
**MINUTES OF THE YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES COUNCIL MEETING
WHITEHORSE
September 9 & 10, 2005**

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MEETING**

Windsor Boardroom of Edgewater Hotel
September 9 & 10, 2005

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colleen Wirth – Chair
Glenis Allen – Co-chair
David Ravensdale
Iris Cormier
Dorothy John
Shirley Laverdure
Phil Dyke

REGRETS: Margaret Titus
Rosemary Rowlands
James Allen

SECRETARIAT: Amar Dhillon

ALSO PRESENT: Jan Horton, Coordinator, PHCTF
Anne Westcott, Co-Chair, Children's Act Review Project
Ann MacDonald, Director of Policy, Planning and
Evaluation.
Brian Kitchen, Director of Policy, Planning and Evaluation
Sharon Hickey, Co-Chair, Corrections Consultation
Brenda Jackson, Policy Analyst, Council of Yukon First
Nations
Chief Judge Faulkner, Territorial Court
Jim Tousignant, Senior Statistician, Yukon Bureau of
Statistics

The Yukon Health and Social Services Council held its Second meeting of 2005-06 on September 9 & 10, 2005. The meeting commenced at 9:00 a.m. on Thursday, September 9, 2005.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Whereas issues regarding labeling and stigmatization of youth in the current Young Offenders' Facility (YOF) can have detrimental effects; and,

Whereas the YOF philosophical changes are inclusive of preventive programming;

The Council recommends that Government consider changing the name for the YOF to enhance the image of the facility and the residents.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The Chair advised that James Allen is unable to attend the meeting. Phil Dyke will attend the meeting on Saturday.

Five appointments to the Council are being advertised with a deadline for nomination by end of this month.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

Following amendments were made to agenda:

- a) Palliative Care Presentation on Saturday is cancelled as final report is not yet approved
- b) Add Yukon Policing Review under Council Business

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion: Moved by Glenis Allen and seconded by Phil Dyke to accept the minutes as presented. Motion carried.

CO-CHAIRS' REPORT ON MEETING WITH THE MINISTER OF H&SS:

Glenis was away so Colleen met with the Minister and discussed the following:

- The agenda from Council's last meeting;
- Vacancies on the Council
- Coordinated approach discussed at the Council meeting regarding multi-care facilities
 - Minister said he would consider the idea

- Palliative Care
- WCB Review Process
- Council's Tour of YOF

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION – ACTIVITIES UPDATE:

[Ann MacDonald, Director of Policy, Planning and Evaluation]

Enrollment: Ann distributed enrolment data from all Yukon schools and noted that the data is collected each month in each school by grade level, for future planning. Usually, the forecasts are quite close to the actual numbers although this year there is slight downward movement. These statistics are also available on the Education website.

All-day kindergarten was established based on recommendations from a report. The advantage is that children will be better prepared for the school environment and be more active in the learning environment. Many other jurisdictions also have all-day kindergarten.

Policy Work: The Department of Education has put all policies on the website for easy access and transparency. Also, the Department intends to keep an “open door” approach to new policies that may be required to address issues stemming from the existing or on-coming policies. They are currently working on a Field Trips Policy. She handed hard copies of the website that lists the policies of the Department of Education.

Education Reform: Ann circulated copies of YTG’s Joint Press Release announcing a two-year Education Reform process. She noted that the Terms of Reference have been drafted and a team from both YTG and CYFN has been appointed to be at arm’s length from the Government and located in a space of its own at the Financial Plaza Building. A website will be developed for this process, similar to Corrections Consultation and Children’s Act Review Project.

Carmacks School: Three bids for construction were received at the time of bid closing. A decision is expected by the end of September. Design work is well underway and some infrastructure is in place.

New Partnerships: Ann provided copies of YTG’s Press Release titled “Collaborating to Deliver Unique Training Programs.” Department of Education’s Community Training Fund contributed \$50,000 for Health and Social Services’ Social Assistance branch to provide access to certification and pre-employment programs to social assistance clients. The success rate of this pilot project will be monitored.

