



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2012

1. **LOCATION:** Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph Street, Vancouver, BC

2. **CHAIRPERSON:** 1st Vice President Terry Engler

3. **ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

MSC that the minutes of the October 16, 2012 Regular meeting be adopted.

4. **CREDENTIALS:**

FPSE Local 15 - VCC FA

Frank Cosco *

Ingrid Kolsteren *

Virginia Adams *

Brenda Appleton (A) *

Settimo Sicoli (A) *

Marine & Shipbuilders Local 506

David Maidman

MSC to obligate/seat the delegates.

5. **GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Shane Simpson, NDP Labour Critic

In advance of the election the NDP's mandate needs to be clear. The full platform is being developed and will be shared during the campaign period, but Shane Simpson shared some main points. BC needs an economy based on good jobs, the cornerstone of which is skills training. They need to reduce inequality – meaning a solid poverty reduction strategy; BC has the greatest level of inequality of any province in Canada. This means strengthening the middle class which means strengthening the labour movement. They need to create opportunities to increase union density in the province. They are looking at restoring the workers' compensation system to a service that looks at rehabilitation (getting people back to work in a safe, dignified way), prevention (consequences for negligent employers and ensuring employers are doing everything they can to provide a safe workplace), and compensation. The BC Liberals have reduced employment standards by about 40%, shut down ½ of the offices, and removed the proactive nature of investigation and replaced it with a self-help model. The NDP will look at how to restore those services to ensure that those workers who aren't protected by their union and a collective agreement do have their fundamental rights protected. In 2001, there were approximately 16,000 temporary foreign workers in BC, now there are about 70,000. Temporary foreign workers are virtually indentured to a single employer and are the most vulnerable workers in the province. There is much debate around the temporary foreign worker policy but regardless of where one stands on it once those workers are here they deserve to be protected like any other worker in

BC. To ensure creation of good jobs, openness, and that labour has a place at the policy tables again the BC NDP needs to win the next election. The NDP currently leads in the polls but that will tighten up. What they need is for everyone to get involved in their local campaigns. Delegates were asked to encourage everyone in their locals to get involved so that we can change our province.

Michelle Laurie – Candidate BC Federation of Labour President

Michelle Laurie is President of IBEW 258 and her work has brought her around the province as a journey person electrician. She was an activist in her local for 20 years before being elected as President which she has been for 10 years. She also served as a Vice-President to the BC Fed for 5 years. Over the years she has become concerned with the BC Fed's perceived image as a voice of protest. She feels that labour is the voice of solutions and should be seen that way. Organized labour makes up 30% of BC's workforce - generally earning living wages; most with retirement savings and pension; and many being volunteers within our communities. Union workers are the social and economic backbone of our communities and as such we have an important, credible voice that needs to be heard as a voice of solutions to the problems facing this province. How do we change the perception? We need to have goals set by and agreed to by the whole labour movement. We need to talk with our members about the steps along the way to achieve those goals. Labour has had big campaigns but hasn't managed to engage the members. While fighting to increase minimum wage, 30,000 jobs were lost. When the members are engaged they know what is important to them, and why. Come elections they will go and talk to their political candidates because they want to, not because they've been told to. It is up to the labour movement to do research and policy development and present those solutions in a credible way. The BC Federation of Labour is a coalition and Sister Laurie said she has proven experience: past chair of BC Citizens for Public Power for 10 years; past chair of United Way of the Lower Mainland; and President of the United Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

Trevor Davies – Candidate BC Federation of Labour Secretary Treasurer

Trevor Davies is President of CUPE Local 374 (municipal workers of Greater Victoria) as well as a Vice President of CUPE BC. Brother Davies has been involved at the BC Federation of Labour for many years, first as a young worker on the minimum wage campaign, Grant's law, and many more. He feels many of the campaigns were missing focus on what they wanted to achieve in the long term. Something that he and Sister Laurie connected on was the desire to work with affiliates to develop a concrete plan, a target of what the labour movement wants to achieve. As Secretary Treasurer Brother Davies commits to full transparency to both the Executive and membership as a whole so that the best decisions can be made. His passion is for community building. The next generation is going to have a lower quality of life than their parents. This is something that the BC Fed can really take a step forward on by putting forward policies that can make things better. It is positive, researched reforms and vision that will inspire the next generation and will allow us to make the changes needed to improve the quality of life and make BC better.

