

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, April 4, 2023
Open to public attendance in Committee Room G
Lower Level, City Hall
Committee members may attend electronically

PRESENT:

Councillor Daniel Fontaine	Chair
Paige Mercier*	Alternate Chair/Community Member
Pamela Craven*	School District 40 (SD 40)
Alvin Kube*	New Westminster First Nations Court
Constable John MacDonald*	New Westminster Police Department
Gurinder Mann*	Communities Embracing Restorative Action

REGRETS:

Robert Nahanee	Indigenous Community Representative
Amanda Semenoff	Community Member
Tu Van Trieu	Community Member

GUESTS:

Emily Lloyd*	New Westminster Victim Assistance Association
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STAFF PRESENT:

Carilyn Cook	Committee Clerk, Legislative Services
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1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Councillor Fontaine opened the meeting at 5:00 p.m. and recognized with respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. He acknowledged that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. He recognized that, as a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

None.

3. CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the April 4, 2023 Restorative Justice Committee meeting agenda be adopted with the change that New Business Item 7.1: City's Strategic Planning and the Role of the Restorative Justice Committee be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

Carried.

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

4. ADOPTION OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

4.1 July 5, 2022

MOVED and SECONDED

THAT the July 5, 2022 Restorative Justice Committee meeting minutes be adopted as circulated.

Carried.

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

5. UNFINISHED BUSINESS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

5.1 Reclaiming Power and Place: The Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

No discussion took place.

6. STANDING REPORTS AND UPDATES

6.1 New Westminster Police Department (NWPD)

Constable John MacDonald, New Westminster Police Department, noted the following:

- As Inspector Diana McDaniel is now retired, Inspector Aman Gossel can attend a future meeting to review the report written by Inspector McDaniel regarding the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls; and,
- Restorative justice referrals have completely halted since the School District voted to end the New Westminster Police Department liaison program in the school, approximately two years ago.

6.2 Communities Embracing Restorative Action (CERA)

Gurinder Mann, CERA Representative, reported the following:

- The new Memorandum of Understand with Crown Council has now been established and it is hoped that it will expand the restorative justice referral base in New Westminster;
- Referrals now come from the Court House, New Westminster Police Department (NWPD), and the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia;
- The decline in referrals from the New Westminster Police Department is noticeable since the end of the liaison program;
- It is projected that New Westminster restorative justice referrals will start to come in from the School District, which is what happens in the Tri-Cities; and,
- CERA will connect with the NWPD to facilitate referrals for youth and adult offenders.

6.3 New Westminster Victims Assistance Association (NWVAA)

Emily Lloyd, New Westminster Victims Assistance Association, shared the following:

- The Provincial Association for Victim Services Police Training is now live and includes a restorative justice aspect;
- The volunteer program, which has been paused since the start of the pandemic, has now been officially ended; however, there are other volunteers in the Police Department so services will not be impacted; and,
- They have no active files in the restorative justice process.

6.4 School District 40 (SD40)

Pam Craven, School District 40, advised of the following:

- Melanie Smith was recently hired to liaise with the New Westminster Police Department and, as part of her work plan, she will be working on restorative justice referrals;
- Administrators are still feeling the loss of the police liaisons and often only get second hand news of things going on with students which is sometimes too late; and,
- The CERA videos are being shared again as the School District continues with internal capacity building.

Constable MacDonald advised that with respect to the Memorandum of Understanding that is in place between the New Westminster Police Department and the School District, he and Inspector Gossel are Ms. Smith's points of contact for information sharing. He noted the importance of Violence Threat Risk Assessment (VTRA) training so that plans can be put into place if, upon assessment, it is determined that a youth may pose a safety risk.

Alvin Kube, New Westminster First Nations Court, provided the following update:

- Monthly court sessions have been increased from one session per month to two sessions per month;
- Elders are expected to comment on each case and inspire clients to go in the right direction; however, this can be challenging for clients;
- Elders meet with lawyers prior to court sessions to review cases;
- A judge from Japan attended the last court session to observe proceedings and it will be interesting to hear how these things are dealt with in Japan;
- It will be nice to see the statistics and how restorative justice is making a difference as so far it is being heard that the success rate is tremendous;
- Often communication with the clients continues after they have completed their Healing Plan; and,
- The next court session dates are April 13th and 14th and everyone is welcome to attend.

In response to a question from Councillor Fontaine, Mr. Kube shared that the success of restorative justice is realized when clients do not return to court and that it would be great to see the raw data from the study done on the court and its effectiveness.

Councillor Fontaine noted that as we move forward, it will be interesting to see the broader community discussion regarding re-offenders as this will become a much more topical discussion as actions come down from senior government. He stated that this is likely something that the Committee will discuss in the future.

Mr. Kube advised that specific programming that tackles the issues that offenders face is proven to work and that repeat offenders need to have intervention in their lives through programming; however, this can be difficult to do if they are not in the community. He noted that the punishment model does not work and is unproductive and that long-term offenders with addiction and mental health issues need ongoing support.

A Committee member shared of their experience attending the Court noting that it provides great value to the community. He encouraged all Committee members to attend a session.

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 City's Strategic Planning and the Role of the Restorative Justice Committee

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

7.2 Committee Member Recognition and Thank You

Councillor Fontaine thanked committee members for their efforts and positive work on the Committee and noted that it is hoped that Council's strategic planning will soon be complete so that Committee members can receive an update on the future of the City's advisory committees.

Committee members shared that their experiences on the Committee have been productive and beneficial and noted that it is an ongoing challenge to convince society that restorative justice works.

8. END OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 5:45 p.m.

9. UPCOMING MEETINGS

No further meetings are scheduled.

Certified correct,

Councillor Daniel Fontaine

Carilyn Cook, Committee Clerk