

**DRAFT RECORD OF MEETING
B.C. REGIONAL COUNCIL CONFERENCE CALL
HELD TUESDAY, APRIL 21, 2020 AT 6:00 PM**

In Attendance:

Jamey Mills, REVP-B.C. (Chair)	Terri Lee, Metro Vancouver
Johann Ackermann, West Fraser Valley	Trish Martin, South Vancouver Island
James Brierley, Young Workers	Jenny MacLeod, Indigenous Peoples
Bert Farwell, North Vancouver Island	Jeanne Olineck, Southern Interior
Nia Gillies, LGTBQ2+	Antony Paller, East Fraser Valley
Linda Harding, Health & Safety	Shane Polak, MWD
Ernest Hooker, South Vancouver Island	Kelly Sidhu, Women's
Jennifer Horsley, Metro Vancouver	Todd Smith Alternate, REVP-B.C.

Regrets:

John Davies, DCL and SE Units	Jill MacNeill, Northwest B.C.
Ron Hardy, Northeast B.C.	Carolyn McGillivray, Southern Interior
Leanne Hughes, National Officers	Stephen Torng, Racially Visible

Staff:

Patrick Bragg, Political Communications Officer	Kristin Schnider, EA to the REVP-B.C.
Luc Guevremont, Regional Coordinator	

Jamey Mills called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' TERRITORY

Before started the meeting, Jamey acknowledged that the call was taking place on the unceded lands of several Indigenous Peoples. Jamey in particular was attending the call on the unceded lands of the Musqueam, Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish and Stó:lō Peoples.

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Jamey also took a moment to acknowledge the tragedy in Nova Scotia. Included in the losses was retired UCTE activist and veteran Tom Bagley who worked as a firefighter at Halifax Airport. A moment of silence was then held for the 22 lives that were violently and unnecessarily taken.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Jamey called for any additions to the agenda, which had been circulated in advance via email. No additions were made.

Moved: Jamey Mills; seconded: Johann Ackermann
Carried

REVP REPORT

a. AEC and NBoD Updates re: COVID-19

The AEC and NBOD continue to meet at least weekly to discuss the impacts of COVID-19 on members, worksites and the organization as a whole. Jamey is also receiving daily updates from the PSAC Directors Team.

We have been fortunate not to see as many layoffs that other Regions have. DCLs have been hit hard in other Regions (e.g. casinos, northern mine). In BC, the layoffs have occurred with separate

employer units, particularly at Swissport and small airports. Layoffs are not expected at YVR or YYJ as they have contingency funds.

PSPC has a mechanism in place for members to access their paystubs when don't have access to a computer and/or access to the Employer's VPN. Members can contact Client Contact Centre at 1-855-686-4729 for more information. This information is also posted on the national and regional websites.

The Pay Centre is temporarily suspending the overpayment recovery plans for all new overpayments since March 23 if they equate to more than 10% of the member's gross bi-weekly pay and other established criteria. Smaller recoveries will still proceed. Details are available on the PSAC national website at <http://psacunion.ca/phoenix-recovery-salary-overpayments-during-covid>.

b. BCFL/Affiliate Updates re: COVID-19

BCFL Officers have been meeting weekly to discuss the impacts of COVID-19. Several of those calls have also included members of the Provincial Government. The Premier and others have attended the calls to provide Affiliates with as much information as possible on the situation. However, information provided is not anything different than what the public receives. The majority of questions during those calls have been provincially focused. However, Jamey did ask the Premier about the childcare spaces that had opened up for provincial essential service workers and if those spots would be expanded to include federal critical service workers. We've now received confirmation that the childcare provisions will be extended to include federal critical service workers who have children aged 0-5 years.

BCFL Officers were also invited to a call with the City of Vancouver on April 7. The focus of the discussion was on where the City was at (as an Employer) regarding essential service work, risk mitigating strategies, and layoffs. There have been some layoffs, and there is the potential for additional layoffs depending on the length of the pandemic, which will be in accordance with collective agreements. At the time of that call, the City had enough capacity to keep their current workforce working as much as possible. The City has been honest that they don't have the financial capacity to carry on over the long-term and are looking for funding support from the provincial and federal governments. It's likely that many municipalities will be in the same position.