Jim Sinclair – Candidate BC Federation of Labour President

Jim Sinclair, incumbent BC Federation of Labour President, stated that much of what he had learned about the labour movement he learned in the Maritime Labour Centre and on BC's waterfront. On the waterfront they never got anything they didn't fight for. This is a critical time for the labour movement it's been under siege for a decade. Labour has been fighting hard but it's been tough. One of the reasons the Liberals almost lost in 2005 is because Labour had spent 4 years fighting, mobilizing, organizing actions, and offering alternatives.

In preparation for the next election the Fed has been meeting and researching issues that they want to see in that mandate, including changes to the labour code. A labour code that makes it no longer a risk to a join a union; that protects workers from losing their job and collective agreement if someone buys the company you work for; sectoral bargaining so that small workplaces can start organizing; trades training is a fundamental. The BC Fed fought for the minimum wage increase and it resulted in 200,000 workers receiving a pay increase. It was a chance for the labour movement to talk about more than ourselves. The labour movement is about all workers and if we ignore the other 70% of workers it's a huge mistake. Polls show that people feel better about labour when it's fighting for everybody. Safety has been a huge campaign that is why we will get those changes in the next government. When the farm workers were killed on the highway, within 4 days the BC Fed had put forward 29 recommendations to change things. They won 21 and are still fighting for the rest. Renewal is happening young workers becoming active and those numbers are increasing. The Fed started a Young Workers' Committee, which is now fully staffed and next week the BC Fed Convention starts with a Young Workers' Conference where they expect over 100. At Camp Jubilee young workers make connections that they can continue to build on. When asked about running again, Sinclair asked himself first: Did he have the fire in his belly to keep doing it, to keep fighting, and to keep the vision for the future? He answered in the positive – there are a lot of things to do that he would like to be a part of, and feels he has the experience and vision to do. Secondly, does he have the support of the affiliates? He has the support of 24 unions to lead and unite the labour movement.

Irene Lanzinger – Candidate BC Federation of Labour Secretary Treasurer

Irene Lanzinger, incumbent BC Federation of Labour Secretary Treasurer, concurred that the labour movement needs action. Sister Lanzinger was a part of the leadership that took teachers out on a 2 week illegal strike. The BCTF regularly polls the public about teachers' right to strike and it almost always 50/50. They went out in October and after 2 weeks of being out illegally 61% of those polled felt teachers had the right to strike – the highest rate of support ever. People believed that labour was fighting for their kids and they were right. The BCTF was successful in part because Jim Sinclair mobilized unions in support. The BC Fed coordinates labour to support each other in good times and bad. We win the fights because we don't stand alone. We win because we are united, despite our differences. We coordinate campaigns, political action, public sector bargaining, and to win the next election. The labour movement also fights for social justice, because that is what unions are about – we exist to make things better for all people, not just the 30% that belong to unions. That is the kind of BC Fed that she wants and feels that they currently lead.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

Joey Hartman reported on VDLC activities since the October 16 meeting.

Job Action and Bargaining Support

There have been a number of picket lines and several settlements since the VDLC last met. This week there is job action at VCC, BCIT and SFU. Major settlements include COPE 378 at ICBC, CUPE 15 at the City of Vancouver, and the BCGEU and Government of BC. Health care is still in bargaining in the Facilities, Community Health and Community Social Services sectors. There was a 96% strike vote in Facilities (i.e. hospitals). UNITE HERE Local 40 is ready to take strike action at the Richmond Sheraton.

Trade Union Research Bureau

After 66 years of providing unions with research expertise, TURB is closing on December 31. David Fairey, Ted Byrne, and Susan Lockhart are retiring. The VDLC will co-host a wine and cheese reception to recognize their contributions on Tuesday, January 15.

CEP Convention

Sister Hartman attended the national CEP convention in Québec City where almost 1,000 delegates voted overwhelmingly in favour of the “new union project” to form a new labour organization with CAW. The founding convention will be held on the 2013 Labour Day weekend. The new union will represent about 325,000 workers and allow for individual membership by workers outside certified workplaces.

Employment Standards Act Coalition

Sister Hartman participated in a meeting with BC NDP labour critic Shane Simpson that was hosted by the ESA Coalition. The discussion focused on the importance of strengthening the Act and its enforcement to protect non-unionized workers.

