



VANCOUVER and DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL



REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2021

- 1. LOCATION:** ZOOM Video Conference – 7:00PM

The VDLC acknowledges that this meeting is being held on the unceded traditional territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, and other First Nations people.

- 2. CHAIRPERSON:** 2nd Vice President Bal Shandhu

- 3. NOTICE OF VDLC POLICY ON HARASSMENT:** Circulated prior to meeting

- 4. ADOPTION OF MEETING AGENDA**

M/S/C that the agenda of the February 16, 2021 Regular meeting be adopted.

- 5. ADOPTION OF PREVIOUS MINUTES:**

M/S/C that the minutes of the January 19, 2021 Regular meeting be adopted.

- 6. CREDENTIALS:**

HEU-VGH

Christine Shovar

Judith Haughton

Not present; will be credentialed at March's Regular Meeting

- 7. OBLIGATION OF NEW DELEGATES:** Pledge of New Delegates

- 8. GUEST SPEAKERS:**

Kate Holowatiuk, Delivering Community Power Campaign

Thank you for having me. I am very privileged to be coming to you from the unceded territory of the Songhees people, also known as Victoria. I'm a postal worker. I am now working as the Delivering Community Power Campaign Coordinator for the Pacific Region which includes BC and the Yukon. Some of you may have heard of this campaign or even worked on this campaign before. Some of you may have even contacted your MP's and volunteered to send letters of support. I did send in a motion that hopefully the Vancouver and District Labour Council will approve to send another letter to the Minister of Public Procurement, Anita Anand, who's in charge of Canada Post.

Delivering Community Power has a few different aspects. One of them is keeping and creating good unionized jobs. Canada Post is changing in what we do. The business model is looking different in that people are sending less letters, but the parcel business is booming. To give you an example, in 2017, Canada Post had 67 days where they delivered a million

parcels. In 2020, we had 181 days where we delivered a million parcels. We are far busier than ever. This campaign is looking to expand the services that Canada Post offers. As people in our communities daily, we are sometimes the only contact that people have had. And during COVID we can be the only people that someone sees daily. In countries like France or Ireland, the postal system works in conjunction with the health care system. They have a program where families can opt in to do basic welfare checks, on people such as seniors with limited mobility, the postal workers relay that information back to health care workers where a follow up visit that might not otherwise be available.

This campaign is also addressing the biggest threat to humanity and the environment, which is climate change, we own the biggest delivery fleet and more retail outlets than Tim Horton's. There are 20,000 delivery vehicles. We are putting on pressure to have Canada Post to transition that fleet to zero emission vehicles. Also, to install charging stations at all of the retail outlets, and to connect this system from coast to coast. We would like them to retrofit the existing buildings to have them be lead certified. Any new buildings would have to meet these standards as well.

Another aspect, and not so much in our urban centers, but rural, around 60 out of 700 communities have access to broadband internet. Our retail outlets could be a place where people would have access to the internet. I get asked this a lot and this is "How are we going to pay for this?" That's where the branch of public postal banking comes in. There are 62 countries in the world that currently have a public postal bank and rather than the big banks making billions of dollars in profit, we would like to take a little piece of that pie and the profits could be redirected back to fund some of these public services.

Something else is happening right. We've got two contracts, we have our urban and rural contacts that are both set to expire in the next year. Right now we are writing resolutions to bring to our bargaining committee. We are bringing resolutions that speak to delivering community power and we want them in our contract. We're demanding that the government, and in essence, Canada Post does addresses these items.

I'd like to thank you all for your support. We see a lot of you on our picket lines and we rely on the support of our labour allies so thank you very much. We're hoping for a negotiated contract and not being legislated back to work.

