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**MINUTES OF THE YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL  
SERVICES COUNCIL MEETING  
WHITEHORSE  
March 3 & 4, 2006**

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MEETING**

Windsor Boardroom of Edgewater Hotel

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**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Colleen Wirth – Chair  
Glenis Allen – Co-chair  
David Ravensdale  
Iris Cormier  
Phil Dyke  
Margaret Titus  
James Allen (Friday only)

**REGRETS:** Shirley Laverdure  
Rosemary Rowlands  
Hon. Brad Cathers, Minister of H&SS

**SECRETARIAT:** Amar Dhillon

**ALSO PRESENT:** Jeanette McCrie, Coordinator, Primary program, Dept. of  
Education  
Sharon Jacobs, Consultant, First Nation Education. Dept. of  
Education  
Ed Schultz, Co-Chair, Education Act Review  
Kip Veale, Seniors Services Unit, Dept. of H&SS  
Jan Horton, Coordinator, PHCTF  
Daisy Lemphers, A/Director of Policy, Planning and  
Evaluation.  
Brian Kitchen, Director of Policy, Planning and Program  
Development, H&SS  
Ross Findlater, Co-Chair, Anti-Poverty Coalition  
Melissa Craig, Anti-Poverty Coalition  
George Green, Anti-Poverty Coalition  
Marny Ryder, Chair, Hospital Corporation Board

The Yukon Health and Social Services Council held its fourth meeting of 2005-06 on March 3 & 4, 2006. The meeting commenced at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, March 3, 2006 and was called to order at 9:05 a.m.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Whereas, the current Social Services Act & Regulations discourage social assistance recipients to subsidize their income to get out of poverty;

The Council recommends that the Social Services Act & Regulations be reviewed and amended in a manner that encourages and supports the recipients to move out of poverty and on to self-reliance.

## **FRIDAY, MARCH 3, 2006**

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Chair extended Minister Cather's regrets as he was called to attend a Provincial/Territorial Ministers meeting with the new federal Minister.

She also announced that Shirley Laverdure is unable to attend the meeting and that James Allen is unable to attend the meeting on Saturday due to a conflict.

## **REVIEW OF AGENDA:**

Chair reviewed the agenda and following item was added under the Council Business:

- New Horizon Seniors' Program

Following changes were made to the presentations:

- Updates on PHCTF & Palliative Care will be presented at 11:00
- Pandemic Planning will be presented at 2:30

**Motion:** Moved by David Ravensdale, seconded by Glenis Allen to accept the agenda with above-noted amendments – carried.

## **REVIEW OF MINUTES:**

**Motion:** Moved by David Ravensdale and seconded by Glenis to accept the minutes as presented – carried.

## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES : ACTIVITIES UPDATE:**

[Brian Kitchen, Director of Policy, Planning and Program Development]

Brian extended Minister Cathers' regrets. The Minister was called to a meeting with the new federal minister.

Due to the change in government at the federal level and change in Minister in Yukon, most activities are on hold right now, hence not much of an update.

*Child Care Funding:* All provinces signed bilateral agreements in principle. Early Learning and Child Care agreements were signed only by three provinces – Quebec, Ontario and Manitoba. Due to the issue of base funding, none of the territories had signed the agreement. The Prime Minister has announced that the funding will only be provided this year and the next through a trust fund and will be replaced with their own program.

According to its platform promise, the new Conservative government will provide \$100/month for each child under the age of six. No details are available right now regarding tax break for child care operators as an incentive to create spaces.

*Health Care Funding:* Prior to federal election, a number of commitments were made which were included in a supplementary budget. One of these items is Territorial Access Funding for the three territories which was approved for the next five years through a special warrant.

Reduction of wait times is a platform promise but no details are available. Alberta's proposal to allow physicians to work in private and public sector will also require a response from the federal government.

*Federal Agenda:* Given that this is a minority government, some compromises will be forced, although do not know which ones. Government has strong platform which includes:

- Accountability
- Wait times reduction
- Child Care
- Crime Prevention
- Fiscal imbalance – less federal intrusion and more provincial powers

*Anti-Poverty:* Government of Yukon provided funding to Anti-Poverty Coalition to get low-income people together to develop a sustainable support network.

*Territorial Access Fund:* This \$4.0 million-per-year fund will be administered jointly by three territories to support projects in the territories. This is a very unique arrangement between federal and territorial governments. A staff position located in the Yukon will administer the fund for the three territories, reporting to all three northern Assistant Deputy Ministers.

