



Vancouver Island Region  
Restorative Justice Association  
Advancing restorative justice on Vancouver Island, the  
Sunshine Coast and all Gulf Islands

**VIRRJA GENERAL MEETING MINUTES**

**16 August 2021**

**10.00 AM – 12 NOON with program networking 12 noon to 12.45 PM**

**Zoom Meeting**

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND OPENING ROUND

22 people in attendance representing 10 programs, one independent practitioner, RJABC, a native court worker from Port Hardy, the Jurisdiction Project Manager for Gwa'sala-Nakwaxdixw, Port Hardy, the two presenters: Mabel Peter, Native Court Worker Duncan and Leah Fontaine, Crown Counsel, Duncan and a journalist, Zoe, from the Goldstream Gazette. Apologies from Corporal Kara Donsanjh, Arlene Fehr, Caryl Wylie, Jane Osborne

Comox Valley Community Justice Centre: Bruce Curtis

Saanich Peninsula Restorative Justice: Sue Saunders, Andrea Safavi

gathet Community Justice: Jane Waterman, Siobhan Brown

Sunshine Coast RJ: Jan Smalley, Marg Penney

Campbell River RJ: Kristine Atkinson,

Community Circles RJ Ladysmith: Richard Tarnoff, Deanna Wrate

West Coast RJ: Myles Morrison

Salt Spring Island RJ: Darlene Gage

RJ Victoria: Jo-Ann Youmans, Nicky Hadwell

John Howard Victoria: Amanda MacPherson

Independent Practitioner: Gail Jewsbury

RJ Association of BC: Christianne Paras

Jurisdiction Project Manager for Gwa'sala-Nakwaxdixw, Port Hardy: Salla Sukow

Native Court Worker, Port Hardy: Lisa Hanusa

BUSINESS MEETING: was called to order at 10.10 AM

FINANCIAL AND MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Gail Jewsbury reported a balance of \$37,912 as at 30 June 2021. Since then \$550 has been spent from the Civil Forfeiture grant funds.

## SUBMISSION TO BC GOVERNMENT FINANCE COMMITTEE RE 2022 PROVINCIAL BUDGET

A copy of VIRJA's submission to the BC Government Finance committee was circulated with the agenda. It followed the overall framework of last year's submission and also included a section on Restorative Justice in the Era of Reconciliation, UNDRIP and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We asked for an increase in the CAP grant to \$10,000 over 5 years and a supplementary grant to programs dealing with complex cases. We are on the waiting list to give an oral presentation. Darlene thanked the committee for its hard work on the well thought out document.

### COMMITTEE REPORTS

#### Education Committee (Richard)

- Continues to arrange speakers for general meetings and the conference.
- Speaker for AGM 26 October 2021: Mitch Walker, Director of Gladue Services
- Annual Conference deferred until 26-27 February 2022. 2 days in person with ZOOM option. Topic: Mental health and addictions. Hoping to nail down location and other details for circulation before too long.

#### By-law Committee (Gail)

- Has submitted a report to the board for changes to the by-laws. There are a couple of amendments to be made. The final version will be submitted to the board for the September meeting and presented for approval at the AGM in October so that they can be filed with the BC Society Registry at the same time as the annual report submission.
- Also produced a policy manual. This is a more fluid document that can be changed with Board approval. Again the board suggested a few amendments before it is given to the membership.

#### Fundraising Committee (Bruce)

- As we have the \$30,000 Civil Forfeitures grant have not applied for other grants.
- Please notify VIRRJA if you hear of suitable funding sources

#### Communication Committee (Sue)

- The new website [www.virrja.ca](http://www.virrja.ca) has been launched. It includes resource materials, meeting minutes
- Please send feedback to [communications@virrja.ca](mailto:communications@virrja.ca)
- We thank Caryl Wylie for managing the old website and her crucial contributions to building the new one
- New logo will be finalized in the next month
- VIRRJA Facebook page is a private group. Once a member of the group you are encouraged to post to the page

### Indigenous Values and Diverse Communities Committee (Richard, Jan)

- Has not been active since 3 of the original 5 members have left.
- Information has been forwarded to the education committee for teachings
- Nicky Hadwell and Deanna Wrate volunteered to be on this committee

### Membership Committee (Jane)

- Have worked on a letter about the value of VIRJA and benefits of membership. This will be circulated with the agenda for the AGM
- Working on acknowledging honorary members

### NOMINATION SLATE FOR AGM AND CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The following slate was put forward:

- President 1 year term                      Richard Tarnoff, Community Circles Ladysmith
- Vice-President 2 year term              Amanda Macpherson, John Howard Victoria
- Secretary 2 year term                      Sue Saunders, Saanich Peninsula RJ
- Director-at-large 2 year term            Jan Smalley, Sunshine Coast RJ
- Director-at-large 1 year term            Siobhan Brown, qathet CJ
- Director-at-large 1 year term            Deanna Wrate, Community Circles Ladysmith

Bruce called for other nominations. There were none.

