

West Fraser Valley Area Council

Meeting – Knight and Day Restaurant

November 30, 2015

Invitees: Johann Ackermann, President (UTE local 20029), Richard Hyatt, Secretary (UTE local 20050), Michael Small, Treasurer (UTE local 20029), Jennifer Chieh Ho, Education Officer (UNE local 20088), Monique Bakker (UEW local 20147), Robert Strang (PSAC Rep);

Regrets: Shirley Torres (UNE Local 20278); Bob Jackson (PSAC-REVP/AGR Local 20044); Jacquie Belanger (GSU Local 20008)

Absent: Celine Ahodekon (UNE Local 20278); Deoraj Mahabirsingh (UTE Local 20050); Jeremy Amor, Vice President (UTE Local 20029); Susie Blyth (CEIU Local 20910); Sandy Kincek (CEIU Local 20910); Heather Kenny (UTE Local 20029); Tracy Bestland (USGE Local 20111); Melodie Dolinski (USGE Local 20011)

I. Call to order

Meeting was called to order at 5:45 PM

II. Adoption of the Agenda

Moved by Michael and seconded by Jennifer to adopt the agenda with the following additions:

Under Financial Report Child Care Reimbursement and Asian Heritage Month and under Political Action add New Westminster District Labour Council Report and under Other Business the CLC Winter School, Christmas Adopt a Family Sponsorship and Meal Reimbursement. Carried.

III. Approval of minutes from August 17, 2015

Moved by Richard and seconded by Jenn to adopt the minutes of August 17, 2015. Carried.

IV. Financial Report

Michael provided a current report and these were reviewed by Monique Bakker prior to the meeting. The bank balance as of September 30th is \$9505.82. Expenditures are on target. We have spent 2/3rd of the budgeted amount for meetings. Dues received are lower than projected. We are currently running at a deficit of \$210. This does not include expenditures approved for meetings held after May. Discussion on how the Fusion Festival was paid. Robert Strang will

contact the Regional PSACBC office to see if the Council needs to reimburse the Regional Office for this event.

Jeremy was not present to sign cheques to reimburse Jennifer and Richard the out of pocket expenses that were previously approved. Johann will connect with Jeremy and arrange to get these payments to both asap.

Michael moved and Monique seconded the approval of the financial report. Carried

a. Child Care Reimbursement

Michael moved and Jennifer seconded to reimburse Monique the amount of \$52.50 for childcare. Carried.

b. 2015 May Asian Heritage Month

Jennifer indicated that she was already been approved for \$100 for this event at a past meeting but there was a slight cost overrun of \$36.11 and is request reimbursement for this.

Monique moved and Michael seconded to the additional \$36.11 to cover the additional costs for Asian Heritage Month event. Carried.

V. Education Report

Robert provided a schedule of courses for Fraser Valley and planned courses for the BC Region. These courses are available on the www.psacbc.com website.

Alliance Facilitator Training – Holiday Inn – January 15 – 17, 2016 – Burnaby

Talking Union Basics – Abbotsford - January 23 – 24, 2016 – Application Closes Jan 8

Grievance Handling – Victoria RO - January 23-24, 2016 – Application Closes Jan 15

Talking Union Basics/Understanding Interpreting Collective Agreement – February 6 – 7, 2016 – Vancouver RO – Application Closes – Jan 22

Understanding Interpreting Collective Agreements – February 6, 2016 – Abbotsford – Application Closes Jan 22

Public Speaking - February 20, 2016 – Victoria RO – Application Closes Feb 12

TUB/UICA - February 20 – 21, 2016, To Be Determined – Application Closes Feb 5

Representing Members with Mental Illness - February 20, 2016 – Prince Rupert – Application Closes Feb 5

Understanding Interpreting Collective Agreement - February 21, 2016 – Prince Rupert – Application Closes Feb 5

TUB/UICA – March 12 – 13, 2016 – Nanaimo – Application Closes March 4

TUB/UICA – April 2 – 3, 2016 – Courtenay – Application Closes March 24

Public Speaking – April 2, 2016 – Vancouver RO – Application Closes March 18

Local Officers Course – April 16 – 17, 2016 – To Be Determined – Application Closes Apr 1

Local Officers Course – April 16 – 17, 2016 – Abbotsford – Application Closes Apr 1

Grievance Handling – June 4 – 5, 2016 – Vancouver RO – Application Closes May 20
Health & Safety Activism – May 28 -29, 2016 – Prince George – Application Closes May 13

Education Co-Ordinator's Report:

Jenn updated about online courses that will be posted on the PSAC website www.psacunion.ca. There will be three tiers. Tier 1 is available now, Tier 2 will be available in the spring of 2016 and Tier 3 should be in the fall of 2016. Information was provided by Loren Crawford, PSAC staff in Ottawa early November at the PSAC National Human Rights Committee meeting.

Jenn suggested that there may be short courses that could be done during area council and other committee meetings and suggested that we look for something for the WFVAC AGM.

The CLC Winter School is approaching, in total will be 5 weeks starting January 17 – February 19th, 2016. She encouraged activists to look to their locals or committees to help fund them to take a course if interested in attending.

Jenn is a member of the Surrey David Suzuki Blue Dot Movement volunteer group and she suggested that a presentation by this group be considered at AGM or future meetings. Jenn will provide further information on the group and this movement.

Recent activity of this group:

- David Suzuki Blue Dot Movement Meeting, Surrey:

The Surrey Blue Dot Movement committee presented to the Surrey's Environmental Advisory Sustainability Committee and the Surrey Mayor and Surrey Council regarding a municipal declaration on environmental rights in June and July 2015 respectively. The campaign in Surrey has gained momentum since their June presentation. We know that municipal leaders pay attention when Blue Dot supporters show big numbers and community support - this has made all the difference in many other municipalities across the country. As a Blue Dot Movement committee member I see an opportunity for the other union members to get involved in community movements and respect the recently passed PSAC resolution to create respect for Canada's water.

A reminder that the PSAC Alliance Facilitator Network Training is coming up in January 2016. Registration is full, but there could still be cancellations if interested in attended. The Area Council and locals should think of ways where they can make use of the new graduates from this course. Jenn suggested that perhaps at locals meetings, committee meetings and area councils to start talking about how sessions such as brown bag sessions can be arranged at workplaces, etc

A reminder that when registering for all PSAC courses, conferences or conventions, to ensure that you self identify in all, one should not assume that this will carry over to the next time you register for another course.

VI. Political Action

a. Election Update

We defeated the Harper government and things are looking up with the new government. They are promising to rescind some of the legislation that negatively affected labour unions such as Bill C-377 and C-525.

Robert distributed an election questionnaire to obtain feedback on the effectiveness of the PSAC campaign that was launched for the past election. The responses to the questions were as follows:

Training

1. Did any members of your AC take part in the political action trainings held by PSAC BC? How many?
 - One: Jen Cheih Ho
2. How many AC members actually did work related to the federal election and what did they do
 - Phone banks
 - 2-3. 2 from Lists from PSAC BC. 1 volunteered on own with local NDP Candidate
 - Door to Door canvassing
 - 2 nights. 6 first nights. 3 the second night
 - 1 member did door to door with their local candidate
 - Other
 - 1 member put up signs for local NDP candidate
3. Did the training meet the needs of your AC?
 - Yes. 1 person attended.
4. Do you have any suggestions for improving the training?

- 1 member with daycare issues couldn't / didn't attend training but would have liked online / webinar training. She can't get to training often on wknds.

Materials

1. Did you use the materials which were produced by PSAC HQ / PSAC BC?

- Yes. Scripts for door to door and phone were used.

2. Was the material helpful?

- Scripts good

PSAC National Campaign

1. How would you rate the impact of the PSAC national “vote to stop the cuts” campaign in your area?

- Good. People at the park (general public) mentioned that they had seen them. Seemed to be successful at getting past the public service to the general public
- No one saw billboards but some mentioned seeing in social media

2. Do you have data to help you evaluate the impact of PSAC national advertising campaign (billboards, ads, etc.)? Did you see any of the campaign in your area?

- No and no. Anecdotally, just from a few mentions from friends, family and public, it seems that it got to them.

Other activities

1. What other activities were conducted by your Area Council in support of our federal election work?

- None.

Strategy

1. Do you believe that PSAC's overall strategy – regionally and nationally – was clear?

- Yes. Stop cuts. Defeat Conservatives.

2. Was direction received from PSAC BC clear and timely?

- Yes.

3. Were Election Plans approved in a timely manner?

- From PSAC: Don't know. PSAC BC Town Hall calls were good.
- From WFVAC: Started plans after election writ in summer. A bit late.

4. Were questions on the *Election Act* answered diligently?
 - Yes. Q&A was provided before questions came from members.
5. Do you have data that suggests your election work has had an impact in members' voting intention? If so, how do you come to that conclusion?
 - Data: No. Anecdotally it seemed very clear from talking to members at work and in election canvassing that members were already aware of issues and anti-Conservative.
6. What was the most significant election activity or action held in your area?
 - Phone and door to door canvassing.
7. Was the budget provided to your Area Council for election work appropriate?
 - Unsure how much received. Not sure if any spent. Canvassers reimbursed directly from PSAC BC. \$ wasn't problem. Needed more bodies to help with canvassing.
8. For a future federal election, what would your Area Council do differently should you have access to the same resources?
 - Start organizing earlier. Find ways to get more participation from AC folks.
 - "Funding didn't come until delegates at Nat Conv put the \$ forward. Do budgeting earlier."
9. Do you have any suggestions on how we could be more effective?
 - Nothing in addition to the above.

It was suggested that the AC be in meetings with the MPs of the Areas and arrange to meet with these elected individuals on a more regular basis.

b. December 6

December 6th is the 26th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre. It is the 5th annual candle light vigil for the National Day to Remember and Action to End Violence Against Women held at Holland Park.

BCFED is joining PSAC again this year for the second time in this event. . WFVAC has supported financially in the past. Jenn has requested that BCFED paid for the honorarium for the Elder to open and cloe event but to date, has not heard back. . In case there is no

coverage for the services of the Elder, it was requested if the AC could cover this expense. Otherwise, donation would be utilized for other expenses.

Krispy Kreme on Scott Road in Delta and Starbucks in Surrey Central Mall have generously donated refreshment.

Jenn moved, Michael seconded that that an amount not exceeding \$250 be used for the December 6th vigil if needed. Carried

The event will take place at Holland Park. Surrey RCMP will be sending two volunteers and the Surrey Firefighters from Fire Hall 2 will be there if they don't get called out for emergency rescues. They have been there every year.

Confirmed speakers at this time are MLA Surrey Whalley Bruce Ralston, MLA Surrey Green Timbers Sue Hammell and PSAC BC REVP, Bob Jackson. Mayor of Surrey has not confirmed at this point. An event will be created on the Facebook page and contact the Leader and The Now. Those present were provided with a poster to post in their workplaces.

c. NWDLC Report

Debrief on the Federal Election was the main topic of discussion. Some of the points raised were on the importance of ongoing lobbying and being active on the issues of the election. Reported by CLC representative at the NWDLC October meeting that in early 2016, there will be information and schedules coming about lobbying their MPs.

VII. Annual General Meeting and Area Council Meeting Dates 2016

Discussion took place on the challenges we had in arranging meetings this past year. Therefore it was recommended that we set up our meeting dates for the next year so individuals can plan to attend.

The first meeting of the year will be our Annual General Meeting.

January 18, 2016. Meeting at 5:30PM. Richard will book the ABC Restaurant on Fraser Hwy for this event. To ensure notification is sent, we will send out the official notification and then reminders as we get closer to the date. We will have Patrick Bragg do this.

The other meeting dates will be as follows:

Monday April 18, 2016
Monday September 19, 2016
Monday November 21, 2016

VIII. Other Business

a. CLC Winter School

Jenn is requesting \$500 to assist in attending course at the CLC Winter School. She will be looking at other avenues to get funding assistance. She has a number of interests however; the primary interest is in the course is the BC Federation of Labour Organizing. The course simulates conditions that participants would likely meet in organizing labour activities. Participants would work in groups. It also looks at working with diverse individuals which includes all equity groups.

If she is unable to get into this course then she will be choosing to attend an alternative. The alternates are:

Unions in the Community. Assists Labour activists to work in the community on their issues..

Parliamentary Procedure and Public Speaking. Deals with rules of order in parliament and public speaking covers how to speak persuasively.

Moved by Monique seconded by Michael to provide Jennifer with \$500 to assist in funding to register and attend one of the courses of her choice for the CLC Winter School. Carried.

b. Adopt a family for Christmas

A suggestion was brought forward for the WFVAC to sponsor a family in Surrey through the Christmas bureau. Discussion revolved around whether we should be providing donations based on suggestions from members of the Area Council or only if we are approached from such an organization. In addition, discussion surrounded around why the Surrey area rather than another area in the jurisdictional boundaries of this Area Council.