The other focus at the City is marginalized peoples (i.e. those on the downtown east side) and the risk of an outbreak within that demographic. At the time of the call there were documented cases of COVID-19 on the DTES, but there is a concern that if/when it happens will spread quickly and will be hard to isolate. City is working to create hotel space to isolate individuals who may be impacted in that area. With the recent outbreak at United Poultry in East Vancouver the risk to those on the downtown eastside is heightened.

Todd noted that United Poultry is inspected by PSAC members so there has been an exposure risk to these members as well.

Relatively speaking, the PSAC is in a much better place than some other Affiliates: there have been massive layoffs in IASTE, BCGEU and CUPE. MoveUP is also facing layoffs with the service reductions at Coast Mountain Bus Company and Translink.

c. Negotiations Updates

A tentative agreement has been reached at Canada Post, which includes a 2% increase per year. This tentative agreement was achieved under an expedited bargaining process. Ratifications votes will be conducted electronically in May with online webinars. This tentative agreement sets a good

precedent for Treasury Board (TB) bargaining. It shows that there is the ability to get back to the bargaining table with a respectful mandate during these challenging times.

We are continuing to press TB to get back to the table with a respectful mandate, especially given that PSAC members continue to be here for Canada despite Phoenix problems and now the pandemic.

Across all bargaining units, members have stepped up to the plate to keep the country running. They are working outside their normal job descriptions and in high risk environments. Members should be congratulated for their hard work.

Notice to bargain was served for ARINC.

CFIA PIC hearing is rescheduled for May 7-8 and will be convened by via Skype/Zoom or other virtual means. Terri noted they will not discuss the common table demands at the hearing. The hope is that the PIC will only rule on CFIA specific proposals and that TB issues will be separate.

d. PSAC Offices Closures and Webinars

Earlier this week, the PSAC office closure and telework period was extended to at least June 30. This decision was based on the best information available from public health officials. We will continue to review the situation and adjust needed as we move forward. PSAC staff are all still available via phone and email. In the Region, all staff are working and will respond to member queries as quickly as possible. During the office closure period, PSAC staff will not be conducting any work-related travel.

The Region held the two webinars last week on workplace health and safety rights. A recording of the webinar is available on the regional website. Thanks to the Regional Office staff for their hard work to make the webinars such a success. The Region is looking at offering additional webinars on a variety of topics: mental health, ergonomics, teleworking, pensions, etc.

Luc added that future webinars going to be popular and staff are working at making them more available and on a variety of topics (not just health and safety). Staff will be taking additional webinar training later this week to support this.

EMAIL VOTE RESULTS: ENDORSEMENT OF THE ELCC COVID-19 RESCUE PLAN

The Regional Council voted in favour of endorsing the [Early Learning and Child Care COVID-19 Rescue Plan](#), put forward by Child Care Now, the Childcare Resource and Research Unit and the Canadian Child Care Federation.

The plan calls on the federal government to government to defray 75 per cent of the costs of maintaining full provincial/territorial public funding of licensed/regulated ELCC services during the pandemic, and to compensate providers for all lost parent fee revenue. Under our plan, providers that receive such funding must (a) keep paying all staff their wages and benefits, (b) cease to collect parental fees from parents who cannot access services or choose not to do so during the pandemic, and (c) agree to resume full operations when it is safe to do so. Under our plan, this financial support would replace other COVID-19 government support mechanisms such as the federal wage subsidy program or replacement income programs such as EI or CERB. The plan would require provinces/territories to sustain public funding for licensed/regulated early learning and child care programs, as set out above, in order to receive federal funding.

PSAC BC Region has now signed the plan online at www.childcareforall.ca. Individuals can also sign on to the plan at the same link.

The motion was moved by Jamey Mills; seconded by Ernest Hooker.

POLITICAL ACTION REPORT

a. “Still Here for Canada” Campaign

It’s important that we keep highlighting the good work ALL PSAC members, including non-federal units, are doing to help Canadians and help keep the country going during the pandemic. PSAC members are *Still Here for Canada*. To showcase this, the PSAC has set up an online campaign at the national website under the COVID banner. The aim of the campaign is to let the public and members know how our work is helping Canadians. Members are asked to upload a photo using the [online form](#) and tell us about their work. The PSAC will post stories on the national and regional social media accounts.