*Health Professions:* Regulations for the physiotherapists are complete now and work will commence on laboratory technicians and psychiatric nurses. Occupational therapists are also interested in being regulated.

*Information Sharing:* Corrections Canada is looking to have information sharing arrangements regarding outstanding warrants. This will allow screening of names of people with outstanding warrants who are accessing government services.

*Revenue Canada:* Revenue Canada is searching the possibility of putting in place on-line income verification with client's permission, and to establish some process or agreement in place, although it will be dated information.

*Program & Service Transfer Agreements:* As a follow-up to Self-Government agreements, social assistance agreements have been put in place. First Nations want to move forward and take on alcohol and drug services. Work on details will commence.

*Children's Act Review Project:* All public consultations on policy have now occurred and a contribution agreement has been put in place between CYFN and YTG to continue policy work.

*Social Assistance:* Department is looking at final decision on compensation issues – among these is how to treat residential school compensation payments.

*Federal Legislative Changes:* Yukon was to do housekeeping changes to its legislation on same sex marriage but now it has been put on hold as new Prime Minister has promised a free vote on this issue.

## **PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRANSITION FUND (PHCTF) & PALLIATIVE CARE PROJECT:**

[Jan Horton, Coordinator of PHCTF]

*PHCTF:* Jan advised that most PHCTF initiatives are entering final stages. We are looking at long-term sustainability for a number of projects such as a Nurse Information Line, Palliative Care, Healthy Living/Health Promotion and others, perhaps through Territorial Access Funding, when approved.

Negotiations are under way to finalize contract for Insured Health Services client registry system which will be the foundation for future Electronic Health Records.

A Pan-Territorial initiative will produce a video/DVD to assist health care and social services providers with orientation on how to work effectively with First Nation people in northern communities.

*Palliative Care:* Steering Committee looked at best practices across other jurisdictions and how to improve the services in Yukon. Numerous consultation sessions and meetings were held with stakeholders and Yukoners, throughout the territory. The following items were identified as important components for the program:

- Access
- Coordination

- Support
- Education

Good groundwork was set and the draft report is undergoing review and approval process currently within the department before it is forwarded for political approval.

A final report on PHCTF activities has been prepared and will be released shortly.

**SERVICES FOR THE SENIORS & ADULT PROTECTION:**

[Kip Veale, Adult Protection Coordinator, Seniors Services Unit]

*Services for the Senior* : Kip distributed following documents for Council’s information regarding services to seniors and adult protection:

- Service Provider’s Guide to Adult Protection in the Yukon – Supporting Adults Who are Vulnerable to Abuse & Neglect
- Services for Seniors : Guide to Government of Canada Services for Seniors & their families
- Reference Sheet : Adult Abuse & Neglect Assessment & Intervention
- R. v. Peterson – Judgment of Oct. 20, 2005

In Yukon, the Seniors Services Unit works with adults and provides informal support systems. The four staff members work with people in the way the clients wish, i.e., how they want to be served and what they need.

*Adult Protection*: Kip noted that this is a cutting-edge legislation developed on extensive research of existing policies across the country. Adult Protection and Decision Making Act is an Omnibus Bill with three schedules:

- A) Adult Protection & Decision-Making Act
- B) Care Consent Act
- C) Public Guardian and Trustee Act

Under the Act, there are four parts which have been developed by balancing health, well-being, responsibility to protect from harm, simple, effective, efficient process on one hand and oversights of safeguards in Charter of Rights, Human Rights and due process on the other.

This is based on following principles:

- Adults presumed capable
- Most effective, least intrusive support
- Right to live in manner of choice as long as people do not harm others and are capable of making decision
- Guardianship is the last resort
- Values, beliefs, wishes and cultural norms and traditions should be respected
- Communication does not reflect capability

Purpose of Adult Protection is to:

- Offer support and assistance to vulnerable adults
- Protect person(s) who report abuse
- Ability to collect relevant information to properly assess adult's situation
- Emergency assistance
- Legal tools to protect the most vulnerable adults who are unable to get assistance for themselves, i.e., Access Orders and Adult Protection Orders

Kip outlined what constitutes an abuse, neglect, self-neglect, indicators of abuse/neglect and barriers to getting help. She also talked about tools for risk assessment and collaborative work among agencies to serve better. Which agency will provide initial intervention will be dictated by the type of help required, for instance, if it is medical emergency then an ambulance will be called.

Council expressed its appreciation for the immense amount of work done on this and consideration given to every detail and possibility which may arise.