Bea Bruske, Team Unite CLC

Thank you to all of you to giving us some time to introduce ourselves. It's myself, Lily Chang and Siobhan Vipond. We are running for the leadership positions of the CLC. Now that we have a date set for the CLC Convention we are in the process of introducing ourselves to labour councils, affiliates, and the federations of labour. My name is Bea Bruske and I work with UFCW Local 832 in Manitoba. We are 20,000 member local and I've been an activist since the age of 18. I started by walking a picket line for 4 months when Superstore put us out on strike. That led me down the road to becoming a youth activist and changed my course of studies to labour studies. I was very fortunate in being hired at UFCW Local 832 right out of university and I spent 10 years as a servicing rep going into different workplaces. I spent those 10 years going into various workplaces to enforce collective agreements dealing with workplace safety and health issues.

I spent the next 10 years bargaining collective agreements in those same workplaces. Since 2012, I've been the full-time Secretary Treasurer and I'm involved in major bargaining with our major employers that across Canada. I'm a very active participant in our provincial NDP. I've been serving on the NDP executive in Manitoba for a number of years. I've had 3 different terms on the Manitoba Federation of Labour as Executive VP and I've served 3 terms on the Manitoba Labour Board as an employee representative.

I'm very fortunate to be running with 2 very dynamic women who make up Team Unite. We have 3 over-arching pillars that we want to focus on with regards to our campaign. We want to make sure that we build unity and solidarity amongst the affiliates, labour councils and federations of labour in the labour movement. We are all under attack in various different provinces. Unfortunately, we have a Tory government that is passing horrible labour legislation that we are having to fight back against and we're having to mobilize our labour councils and our federation here to fight back. Worker engagement is hugely importance with us and also building our national relationship with the NDP and making sure that when we elect NDP governments that they are following through on their promises and commitments to those who helped them get elected.

Lily Chang – CUPE Local 79

Good Evening Sisters and Brothers. My name is Lily Chang. I'm a full-time unit officer for CUPE Local 79 representing about 22,000 members working for the City of Toronto, Bridgepoint Health and Toronto Community Housing. Thank you for this opportunity to tell you a bit about myself and why I'm running for CLC Secretary-Treasurer.

My involvement with the labour movement began when I took a job at Seneca College as an Admissions Officer. I was a member of CUPE Local 561 and I wasn't particular connected with my union. This all changed when I applied for a new job and I was denied the promotion even though I was a qualified senior applicant. Many of us get involved in union activities because of unfairness towards ourselves or someone else. I went to HR expected support and answers. It turned out that they were to support management. It was suggested that I take my position to the union so I took it to the union. This is where I learned about grievances and the important role that the union played in defending and advancing workers' rights. Throughout the grievance process the union provided me with support and I found that my idea of fairness and union involvement went hand in hand, so I became a shop steward.

Following this, I was looking for a change in career. I took a job with the City of Toronto and I was a case worker. This work involved connecting families with important public services. I found out shortly after I was hired that myself and my co-workers were being paid about \$10,000 less than our provincial counterparts. This highlighted a huge wage gap. My female dominated bargaining unit representing social services, children services and long-term care felt that we were being neglected by union leadership, which was mostly comprised of members from a different bargaining unit, representing male dominated hard services. So I became a shop steward, set up a meeting, made a lot of noise and before long the employer convened a labour management committee. Our union implemented a social services committee giving us a voice in the decision making process both with in the workplace and the union. I'm proud to say that both of these structures are still in use today.

In 1998, the City of Toronto went through amalgamation. This brought forward a representation vote as well as wage gaps and pay equity problems for our members. Following a strike for our first contract I was asked to sit on a wage harmonization committee and this work brought me onto the CUPE Local 79 Executive. I was first elected as treasurer in 2005 and served in that role for 13 years. I also sit on the executive board of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council and have served as a labour rep on the board of trustees for the United Way of Greater Toronto. I'd like to mention that I'm the proud mother of 2 and my children have always been part of my activism and one of the reasons why I fight so hard. I'm really excited to be one of a team of three, with Bea Bruske for President and Siobhan Vipond for Executive VP. One of the issues we'd like to address, once elected to the CLC executive, is getting its financial house in order. We have to be honest and accept that the CLC is facing some serious financial challenges. I've managed an annual budget of 14 million which is comparable in size to that of the CLC's. The skills that I built over my 13 years as treasurer were invaluable. I've grown my expertise in project management, property management, human resources and procurement and all of these skills and experiences will boost my capacity as CLC Secretary Treasurer. Thank you again for your time today and the opportunity to share my story.