Speaking Opportunities

Sister Hartman spoke on behalf of the VDLC at the following events:

- Nov 4 – PSAC Young Workers Conference – labour history presentation
- Nov 5 – Hospital Employees’ Union Convention – solidarity greetings
- Nov 14 – COPE Vancouver – meeting with the executive
- Nov 16 – COPE 378 Convention – solidarity greetings

MSC to adopt the report.

7. CORRESPONDENCE:

Circulated to delegates and is attached.

8. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

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

Subject: Donations and Spending Approvals

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL approve the following expenditures:

- Provincial NDP – donation of \$200.00
- For the VDLC to co-host a wine and cheese reception and award event to recognize the Trade Union Research Bureau’s closing after 66 years of operation – at a cost of \$300.00
- Labour History Walking Tour Booklet update – donation of \$300.00
- Purchase 1 copy of DVD “These were the Reasons – Stories of Union Organizing in BC” - \$25.00 plus tax and shipping
- Pacific Northwest Labour History Association (PNLHA) membership renewal - \$150.00

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

Subject: Greyhound Bus Campaign

BECAUSE Greyhound Bus Company has applied to the Passenger Transportation Board to cut 2.2 million miles, representing 25%, of bus services in British Columbia; and

BECAUSE Greyhound Bus employees who service these routes belong to CAW, ATU and COPE 378; and

BECAUSE the services would either be replaced with non-union companies or leave communities without any transportation service,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL write to the BC Passenger Transportation Board, with copies to Premier Christy Clark and the affected unions, to encourage the denial of the application from Greyhound Bus Company to cut 2.2 million miles of service from their British Columbian routes.

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

Subject: Get on Board Campaign

BECAUSE the UBC Alma Mater Society, which recently concluded negotiated a collective agreement for security staff with COPE 378, and initiated a “Get on Board” campaign; and

BECAUSE the campaign calls for sustainable and equitable funding for transit in the region, which is of significant interest to workers, students and others who rely on public transit; and

BECAUSE over 70 organizations, including several VDLC affiliated unions, have already signed on to the campaign,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL endorse and participate in the “Get on Board” campaign for sustainable and equitable funding for public transit in the Metro-Vancouver region.

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

Subject: Temporary Foreign Workers

BECAUSE recent media reports have brought unprecedented attention to the massive expansion of the use of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW), with approximately 70,000 in British Columbia alone, and to the exploitation of these workers; and

BECAUSE the federal government allows Canadian employers to use TFWs with minimal effort to fill jobs by Canadians, and further allows them to pay 15% less than the prevailing wage to non-TFWs, which drives down all wages and job opportunities; and

BECAUSE Canada needs immigration, not indentured temporary labour,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL reaffirm its position that the best way to fill jobs in Canada and eliminate exploitation of workers is with unionization, payment of living wages, skill development through apprenticeships and other training programs, and enforcement of work related legislation; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL continue to advocate for permanent immigration options over temporary foreign worker programs.

9. REPORT OF UNIONS: (in order reported)

a) HSA – Reported by Agnes Jackman

Health Science professionals have delivered a 90% vote to back their bargaining committee in negotiations with BC's health employers. The unions in this bargaining association are HSA, BCGEU, PEA, CUPE, and HEU. As stated by Reid Johnson, the President of HSA *"Talks at the table broke down October 31. After seven months, the government and health authorities have nothing to offer. They have not responded to a wage demand, they refuse to respond to repeated requests for costing on budget – saving measures, and they have not dealt with important issues that matter to patients and the modern health care team we all count on for our good health."* HSA Chief Negotiator Jeanne Meyers said the strike vote delivers a strong message to the government and health authorities that it's time to negotiate under the government imposed "cooperative gains" mandate, not hide behind that mandate.

HSA is also at the Community Sector bargaining table. This group is currently involved with job action, with rotating strikes. They too have not been heard by their employers and are not being treated fairly. Jeanne Meyers said, *"We've seen other employers able to work within the government mandate and reach agreements that provide fair and reasonable settlements in the public sector. Health science professionals and community health workers deserve no less."*

b) HEU – North Shore Community Local – Reported by Graham O'Neill

HEU held its convention the first week of November where main points included the election of a new president, Victor Elkins. Brother Elkins is a long-standing delegate to the VDLC from the Provincial Health Services Local. HEU also passed an all-encompassing resolution authorizing a review of HEUs structure in all areas and the potential result of resolutions or constitutional changes with will address any apparent issues. Lay-off of some 90 HEU members from George Derby is slated to take place by April 2013. George Derby is a seniors' residence for retired veterans. HEU and other Facilities Bargaining Association unions achieved a 96% strike vote as the government and the employers' association, HEABC, has refused to make a fair offer.