In the context of bargaining for national units, it’s important that we continue to keep our work in the public eye. This campaign is one of the ways we are trying to do this. In the Region uptake on campaign has been quite good and several submissions received and posted already. Feedback on the social media posts has also been good. There have been approximately 17,500 views of the posts and 1,200 likes, comments or shares of the campaign content. A [Facebook album](#) of the campaign posts is available online.

b. Showcasing Campaigns and Appeals

The Vancouver & Dist. Area Council has showcasing different local/regional appeals and campaigns weekly to provide support to the large number of people hurting right now. This information is also being promoted through the PSAC BC social media accounts. If there are any other Area Councils, Regional Committees, or Locals/Branches are engaged in local appeals or campaigns that you want to share with members, please let the Patrick know.

c. MP Lobbying

It’s still very possible and feasible to lobby Members of Parliament during the pandemic. MPs can meet via conference call, Skype, etc. The PSAC is still pressing Treasury Board and the Agencies to come to the table with a respectful mandate. Even during this challenging time, MP lobbying will help with this. If Regional Council members need assistance setting up a meeting with their MP, please let the REVP Office know. We can also provide an updated lobbying kit or speaking notes for use during those meetings.

d. Regional Websites

Headquarters has been working on revamping the regional websites, which are now almost ten years old. There will be a common look and feel for all regional websites, based on the national website. Along with the design, the site navigation and search functions will be vastly improved and more user friendly. The regional websites will also look much better on mobile devices. Patrick saw mockups earlier this week and they look good. The process is moving ahead, but there is no firm eta for the rollout yet. Stay tuned.

UPDATE ON 2020 PSAC BC REGIONAL TRIENNIAL CONVENTION

At this point, there hasn’t been any clear decision on how or when the regional conventions will take place. A small committee was struck at the national level to investigate all options for conducting the business that needs to take place at regional conventions: election of the REVP, Alternate REVP, 2nd Alternate REVP (where applicable) and all other Regional Council members elected at regional conventions; approval of the regional budget; and resolutions debate. Committee members include Magali Picard (chair) and PSAC staff Mandy Rocks, Morna Ballantyne, Krista Devine and Patrick Leblanc.

A proposal from the Committee was presented to the NBoD today. A second, alternate proposal was also put forward by Kevin King, President of the Union of National Employees. The proposal

from the Committee looks to conduct all seven regional conventions in the fall of 2020 through use of an electronic platform. The proposal from UNE (while still in draft form) calls on the PSAC to push all conventions (regional, Component and the PSAC National Triennial Convention) out one year. This would put all regional and Component conventions to 2021 and the National Convention 2022. Under the UNE proposal, all conventions would still take place in-person.

NBoD members are reviewing the proposals with their National Officers/Executives and hope to make a decision on how to move forward by May 1. Whatever option is ultimately selected, it will be applied to all regional conventions to ensure consistency. At this point, we do not know if the decision will embody one of the two options presented, a hybrid or a totally different proposal. Regardless the priorities will be to ensure the health and safety of members and maintaining the union's democratic process.

Many Component Conventions have already been postponed and some have been rescheduled with new dates later this year and in 2021. At this point it's not looking optimistic that we'll be able to hold large in-person gatherings this fall.

Component conventions postponed until 2021 will pose logistical challenges for the PSAC National Triennial Convention (NTC), which is still scheduled for May 30-June 4, 2021. Regional and Component Conventions are resolution-submitting bodies to the NTC. Components typically elect their NTC delegates at the Component Convention as well. Therefore, the PSAC may need to look at the established deadline date for delegates names and the submission of resolutions. Currently the deadline for both is Nov. 30, 2020.

Several Regional Council members advised that they were not in favour of an electronic platform for the regional conventions. Many suggested that it would be more logical to delay the conventions a year. A common concern with the electronic format was with the resolutions debate and the inability of members to lobby delegates on specific resolutions. Membership engagement would also be challenging under an electronic format. Concerns were voiced on the revised rules of order as resolutions referrals, divisions, and late resolutions would not be accepted under the electronic format.

