



## **RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COMMITTEE (RJC)**

**March 30, 2021**

**Meeting held electronically under Ministerial Order No. M192/2020 and  
the current Order of the Provincial Health Officer - *Gatherings and Events***

### **MINUTES**

#### **VOTING MEMBERS PRESENT:**

- |                           |   |
|---------------------------|---|
| Councillor Chuck Puchmayr | - Chair, City Council Member  |
| Stacey Ferguson           | - Community Member  |
| Amanda Semenoff           | - Alternate Chair, Community Member                                 |
| Gurinder Mann             | - Communities Embracing Restorative Action (CERA)<br>Representative |
| Savanna Pelech            | - Community Member  |

#### **VOTING MEMBER REGRETS:**

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| Pamela Craven | - School District 40 (SD40) Representative |
|---------------|--|

#### **GUEST:**

- |                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Robert Nahanee | - Squamish Nation Elder |
|----------------|-------------------------|

#### **STAFF PRESENT:**

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Constable John MacDonald | - New Westminister Police Department (NWPD)<br>Representative |
| Bailey Keeler            | - New Westminister Victim Assistance Association<br>(NWVAA)   |
| Heather Corbett          | - Committee Clerk   |
| Carilyn Cook             | - Committee Clerk   |

The meeting was called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Councillor Puchmayr introduced Mr. Robert Nahanee, a Squamish Nation Elder and veteran of the Canadian Armed Forces, who works with the Kwikwèxwelhp Healing Village Program.

**MOVED AND SECONDED**

*THAT the March 30, 2021 Restorative Justice Committee meeting agenda be adopted with the addition of New Business Item 6.4: Restorative Justice Committee Status Update by Councillor Puchmayr.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

**2.0 ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**2.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the January 12, 2021 Restorative Justice Committee Meeting**

**MOVED AND SECONDED**

*THAT the January 12, 2021 Restorative Justice Committee minutes be adopted as circulated.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

**3.0 PRESENTATIONS**

There were no items.

**4.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**4.1 Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous and Girls - Recommendations to Council and/or the Provincial Court System to Inform a Local Approach – Councillor Puchmayr (Standing Item)**

Councillor Puchmayr advised that he welcomes more intense work on this item, including possibly working with the New Westminster Police Department to address police-related reforms and delivery of service, as Council has requested that the Committee be engaged in the police reform discussion which may include having a sub-committee and holding workshops to address relevant issues.

**4.2 State of First Nations Court**

Councillor Puchmayr shared that the First Nations Court has moved from the Anvil Centre to Inn At The Quay, which is more flexible for their purposes; however, the search continues for a more appropriate location.

**5.0 NEW BUSINESS**

## 5.1 Election of Alternate Chair

### **MOVED AND SECONDED**

*THAT Amanda Semenoff be elected as the Alternate Chair for the 2021 term of the Restorative Justice Advisory Committee.*

**CARRIED.**

All members of the Committee present voted in favour of the motion.

## 5.1 Kwìkwèxwelhp Healing Village Program

Robert Nahanee, Squamish Nation Elder, shared information about his background and the Kwìkwèxwelhp Healing Village Program, including:

- He has been with Corrections Canada since 2006 and with the Kwìkwèxwelhp Healing Village Program since 2008;
- Kwìkwèxwelhp means a place of gathering medicine and healing;
- Previously known as the Elbow Lake Institution and used as a prison work camp, the Kwìkwèxwelhp Healing Village is a minimum security institution with a focus on Indigenous spiritual and cultural teachings where historically gathering was only permitted in a Christian setting;
- Elders work with inmates (preferably referred to as “residents”) from various other correctional facilities to assist them in re-entering society as law abiding citizens, through:
  - Traditional teachings such as the long house system and a balanced lifestyle through the medicine wheel;
  - Working through the impacts of colonization and residential schools to make peace with themselves, the law, and society;
  - Assist many in getting their identity back including via a status card; and,
  - Employment assistance once they are released;
- The goal is to get residents back into the community as safe and productive citizens which sometimes takes up to three years of intensive training to change behaviours, break the “con code”, and help them to see the goodness of spirit and how the elders carry themselves;
- Successful residents recover credibility with themselves, their family, and most importantly their victims by taking responsibility for what they have done;
- Staff at the Village are supportive of the Indigenous culture and spirituality, with some even participating in ceremonies; and,
- It is understood that it is still a federal facility therefore federal law must be followed.