c) BCGEU Local 1203 – Reported by Matt Damario

BCGEU direct BC government workers voted 64% in favour of ratifying a 2 year agreement on November 3, 2012. Rotating job action continues for members in community social services. Their next action will be at DiverseCity Community Resources Society November 22, Newton Village area, Surrey. Support staff at BCIT have commenced job action this week and Douglas College, Coquitlam support staff are on strike November 21, 7:00 am to 7:00 pm at 1250 Pinetree Way. Community Health members have been on strike since November 7. Health Facilities voted 96% in favour of job action. Health sciences professionals voted 90% in favour of striking.

d) BC Teachers' Federation – VSTA – Reported Sylvia Metzner

BCTF engaged in a Year of Action leading up to opening of negotiations next spring. November's issue is Child Poverty. BC has the 2nd highest rate of child poverty in Canada. BCTF will be taking issues and reaffirming Vancouver City Council's commitment to a Poverty Reduction plan. BCTF asks that everyone sign their petition.

- e) BC Ferry and Marine Workers' Union – Reported by Nelson Vega
BC Ferry's is in the process of consultation and engagement on the BC Coastal Ferry Service. They need to save \$26 million from now to 2016. They lost more than \$16 million in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2012 and project to fall short \$56 million a year for the next 5 years. The province contributes \$79.5 million a year. The blame is being put on rising fuel and labour costs, declining ridership, and additional capital costs; they say they need \$2.5 billion in further capital.
- f) CUPW – Reported by Fruma Sloan
Across Canada, CUPW members are being asked to vote on a tentative agreement with Canada Post. Of course, they haven't been afforded the opportunity to free collective bargaining. The union is at a critical juncture in their existence. For the next number of weeks, CUPW will be voting. Workers in smaller communities who have seen many job losses will likely be voting yes; many workers in urban environments have been advocating for a "no vote". If members do not accept this tentative agreement with its rollbacks, then Harper's government will appoint an arbitrator to adjudicate the final selection offer. Either way, CUPW is facing the loss of many gains that their predecessors fought so hard for.
- g) CUPE Local 116 – Reported by Harry Easton
Brother Easton was pleased to announce 89% ratification of their new collective agreement. While they could not break 0-0-2+2 they did achieve other positive changes such as, 400 part-time workers getting on to the staff pension; increase to MSP paid by employer from 75% to 100%; ALP language; as well as almost 50 other positive changes to the collective agreement. Local 116 wishes to thank the other unions for their support. The fight is not over, there are still others on the line that need their support.
- h) CUPE Local 1936 – Reported by Michael Lanier
Strike actions continue across BC; one day actions in the Kootenays, Okanagan, Vancouver Island, and Lower Mainland. No bargaining dates are set at this time. CUPE Local 1936 will have striking members at the BC Fed Convention and will participate in any actions. The local is hopeful that with other sectors reaching settlements the government will see fit to allow the Community Social Services Bargaining Association to receive a fair and reasonable monetary proposal from the employers.
- i) CUPE Local 391 – Reported by Gary Jarvis (*written report submitted but not presented*)
Bargaining is ongoing – 2 days at the start and 3 days at the end of November. The union has been able to sign off on smaller articles in the contract, but no monetary items. The relationship with the employer remains positive, although this could change. They are working hard to maintain the positive. November 20 at the CUPE 391 general meeting they discussed changes to their constitution. The motions presented and voted on at the general meeting relate to the election process of the incoming executive.

MSC to adopt the reports of unions.

10. REPORT OF COMMITTEES: (in order reported)

- a) Education – Reported by Donalda Greenwell Baker
The VDLC is cosponsoring a number of events that are happening with the BC Fed. November 21 and 22 the VDLC is hosting the BC Fed's Political Action Training workshops at the Maritime Labour Centre. There are currently 175 people registered.