Terri Lee commented that an online platform would lose the fundraising aspect of regional conventions. In addition, elections may be skewed toward incumbents as delegates wouldn't necessarily be able to meet candidates in person or see them in action prior to voting.

Jennifer commented that the UNE proposal doesn't take into account Component conventions that have already been rescheduled in 2021. Based on the proposal, if regional conventions must take place before Component conventions, some Components will have to reschedule their convention again and may face financial impacts as a result.

Bert commented that the electronic format will be problematic for ships' crews as they do not have internet for weeks at time when they are at sea. Jamey answered that this issue has already been raised and the PSAC will have to accommodate work cycles to ensure that delegates are have access to the electronic forum by either bringing to internet access to delegates or having delegates brought to internet access depending on the circumstances. This may involve salary reimbursements and keeping some members at home during their shifts. Jamey added that concerns regarding disabilities accommodations have also been raised and even if regional conventions are held electronically, they must still be fully accessible for all members.

Jamey concluded the conversation by advising Council members to speak with their Component National Executive or the REVP if they have further comments. It's important that the NBoD hear from activists before deciding on how to proceed.

UNITED WAY & MOBILIZING LOCAL LOVE – UPDATE FROM LINDA HARDING

Linda advised that she attended the recent United Way (UW) campaign meetings with Jamey via teleconference. The Committee discussed the UW's Local Love campaign, the impact of COVID-19 and how to mobilize engagement. The UW has released an online tool to connect the public to the campaign through social media and they are established a neighbourhood to neighbourhood network of needs that will be vetted by the UW. Volunteers can sign up [online](#) to get involved.

The UW has also developed food hubs in partnership with local food banks. This is especially important as food banks have had to centralize during the pandemic, which makes it more difficult for the vulnerable to access food and services.

The UW's [Period Promise](#) campaign is still continuing. Last year the Vancouver RWC got involved, and Linda asked that Locals look to support and participate in the campaign when members return to worksites.

The Committee also talked about [BC211](#), which has been expanded across BC and provides support to seniors. The program was established in partnership with the UW's Better At Home Program and assists with matching seniors who need support with non-medical essential with volunteers in their community who can help (e.g. grocery shopping, errands, etc.)

Linda is also working with a UW sub-committee who will be looking at how to better engage retirees. Kelly advised that she's also involved with the UW's Hi Neighbour Initiative where she is available by phone to speak with seniors in self-isolation. More information on the initiative is available [online](#).

DASH COMMITTEE DONATION REQUEST – DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE WOMEN'S CENTRE #ASSISTANCEFROMADISTANCE CAMPAIGN

The DASH Committee received a donation request from the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, requesting support for their #AssistanceFromADistance campaign. The campaign seeks support to continue provide essential services to women in need during the pandemic, including the DEWC meal program, centre facilities, and the 24-hour emergency shelter. The DASH Committee is recommending a donation of \$250 toward the campaign through use of the Donations and Membership budget line.

Motion moved by: Jennifer Horsley; seconded by: Trish Martin
Carried.

UNION PROTEIN PROJECT – PALLET DONATION FOR BC FOOD BANKS

Jamey began the discussion by noting that the Union Protein Project (UPP) was the charity selected for the 2020 PSAC BC Regional Convention raffle. In 2017, the regional convention was able to raise around \$3,000 through the raffle for the charity, and with the postponement of the regional convention, Jamey was hoping to find another opportunity to support UPP.

UPP recently approached the PSAC and affiliates with an offer for unions/locals/DLCs to purchase their remaining canned tuna to support local food banks during this time of need. Cans are being sold at reduced cost of \$0.89/can (lower than usual \$2.50/can). Purchases can be made in half-pallet orders (24 cans per case, 70 cases per half pallet) at cost of \$1,495.20. Arrangements can be made to deliver to most communities in BC.

