



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING TUESDAY, May 15, 2012

1. **LOCATION:** Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, BC
2. **CHAIRPERSON:** Terry Engler
3. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

MSC that the minutes of the April 17, 2012 Regular meeting be adopted.

4. **CREDENTIALS:**

The following credentials were received since the last VDLC meeting:(* = recredentialled, A = alternate)

BCTGM Local 468

Rob Dombrowski

CAW Local 2002

Luis Melendez

HEU – PHSA

Carol Tunney

TWU Local 63

Shea Dewar

USW Local 2009

Georgianna Bates

MSC to obligate/seat the delegate(s).

5. **GUEST SPEAKER(S):**

- a) **Genoa Raynier & Karin Peter: HEU Medical Transcriptionist**

Genoa Raynier and Karin Peter, Medical Transcriptionists from HEU, addressed the delegates regarding their campaign to prevent the planned contracting out of their work by the health authorities. Aside from the loss of unionized positions, they identified numerous reasons to oppose contracting out.

Among other concerns, these included:

- The loss of access to a whole network of patient information that is only available to direct hospital staff, and is routinely used to verify information in the dictation
- Contracted out MTs will work at home, leading to errors by distraction, loss of coworkers to check facts with, rushing through the work which will be paid by the minute of recorded dictation or by the line typed, and potential security concerns as the documents will be transmitted back and forth on the internet.

b) **Sister Janet Routledge: EI Referees**

Janet is a VDLC appointee to the Federal Board of Referees to hear appeals for EI claim denials. The current 3 person appeal boards are made up of one employer side and one union side referee in addition to a neutral chairperson. As of April 2013, the Federal Government is eliminating the Board of Referees across Canada and replacing the thousand or so referees with a super-tribunal responsible for appeals under a number of statutes. It is unclear how this is intended to work, but the expectation is that all appeals will be by telephone and workers will be less able to succeed in their appeals of unfair denials.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Joey Hartman reported on activities since the April 17th meeting.

Job Action and Bargaining Support

- **Teamsters Local 31 locked-out by Rocky Mountaineers** – The VDLC is asking Vancouver Park Board Commissioners to fine the company in addition to restitution costs for cutting down 7 boulevard cherry trees. Picketers had hung signs from the trees.

The City also installed a taxi zone on Cottrell Street at the request of cab companies. This forces Rocky Mountaineer managers to come out through the pickets to escort their passengers through the gate. Media stories are increasing about passengers requesting refunds after learning of the dispute, and the new Board President, John Furlong, is being named in the media. This attention may be responsible for the employer finally agreeing to bargaining dates in the next month.

Teamsters Local 31 were fined \$25,000, payable to the Vancouver Food Bank, for contempt of the injunction for incidents where picketers impeded traffic, yelled or glared at those crossing the line.

The VDLC is continuing to assist with support pickets Tuesday and Friday mornings from 5:30 am until 8:00 am when the trains depart.

- **COPE 378 and the TWU Pension Plan** - the dispute continues.

- **BCTF** – teachers voted 73% in favour of continued actions, but need another vote if the recommendation is to defy the ban on strike action. The current status includes withdrawal of volunteer activities and weekly Thursday afternoon rallies on high traffic corners.

Queen Alexandra School

The Vancouver Sun will run a story in the fall about the VDLC's 25 year partnership with Queen Alexandra Elementary School. Discussions are underway about setting up the store in the school with our donation. It will be called "The Wishing Tree".

April 28 Day of Mourning

Sister Hartman spoke at the ceremony at the New Westminster Quay. The deaths of two workers from the sawmill explosion in Prince George earlier in the week were clearly on everyone's minds.

VDLC Education

On May 12 & 13 Leo McGrady taught "An introduction to the BC Labour Code." A program of all Fall offerings will available in June. The labour law offerings will be titled the "Anita Yan Memorial Labour Law Series" in recognition of a young organizer from the Garment Workers who died of cancer and was an inspiration to Leo McGrady.

