

Amended

Vancouver and District Area Council General Meeting – June 3, 2020

Via Teleconference due to COVID-19 pandemic

In Attendance:

Todd Smith (President, AGR 20044), Crystal Isaac (1st Vice President, UTE 20027), Jen Horsley (Secretary, UPCE 20095), Andre Bessette (UHEW 20729), Warren Wulff (UCTE 20088), Damir Moric (CEIU 20937), Mahalia Nahanee (UNE 20150), Alexis Fells (UNE 20150), Shane Polak (UVAE 20045), Aaron Chang (Treasurer, CEIU 20938), Tracey Brussard (MHRC), Jamey Mills (REVP), Monica Urrutia - Staff

Regrets: Anne-Marie Friesen (UHEW 20729), Sandra Wasilewski (CEIU 20937), Marion McClarty (UNE 20150), Sharon Cowie, (UTE 20027)

Meeting started at 6:03 PM, Called to Order at 6:20 PM

Agenda:

1. Prior Minutes
 - a. April 22, 2020
2. Business Arising from the Previous Minutes
3. Standing Updates
 - a. Financial Report
 - b. Metro Vancouver Alliance
 - c. Phoenix
 - d. COVID-19
4. Affiliate Reports
5. New Business
 - a. Vancouver Just Recovery
6. Round Table
7. Next Meeting September 9, 2020

Welcome & Acknowledgement – Todd opened the meeting with the acknowledgement of the traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tseil-Waututh.

Before the meeting was called to order, the floor was given to Jamey to give the members an update on COVID-19 and the PSAC, bargaining, and Phoenix.

Jamey welcomed the new members of the Area Council. Jamey noted that he has been attending and acknowledged that we all have been attending a lot of meetings via phone and video conference and thanked everyone for joining the call tonight. He also thanked everyone on the call for the work that they do and for making Canada a great place to live and work and for all that we all continue to do for the members.

COVID-19: The employer is looking at the future and the “new normal” and what a return to work will look like. The employer (treasury board) has supplied a lengthy document, but the PSAC considers this the infancy of consultation. There are no anticipated dates for a return to work in an office environment.

The PSAC acknowledges that it won't be the same conditions for everyone in every region. The PSAC has provided as much information for members as possible through town halls and continuing webinars.

Bargaining: Bargaining is currently on hold, but the PSAC is optimistic that the employer will come back to the table with a respectful mandate. In light of there having been units that have been without a contract for up to 4 years, the ongoing issues with Phoenix and that the members are "Still here for Canada" throughout the pandemic. Bargaining is now down to wages as in previous sittings the teams made good gains on items like the definition of family.

Phoenix: there is not much news here.

Other Updates: The PSAC BC Regional Convention has been postponed, it is now scheduled for May 7-9, 2021 at the Pinnacle. Because we are still not certain whether it will be able to go ahead in person, contingencies are being planned and we (NBOD?) are determining what delegates / resolutions will look like. A decision should be made in the next 10 days.

Jamey said that he was very proud of what area councils are doing, stepping up to keep members engaged. The VAC "Action Wednesdays" and the "Solidarity Saturdays".

Jamey asked if anyone had any questions for him.

Someone asked about terms of office – current and after next convention. Jamey answered that the NBOD had agreed that current terms are extended by one year and that the next term will be a two-year term to put us back into cycle.

Aaron noted that at IRCC they had been given a survey about employees concerns about returning to work. Aaron felt that the workplace is not set up for a post-COVID world and that a lot of employees have been able to work well away from the office. He was worried about a second wave of COVID and hopes that everyone will be careful.

Andre mentioned that there were some issues coming up around the Workplace 2.0 standards that have already been rolled out. He said that there is a disconnect between local and regional OSH committees as well as between the Local and Regional Union and Management consultations. Andre said that he is not totally convinced that decisions made at the top are trickling down to the local level, and that some of the decision-making process is not engaging local groups. Andre asked if the union was specifically fighting against 2.0 standards in the post-COVID office?