### **PANDEMIC PLANNING**

[Brian Kitchen, Director of Policy, Planning and Program Development, H&SS]

Brian distributed a hard copy of the Power Point presentation and went through it in detail while answering questions from the Council members.

The Contingency Plan is built on the core emergency plan and identifies and addresses unique circumstances of a specific type of event.

Contingency plans for health and social services include: Airport Disaster Plan, Communicable Disease Plan, Chemical/Biological/Radiological/ Nuclear (CBRN) Plan, 2007 Canada Winter Games Plan, and Power Outage.

The Department has had a Pandemic Plan since 2001, however, events such as SARS, West Nile virus, Avian Flu, etc. have resulted in changes and updating on the information. The Department of H&SS has established a Working Group to develop communicable disease contingency plan that will address specifics related to a pandemic event.

Annual (seasonal) Flu is a contagious respiratory illness in humans caused by influenza viruses that occurs every year. An influenza pandemic occurs globally when a novel influenza A virus causes serious human illness and spreads easily from person to person. Avian (bird) Flu is an infection caused by avian influenza viruses, which occurs naturally among wild birds but can cause illness in domestic poultry.

Brian provided information on 1918 Spanish Flu, 1957 Asian Flu, and 1968 Hong Kong Flu. Impact of the next pandemic depends on many factors such as virulence of the

strain, affected age groups, gross attack rate, complication rates, speed of spread from country to country, our level of preparedness, and effectiveness of the response.

Pandemic Planning in Canada commenced in 1988 when a draft plan was developed. In 2002, FPT Pandemic Influenza Committee was organized in 2002 and in 2004, a Canadian Plan was released which outlines key strategies to deal with the pandemic. Roles of all levels of governments have been charted out in planning.

### **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION : UPDATES**

[Jeanette McCrie, Coordinator of Primary Program]

[Sharon Jacobs, Consultant, First Nation Education]

[Daisy Lamphers, A/Director of Policy & Planning]

[Ed Schultz, CYFN Co-Chair, Education Reform]

[Shehnaz Ali, YG Policy Analyst, Education Reform]

*Reading Program:* Series of seven titles of story books have been developed to encourage reading in Grade One students and focus on sustaining culture through generations. . These stories are Yukon relevant and were developed in collaboration with First Nations. Jeanette and Sharon worked on story lines, focused on seniors, elders, etc. to reflect Yukon's culture. The books portray contemporary situations. The books have also been translated into French. Sets have been placed in every school and are being widely used.

A Working Group of teachers and First Nation elders was established to help identify stories. The same group will also help develop teachers' guides. Consultations are under way to develop similar books for higher grades.

A set of these books was circulated to the members of the Council to view. Also, ordering information on contractor, Eaglecrest Books.

*Education Reform:* Ed stated that the Education Reform is important to all Yukoners. First Nations are emerging as governments and per self-government agreements, may at some point wish to exercise their rights to draw down services. Education Reform Team's job is to look at the public education system and make recommendations so that it may be reformed to better meet the needs of all Yukoners.

Methodology is to engage public, to bring forward the work of last 20 years, i.e., numerous reports done over the years and emphasize what is relevant today, to go over recommendations from the last Education Act review, collate the information into public discussion documents that examine areas such as governance, administration, personnel issues and curriculum.

The Team meets on Monday morning to share stream of information and works on consensus-basis. It tries to be apolitical and avoid any such perception as well. It reports to the Executive Committee – made up of Chair of Chief's Committee on Education and the Minister of Education and a representative of the Liard First Nation - quarterly to



identify any issues requiring attention. Carmacks is not fully participating and KDFN is not participating at this time and we respect their wishes.

Pre-consultations, particularly with the First Nations communities were held to confirm the parameters of this project and to determine how each community wished to be consulted. Each First Nation community participated in the pre-consultation except for KDFN and Carmacks who declined. Every effort is being made to include everyone willing to participate and provide input in this process, via in-person, internet, phone, individual meetings, etc.

Previous Education Act review gathered about 7200 comments from the public of which a large number, about 80%, were not specifically related to changes to the Education Act. The Team has been reviewing and condensing these comments into themes as well as examining the common denominators in order to identify root issues from the statements.

Currently, the Team is working on approval of papers in the following three areas:

1. Governance (how the system may be governed to be more inclusive)
2. Administration (looking at an administrative structure necessary to support a governance structure)
3. Aboriginal Languages Paper (recommendations for immediate action)

These papers are in early approval stages, but once complete and sanctioned by Executive Committee, these will be taken to full public consultation. Once these papers are endorsed, they will be put into a report.