A motion was made to use the net reserve asset to purchase two half-pallets at a total cost of \$2,990.40. Each geographic coordinator would then provide the names of two cities that have food banks within their catchment for consideration, and two cities (each from a different geographic district) would be randomly drawn to determine where the half pallets would be sent.

Moved: Jamey Mills; seconded by: Linda Harding
Carried unanimously

ROUND TABLE DISCUSSION

JOHANN ACKERMANN: Not working from home presently as Johann doesn't have an office. Johann has been busy working with Deltassist Family and Community Services Society where he has volunteered to grocery shop for seniors. An ongoing challenge the organization faces is with seeking volunteers: the majority that step forward are seniors and they don't want them doing this volunteer work. Johann has also been busy assisting his sister with her child care needs and helping an aunt in Cache Creek.

JAMES BRIERLEY: Currently working from home on EI processing as his regular work is on a hiatus. Some CEIU members have been re-assigned to different business streams to help with work volumes and to ensure government help is getting out the public. To date, two million benefit claims have been processed. On the subject of regional conventions, James expressed a concern that an electronic format limits Young Workers' ability to lobby on YW issues.

BERT FARWELL: Just finished a 28-day trip on a coast guard vessel where they were short-staffed, and members had to work 18-hour days. Bert had to fight with the Employer to set up barriers for contractors aboard the vessel to ensure the safety of the crew. Once protocols were in place, all contractors were wearing PPE and common touch points were washed down frequently. Bert is still dealing with some 699 leave claims within his Local.

NIA GILLIES: The Victoria and Vancouver Pride events have been cancelled, and it's likely that Pride events in other communities will be as well. Nia is looking for suggestions on how to celebrate Pride this year without these community events. Jamey commented that the West Fraser Valley Area Councils is discussing this and looking at possible virtual activities.

LINDA HARDING: A BRUSH meeting was held a couple weeks ago, which had a good turnout. Within Linda's department, all but four staff are teleworking. Those four members are in the mail room. There were challenges in getting the names of those members from the Employer, but Linda received the information this evening. Local will be reaching out to them to ensure they have sufficient PPE, etc. Employer has implemented three tiers of access for the VPN. Accounts Payable, the Pay Centre and the Pension Centre have 24-hour access to the network and the rest are allowed to log on to the VPN at 12 PM daily.

ERNEST HOOKER: Facing the same challenges as Bert with the Employer. Ernest is also finding that the messaging from the Employer isn't consistent or well organized, which leads to confusion for members. On regional conventions, Ernest noted that we need to ensure we're doing the right thing, not the easy thing to address the cancellations. All decisions considered need to be held under scrutiny by the membership.

JENNIFER HORSLEY: At the outset of the pandemic, the Component had a lot of trouble getting PPE at worksites. It's now slowly trickling in. Shields have been installed at the retail centres, but they're only small, thin plastic sheets hanging from ceiling and aren't large enough to cover the full counter. Have asked the Employer to improve the shields, but don't know when more are coming. Component had been facing layoffs, but the Employer has cancelled them due to increased work volumes. There are some staffing issues for members with child care issues and those in self-isolation, etc. Management has been checking in on the retail centres a few times a week, but workers feel like they're on their own and left vulnerable. Jen has been reaching out to these members by email to see how the Local can help. There are very few who can work from home as the majority are considered critical workers.

TERRI LEE: Most of the members at the agriculture research stations have been sent home. Only critical staff remain to cover basic work and care for plants and animals. Have been told there is no more research to be conducted, which means they will lose data for the whole year. Across the country there are over ten meat plants with COVID-19 cases. In BC, today there was confirmation of an outbreak at United Poultry in East Vancouver. This plant is inspected by Agriculture members. Social distancing is a challenge in these plants and having live animals in the plants poses a potential higher risk to workers and inspectors. It's expected that inspectors who work at these sites will become sick, so management is creating a list of other inspectors to replace them. This is creating anxiety for some members. PPE has been offered to members, but it doesn't replace social distancing. Component is continuing to press management on these concerns.