Siobhan Vipond

Thank you so much for making space in your meeting for us. I'm calling in from Edmonton which is Treaty 6 Territory and I am from IATSE, which is the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage, Employees and Motion Picture Technicians. I am a technician which worked both in film and stage and the arts. I'm currently the Secretary Treasurer at the Alberta Federation of Labour. It seems a theme; I'm very happy to be running with Bea and Lily. We all just happen to have strong secretary treasurer backgrounds. I think that gives us the pragmatic approach to see what we want to see laid out which is really about unity.

For me, my activism was really important in a field that is not always recognized as workers. My activism grew with the realization how limited what we could do at the table through grievances or bargaining because of the rules that we had to work under. So I became more active and was elected almost 8 years ago to the Alberta Federation of Labour and I've been there ever since. I'm very excited to be working with Bea and Lily on this vision and working towards leading the CLC as we work together, especially at this time as COVID has done, which has highlighted the gaps we now see in our society. It's not that they have grown or didn't exist, it's just that they were not highlighted or we did not pay enough attention to them. I think that this is not highlighted in the equity for workers and the type of work we show respect to and maybe the over respect given to ownership rather the people doing the work. We see this in retail, healthcare. We're also seeing some huge gaps in our privately delivered health care. Unfortunately, we here are on the leading edge of how much private health care and how much conservative ideas and the taking away of rights, be it workers' rights or health and safety rights, and it's a real unfortunate position to be in. We're also not unique, this is something that has spread across the country by many governments; thankfully not yours. We look to you for inspiration during these times when some of these actions are being taken. Thank you so much for making the space and time as we wanted to introduce ourselves. I'm running with Bea and Lily because our vision is the CLC can be the power that it is, which is, all of you and all of us together standing up so that all workers can have a better living.

9. EDUCATIONAL: Nil

10. PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

President Stephen von Sychowski reported on activities since the January 2021 meeting.

Political Action

Our Political Action Committee is in the process of its next round of meetings with the various progressive forces in the City of Vancouver. Late last month we met with representatives of Vision Vancouver. We had not been able to arrange a meeting with them in our previous round of meetings last Fall, and therefore wanted to meet with first. Next, I am working on arranging a meeting with Mayor Stewart's team. We will also meet with COPE, OneCity, and the Greens.

I have been working with CUPE 1004 and a number of Park Board Commissioners and City Councillors to ensure that maintenance of a new rooftop park at Oakridge is not contracted out.

I attended an E-Rally in support of pharmacare last month. There is a big push currently to ensure that Bill C-213: An Act to Enact the Pharmacare Act is passed. It will be debated for the second time, and voted on for the first time, later in February. I have sent a letter of support to MP Peter Julian, who brought forward the Private Members Bill. We have also been asking people to sign the NDP and CLC petitions and to send a letter to their MP.

Labour Education

Our Labour Education courses for the first half of 2021 are filling up fast. Several are already full, and others are going well. There is still room available particularly in the later Spring courses, so please continue to promote. We have hosted two courses so-far: Steward Level 1 & Level 2. It appears likely that we will need to re-offer these courses later in the year as they filled up and there has been additional interest expressed in them.

The WELLS Zoom 101 & 102 courses also filled up and went very well. These were free courses, paid for by WELLS. Over half of the participants were VDLC facilitators, and other included committee activists, and allies from community organizations.

Day of Mourning

Plans are underway for a virtual Day of Mourning ceremony once again this year. The ceremony will include impact speakers as well as speakers from WCB, VDLC, BCFED, and the BC Business Council. Promotional materials will be released shortly both digitally and physically.