May Day

The May Day rally and march was held in collaboration with the BC Federation of Labour and Occupy Vancouver. Participants came and went through the course of the afternoon but about 300 people participated in some way.

Protein for People

Plans are moving forward for a community forum for Saturday, June 16th. Bonnie Hammond is coordinating this event for the VDLC. Affiliates are encouraged to participate.

MP Lobby - Retirement Security for All Canadians

The VDLC met with Conservative MP Wei Young on April 27 and will meet with MP Kerry-Lynne Findlay on May 24th to lobby for improvements to CPP and other retirement security measures.

2011/12 Financial Audit

The VDLC Executive met with auditor Lyle Brown from Culver & Co., approved the 2011 financial statements and re-appointed the auditor for 2012.

Presentations to Affiliates

Sister Hartman spoke at two regional conferences for HEU local leaders and encouraged all locals to affiliate to their labour council. She also participated in the CEP western region women's conference.

Political Engagement

The Sustainable Communities Initiative invites labour leaders and elected politicians from around Metro Vancouver to meet twice a year. The May meeting was attended by Joey Hartman and Paul Sihota from the VDLC. There was discussion around the proposed oil pipelines, and the investment of union pension money into P3s.

The VDLC is also hosting a wine and cheese open house between 5:30 and 8:30 pm on June 7th for local “progressive” members of council, school and parks boards to informally meet with VDLC executive members and delegates.

MSC to adopt the report.

7. CORRESPONDENCE:

a) The following donations were received since the last meeting of council:

<u>May Day 2012 (in order received)</u>	
IBEW Local 258	\$200.00
FPSE – VCC Faculty	\$200.00
Plumbers Local 170	\$200.00
CAW Local 3000	\$100.00
PSAC – BC	\$50.00
CAW Local	\$200.00
PSAC – Vancouver Regional	\$200.00
CAW Canada	\$200.00
TSSU	\$200.00
BC Ferry and Marine Workers Union	\$200.00
HSA	\$200.00
BCGEU	\$200.00
CEP Local 465	\$100.00
CUPW – Vancouver	\$200.00
VESTA	\$150.00
<u>Total</u>	<u>\$2,600.00</u>

MSC that the correspondence be received and filed with appreciation.

8. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

a) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Canadian Peace Alliance Declaration “Peace & Prosperity – Not War and Austerity”

BECAUSE under the Conservative Federal Government, military spending has reached its highest levels since World War II; and

BECAUSE real security is only possible when the people of the world can meet their basic needs and those are the things we should be funding; and

BECAUSE this Conservative government is expanding military bases around the world and entrenching a higher level of militarism into Canadian society; and

BECAUSE we, as workers, agree that this money must be reallocated to social and environmental programs, to protect jobs and pensions, preserve public health care and education, and create a green economy,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL support the Canadian Peace Alliance by signing the declaration for Peace & Prosperity – Not War & Austerity.

b) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Minimum Wage for Agricultural Workers – Eliminate Piece Rates

BECAUSE hand harvesting farmworkers who pick tree fruits, berries and certain vegetables are not entitled to the minimum wage under the Employment Standards Act of BC, but rather receive piece rate pay on the basis of volume or weight of the crops picked; and

BECAUSE the provincial government did not eliminate this exclusion or adjust the piece rate amount when the minimum wage was increased on November 1, 2011, claiming they were analysing the system; and

BECAUSE the provincial Minister of Labour subsequently announced on March 9, 2012 that there would be a freeze on any increases for hand harvesting piece rates for an indefinite period; and

BECAUSE the Liberal government has repeatedly bowed to pressure from the agricultural industry, and between 2001 and 2003 reduced overtime pay and daily minimums, and stripped farmworkers of important rights and benefits such as entitlement to statutory holiday pay,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL work with affiliates to take actions in support of achieving fair treatment for agricultural workers under the Employment Standards Act and other statutes; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL sign the petition circulated by the BC Employment Standards Coalition and write to the Minister of Labour to call for the elimination of the piece rate system in favour of hourly minimum wages for all workers.

c) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: MetroVancouver Alliance 2012 Membership Renewal

BECAUSE the VDLC is one of the founding members of MetroVancouver Alliance, which is a coalition of organizations representing labour, faith and community groups,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL renew its membership in the MetroVancouver Alliance for 2012 at a cost of \$500.00.

d) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Support for the Justice for Mohamed Harkat Committee

BECAUSE the Supreme Court of Canada declared in 2007 that Security Certificates are violation of Canadian Charter rights; and

BECAUSE Mohamed Harkat spent 43 months in Canadian prisons without charges, trial or recourse under the security certificate program, and is now living under severe bail restrictions and may be deported to Algeria,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL sign onto petitions and statements calling for abolition of the Canadian Security Certificate process, an immediate release of all detainees, a fair trial if charges are laid and an end to threats of deportation; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL donate \$100.00 to the Justice for Mohamed Harkat committee.

e) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: Lower Mainland Workforce Housing

BECAUSE Think City and SFU's School of Public Policy are collaborating on a study of options for affordable work force housing in Metro Vancouver; and

BECAUSE this study would quantify information about the social and environmental costs of long commutes between home and work; and

BECAUSE alternative models of affordable housing would benefit both employers and workers,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL encourage its affiliates to support the Think City Lower Mainland Housing Report and will donate \$100.00 towards the study.

f) *MS that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: UNITED WAY SYD THOMPSON AWARD

BECAUSE the VDLC sponsors the Syd Thompson Community Service Award each year to present at the annual United Way Labour Appreciation dinner, which will next be held on December 6, 2012,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL name Rachel Tutte, a longstanding and dedicated labour and community activist, VDLC delegate and co-chair of the BC Health Coalition, as the recipient of the 2012 Syd Thompson Community Service Award.

MSC that the motion be deferred for consideration to the June 2012 Regular Meeting.

g) *MSC that the following recommendation be adopted:*

SUBJECT: ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION IN QUEBEC

BECAUSE accessible education is a right, not a privilege; and

BECAUSE students in Québec are facing a \$1,625.00 increase in tuition fees that threatens their access to education; and

BECAUSE Québec students have launched a mass mobilization against this increase and the Charest Liberal provincial government, rallying some of the largest protests in Canadian history; and

BECAUSE Québec students have democratically voted on and organized an ongoing student strike; and

BECAUSE all the student associations have denounced and condemned violence against people as a tactic of struggle and called for the government to negotiate; and

BECAUSE the Québec government has allowed police violence against the students including gassing protestors, mass arrests, and even blinding one student in the eye with a sound bomb,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL express its solidarity and support with the Québec students and will send a letter of support expressing this decision to the CLASSE, FECQ and the FEUQ; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL send a letter to the Charest Liberal government calling for them to negotiate with the students to reach an agreement that will be acceptable to the students.

9. REPORT OF UNIONS:

a) BCGEU: Reported by Keith Stone

The last few months have been very busy for our local. Some things that we have been involved in include; the Day of Mourning, working for petitions for Libby Davies, and attending a meeting at Hastings Community Centre.

b) BCTF (VSTA): Reported by Sylvia Metzner

Many thanks to the VDLC Executive for supporting a grass roots public protest movement in Vancouver. The plan is to rally every Thursday at ten different locations across the city from May 10 through until June 14, 2012.

c) CAW Local 111: Reported by Agata Matyszcuk

CAW Local 111 is currently in bargaining. The bargaining committee is not divulging any details other than they are starting off with the language and planning to then go forward with monetary issues.

The women's committee is hosting a "Sister Solidarity" brunch on June 2, 2012. Tickets are \$25.00 each or \$200.00 for a table of 8. It's a catered brunch and will have Joey Hartman presenting "Bread and Roses: The History of Women in the Labour Movement" and also other guest speakers.

d) CUPE Local 391: Reported by Gary Jarvis

The CUPE BC Convention took place the last weekend in April. I joined other members from our local at the Day of Mourning event.