Education Review Team's office is located at room 300 in Elijah Smith Building. Members of the Council were encouraged to drop in to discuss any ideas.

*Literacy Action Committee:* Encourages people to apply for funding for projects that support literacy for young and adults.

### **ANTI-POVERTY COALITION: UPDATE**

[Ross Findlater, Co-Chair]

[George Green, Member]

[Melissa Craig, Co-Chair]

Following introductions, presenters noted that they will talk about following three items:

#### *1) Women in Poverty*

Melissa distributed a Yukon-based research paper "Monthly Budget for a Mother and One Child" that listed costs of food, rent (2 bedrooms), electric/heat, telephone, transportation and laundry – a total of \$1603/month. Therefore, at the proposed minimum

wage of \$8.25, a person would take home \$1105.12/month, which is \$498.10 less than the estimation in the research paper.

Allowances for the shelter, standard benefits, transportation (after six months), laundry (after six months), electric/heat up to winter maximum adds up to approximately \$1124/month after deducting child maintenance and child tax benefit.

This approximate annual income of \$13,488 is \$4,529 less than the national LICO (Low Income Cut Off) of \$18,017.

The researched estimate does not include many routine expenses a family would incur, such as: school needs for the child, emergencies, childcare/babysitting, birthday/Christmas, etc. Being poor limits ones choices and is not simply a matter of bad budgeting. Living in poverty increases vulnerability to violence and abuse, as poverty traps women and limits choices. Child poverty is a social problem that is connected to women's poverty.

Also, Government of Yukon needs to prevent the potential "claw back" of Federal Conservative Childcare Plan of \$1200/year/child for social assistance recipients.

## *2) Focus Groups*

Two years ago, Minister Jenkins met with the Anti-Poverty Coalition (APC) to discuss needs of the working poor. Following these discussion, APC sent a proposal to the Minister who provided funding to hold the Focus Groups for the people living in poverty where they were provided hot lunch and \$50 as honoraria for attending the meetings. None of the Focus Group was interested in poverty line and wanted to talk about the real life issues. Surprisingly, they had low expectations.

A concern was expressed that Social Services Act gives tremendous power to the Director and this needs to be amended.

Mary House is going broke due to growing demand of food. Neither Mary House nor Salvation Army are food banks and current reduction from both is an issue to be addressed by the territory.

## *3) Homelessness*

The Phase two of federal homelessness program extended for another year. Two organizations need funding are FASSY and Salvation Army.

Joint low-cost house (federal/territorial) is not really affordable as these houses are being sold at \$180,000 so not exactly low-cost housing per se.

#### 4) *Anti-Poverty Strategy*

APC did not hear from the Sub-Committee of the Council and was quite disappointed. The Chair advised that the previous Minister advised the Council that he was dealing directly with the APC and its issues.

Council was given one-page of quotes from *Poor-bashing: The Politics of Exclusion*.

APC meets every month on a third Thursday at 5:00 p.m. at 1st and Strickland St. and invited Council members to attend when they can.

#### **WHITEHORSE GENERAL HOSPITAL : UPDATE**

[Marny Ryder, Chair of the Hospital Board]

Mrs. Ryder updated the Council on following hospital's initiatives:

**Fundraising:** It is 13 years since the new hospital was built and most of its equipment is failing – average life span for the medical equipment is five years. Hence, a foundation – Under the Wing - was established to raise funds, as well, as to give ownership of the institution to the people. Hospital does receive generous donations from the Yukoners but these donations are committed, such as Run for the Mum.

People do not like to go out of territory and the hospital is trying to meet priorities identified. For example, MRI is number one on the list and mammogram machine needs to be replaced. The numbers are not there to make Hemodialysis economically viable so it is not high on the list.

Hospital is aware of the shortage of technicians to operate the equipment so this is another consideration when acquiring new equipment.

**Emergency:** Over the past year, there has been an increase of 30% in usage and it keeps growing. The area is too small and will require a lot of resources to meet the growing demand. The Hospital recently put a triage nurse in the emergency which is putting hospital in a deficit situation. Hospital would like to see 24/7 walk-in clinic in Whitehorse and is pro-nurse practitioner practice.

**Specialists:** Currently, 9 to 10 knee surgeries are being performed in Yukon. The hospital is looking into getting a second orthopedic surgeon. Cataract surgery is also available in Yukon. The hospital keeps a close check on wait lists and these are looking much better than the past.

