

Minutes – Executive Committee Meeting
Duncan and District Branch – National Association of Federal Retirees
Held at Crofton Senior Centre
On Thursday 21st November 2024

Present: Bronwen Cossey, George Cossey, Rick Devlieger, Dee Dohm, Kathy Pringle, Greg Taylor.

Regrets: Drew Bodaly, Paul Chmielewski, Karin Laurie

Meeting was called to order by Rick Devlieger at 2 pm

1. Previous Minutes:

M/S/C (Bronwen/Kathy) that the minutes of 1st August 2024 be accepted as distributed.

2. Reports

2.1 Treasurer's Report:

Current bank balance is \$4,945.08

We have received notification from NO that all the 2023 documents sent were acceptable and that we did not have an Excess Surplus for 2023 so no funds need to be sent to NO.

Wreath costs for this year were \$355, up slightly from \$350 in 2023.

M/S/C (Bronwen/Kathy) that the report be accepted as presented.

3. Committee Reports

3.1 Membership report from George:

The branch membership is now 895.

CRM now shows details of new members, deceased members and those who have been removed either by cancellation or non-payment of fees.

3.2 Advocacy report from Greg:

Greg advised that, for the recent provincial election, he worked with Nanaimo and Victoria branches on goals that Amy at NO had prepared.

He will be using the templates provide by NO to write to the successful candidates.

3.3 Member Services:

No reports

3.4 Program Coordinator:

No report but there was a discussion about whether the Ramada will be available next year and how hard it is to find appropriate speakers.

3.5 Communication/Website/Sage:

Rick will be looking after the website on the national site and preparing Sage inserts.

Old Business

4.1 Picnic:

Picnic was held on the Salt Spring Museum grounds and was enjoyed by all who attended.

Drew purchased all the food and drinks for the event.

There was no cost to the branch for this event as we collected \$11.07 more than we spent.

- 4.2 Labour Day Picnic in Ladysmith:
Rick and Greg both attended the event which was not as well attended as in previous years despite the good weather. They worked with the Nanaimo branch to host a table for good association visibility within the community. All the NDP candidates for the upcoming election were present as well as Alistair McGregor, MP and both Rick and Greg were able to have discussions with them.
- 4.3 District Workshop:
This was held in October – report attached.

New Business:

- 5.1 Provincial Election - letter:
Greg will provide copies of letters to be recorded in Branch documents.
- 5.2 Unplanned Succession:
Rick noted the importance of identifying branch and Association property to ensure that records are not lost. Bronwen will ensure that branch supply boxes are labelled and records that should be retained will be updated on the branch laptop.
- 5.3 Member Meeting – Agenda Items:
All arrangements have been made for the upcoming meeting on 5th December. So far we have approximately 50 members who will attend. Kathy will provide some photo cards for door prizes, Bronwen will purchase a few door prizes and has purchased chocolates for each table. Joan Wallace of Wallace Driving School and one of her trainers will be speakers for this meeting.
- 5.4 CPP and Alberta:
Greg discussed his participation in a recent webinar held by NO moderated by Roy Goodall. The discussion confirmed that the CPP was a very well managed plan which will maintain and enhance the plan for many years. It will be sad if Alberta manages to establish its own plan and removed funds from the CPP. Greg was impressed with the handling of the webinar by NO.
- 5.5 Executive Expenses for 2024:
Expenses claims should be submitted to Bronwen for any travel or other expenses incurred for branch business in 2024 ASAP. Greg asked for a copy of the claim form.
- 5.6 Meeting Dates for 2025:
Executive meetings for 2025 will be on 6th March, 10th July and 27th November. Dee will contact Crofton Senior Centre to confirm the dates.
2025 AGM will be on 20th March and a member meeting will be held on 4th December. Kathy will discuss availability with Cat at the Ramada
A picnic will be held on Vancouver Island in July or August and Dee and Kathy will investigate options.
- 5.7 Possible Change for SSI Executive Rep:
Drew has indicated that he is often unable to attend meetings and thinks he should step down if someone else could fulfill this role. Previously, Patricia Flanagan indicated that she may be willing to take over this role and Rick will contact her.
- 5.8 Other Business:
- Bronwen and George noted that they were very disappointed with the renewal of the home insurance offered by Belairdirect who recently took over Johnson insurance and worry about how this may affect Medoc travel insurance in the future. They sent their comments to NO as this is a Preferred Partner issue affecting many members;
 - Bronwen and George provided an update to their issues with the travel insurance and expenses incurred while in Hawaii. The information provided in a recent Sage magazine was good but members should be aware of who is responsible for which expenses and to have patience while dealing with the insurance providers. George will provide a summary at the upcoming member meeting;

- Bronwen noted that she has been dealing with an ageism issue with respect to the inequity of claiming the Disability Tax Credit and medical expenses for seniors with low to moderate income. She has prepared a summary for a taxpayer to discuss with our MP. Working taxpayers can claim the refundable medical tax supplement not available to non-working taxpayers, mostly seniors. Bronwen will provide a copy of the summary to Rick.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 3:40 pm

Next meeting: 2 pm - Thursday 6th March 2025

BCCI Regional Workshop – 22nd October 2024

Participants:

Brian Strongman Director
 Rick Devlieger BSC/BC03 President
 Renate Sutherland APO
 Kathy Pringle BC03 Vice-President
 Greg Taylor BC03 Advocacy Chair
 Christine Walker BC05 Vice-President
 Marg Smith BC05 Advocacy Chair
 Norma Dean BC06 President
 Cecile Turnbull BC06 Secretary/Vice-President
 Lisa McHaffie BC06 Newsletter
 Elizabeth Macrae BC09 President
 Patricia Francis BC09 Director Speakers Program
 Benny Wong BC09 Director-at-Large

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Consisted of public service announcements, no action items

Review Of 2023 Record of Discussion

District Director Update

Brian Strongman provided an update on issues which are being discussed at the national level at the various board and committee meetings he has attended. These included national initiatives, state of branches, many of which have indicated a lack of volunteers being a major issue. It was acknowledged that recruiting volunteers for both branch and national levels is becoming more difficult. He also asked everyone to remind their membership to check on their enrolment status and banking info on the Canada Life PDSP website.

Next, participants reviewed the latest version of the Strategic Plan. There was some discussion on separation of strategic and operational elements with a consensus that much of the Branch activity would be operational. Brian indicated that some Branches have been drafting their own Strategic Plan modelled on the National Plan.

Brian also addressed questions brought forward by the participants on the status of the Restructuring Committee. He indicated that the committee was only just getting started with framing the terms of reference and there was really very little to report other than the members have been named.

Action 1: Branches to remind their membership to check the status of their PDSP enrolment.

Action 02: District Director to take comments raised during discussion to the National board.

Branch Updates

Each Branch provided an update on what is happening in their area to the group in a round table format. Most of the Branches maintained a consistent membership. Everyone indicated that volunteers for Branch boards are an ongoing issue. Retention is becoming a problem because Board members are retiring due to personal circumstances and adding to already vacant board positions. The exception was North Island

John Finn Branch who indicated that this year they had filled all their executive positions. All Branches indicated that only a small proportion of their membership regularly attend meetings.

One item that came up during the Branch round table was the issue of “unplanned succession” and protecting/preserving corporate information during such an event. Cloud storage was mentioned as one solution but it is problematic if there is membership personal information in any of the documents. Positional email addresses are a partial solution, but again, all the information in emails is stored in the cloud. