



VIRRJA

Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association

*Advancing restorative justice on Vancouver Island, the
Sunshine Coast and all Gulf Islands*

General Meeting Minutes

April 2, 2024 11AM - 1 PM ZOOM

ATTENDEES (29)

Comox

Kristine Atkinson
Graeme Duffy
Dennis Evans

Community Circles

Richard Tarnoff (Pres)

RJ Sunshine Coast

Deanna Wrate
Ian Cochran

Jan Smalley (Board)

RJ Cowichan

Donna Schmirler
Raj Gill
Suzanne Anderson
Allen Peabody
Rosalie Sawrie
Brandy Gallagher

Alberni Valley
Ladysmith

Alex Glassey
Carmen Barclay
Jen Walker
Allan Jones

Arrowsmith/ Duncan

Breann Duchesne
Alyssa Noble

Saanich Peninsula

Sue Saunders (Secretary)

RJ Victoria
Nanaimo
Uclulet

Liz Cox
Gillian Lindquist
Kluane
Myles Morrison

Pender Island
Salt Spring Island
Powell River

Brook Parkin
Jessica Terazakis

Alert Bay

Siobhan Brown (Treasurer)

Molly Willie (Board)

Crown Counsel

John Laboissiere

Regrets:

Gail Jewsbury
Jan Slakov

1. Meeting opened at 10:05 am by Richard (President)
2. Introductions and Land acknowledgement by all attendees
3. Agenda approved
4. Financial Report: Siobhan provided a verbal report. The balance of our three accounts (General, Grant, Special) is \$6,985.34. Special Account balance is \$3500 and the remaining funds are available. Primary expense this month was Board Insurance (approx \$800) and income from Membership fees (approx \$450). VIRRJA has sufficient funds to conduct trainings and meeting expenses for the remainder of the year. The Civil Forfeiture Grant for 2024 is yet to be announced.
5. Committees:
 1. Membership: We welcome 2 new independent members and expect that all 19 programs will re-register (3 have yet to complete)
 2. Communication: Offered the first “Casual Collective” on Mar 5, hosted by Alex Glassey (Alberni Valley), topic: how to revitalize your program. Slide deck resources were shared. Next meeting is May 7 (10 AM), topic is Funding and hosted by Allen Peabody. Allen asks if any program has a funding source, please share with Allen as he is compiling a comprehensive list, (allenpeabody@outlook.com)
 3. Training : “Truth Trust Relationships” will be held on May 11, limited enrolment (20 max), in person, location is the Nanaimo Conference Centre from 11 Am - 3:30 PM. Limited enrolment will be in place for each program and registration will begin on May 1. “Save the Date” email will be sent in early April.

Special Presentation **John Laboissiere - Region Crown Counsel**

- BC Prosecution Services support alternative measures
- In the past, corrections referred to RJ, Issue was that the client streamed out of the system and then could not receive RJ support and no opportunity for accountability
- Now - a direct referral process, more streamlined approval process for RJ referrals
- Assistant Deputy Attorney General (ADAG) (top Provincial position)) can directly assign, and now no longer needs to sign or approval all RJ referrals
- John is the Head of the Region program. 5 Deputy Regions in BC manage their own RJ delivery (including assigning MOU)
- Relevant regions for VIRRJA are North, Central, South and Vancouver
- John will provide the contact information for each region.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) ensures all providers are capable of delivering their responsibilities, and the deliverables by Crown.
- MOU has a 3 year lifespan. Renew when required.
- Personnel are changing rapidly (retirements etc) at all levels, suggest keep your Counsel updated and current
- To request an MOU, send a letter to Deputy Region Crown with contact info and a reply will be sent outlining the criteria for approval
- An MOU does not come with funding (finding is a political decision: PSSG and Treasury Board))
- Accused needs to admit they committed the offence, make an admission to be involved with RJ process at any level

- Stay connected with Crown office and work on “unexpected” options to support all clients.

Deputy Regional Crown Counsel	Sub Region	Courthouses
Joel Gold	South Island	Victoria, Western Communities
<u>joel.gold@gov.bc.ca</u>		
Kimberly Henders Miller	Central Island	Duncan, Nanaimo, Port Alberni,
<u>kimberly.hendersmiller@gov.bc.ca</u>		
Debra Drissell	North Island	Campbell River, Courtenay, Port Hardy, Powell River
<u>debra.drissell@gov.bc.ca</u>		

DIALOGUE with Members:

- Keep Defence Counsel in the loop and a partner, very useful relationship, they can make requests to crown on behalf of their client and support the process in an RJ conference, they can often ask affected parties to advocate RJ option as clients are usually unaware of RJ option
- RJ cases can be covered under diversion with Legal Aid - check into this option
- Alert Bay is finding a disconnect between the Gladue mechanism and how it connect with Clients. Request request for clarification - still no answers.
- Gatekeeping is a factor - programs need to get out into their community to let all parties know about RJ and the effectiveness and benefits (DFO, Schools, Police, Crown, Defence, Legal Aid. Etc)
- Help Crown understand to open willingness to use RJ regardless of type of offence and history of offender
- Add the RJ process to the post - sentencing process - still very valuable for positive results
- Is there a list of agencies that acknowledge the RJ Process? (link offered provided) at end of minutes)
- Legal reference to use of RJ (Link provided by Allen P)

Meeting adjourned at 12:52 PM

LINKS provided by members during Dialogue:

Alternatives to Prosecution <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/law-crime-and-justice/criminal-justice/prosecution-service/crown-counsel-policy-manual/alt-1.pdf>

Restorative Justice and the Law (qathet)
<https://qathetcj.org/restorative-justice-and-the-law/>

Increase use of RJ - RCMP. <https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/change-the-rcmp/advance-reconciliation-indigenous-peoples/increase-use-restorative-justice?wbdisable=true>

Minutes submitted:
Sue Saunders, Secretary
April 4, 2024