Council is pleased to note linkages between the departments.

Miscellaneous Items: Ann listed a number of other initiatives in which the Department of Education is involved, such as:

- Jeannette McCrea and Sharon Jacobs have initiated an early reading program which is being launched throughout Yukon schools from Grade 1 to 3.
- Discussions are underway with the White River First Nation who wish to set their own priorities to use Community Training Fund.
- On October 14, 10 new pieces of students' art work will be on display at the Arts Centre.
- Each year, we celebrate something new during Education Week in April. This year's topic was Choices and Changes.
- Women Exploring Trades is scheduled for November 18 this year. It is an all-day event in which young women from all Yukon schools participate in and are introduced to various trades at Yukon College.
- Results of Adult Literacy studies should be out this fall. Two programs – Yukon Learn and Yukon Literacy – received \$250,000 and \$93,000 from the Government and they also seek community partnerships to promote literacy in Yukon.

Council thanked Ann MacDonald for providing a lot of good information and noted that the Early Reading Program is an excellent initiative. It also suggested a link with other related organizations, e.g., Literary Coalition, Yukon Learn, Child Development Center, etc.

CHILDREN'S ACT REVIEW PROJECT : UPDATE:

[Anne Westcott, Co-Chair of the Project]

Anne summarized briefly sequential highlights of the Children's Act Review Project since Council's June meeting. Due to the summer, there was not much movement on the Project. There was a change in Chiefs' Committee membership and the new members' meeting was held recently in Pelly Crossing. The issue of which governance model to be used was passed on to the politicians to decide.

The next Forum meeting will be held at the end of the month. There is still a fair amount of work on other policy issues to be looked at and the Project Team has started work on research and analysis of these issues. The Project is a priority for the Government and the Department. The new Act is to be ready by spring of 2006.

One of the beneficial by-product of this review project, Anne observed, has been as staff, communities, individuals and governments, considered and discussed the very important aspects of child welfare, they developed an understanding of what is required in the revised Act and looked at the positive outcomes.

Anne advised the Council that she has decided to retire and her last day would be November 8th.

On behalf of the Council, Colleen thanked Anne for many years of hard work for the Yukon's children, most recently with the Children's Act Review Project. Council appreciated Anne's well-prepared and professionally-delivered presentations that kept the

members informed and answered their questions over the years. Members wished Anne all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES : ACTIVITIES UPDATE

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

Brian provided updates on following items:

F/P/T Meetings: Provincial/Territorial and Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Social Services are meeting on Oct. 19 & 20 and agenda for the meeting includes:

- Sexual Exploitation of Children and Youth
- Child Care Agreements – territories did not sign due to base funding/per capita issue
- Caregiving item – to support caregivers – this discussion is in an early stage
- Disabilities issue – discuss options of what supports to be provided
- Aboriginal Child Welfare
- Federal off-loading
- Few housekeeping items

The Ministers of Health are meeting on Oct. 21 & 22 to discuss:

- Funding
- Pharmaceuticals
- Blood issues
- Indemnification
- Aboriginal Blueprint

Same Sex Legislation: Based on federal legislation, some YTG legislation need to be amended – most of these amendments are re-wording and consequential. The Department has five Acts that may require amendment.

Anti-Poverty: Minister has received a proposal from the Anti-Poverty Coalition which is currently being reviewed.

Development Assessment Process (DAP): This is a process set up to review social and environmental impacts on major development projects. The new federal Act – The Yukon Environment and Socio-Economic Assessment Act (YESSA) will come into force before Christmas and new processes will be required.

Integrated Resource Management Project: Resource-based departments to look collectively at how to manage resource planning and issues, e.g. water, etc.

Pipeline Committee: This committee is looking at various planning and impacts issues. The Department is involved regarding planning for services and on social impacts assessments.

Rail Study: Three million dedicated for feasibility study for railroad in northern BC/Alaska.