Jamey answered that regardless of what local management is doing, their decisions are not going to fly without consultation. He also said that the PSAC and Components are reaching out to consult with our folks right down to the local level. The PSAC would not be specifically pushing back on Workplace 2.0 but would push against unsafe workplaces.

Meeting called to order at 6:20 PM.

Andre proposed adding a discussion about the Vancouver Just Recovery Coalition and joining on to their Joint Statement to the agenda (this item was not specifically on the agenda on the email sent out). This would be added under new business.

Amended Agenda M/S/C (Crystal/Warren)

Previous mins – April 22, 2020 - M/S/C (Crystal/Warren)

Business Arising –

There is currently no business arising from the previous minutes. The Wet'suwet'en Statement was published on the PSAC BC website.

Financial Report

Aaron gave the financial update with the current balance and expenses. There are currently no new expenses. The Area Council is now set up for mobile deposit, so when the Area Council disbursement comes Aaron will deposit it. As many of our events have been cancelled or postponed, we should be looking for ideas or opportunities to use our budgeted monies.

Metro Vancouver Alliance

Jen reported that there have been a few calls to discuss the updated statement of intent and going forward in the sponsoring stage to rebuild the Alliance. Todd asked Jen to give an idea of what the Alliance does for the new members on the call. Jen asked if the dues had been paid for the year, Aaron answered that he didn't think that they had. Jen committed to contacting Naomi from the Alliance to get an invoice sent.

Phoenix

Todd had no updates.

Jamey said that his office would like to hear about how Phoenix is impacting workplaces under the current conditions, as the REVP's office had not received many calls since the start of COVID. He did not have a current update on where the backlog is at. Damages discussions have been put on pause with ongoing bargaining.

Jamey opened the floor for discussion on current impacts.

Alexis said that she works closely with members and had had dozens of Phoenix issues herself. She had a question about the freezing of overpayment recoveries. She had a member who was not offered options by the pay centre for repayment as per the agreement. The member had been double paid.

Jamey responded that recoveries should not be happening until the member had had 3 consecutive correct payments and then they should have been offered a negotiated payment plan. He recommended that Alexis should contact the local president to find out the process being followed by her component, whether a grievance should be filed or if there is another process in place.

COVID-19

The floor was opened to hear from members on the line what was going on, what they would like to see in terms of engagement, mobilization.

Damir – management at Harbour Centre has stated that for those employees accessing computers through APPGATE, if it crashes for more than 90 minutes the employee will be required to come into the office to finish their day. Also, new hires have not been allowed to work from home, they are required to go into the worksite and work at a desk, not being assigned their own desks, they are being given the desks of employees who are working over VPN from home.

Aaron – the employer sent out “cautious optimism” messaging on May 22 and have been sending out surveys. There is no specified timeline for a return to “normal” operations in the messaging. At the LMCC the employer said that they would not be going back until after the summer, there is no clear messaging on this. Also, the survey came out earlier than it was supposed to. It was supposed to be done in consultation with CEIU, but the National Component was not even aware of it. The questions on the survey were about PPE, distancing, hygiene. The survey deadline was Jun 3 for IRCC. Most people in his location would be working at home through the summer.

Warren – had an idea for the PSAC to canvas members to see if anyone is being denied 699 leave, gave an example of someone who was denied both an accommodation for ergonomics while they worked at home and 699 leave to relieve some of the pain in their back by not working part day and part day to get up and move around.

Jen – Purolator had an outbreak in our Calgary Depot, 67 people affected. No paid leave was offered to employees unless they tested positive, if required to take time off for self-isolation due to exposure with no positive test result. Time off without pay or required to apply for CERB for duration of leave. There is now more PPE being handed out at Richmond and instituting one-way pathways.