Mr. Nahanee thanked the Committee for inviting him to share his story and information about the Kwìkwèxwelhp Healing Village Program and encouraged members to visit once the pandemic is over.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Nahanee provided the following comments:

- Elders work with clients in the maximum and medium security prisons on a daily basis to interview and observe potential residents to assess if they will make the necessary commitment to the culture, traditions, and medicine wheel lifestyle offered in the Program, which only has the ability to have 50 residents at a time; and,
- While it may take years for clients to move from maximum to medium security, they are working with elders all along the way.

Discussion ensued, and the Committee noted that stories of trauma go back generations and that elders play an instrumental role in getting residents connected to and proud of their history and culture which is an important role in rehabilitation.

Committee members thanked Mr. Nahanee for sharing his story and the history and mandate of the Kwikwèxwelhp Healing Village Program and shared that members look forward to visiting the Village in the future.

## **6.0 REPORTS AND INFORMATION**

### **Standing Items:**

#### **6.1 Constable John MacDonald – Report**

Constable MacDonald, NRPD, introduced himself, shared information about his background, and noted that as he was new to the position as a result of Constable Callaghan's secondment to another unit, he would provide a report at the next meeting.

#### **6.2 Communities Embracing Restorative Action (CERA) – Report**

Gurinder Mann, CERA representative, provided the following report:

- A presentation on restorative justice will be shared with the NRPD during their morning watch meeting;
- A goal is to expand services throughout New Westminster, including with teachers and staff in the school district;
- CERA is eager to grow its relationship with Sto:lo First Nations communities and are seeking a First Nations representative to sit on the CERA Board. Committee members were asked to share Mr. Mann's email address with anyone who may be interested in this opportunity; and,

- CERA has reached out to the BC First Nations Justice Council as well to maximize restorative justice efforts.

### **6.3 New Westminster Victim Assistance Association (NWVAA) – Report**

Bailey Keeler, NWVAA representative, shared the following updates:

- The NWVAA continues to be very busy with crises calls in the community which are closely evaluated to determine when and where staff can personally attend calls;
- The impacts of the opioid crises, increase in domestic violence, and sexual assault calls is being felt by staff;
- While transportation for clients can still not be provided, other new and creative ways are being found to support people;
- Court attendance is ongoing as it remains COVID safe;
- There are no new restorative justice files; however, work continues with youth probation where the Crown decides if restorative justice may be appropriate or a condition of sentencing; and,
- Work with the approximate 50 volunteers will most likely remain on hold until the entire civilian workforce is back and, once the volunteers do return, they will need to be retrained.

### **6.4 Restorative Justice Committee Status Update**

Councillor Puchmayr announced that, as a result of concern expressed about the Restorative Justice Committee being folded into a new committee in 2022 and the loss of momentum that would occur with restorative justice in the First Nations community, including work with the New Westminster First Nations Court, the majority of Council agreed that the Restorative Justice Committee would continue beyond 2021.

Discussion ensued and Committee members acknowledged the great and exciting work ahead for the Committee.

## **7.0 CORRESPONDENCE**

There were no items.

## **8.0 NEXT MEETING DATE**

Tuesday, June 29, 2021

## **9.0 ADJOURNMENT**

**ON MOTION**, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Certified Correct,

Original Signed  
**Councillor Puchmayr**  
**Chair**

Original Signed  
**Carilyn Cook**  
**Committee Clerk**