Compensation Discussion: Brian provided a handout for discussion on whether compensation monies should be exempted from being considered as income under Section 18 of the Social Assistance (S.A) Regulations. If yes, what types of compensation should be exempted while maintaining the principle that Social Assistance as the payor of last resort. He also provided information on how other jurisdictions deal with these payments under their S.A. program.

A number of scenarios were presented and discussed with the Council.

Emergency Measures Plan: Due to the shortage of time for Brian's presentation, this item was deferred to the next Council meeting.

CORRECTIONS CONSULTATION: BRIEFING

[Sharon Hickey, Co-chair of the Corrections Consultation Project]

[Brenda Jackson, Policy Analyst, Council for Yukon First Nations]

Following introductions, there was a discussion about the differences between the Children's Act Review and the Corrections Consultation project. Sharon noted that although Children's Act Review Project and Corrections Consultation have the same partnership structure, they are quite different in outputs or products. While Children's Act Review Project is focused on the creation of outcomes such as a new Act, the Corrections Consultation is not. It is focussing on creating an Action Plan which will recommend a number of changes for both WCC and Community Corrections. For example, we will be recommending that a new act is needed, which is not the same as creating a new Act, which is one of the objectives of the Children's Act Review. An Implementation Plan will have to follow the final approval of our Action Plan.

Presenters advised that the community consultations are complete and meeting with stakeholders and groups are underway in Whitehorse, including YTG and RCMP.

Many simultaneous tours have been arranged for the team members to visit a few out of territory facilities to see what they are doing in various areas, including aboriginal programs.

Round two of travel to Yukon communities is planned to let participants know what was heard and edit the summary accordingly. Also, a two-day Summit on December 1 & 2 is being arranged where community members, YTG departments, etc. would be invited. It is estimated that 100 to 110 people will attend – three from each community and Council members are welcome to attend. Following the Summit, in December and January, a draft Action Plan will be written for Roundtable meeting of the Minister and Chiefs, tentatively scheduled for February 2006.

What we are hearing in the consultation is that people think the main problem is addiction, which is responsible for crime, and other issues are behind the addictions: such as trauma, cognitive problems, low literacy levels and undiagnosed mental health problems. The public is also saying that the Government needs to do better in all areas of prevention, intervention and after care. As well, we need to look at what responsibilities for programs and services belongs to which area of government, build partnerships, and create easier access to services and community-based services for minor crimes (e.g. healing, cultural camps, etc.).

A database will be developed based on what was heard and learned from the consultations. Dealing with people in holistic way is critical for success.

Corrections Consultation has a website www.correctionsconsultations.yk.ca to obtain any information relating to this process. The comments from the public meetings held in each community are now on the website under “Consultation Documents Available.”

DECISION AS DETERRENT TO CRIMES: INFORMATION:

[Chief Judge Faulkner, Territorial Courts]

Judge Faulkner noted that the courts are dealing with a host of problems relating to addictions and it is not certain whether jail is the solution to their problems or whether it would act as a deterrent. Perhaps addiction treatment is a better solution. Judges have concerns with ordering people to undergo treatment for addictions as there are no designated funds for court ordered treatments. Both Departments of Justice and Health and Social Services say they do not have the funds. Although some believe that the volunteer treatment is more effective, research indicates there is no difference in the results of volunteer vs court-ordered treatment. Court-ordered treatment has more success even in the area of family violence prevention cases, in fact there is twice the success rate in this area.

Judges are in discussion with the Minister of Justice to establish a problem-solving court to deal with addiction, FASD and mental health related cases. This would offer an option of long-term court monitored intervention to make changes in the lives of such people. Finding additional resources would be an issue, i.e., variety of services would be required. This process would seek expertise and services from the Department of Health and Social Services. Ministers and Deputy Ministers of both departments are supportive of these discussions.

Existing programs are geared to “average” addictions and not to addictions with “complex” issues. As a result, a significant number of people are living in a state of revolving door and need to be in an “alternative” stream of programs.

