



Vancouver Island Human Rights Committee

February 19, 2013 Meeting Minutes

Minutes prepared by
VIHRC Recording Secretary Kay Ahmadi

Released Unofficially: April 11, 2013
Adopted Officially: April 18, 2013

Attendance

Boardroom: Bert Farwell, Jim Sidel, Kay Ahmadi, Michael Doerfler, Michelle Ratsoy, Paul Jones, Reziah Klan, Virginia Vaillancourt & PSAC Representative: James Little.

Teleconference: Reziah Khan & Tracy Shudo.

Translators: Mary Butterfield & Sarah Coupe.

Regrets: David Ramalho.

Meeting – Call to Order

VIHRC Vice President Virginia Vaillancourt called this meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Roundtable Introduction

Introduction:

The members in the attendance did their introductions to each other as part of the opening roundtable conversations.

[NEW DISCUSSION ENSUED DURING INTRODUCTIONS]

President Position Vacancy:

Virginia Vaillancourt advised the members that she is currently chairing the VIHR committee because the President that was elected at our AGM in September 2012 has stepped down due to health reasons so we are now looking for a member to become the President.

Michael Doerfler asked Virginia Vaillancourt if she will chair the meetings till September? Virginia Vaillancourt stated that due to her upcoming knee surgery, she is not sure that she can attend all meetings.

Members had a brief discussion and suggested that Michael Doerfler to be next President. Michael Doerfler said he would step up and help out.

Motion: Paul Jones made the motion to have Michael Doerfler to be appointed as the President.

Seconded: Kay Ahmadi.

Carried: Unanimously.

James Little asked if the motion was for the Caucus to elect Michael as the President? Virginia Vaillancourt stated as not all of the executive members are present so we can't make that decision. James Little said he would sent the motion to the members via email to see if everyone agrees.

Paul Jones then asked as the majority of Caucus members were present at the meeting so then could we not vote on the motion? It was decided that it was fine and the original motion that was passed unanimously still stood.

The roundtable introductions segment now concluded.

Old Business for Review

Adoption of the February 19, 2013 VIHRC Minutes:

A review of previous meeting minutes took place at this time.

Paul Jones advised the members that the funding for the joint learning program is \$3.3 million every year and the anti-discrimination course is not new, it is one of the original courses.

[NEW DISCUSSION ENSUED PRIOR TO ADOPTING THE MINUTES]

PSAC Victoria RO Accommodations:

Michael Doerfler asked if the landlord will be installing a flashing light on the intercom phone to indicate that someone is buzzing when we move to our new office?

Paul Jones asked if PSAC had consulted with members with disabilities group regarding the new office? Paul Jones mentioned that the Toronto office did not consult with members when they were planning their new office and they had to go back and make changes to their office at a later date to accommodate members with disabilities. Paul Jones stated that this was a huge issue with the members at the human rights convention that was held in December 2012.

Virginia Vaillancourt stated that she will contact Luc Guevremont as there is a facility manager who has been working with the building group and she also will forward Paul Jones's concerns regarding members with disabilities being consulted in respect to the new office layout. Virginia Vaillancourt will also forward their responses to Michael Doerfler so he can send it out to all of the members.

Motion: Bert Farwell made the motion to accept the previous minutes.

Seconded: Michael Doerfler.

Carried: Unanimously.

Donation to Victoria Regional Women's Committee:

Virginia Vaillancourt stated the Women's committee had submitted a request for \$140.00 donation to go to one of the women's organizations in Victoria as part of December 6th Candle Light Vigil and she was contacted by VIHRC Treasurer Daniel Girard as he had not been informed about the donation.

Based on information available, the members of VIHRC were sent an email on November 18, 2012 and all agreed that the donation should be made. Virginia Vaillancourt asked if Michael Doerfler could arrange for \$140.00 cheque to be forwarded to the Women's committee, so products can be purchased for this organization.

New Business

VIHRC Treasurer's Report:

VIHRC Treasurer Daniel Girard was absent. So the financial reports were deferred to next scheduled meeting.

Human Rights General News:

VIHRC Technical Communications Michael Doerfler provided a lot of printed out interesting human rights related news stories from our facebook page.

One interesting story was called, '*CRTC tells wireless providers to support 911 text messaging for Deaf and Hard of Hearing*'. Michael Doerfler said that he was very happy with this initiative and also stated that the pilot program would be launched among Deaf and Hard of Hearing members who pre-registered with 911 for this service then it would be expanded to everyone else in general population at later stages.

Michael Doerfler also advised that there is more information that can be found on VIHRC facebook page on other local stories as well.

Paul Jones mentioned that the Canadian Mental Health report was just unveiled last month.

Bert Farwell thanked Michael Doerfler for the work he does on keeping the members informed and the facebook page he maintains.