Todd – CFIA has had members affected by outbreaks at food processing facilities in BC and Alberta. When the issues are raised to management they smile and nod, but don't actually address them. There is a widening gap of distrust building. There is an online action that Agriculture Union is asking for support on, “Invisible Heroes” campaign. The safety of inspectors is also the safety of processing workers.

Monica – recordings of Webinars that have been offered are now available online at the Regional website if you haven't been able to attend. These were:

- Workplace Health & Safety Rights – with a COVID-19 lens
- Practical Home Office Ergonomics
- How to Refuse Unsafe Work

Next week the webinar is about Returning to Work and Accommodations, being offered on Tuesday June 9 at 6:00 PM and Wednesday June 10 at 12:00 PM.

Jamey mentioned that the PSAC national website has posted their recommendations of an ideal return to work plan. Jamey also said that he would bring Warren's question about 699 leave to the upcoming National Officers meeting.

Affiliate Reports

No written reports were received.

New Business

Vancouver Just Recovery Coalition

Andre gave an overview of the coalition. It is a new coalition formed in reaction to COVID-19, looking forward around economic recovery post-COVID. It seeks to discuss the hits to the economy and measures to ensure that government is spending public monies with priorities that respect indigenous

rights and address climate change. Andre read out the about page on www.vancouverjustrecovery.ca and then read out the joint statement for discussion.

Todd said that his initial thoughts on this were that it is very forward thinking and falls within the scope of the Area Council.

“Joint Statement for a Just Recovery

Vancouver Just Recovery Coalition

April 30, 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, the world is thinking about the future, hungry to rebuild anew. This moment presents an opportunity to examine if the status quo was truly serving our people, our environment, and our opportunities to live, work, and prosper.

As we have watched the pandemic unfold, the devastating impacts on those without homes, without adequate income, without jobs easily conducted remotely, without access to information, social support or food have only made painfully clear the inequities that are part of Vancouver's social fabric.

The Vancouver Just Recovery Coalition is calling on the City of Vancouver to prioritize lessening existing inequalities, respecting Indigenous rights, and tackling the climate emergency. We believe socially just strategies to recover and rebuild post-COVID-19 will better support vulnerable communities, and make a safer, healthier city for all.

As many Vancouverites continue to struggle financially and emotionally with the pandemic, now is not the time to reduce social spending. Now is not the time to restrict spending in an effort to preserve the status quo.

As our federal, provincial and municipal governments begin to strategize on their post-COVID recovery and rebuilding strategies, we need to prioritize those most impacted, ensuring that our economic recovery lessens existing inequalities, respects Indigenous rights, and tackles the climate emergency. The pre-COVID status quo was failing too many people.

This is especially true in Vancouver, where the impacts of COVID-19 on the City's operating budget, combined with anti-tax lobbying, could mean delays or defunding of critical cultural, social equity, and climate programs.

The City of Vancouver is very limited by its inability to run a deficit to cover the gap. The lack of fiscal tools for local governments threatens the City's provision of essential public services, social programs and other public priorities. This includes essential programs and services that many of those hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic rely on: public libraries, public transportation, community centres, neighbourhood houses, homeless outreach services, food security programs, etc. There is also an urgent need for more affordable housing options, accessibility improvements, and capital upgrades to aging community centres and other infrastructure. The loss of these supports and programs will disproportionately affect women, those living with disabilities, those struggling with homelessness, renters, health workers, elders, youth, artists, cultural workers, small businesses, sex workers, Indigenous peoples, communities of colour, and those continuing to fight the opioid crisis. Alternatively, investing in services and programs, such as cultural services, public libraries, and climate action will enable Vancouverites to heal together and build a better city for the future

Vancouver's Just Recovery Coalition calls on the Governments of BC and Canada to provide Vancouver and other local governments with emergency funding supports to address financial short-falls caused by the pandemic, and to develop, in coordination with the City of Vancouver and others, additional fiscal tools that allow municipalities to be more resilient in the face of future crises of this scale and scope.