### GUEST SPEAKERS

#### ***Healing Circle/Healing Plan practices of First Nations Court***

Tth'utsimulwut (Mabel Peter), Native Court worker, Duncan and Leah Fontaine, Crown Counsel, Duncan

Mabel is a Cowichan Tribes member; with ancestors from the Snuneymuxw; Penelakut and Tsartlip First Nations. Mabel was born and raised in Duncan and has been the Native Court worker located in Duncan BC for the last 11 years. The overrepresentation of Aboriginal people within the Criminal Justice system was the driving factor to Mabel pursuing the job as Native Court worker. Mabel felt that she could echo the voices of her community members in the criminal justice system. It has been rewarding for Mabel to see clients change and make positive choices for their future. Mabel assisted in the development of two specialized courts in Duncan; Domestic Violence Court and First Nations Court. The Official Opening Celebration for First Nations Court was a grand event which included local Chiefs, Chief Judge Crabtree and the Minister of Justice and numerous other levels of Government from the area. Along with Leah

Fontaine and Judge Wood, she coordinated the most memorable moment of her current employment. Contact: [mpeter@nccabc.com](mailto:mpeter@nccabc.com) 1-855-221-5735 <http://nccabc.ca>

Leah Fontaine works for the BC Provincial Service as a Crown Counsel. Contact: [Leah.fontaine@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Leah.fontaine@gov.bc.ca) 1-250-732-2858

Mabel and Leah gave a very interesting overview of the 2 specialized courts in Duncan – Domestic Violence Court and First Nations Court. People are encouraged to attend the court although there are COVID limits on numbers at present. Contact Mabel or Leah for more information. There were many questions afterwards.

#### RJABC UPDATE from Christianne Paras

- Working to develop relationships with Crown Counsels. Holding a 2-part conversation: September 21<sup>st</sup> will be community dialogue and September 28<sup>th</sup> someone from Crown Counsel Office will discuss what is important for them to develop relations with RJ programs.
- Developing Foundational training that RJABC will offer free to members.

#### CLOSING ROUND

The meeting ended at 12 noon after a closing round.

#### PROGRAM SHARING AND NETWORKING.

This was an opportunity to update programs 'activities; discuss points of interest; get help and advice from other practitioners.

Bruce - Comox Valley Community Justice Centre Have developed a relationship with an Urban Indigenous Group and are now elders represent community in circles. Holding the 10<sup>th</sup> annual Campanola Lecture this year with speaker Terri-Lynn Williams-Davidson, Indigenous environmental lawyer, artist and musician. New initiative offering CFB Comox a pilot project to use RJ. Surprising number of self-referrals to program and municipal by-law referrals. Will be holding the community consultation portion of a draft policy of anti-racism for the college. Most insurance companies provide volunteer and directors liability insurance.

Kristine – Campbell River RJ Received Civil Forfeitures (CF) grant to hire an outreach worker. File load is up. Hired Jim Cooley to train 15 new facilitators. Island District RCMP have just sent out a memo to consider RJ first on files. Recommends checking in with local detachment.

Siobhan and Jane – qathet Community Justice Internal training manual almost complete. CAP reporting quite complicated. Reaching out to Crown Counsel. Have good relationship with our program and Tla'amin Justice. Going through a process of Strategic Planning over a number of months. Looking for strategies for scheduling cases.

Myles – West Coast RJ Have found Crown and Parole uncooperative. Has monthly zoom meeting with facilitators. Thinks the Native Court graduation ceremony a great idea.

Richard and Deanna – Community Circles Society Ladysmith Got CF grant to provide cultural awareness training online. Having peace-making circle training in the fall. Planning a RJ Café for online open discussion in the community

Jan and Marg - Sunshine Coast RJ Very busy with RCMP, Community and school referrals so resources stretched. Schedule cases 2 days a week, Tuesdays 3 – 9 pm and Sundays ensures space and laptops available. Have regular facilitators for those days. Seems to capture most activities. Question – is there a specific insurance company that VIRRJA or other programs use. Has a Canada Summer jobs grant and funding from Red Cross. Someone created a grant tracker and got a small grant to use for strategic planning. Question - looking at Board terms. Exploring charitable status.

Gail – Independent practitioner There are a lot more requirements to be a charity than just a non-profit society. Have to produce tax return and keep to activities registered. VIRRJA changed board terms so that 50% of board terms expire each year to provide some continuity. Abbotsford RJ had paid staff working with schools and funding from SD. This funding now cancelled.

Sue – Saanich Peninsula RJ Working on cases with Crown and with local First Nations. Worked with Alana Abrahamson's study learning more about First Nations justice and using RJ programs. Several Crown Counsels also involved in that group. Focusing on communication with partners and making more face to face connections. Training has to happen soon. Need to keep facilitators connected.