On May 6, 2012 our AGM took place and 219 people attended the meeting which is 28% of our membership. Alex Youngberg was re-elected as president and Gerard Batty was one of the two Vice-Presidents also elected.

Local 391 continues to make noise about the cuts to part-timers at the library. These cuts continue to impact library services. More information is available at www.cupe391.ca

e) CUPW: Reported by Louise Fruma Sloan

Last week the Supreme Court of Canada ordered a stay in proceedings in the final offer selection arbitration of the urban operations.

The union has challenged the appointment of final selection arbitrator Guy Dufort in the courts and were successful in getting a stay to stop him ruling on any issue related to the urban operations until this is heard in court. CUPW challenged Dufort because he has un

as a federal Conservative candidate and he acted for Canada Post in their protracted battle to prevent clerical and administrative workers from achieving pay equity.

CUPW is also bargaining for over 7000 rural and suburban mail carriers, 70% of which are women. These workers do the same work as letter carriers but have lower wages and fewer benefits. CUPW believes this is a fundamental issue of fairness.

Canada Post recently declared a financial loss for the first time in 17 years. They are trying to tell you that the post office is unsustainable but that is not true. The reasons for the loss include; locking out all of their employees for a number of days last year which meant the mail did not move, and finally being forced to pay equity payments.

Finally, CUPW just lost an arbitration challenging the firing of a worker who posted derogatory comments about her supervisor on Facebook. We argued she was just venting but the arbitrator agreed with the employer and upheld her discharge. This should be a warning to all to be careful what you display on social media – you never know who is watching.

f) HEU – North Shore Community: Reported by Graham O’Neill

On May 9, 2012 the LRB ordered a representation vote between BCNU and HEU for LPN’s . There will be a mail in ballot over the next few weeks for all LPN’s.

HEU held its Regional Convention, and I attended the Vancouver Coastal one. VDLC President Joey Hartman attended and it is suspected that we will see more involvement from other HEU Locals at the labour council.

MSC to adopt the reports of unions.

10. REPORT OF COMMITTEES:

1. Strike Solidarity Committee: - Reported by Stephen Von Sychowski

The BCTF will be having weekly rallies every Thursday at 4pm. Please contact Rachel at the VDLC for a list of locations. The committee is keeping a close eye on public sector bargaining. The committee recently purchased new picket signs and will be getting a banner.

2. Young Workers’ - Reported by Georgi Bates

The Young Workers Committee sponsored five committee members to participate in the Che Guevara Volunteer Brigade to Cuba.

3. Women's - Reported by Agnes Jackman

The next meeting will be May 28, 2012 at the VDLC. The Potluck for Women is July 9, 2012. Rachel will be sending out the poster soon. CAW Local 111 is celebrating sisterhood on June 2, 2012.

OTHER REPORTS

CLC – Reported by Ron Stipp

Ron Stipp reported about the MP Lobbying and noted that the Provincial Finance Minister agreed to meet in regards to a “modest” CPP increase.

Federal Bill 377 is making its way through Parliament. If implemented, this bill will require labour unions and organizations to disclose all aspects of their finances.

BC FORUM: Reported by Sandy Bauer

Recently at the Executive Board meeting Gerry Edwards resigned due to health reasons. Sister Diane Wood was acclaimed President. Dave Gill was acclaimed Treasurer. Miriam Olney was acclaimed Secretary. John Savage was elected Vice President and Bill Silvester remains as Vice President.

The AGM will be Wednesday, June 13, 2012 at 9:30 am at the Burnaby Fire Fighter’s Banquet Hall in Burnaby..

MSC to adopt the reports of Committees.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NIL

12. NEW BUSINESS: NIL

13. NOTICE OF MOTION: NIL

14. GOOD AND WELFARE:

- 50/50 proceeds will be a donation to victims of the recent mill explosion in Prince George

15. MEETING ADJOURNED: *MSC to adjourn at 9:15 pm*

16. NEXT MEETING: **Tuesday, June 19, 2012**, 7:30 pm, Maritime Labour Centre.