They will be holding more December 4 and 5 and again in January. The workshops are centred on volunteering in 2013. The overall theme is “We Vote for a Better BC”. There a number of things happening in conjunction as well. On November 25, at the BC Fed Convention Donalda with Kassandra Cordero will be holding a young workers’ workshop. November 29 at the Convention they will be holding a luncheon at which Shane Simpson will be speaking about what people can do to get involved in the election. The BC Fed has put together a complete package of information about the issues in this election and getting involved; they can be picked up from Donalda or at the Convention.

b) Women’s – Reported by Agnes Jackman

Next meeting is December 18 at the home of Magnolia Villalobos, a potluck dinner and meeting. IWD Dinner arrangements are coming along, 2 speakers are set – one representing older working women and the other, younger working women. The Women Transforming Cities Café last night was on confronting the affordable housing crisis.

c) Young Workers’ – Reported by Bonnie Hammond

Last meeting was well attended with 5 new members. Committee calendars are now available for \$20 each; they feature pictures of the Young Workers’ Committee in action. The committee is holding a raffle for a handmade wooden box as well. At the December 11 meeting at 6 pm, the committee will hold a Craft Fair in the lobby before the meeting.

MSC to adopt the reports of Committees.

OTHER REPORTS

a) CLC – Reported by Ron Stipp
See attached report

b) WeCan End Violence Against Women – Reported by Graham O’Neill

On December 6, 1 pm, at the Vancouver Art Gallery steps, there will be a memorial honouring women and girls who have been victims of violence. Everyone is invited to come out and drop off a pair of shoes that will be laid out in memorial. There is also an event being held at BC Women’s Hospital on December 5 from 11 am to 2 pm.

c) COPE – Reported by Matt Damaro

Sunday’s meeting focussed on labour in the city. They had 2 speakers from the Labour Council, Kassandra Cordero on the Employee Action Rights Network and non-unionized workers and Mike McGahey about city workers. They also had Michael McCarthy-Flynn speak on the Living Wage Campaign. The next meetings are slated to shape their policies for the upcoming municipal election in 2014.

MSC to adopt the Other Reports.

11. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: NIL

12. NEW BUSINESS: NIL

13. NOTICE OF MOTION: NIL

14. GOOD AND WELFARE:

- Moment of Silence held in recognition of Transgender National Day of Remembrance – a day to remember the many people who have lost their lives to violence due to transphobia.
- Young Workers' Conference Sunday, November 25 immediately before the BC Fed Convention. Any young worker delegates not yet registered for the conference still can and are encouraged to.
- Women's Night at Convention is Monday, November 26, 7:30 pm at the Hyatt Hotel with featured speaker Linda McQuaig – event is free and open to all.
- On December 6, a candlelight vigil is being held at 5:30 pm at Burnaby Civic Square which is right next to the Metrotown Hilton where the United Way Labour Appreciation Dinner is being held at 6:30 pm the same evening.
- CoDev Canada draw to win a seat with their 2013 delegation to Latin-America is on-going, tickets are available through Joey Hartman, Agnes Jackman, Kassandra Cordero, at the BC Fed Convention and through the CoDev office for about another 2 weeks
- November 22, Visions of Healthcare and Aboriginal Communities
- November 23, 10th Anniversary of StopWar – party at the WISE Hall, \$10-\$20 admission, lots of music, including performances by Solidarity Notes and Joey Keighley, unplugged
- November 27 in association with the BC Fed Convention – Migrant Worker Solidarity Night at the Hyatt Hotel
- David Rovics Concert, November 30 at the Rhizome Café
- Article in the Courier says that the old Shaughnessy Hospital is going to be torn down, despite the Liberal Government recently investing millions of dollars' worth of renovations into it – a fine example of Liberal financial mismanagement
- 50/50 proceeds to benefit the BC Fed Labour Community Christmas Dinner
- REMINDER the December meeting will be 1 week early and starting early as well – so come early to support the Young Workers' Craft & Bake Sale at 6 pm and then the Children's Choir at 7 pm. The meeting will be followed by a social to usher in the season.
- Delegates and guests are asked to bring donations towards the Queen Alexandra School Wishing Tree store – need new and gently used seasonal clothing and outerwear as well as non-perishable food items. The free community store, which will be housed in Queen Alexandra School, will have its grand opening on December 13 at 3:30 pm in the school gym to which everyone is invited.
- CAW Local 111 is holding an International Human Rights Day celebration on December 10 at their hall in New Westminster

15. MEETING ADJOURNED: *MSC to adjourn at 9:21 pm*

16. NEXT MEETING: [Tuesday, December 11, 2012](#), 7:00 pm, Maritime Labour Centre.

NOTE: **December meeting will be held on the 2nd Tuesday of the month and will be starting early to accommodate the Queen Alexandra School Children's Choir.**