TRISH MARTIN: At the Commissionaires Local one member got infected when aboard a boat and had to self-quarantine for 14 days. The Employer has been refusing to issue ROEs for affected members and the Local is trying to resolve. At CPP/OAS there are 60 members left in the office. Forty of those are in Foundation Services and cannot perform their jobs from home. The rest of the staff are either leadership or members who have chosen not to work from home. Much of the work has converted from a paper-based system to a virtual one. There is now talk of not reverting to paper when the 'new normal' begins. Work priorities are retirements, survivor benefits and the Guaranteed Income Supplement. Local is facing some issues with 699 leave. There was a single father with shared custody of his daughter who was granted 699 leave, however, there are single mothers in the workplace who have been told they have to work. Trish has gotten involved and is hoping to resolve this inequity. Members who are teleworking have been issued work cell phones and are helping out with other business lines where they can to take on some of the call volumes. There appears to be some disconnect with local management and the senior leadership regarding 699 leave criteria. The Local is trying to work this out with the Employer.

JEANNE OLINECK: Three million EI applications have been received to date, and two million have been processed. Members are working a lot of OT to accommodate the high application volumes. All staff that requested to work from home have been sent home and were issued work cell phones. For those still in the office, physical distancing protocols are in place. For those at home, staff have been told if they need any other equipment they need to get their own; Employer won't cover the costs. In Jeanne's Local there are no issues with 699 leave. It has been made available to those who require it. Those with child care issues have are trying to work core hours as much as they can, but if they cannot they are to submit for 699 Leave for those hours. This arrangement is to be in place until June. There are ongoing discussions on whether or not these members can work OT during non-core hours.

SHANE POLAK: At Veterans Affairs no long have in-person events and moving to virtual equivalents. This includes WWII commemoration events. All staff working on veteran disability benefits have been sent home. Those members who were having equipment issues were placed on 699 leave until the required equipment was received. These situations have all been resolved now. Initially the Employer asked members to come in to retrieve equipment, but UVAE saw this as a health and safety issue. Employer has since couriered equipment to members' homes. There are 3,000 VPN lines available daily, and members have had to coordinate their work to ensure connectivity for all staff. Shane added that staff are using their own internet to access the Employer's webex. However, members are to be reimbursed by the Employer.

KELLY SIDHU: Currently in a work share program, which helps avoid layoffs. Kelly has been extremely busy reviewing applications. Most members in Kelly's Local are working from home. However, there are still some on 699 leave, and there have been challenges with the Employer on this in terms of who qualifies. In order to work from home, Kelly and one other member had to purchase laptops as the Employer ran out. Kelly has also been working on 3 grievances, which

includes one DTA file where the member requested to work from home. Ironically, this member is currently working from home under COVID-19. Kelly also has a conference call scheduled with the RWC Chairs to discuss COVID-19 impacts on Committees and other women's issues (e.g. child care and parents who are struggling with teleworking while caring for their children).

TODD SMITH: Arrived back from SJF Guatemala trip last month, and Todd is figuring out a way to report back to the Council and the membership. Despite the pandemic, Todd wants to share the important work being done by SFJ and CoDevelopment Canada.

JENNY MACLEOD: On March 16, majority of staff were sent home to telework. However, some admin staff was deemed essential. Jenny asked the Employer for a list of these essential workers and after a week the rest were all sent home. Members were allowed to take home any equipment the required to work from home. Work volumes are continuing and Jenny is still getting a lot of referrals from CBSA.

ANTONY PALLER: On the situation at United Poultry, Antony commented that if the site goes into a two-week quarantine, the birds are likely to be shifted to another facility, which may put other PSAC members and processing plant staff at risk. Currently Antony is teleworking but is on call if the Employer requires additional staff onsite. Antony added that the members at CSC in the Fraser Valley are working in challenging environments, especially with the outbreak at the Mission Institution.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT CONFERENCE CALL

Jamey suggested that the Regional Council convene another call during the week of May 18 or May 25. The REVP Office will send out a doodle poll for availability.

MEETING ADJOURNMENT

Before concluding the meeting, Jamey thanked all Regional Council members for their hard work during this trying time. He also reminded the Council for forward the REVP Office any concerns regarding COVID-19 workplace impacts or further comments regarding the proposals for the regional conventions.

The call concluded at 7:56 PM.

Minutes recorded by: Kristin Schnider

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