YVR Joint Union Committee

Our YVR Joint Union Committee continues to meet to discuss and collaborate on issues of common concern to affiliates at the airport. Most of these are of course COVID-related at present, particularly around the protection of jobs.

We have secured quarterly meetings with new YVR CEO Tamara Vrooman, and new VP of Human Resources, Richard Beed.

DTES Joint Union Committee

The DTES Joint Union Committee continues to meet monthly and discuss and address issues of concern to affiliates representing Community Health and Community Social Service workers in that neighbourhood.

The Committee has secured quarterly meetings with Attorney General David Eby, and will bring in other participants as appropriate. Our next meeting will focus on housing and will include representatives from BC Housing, as well as MLA Melanie Mark.

CLC Winter School

2nd VP Nick Aubichon, and I, attended the Labour Council leader's session at Winter School this year, which was held virtually.

T-Shirts

Our t-shirt order has been placed. We did not get as many orders as last time, but still had a respectable order to put in.

United Way

Several United Way's are currently undergoing an amalgamation process. I am the labour representation on the amalgamation committee, as those of you who are returning from last term will recall. A meeting was held recently with Labour Council leaders to brief them on the process. A further meeting will take place soon, which will provide additional information and offer an opportunity for dialogue. There will also be similar meetings held with affiliate leaders.

Events Attended / Dates of Note

- January 20 – United Way, Community Investment & Relations Committee
- January 20 – Worker Education and Labour Learning Society – Zoom 101 training
- January 21 – Worker Education and Labour Learning Society, Directors meeting
- January 21 – Meeting with Attorney General David Eby and DTES Joint Union Committee
- January 25 – Political Action Committee meeting with Vision Vancouver
- January 25 – Columbia Institute webinar, Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion
- January 26 – United Way Joint Board Integration Committee
- January 26 – Worker Education and Labour Learning Society, Zoom 102 training
- January 26 – Labour Council leaders meeting re: United Way
- January 28 – Pharmacare E-Rally
- January 29 – Day of Mourning planning meeting
- January 30 – Steward Level 2, facilitating
- February 2 – Meeting with Councillor Swanson / CUPE 1004 re: Oakridge development
- February 3 – Worker Education and Labour Learning Society, Directors meeting
- February 4 – YVR Joint Union Committee
- February 8-9 – Canadian Labour Congress Winter School – Labour Council Officers Session
- February 8 – BCFED Chairs of Standing Committees meeting
- February 9 – Climate Action Roundtable planning meeting
- February 10 – United Way Labour Committee of the Board
- February 10 – BCFED All-Committees meeting

February 11 – Political Action Committee
February 11 – Executive Board
February 16 – BCFED meeting re: Community Social Action Committee
February 16 – Regular Meeting

M/S/C to adopt President's report.

11. TREASURER'S REPORT:

Treasurer Stefan Nielsen reported on financials since the January 2021 meeting.

M/S/C to adopt the Treasurer's Report.

12. CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS REPORT:

Ron Stipp reported on the Canadian Labour Congress since the January 2021 meeting.

I'll start by addressing the COVID situation. I suspect we won't be out of this until the summer or fall so we'll be continuing by zoom for the future. I don't think we'll be out of this for a while yet.

Federal Election: We have a few interesting possibilities. We were expecting a federal budget in February which we now know is not going to happen. Budget dates are always a fixed date on a Tuesday. March 23 or April 13 are possible budget dates. So what does this mean? There is a parliamentary break during this period. Once a budget has been introduced on one of these dates there will be budget implementation which will happen. There are also a few conventions during this time. Both the Liberal and NDP Federal conventions are on April 8. There will be no call before this; Conservatives are in March. It could be an April call for an election in June. The other thing that is new is that this election will be longer than the last. It can go up to 50 days; this could be due to Covid, advance polling and mail-in ballots. The election in Newfoundland has been a disaster. They cancelled the election 2 days before the election. It is now totally mail in ballot and I believe their time is sometime in early March to get your ballots in. If vaccines go into the fall, the government will be defeated by the opposition.