Following are the gaps and issues from the judiciary’s point of view:

- Who pays for the court-ordered addiction treatments – Health Canada is responsible for the First Nations and Yukon Government for the rest;

- More relevant treatments are required in Yukon with regards to youth, FASD sufferers and First Nation;
- Currently, if an out of territory treatment center is identified, there are no funds designated/available for this and people end up in local program which may not be relevant;
- There is no after care once the treatment is complete as people return to the same environment from which their problems stemmed;
- Short-term funding for First Nation treatment centers that runs out or gets cut back.

Conditional Discharge is only applicable to drinking/driving, i.e., if convicted, one can apply for curative discharge based on an agreement that the individual will get into a treatment program which could be up to three-year medically monitored to ensure offender stays dry. Typically, it is not as strictly monitored as it would under Problem-Solving Court.

It sometimes appears that some aspects are “not turning the corner” and it is discouraging to see repeat offenders and the intergenerational continuum of issues. There are some success stories but not enough. Also, some offenders have complex problems that stem from a family environment over which courts have no power or authority. Courts endeavour to deal with the offender in isolation, which is not an effective way of dealing with an individual’s issues that are causing the problems to begin with.

He is not suggesting that money is the only solution but existing programs can make a difference. We submitted a proposal to the Federal Problem-Solving Court in lieu of Drug Courts which was denied based on not meeting the criteria. Minister Edzerza and his Deputy are interested and are reviewing this proposal.

Communities need to be mobilized, get involved and take responsibility. Many communities have moved forward in spite of the fact they are dealing with numerous issues such as addictions, self-government, land claims, residential school aftermath, etc. But, alcohol remains the number one problem behind most court appearances.

PRIMARY HEALTH CARE TRANSITION FUND (PHCTF) : UPDATE

[Jan Horton, Coordinator of PHCTF]

Jan highlighted the following initiatives:

- Extension of PHCTF has been requested; waiting for approval
- Healthy Living activities – planning for active living and healthy eating is underway
- Nurse Information Line – held up due to negotiations in British Columbia. Yukon plans to hook up in BC’s Information Line. It is well used in B.C. and diverts people from emergency and it also helps them better manage their chronic diseases themselves.
- A&DS Research done over the summer by Bureau of Statistics
- Diabetes – learning session for the professionals was held in May
- Developing Palliative Care proposal to seek funding to improve this care in Yukon

- Systems Development – worked with Canada Health Infoway regarding two proposals which were turned down by them so shifted the focus of these and now working independently of Infoway to develop a Yukon client registry. Proposals are being developed for possible future joint projects with Infoway.
- Video/DVD is being developed for health providers on how to provide services effectively in the territories to First Nation population

PHCTF lapsed funds due to delays in programs and have asked Health Canada to move the funds to next year. No response has been received to this request to date.

Concern was expressed regarding doctors' offices using voice mail with no amenity to even leave a message. The recording directs callers to the Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) emergency. This encourages inappropriate use of emergency at the WGH and puts financial burden on health system while leaving individuals with no option other than to go to WGH emergency.

ADDICTIONS SURVEY & LESSONS LEARNED

[Jim Tousignant, Senior Statistician, Yukon Bureau of Statistics]

The Yukon Addictions Survey (YAS) incorporates information from:

- Series of studies and Canadian Addictions Survey
- Youth harm from addiction
- Yukon addictions continuum project - document people's stories regarding harm from any source

Methodology utilized was random phone calls in Whitehorse and face-to-face interviews in communities. Questions posed for YAS were similar to those in Canada's survey but customized for the Yukon. Canada's Addictions Survey was done in 2004 and YAS was done in 2005. 1240 people were involved in this survey. Bureau of Statistics looked for people who fit the criteria and profiled them. Strategic sample - looked for high-risk people on streets, on river bank.

As general population, we are not different than the rest of Canada, except for Marijuana use:

- Use of Marijuana is double
- Use of alcohol is same
- Use of Cocaine is same

Since 1990, the use of alcohol in Yukon has changed and heavy drinking is down by 10% but use of Cocaine and Marijuana has increased. Alcohol is still the drug of choice - but Marijuana the second choice possibly because it is perceived to be less harmful than Cocaine. There is relatively less Crystal Meth as from business perspective there is more money in bootlegging. In the south, Crystal Meth is fast becoming the drug of choice for young, although it is extremely harmful and kills people. With respect to child neglect and family issues, alcohol is number one relating to harm which is intergenerational.