Mental Illness:

Paul Jones mentioned that he recently did a presentation as part of the joint occupational and health and safety committee at his workplace but he had forgot to bring his notes for tonight's meeting.

Paul Jones mentioned that there was a handbook issued by the Government of Canada in association with Canadian Heritage foundation regarding the prevention of the mental illness, a little about first aid (dealing with suicide).

When dealing with mental health, there has to be a human aspect, it is not black and white, there has to be a conversation. This book is a good tool, whether or not the

government will adopt it and make use of some of the things with the new mental health strategy to take a closer look at this issue.

Paul Jones mentioned our jobs are not getting any easier, pressure if not getting lighter and statistics states that it is going to get worse.

Paul Jones was asked by a member if the handbook would be available to the members? Paul Jones advised the members that he only had one copy, therefore he would make a PDF copy of the book and send a copy to Michael Doerfler so he can distribute it out.

New VIHRC Bylaws:

VIHRC Technical Communications Michael Doerfler advised the members that they had in front of them four attachments:

- A. VIHRC Bylaws
- B. VIHRC Terms of Reference
- C. VIHRC Caucus Positions General Descriptions
- D. VIHRC Signing Authorities

Michael Doerfler went over what were mentioned in the Bylaws attachment and stated that next three attachments are examples of what could be found in the Bylaws. We all should keep in mind that VIHRC Bylaws could be twenty pages long in future because it's a 'breathing document' which means Bylaws would always be evolving and growing as the committee works forward. Michael Doerfler really emphasized that key point because as we can all see that the current Terms of Reference document may not be up to date as there is no mention of VIHRC elections.

Paul Jones stated that Michael Doerfler was correct, we need to define what our role is, as the Terms of Reference did and the committee has expressed in the past that we wanted to do more things, get more involved and make a difference in our community. Importantly that the Terms of Reference do not really specify what our mandate is, maybe by having Bylaws would make us focus our energy and to do what we are required to do.

Virginia Vaillancourt said she agrees with what Paul Jones & Michael Doerfler mentioned and that she would like to point out three things:

- 1.) Would it be Regulations verses Bylaws, as regulations run the internal workings of the committee?

2.) We need to work on our terms of reference – do what we say we are going to do. We need to give ourselves a deadline to bring back an idea to the committee and draft a document outlining our plans.

3.) Get a copy of BC Regional Council's bylaws as it is a good tool to have and we fall under these bylaws. Virginia Vaillancourt will send Michael a copy of the council's bylaws and she understands that they are changing some of the bylaws.

Michael Doerfler said he has two questions:

1.) Shouldn't it be bylaws verses regulations as bylaws would be more powerful and official? Regulations would be more like rules.

2.) Shouldn't we have a subcommittee to work on the bylaws – a group of 2-3 people to work on the bylaws over next few months so we can get different point of views and ideas which would help getting VIHRC Bylaws passed at next AGM?

Paul Jones asked James Little if he knew of any other human rights committees in the country that set out their own bylaws? James Little said no.

James Little stated that we are attempting to legalize something that really doesn't have a charter. We are recognized as a committee under PSAC, have rules that authorize/govern the internal workings of the organization. What we are trying to do is draft some simple rules/guidelines on how we are going to conduct ourselves as a committee which are generally found in the terms of reference but we can not violate the PSAC constitution or the BC Bylaws. James Little said he will talk to Shannon Black as she is a legal advisor in Vancouver to see what we can do and can't do.

The following members agreed to form VIHRC Bylaws subcommittee: Bert Farwell, Michael Doerfler, Paul Jones & Rezia Khan.

Victoria Pride Parade:

Paul Jones advised the members that this year's event will be held on July 7, 2013. In the past we have walked in the parade and had a table with swag. We should ask for donations from our locals – maybe \$100.00

Bert Farwell stated in the minutes from our last meeting, we thought about joining other unions and doing a multi-union event. Paul Jones said in the past he had talked to other unions and did not get a good response from them but will try again. Virginia Vaillancourt asked Paul Jones to send her copy of any letters he may send out.

Virginia Vaillancourt said we have four regional committees in Victoria – the area council, the young workers, women's and the human rights. Michael Doerfler and Virginia Vaillancourt could contact these groups to see if we can get together to make

our own multi committee/locals parade. We could send out the invitations to the north island committee and the Locals to see if they would be interested too.

Paul Jones mentioned that last year he made a poster for the parade which we liked by on the day of the parade, he noticed the poster had been changed.

What's on your Mind?:

Reziah Klan advised the members that she was able to obtain a report regarding bullying at the schools which was prepared by the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria.

Meeting – Call to Adjourn

VIHRC Vice President Virginia Vaillancourt called to adjourn this meeting at 7:36 p.m.

Next Meeting Notification

Thursday April 4, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
at the PSAC Office in Admirals Walk