



VIRRJA

Vancouver Island Region Restorative Justice Association

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

General Meeting MINUTES

Tuesday, April 11, 2023

10 AM - Noon

Via ZOOM

Attendees:

Richard Tarnoff
Siobhan Brown
Karen McKinnon
Brandy Gallagher
Myles Morrison
Jan Smalley
Sue Saunders
Molly Willie

Regrets:

Loraine Lee
Nicky Hadwell

1. Call to Order - Richard Tarnoff called the meeting to order at 10:07 AM
2. Land acknowledgment and Opening question
3. Approval of Minutes - waived
4. Approval of Agenda was moved by Jan Smalley and seconded by Siobhan. Carried
5. **Financial Report** - Siobhan Brown provided the Balance sheet to April 1, 2023
(included in the minutes)
 - Balance of the three accounts is \$9,949,99
 - Three separate accounts balances are:
 - General Account (for expenses) \$5081
 - Grant Account (for Strategic Plan expenses) \$1365
 - Special Account (for AGM Guest speakers) \$3500

Motion to accept the Financial statement moved by Jan Smalley and seconded by Richard. Carried

Committee Reports:

Communication - Sue Saunders

- Feedback has been gathered from the Post Conference survey, the Member survey (Jan 23)
- All feedback has been favourable from the members on the use of Facebook, emails and the website
- A Communications review was launched by the Board in Feb 2023, hired Kya Dalton to review our brand, messaging and use of technology
- From Kya's Review we will settle on a Brand package, update our website tabs, branding and content.
- Considering a members only portal on the website
- Board is utilizing a Google Drive to manage and store files, documents and reports
- Member Bulletin was sent to members - will monitor for usefulness

Membership - Sue Saunders

- VIRRJA has 20 members, 2 Independent practitioners and 18 member programs
- Membership renewal is complete, payment from 19 X \$25 = \$475
- One practitioner is a lifetime member and fees are waived
- Encourage all programs to offer their members to add their names to the VIRRJA email list
- Welcome Karen McKinnon from Comox and Kyle Nelson from Saanich as new program managers
- Etransfer, cheques were methods of payment. We are investigating payment by credit card.
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a) Education - Nicky Hadwell. Report not available

President Report - Richard provided a report on the state of RJ in the larger context.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT - APRIL 2023

These are interesting times for RJ in BC. There are ongoing frustrations and new opportunities. Since the start of covid 19, many programs, particularly smaller ones, have seen a decline in RCMP referrals.

There is also the ongoing struggle to secure sufficient funding. This leads to a reliance on grants, in which we are competing with each other and with other community based organizations. Lack of funding also makes it difficult to attract younger staff who need to receive remuneration.

At the same time, there is, in general, a growing awareness of the benefits of restorative practices and restorative approaches to harm. BC Prosecution Service has finalized their process for establishing MOUs with RJ programs.

The federal Prosecution Service is developing a process for referring cases that involve violation of federal laws, such as controlled substances, firearms and Fisheries offenses.

First Nations Health Authority wants to see restorative justice used for incidents of racism in the health system, particularly with the complaint process.

The BC First Nations Justice Council is committed to expanding the use of restorative justice in their work with First Nations and in the 15 Indigenous Justice Centres they are creating in BC.

The office of the Commissioner of the Human Rights Tribunal recently completed an inquiry on the rise of hate crimes during the covid 19 pandemic. Their report, " From Hate to Hope" is a comprehensive overview of the state of hate crimes in Canada.

Overall, police reported hate crimes, Canada wide, increased 72% from 2019-2021. BC is one of the provinces reporting the largest increase in hate crimes, 198 incidents from 2019-2020. Interestingly, race or ethnicity related incidents increased by 122%, while those related to religion and sexual orientation did not change substantially.

In their report, the Tribunal advocates strongly for the use of restorative justice for dealing with hate crimes. I believe some of our programs have already provided training and facilitated referrals for these types of cases.

One final note, you may have seen that the Vatican has recently disavowed their 500 year old doctrine of discovery. This doctrine formed the basis for the colonial governments to assert sovereignty in North America. While their statement will likely have no immediate effect on governance and the legal system in Canada, it will undoubtedly contribute to the continued recognition of Indigenous rights, and title and the question of Indigenous sovereignty. 6. New Business:

Strategic Plan Update - Siobhan and Nicky. Siobhan presented a slide summary to update us on the ongoing Strategic Plan Review.

- hired Theresa Kingston to facilitate
- Three months work, 12 participants (Board and three invitees)
- More robust Mission statement and Vision statement, including Values
- Goals are strong and ambitious - will require hard work
- Final meeting at end of April
- Report to approve in mid May
- Hopefully presented at our June General meeting

This session was recorded and will be shared with attendees.

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Member UPDATES and Feedback

Sue - SPRJ

- merged with Beacon Community Services
- Training in May on Trauma
- Usual number of cases

Siobhan - qathet

- Braking form overseeing organization as of April 1
- Preparing the new admin and tech support needed
- Received Federal funding for 3 year Youth Project
- 2 employees (Siobhan and Chelsea)
- Conduction an internal training program
- Run specialized weekend training and weekend refreshers
- Expanding partnerships, VIU campus nearby and preparing a course on RJ in the workplace
- Referrals from Community and Crown
- 4 cases came from request by victim
- Building capacity for chronic offenders

Jan - Sunshine Coast

- Working to keep up with technology
- Prepared modules for training (compassionate listening, near diversity, circle training,CJF,
- Most files are community driven
- Complex files (year long) will continue
- School files continue

Karen - Comox

- Crucial focus is volunteer engagement, use refreshers in person
- Education process offered
- Facilitate community conversations (un housed and business)
- Always. Focused on financial stability, will be asking for substantial increase
- Work on communication and referral materials
- Bruce Curtis retirement party on Thursday night

Myles - West Coast

- Cases from private , few from RCMP
- Training done on line
- CJF does the job it is meant to do
- Other options, (peacemaking etc) can be used when required
- E Division leadership is needed

Richard - Community Circles

- Their program is independent , the other receives the CAP grant
- Referrals from community , non from RCMP
- Investigating cases from motor vehicle accidents (Surrey model)
- Legal aid society possible source for referrals
- Funding has been tough

8. Adjournment: 12:10 PM

Next meeting: June 5, 2023

Minutes prepared by Sue Saunders, Secretary VIRRJA
April 14, 2023