Jenn moved and Richard seconded that an amount not exceeding \$500 be allocated to adopt a family from the Christmas Bureau in Surrey. Carried.

It was requested that the family we sponsor be a single parent family.

c. Payment of meal.

Moved by Richard and seconded by Monique to pay the food bill to the Knight and Day Restaurant in the amount of \$111.00. Carried.

IX. Adjourn

Adjourn at 8:20 PM

Robert suggested that for the next agenda we start to plan and set up meetings with the MPs. Not that they come to us, but that we go to them.

Addendum to the Minutes

Background information on the David Suzuki Foundation Blue Dot Movement:

The movement for environmental rights is building

The idea of a right to a healthy environment is getting traction at Canada's highest political levels. Federal Opposition MP Linda Duncan recently introduced "[An Act to Establish a Canadian Environmental Bill of Rights](#)" in Parliament. If it's passed, our federal government will have a legal duty to protect Canadians' right to live in a healthy environment.

I'm travelling across Canada with the David Suzuki Foundation's [Blue Dot Tour](#) to encourage people to work for recognition of such a right — locally, regionally and nationally. At the local level, the idea of recognizing citizens' right to live in a healthy environment is already taking hold. Richmond and Vancouver, B.C., The Pas, Manitoba, and the Montreal borough of Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie all recently passed municipal declarations recognizing this basic right.

Our ultimate goal is to have the right to a healthy environment recognized in the Constitution's [Charter of Rights and Freedoms](#), and a federal environmental bill of rights is a logical precursor. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms itself was preceded by a federal statute, the [Bill of Rights](#), enacted under Prime Minister John Diefenbaker's Progressive Conservative government in 1960.

This isn't a partisan issue. It appeals to people across the political spectrum and has broad support among Canadians. An earlier attempt to pass a Canadian environmental bill of rights (also led by Linda Duncan) gained the support of MPs from various parties before its passage through Parliament was interrupted by the 2011 federal election. In France, conservative leader Jacques Chirac championed the idea of environmental rights during his presidency. After more than 70,000 French citizens attended public hearings, the Charter for the Environment was enacted in 2005 with support from all political parties.

I've seen so many positive changes in our legal systems and social safety net in my 78 years — including adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982. My family was incarcerated in the B.C. Interior during the Second World War, just for being of Japanese descent, even though we were born and raised in Canada. Like other people of colour, my parents didn't have the right to vote until 1948. First Nations people on reserves couldn't vote until 1960. And women weren't even considered "persons" under Canadian law until 1918, when they were given voting rights. Homosexuality was a crime punishable by prison until 1969! I'm convinced that legal recognition for environmental rights will be the next big change.

Progress is possible when enough people recognize its necessity and come together to make it happen. Protecting our country and planet, our health and the future of our children and grandchildren is absolutely necessary. We can't live and be well without clean air and water, nutritious food and the numerous services that diverse and vibrant natural environments provide.

Even in Canada, where our spectacular nature and abundant water are sources of pride, we can no longer take these necessities for granted. More than [1,000 drinking-water](#) advisories are in effect in Canada at any time, many of them in First Nations communities. More than half of us live in areas where air quality reaches dangerous levels of toxicity. And from [Grassy Narrows](#) and Sarnia's [Chemical Valley](#) in Ontario to Fort Chipewyan, Alberta, people are being poisoned because industrial interests and profits are prioritized over their right to live healthy lives.

It's not about hindering industry; it's about ensuring that companies operating in Canada, as well as our governments, maintain the highest standards and that human health and well-being are always the priority. Evidence shows strong environmental protection can benefit the economy by spurring innovation and competitiveness and reducing health-care costs. This is about giving all Canadians greater say in the democratic process and looking out for the long-term prosperity of Canada.

More than half the world's nations already recognize environmental rights. It's time for Canada to live up to its values and join this growing global movement.

There's no date yet for a vote on Bill C-634, but its introduction has started a conversation among politicians in

Ottawa. Let's hope people from across the political spectrum will recognize the importance of ensuring that all Canadians have the right to a healthy environment.

X. By David Suzuki with contributions from David Suzuki Foundation Senior Editor Ian Hanington.