Winter School was very successful. We'll be extending some courses over the next few months and doing more webinars. The VDLC has a great program. We're hoping we'll have winter school next year at Harrison but nothing is for certain with covid.

The other major thing is the preparation for municipal elections. We've asked for mid-term reports from the labour councils. We're about a year or more out from a municipal election, so we'll be working towards that in the next while.

CLC Convention from June 16 to 18. You'll be seeing this any day now. There will be no new resolutions at this convention. Only emergency resolutions. There will be a big election. It's a busy few months.

M/S/C to adopt the Canadian Labour Congress Report.

13. CORRESPONDENCE: Circulated prior to the meeting.

M/S/C that the correspondence be received and filed for the information of the delegates.

14. EXECUTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS:

a) *M/S/C that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Paid Sick Days

BECAUSE eleven months into a global pandemic that has killed thousands, no government in Canada has legislated adequate, employer-paid sick days; and

BECAUSE the Canada Recovery Sickness Benefit is temporary, inaccessible and not of use for the crucial first few days of an illness; and

BECAUSE had paid sick day legislation been in place before the global pandemic, lives would have been saved because infection rates would have been reduced; and

BECAUSE the lack of legislated paid sick days has especially hurt Black, Indigenous, workers of colour and women workers who are over-represented in frontline jobs, with low pay, few benefits, and without the ability to work from home,

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL support the call for a minimum of ten (10) permanent, paid sick days for all workers and additional days during public health outbreaks; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL FURTHER endorse the following principles. Paid sick leave should be:

- Universal: Available to all workers regardless of workplace size, work status or FTE, type of work, or immigration status. Legislated, with no exemptions.
- Paid: Fully paid to ensure workers are not financially penalized for following public health advice.
- Adequate: At least ten (10) paid sick days provided on a permanent basis, with additional paid sick days as required during public health emergencies.
- Permanent: Available during the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond.
- Accessible: No barriers to access. Prohibit employers from requiring sick notes; ensure no disruption of income or unnecessary applications; and provide sufficiently flexible leave that reflects the reality of workers' lives, healthcare needs, and caregiving responsibilities; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL FURTHER oppose further public subsidies for corporations like Amazon, Walmart, and Loblaw's that are profiting from the pandemic and who should be implementing employer-paid sick days and raising wages; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL FURTHER lobby provincial and federal government representatives to introduce and pass paid sick days legislation; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL FINALLY encourage members to be involved in campaign for paid sick days.

b) *M/S/C that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: HEU – Make it Public Campaign

BECAUSE private contractors in BC's hospitals profit by paying low wages and benefits for the essential work of cleaning and providing food; and

BECAUSE the BCNDP election platform promised to "bring these valuable workers back into the public service"; and

BECAUSE the government is now limiting that promise to "where possible and appropriate", opening the way to long-term contracts with companies; and

BECAUSE it would be a profound injustice to allow companies to continue super-exploiting hospital workers; and

BECAUSE HEU's Make It Public campaign demands that the government live up to its promise; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL call on the BC government to live up to their promise to bring housekeeping and dietary workers "back into the public service"; and

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL endorse and call on affiliates to join HEU's Make It Public campaign.

c) *M/S/C that the following recommendation be adopted:*

Subject: Research Assistants at Simon Fraser University

BECAUSE Simon Fraser University (SFU) has delayed the process of bargaining for recently unionized Research Assistants and Grant Employees (RA's) for over 14 months, so over a thousand RA's are still bearing healthcare expenses rather than receiving employer-paid coverage that all other SFU employees receive. The Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) is asking for the VDLC to support our campaign to demand that SFU pay for RA Healthcare Now. We have also started a petition.