**Thomson Center:** \$1.5 Million is required to bring the building to meet various building codes and request for funding has been made to the YTG. Siding has been finished but other aspects such as fire retardant, earthquake proofing, etc. need to be addressed in order to meet various codes.

Currently, at the north end of the building programs such as physiotherapy, Red Cross' Medical Equipment Loan Services, and Hospice are housed.

**Hospital's Concerns:** The lack of appointments to the Board – they developed an information package to help with the appointments, emergency nurse, escalating costs of drugs, patient/staff safety, funding for Outreach Van Coordinator; role of the hospital in Canada Winter Games and how it will cope, and privacy and electronic records.

Comparing to United Kingdom and New Zealand, Canada is not doing well with patient safety. Hospital is working with the Workers' Compensation Board to train staff in self-defense and color coding patient bracelets for the staff to quickly identify, for example, if a dementia patient is roaming around.

### **COUNCIL BUSINESS:**

#### *Discussion of Presentations:*

**H&SS Activities - update:** Council expressed concern with the \$1200/month/per child is not enough for the quality child care. It would like to receive an update on Children's Act Review Project progress during its next meeting.

**PHCTF/Palliative Care:** Accepted as information.

**Services to the Seniors/Adult Protection:** Adult Protection project was immense and is well done. Education in recognizing signs of abuse is important. Information was well presented, incidents were good examples, and content was substantial and appropriate.

Council noted that the 7% seniors' abuse was quite high statistically.

**Department of Education:** Council loved the books, particularly the Yukon ones. Members feel that the reading is very important, so excellent endeavor. Language delay is common amongst individuals with FASD, Council suggested that the Department to address this in the future.

Council accepted Education Act Review as information and looks forward to receiving the papers when completed.

**Anti-Poverty Coalition (APC):** Need to look at what is keeping people in poverty – root reasons for why people are on social assistance. Council's sub-committee will meet to discuss related issues and how to proceed.

Council was disappointed to note that it was misinformed with regards to lack of progress on Anti-Poverty Strategy.

Council decided to write a letter to the Minister of H&SS requesting that proposed \$1200/year child care funds from new federal government not be considered income for the social assistance recipients.

The monthly budget for a mother and a child which includes only food, rent, electric/heat, phone, laundry, and transportation comes to \$1603.22 per APC's research. Based on minimum wage of \$8.25/hour, take home salary is approximately \$1105.12/month which is \$498.10 less than APC's under estimated budget for a mother and a child that does not include any personal needs such as clothing, diapers, etc. According to this information, poverty in Yukon is escalating.

Council also feels that there is a demonstrated need for housing for the low income families.

**Whitehorse General Hospital:** Accepted as information.

Council is interested in statistics on people using emergency services relating to alcohol and drug abuse. Broad spectrum of issues were covered relating to the hospital, and Council would like to invite the Chair of WGH Board for updates including statistics on emergency services.

**Meeting dates for the 2006-2007 and 2007 – 2008:** Motion moved by Iris Cormier and seconded by Phil Dyke to accept the proposed dates – listed below - for the Council meetings:

2006-2007

June 2 & 3, 2006

Sept 8 & 9

Dec. 1 & 2

Mar. 2 & 3, 2007

2007-2008

June 1 & 2, 2007

Sept 7 & 8

Nov. 30 & Dec. 1

Feb. 29 & Mar. 1, 2008

Motion Carried.

**June Retreat:** Council's next meeting is scheduled for June 2 & 3<sup>rd</sup>. Council discussed and asked Secretariat to explore and arrange one-day retreat in Haines Junction for the Council, preferably on Saturday.

Among other possible agenda items, Council will have a briefing on alcohol and drug treatment center by James Allen, H&SS Updates by Brian Kitchen, Transition to Just Society by David Ravensdale and discussion of 2006-2008 Action Plan for the Council.

**Action Plan 2006-2008:** Co-Chairs will go over the existing action plan and present a draft for discussion at the next meeting.

**Forum Planning:** Due to change in Minister the planning was put on hold. This item will be discussed with the new Minister.

**New Horizon Seniors' Program:** Federal government is providing five year funding for this initiative and the Chair of the Council sits on the Group that reviews/assesses funding proposals based on an established criteria. Maximum \$20,000 per proposal is allowed. The idea is to involve seniors in the community. The Communities come up with ideas as to how to involve seniors and submit proposals based on their unique needs. Federal government will be increasing the funding for the next two years.

Meeting adjourned.