Harm reduction: Interviewed people who were harmed by others and the interviews were transcribed. Talked to workers, RCMP and children who do not have support systems. Funding was provided through PHCTF to conduct such interviews as they wanted to explore what tangible and practical things can be done to reduce harm, i.e. how to work with the kids today to save them from harm. During the interviews, people talked about the importance of aftercare and supports in the communities, a place to go for coffee where no stigma is attached, resources needed to enforce probation, etc. It was noted through these interviews that small things are required to reduce harm.

Currently, looking at:

- Framework
- Do-able things
- Simple changes to Liquor Act regarding enforcement.

Results of YAS will be presented to the Department of Health and Social Services in December. Department of Justice and H&SS are working on an Action Plan.

COUNCIL BUSINESS:

Discussion of Presentations

Dept. of Education Activities: Good presentation and provided much good information. Secretariat will request a tour of Alternate School, as well as information on the Social Assistance Program regarding access to Partnership Training Fund (\$15,000).

Children's Act Review Project: accepted as information.

Dept. of H&SS Activities: Council discussed the policy question further and recognized the complexity of the issue.

Corrections Consultations: Council noted that the questions posed do not reflect various literacy levels in Yukon communities.

Due to the conflict in December dates for the Council's meeting and Corrections Summit, Council members (Colleen, Glenis, Phil, David and Iris) will meet with the Co-Chairs of the Corrections Consultations to provide feedback on behalf of the Council. Secretariat to arrange this meeting.

Decision as deterrent to crimes: Council was concerned to hear that there are no designated funds to support court-ordered drug and alcohol treatments. As noted by the Chief Judge, significant appearances and repeat offenders in the courts are due to addictions and lack of funding to provide treatment and aftercare significantly negatively impacts communities' well-being.

PHCTF: accepted as information.

Yukon Addictions Survey: Council will invite Jim back when the report is final. This type of approach to “humanizing” the statistics is very refreshing. Look forward to how the outcomes of this survey will be implemented in policies.

Invitation to attend Northern Forum in Prince George: Co-Chairs will discuss the possibility of having a member attend this Forum with the Minister.

Press Release Following Council Meetings: In past, Council used to issue a press release regarding its proceedings/discussions at the end of each meeting. It will be a good vehicle to raise council profile and what it does. Council is open to the idea.

YCEE: Report from Colleen: Nothing to report.

Reports/Updates from various Sub-Committees of the Council: No further work is required by the Sub-Committees at this time.

Yukon Policing Review: Glenis and Colleen – Co-Chairs of the Council will attend this session.

Council Forum: Local members of the Council had a brainstorming meeting with some of Dept. of H&SS staff on Sept. 8th. Numerous concepts and ideas were generated and notes from this meeting were distributed to all members for discussion. Secretariat to arrange next meeting in October.

Young Offenders’ Facility: Deputy Minister provided a tour of the facility to the local members of the Council. Yukon has a legislated mandate to have youth corrections facility. Although the cost of keeping the facility open in view of the fact that the numbers of young offenders continue to decrease, which most of the time leaves the facility vacant, remains a concern. In the past three years there has been a shift towards prevention and it provides a real community connection and to youth learning of life skills, e.g., staff was provided information on “Stars for Success” from B.C. which involves training youth for life-style and employable skills. It is difficult to predict what would happen if the number of young offenders all of sudden went up and there was no facility. The facility encourages community involvement and has very strong structure to foster a positive behavior. A lot of young people work on homework during their free hours as most of the day is very structured.

Council noted that the staff is committed to youth and positive preventative programming.

Agenda items for the next meeting:

S.A. & Partnership Training Fund (\$15,000)

DAP Process

Early Reading Program

Signpost Seniors – services in Watson Lake
Education Review
Tour of Alternate School
Old Crow Project

Meeting Adjourned.