THE VANCOUVER AND DISTRICT LABOUR COUNCIL WILL call on Simon Fraser University Administrators to immediately:

1. Recognize all RA's as workers, including those whose work overlaps with their studies;
2. Provide healthcare and dental benefits for all RA's, including group MSP enrollment for the International Student Health Fee;

3. Reimburse the International Student Health Fee for all RA's, backdated to September 1, 2020, to provide immediate relief;
4. Begin bargaining with TSSU for a first collective agreement for RA's.

15. REPORT OF UNIONS: Submitted in writing in order to be included on meeting minutes.

Masoud Aminzavvar, Chairperson, BCGEU Local 803, Community Health Services

We are getting ready for the BCGEU Convention, that includes electing our delegates and to pass our resolutions in our upcoming meeting next week.

The BCGEU Convention is on June 9 to June 12, this convention will be virtual and in person depending on PHO order in April 2021.

Local 803, despite the pandemic will be conducting its M2M and will be in touch with members in VCH and Fraser Health and other areas.

The new copy of the CBA is here and Local 803 has already started the distribution of the collective agreement among members.

Our monthly local meeting has been held through zoom and we will continue until we would be able to have an in person meeting.

We have two vacant positions for Member at Large, there will be an election for these positions. The notices have gone out at the beginning of February.

M/S/C to adopt the report of unions.

16. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES: Nil

OTHER REPORTS: Nil

M/S/C to adopt reports of committees

17. REPORTS OF LABOUR COUNCIL APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES:

Agnes Jackman, BC FORUM

BC FORUM continues to post a host of information to its website www.bcfocus.ca. We also continue to support various petitions and requests for action and send out to our Board, Regional Representatives, Affiliates Liaisons as well as our allies, affiliations and coalition partners where relevant. As well, we continue to participate in Zoom meetings and webinars.

BC FORUM will be producing its Spring ADVOCATE for distribution at the end of February. All issues of the ADVOCATE are available for viewing on our website www.bcfocus.ca.

BC FORUM provided comments to the Experts Panel in response to the "What We Heard" report which was an interim report of the Canada/British Columbia Expert Panel on the Future of Housing Supply and Affordability. This response can be found on our website.

BC FORUM's submission re. The Federal Pre-budget Consultation will be posted to our website on the Action webpage with a link from our homepage.

There are several municipal by-elections happening in February and BC FORUM works with the CLC to communicate out with our members in the areas of the candidates that have been endorsed by the Labour Councils.

BC FORUM is represented on the CLC Pacific Region working group and our president, Diane Wood, attends these meetings where preparation for the federal election, when it is called, is a standing agenda item for reports and discussions.

In December, the United Nations declared the Decade of Healthy Aging. BC FORUM is working with other organizations who are calling for a new United Nations Convention on the Rights of Older Persons.

We have noted that the Federal Minister of seniors has received a supplementary mandate letter which lists her responsibilities over and above accelerating steps to achieve a national universal pharmacare program (note the omission of public). She is to work with the Minister of Health to set new standards for long-term care so that seniors get the best support possible and to work with the Minister of Health to take additional action to help seniors age in place and to stay in their homes longer.

18. UNFINISHED BUSINESS: Nil

19. ELECTION AND INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS:

Open nominations for one trustee position - closed

20. NEW BUSINESS: Nil

21. NOTICE OF MOTION: Nil

22. GOOD AND WELFARE:

Russ St. Eloi – Suggestion for Ziggy Mangat of ILWU Local 400 regarding deaths of two members.

Peter Marcus – One of the organizers for the farmer's movement, Sharm Gill, passed away recently. Anne Feeney as well recently passed away from COVID.

Moment of silence

23. MEETING ADJOURNED: M/S/C to adjourn at 8:59 pm.

24. NEXT MEETING: **TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2021** at 7:00 pm
Zoom Video Conference.
Please visit website for event listings and more – www.vdlc.ca