Threats to the City of Vancouver's essential services, programs, and public priorities, presents a significant risk to Vancouver's vulnerable communities in an already unaffordable city. This danger could get even worse if there is pressure for Council to pass an austerity budget in 2021.

Any recovery strategy should offer every resident the same opportunities to rebuild their lives and thrive in a safe, inclusive, just, and caring society.

Now is the time to approve innovative, progressive recovery and rebuilding plans with a strong focus on social spending to invest in the rebuilding of our communities. Now is the time to invest in building a city of complete communities based on care and compassion...a kind of city that will be more liveable for everyone. "

Motion: (M/S/C) Andre/Shane The Vancouver and District Area Council will sign on to support the joint statement for Vancouver Just Recovery coalition.

Passed Unanimously.

Further to this motion, Andre asked for direction on the VDAC's participation with the Vancouver Just Recovery coalition. Andre committed to continue to follow up with the coalition on how to participate and bring the information back to the Area Council. His understanding was that the coalition was looking for organizations to appoint individuals as point people/representatives on the coalition. No one was opposed to having Andre participate as our representative.

Motion (M/S/C) Andre/Shane Move that Andre Bessette be appointed to participate in the Vancouver Just Recovery coalition as our representative and he will report back to the Vancouver and District Area Council.

Todd gave a shout out to Andre for continuing to bring activism opportunities to the Vancouver and District Area Council.

Monica asked if Andre would submit our support? Andre responded yes and asked how he should sign on – answer PSAC-VDAC

Andre asked if this would be the appropriate place in the agenda to bring a further motion about funding or donating to Black Lives Matter organizations or the NAACP. Todd advised that since it wasn't an agenda item it could be brought up in the round table discussion.

Monica asked if we could talk about the "Thank You" signs as an action for the Area Council. This came up out of an action by the East Fraser Valley Area Council, signs were created and placed at workplaces in appreciation of members being "Still here for Canada". Want to discuss if we want to do this and what it entails for commitment, time and vehicles. Jen had brought this forward as an idea to do around the airport, but it's open for discussion of worksites to target. Is anyone interested in doing this? How many signs would we need, where do we want to put signs, is there public space or would we need to seek consent of the employers to put signs on their property, who has the time to do this (put signs out), who

would be able to pick them up from the print shop in Burnaby or from a staff member who could pick them up.

Jen committed to try to connect with Airport area locals. (update, Patty Ducharme has contacted and secured consent from Customs).

June 17 would be the date to get back to Monica on this. (Jen missed this date, still waiting to hear back from Francois/Debra from Canada Post)

Round Table

Todd thanked the new delegates, we appreciate their participation.

Next meeting will be September 9, 2020 via conference call. A question was asked if we would be able to hold a video conference, such as Zoom. Todd responded that Zoom was not approved by PSAC due to security issues, but that Google Meets is. We can give it a try for the next meeting. Aaron asked if Google Meets has just a call in option (no video)? Todd answered that it does, but it isn't a direct call option, it will call you back. Shane mentioned that he prefers Zoom, and while it is not currently approved by PSAC, if it was at a later date would we have the option to change over to Zoom or another medium? The answer was yes.

Andre asked if the committee would support donating \$250 to the Black Lives Movement which is active in Canada and the US, or supporting a legal support organization like the NAACP. Crystal said that the council's funds should be donated in Canada and asked if there were any legal defense organizations supported in Canada, maybe to support the protesters arrested in Montreal. There are BLM organizations in Vancouver and nationally based in Toronto. Monica suggested looking on the Black Lives Matter Vancouver website for suggestions of organizations to support. Todd suggested that we should do more research so that we are donating to an appropriate and supported organization in Canada and we can do an email motion over the summer, up to \$100.00 can be approved through and email vote.

Adjourned 7:57 PM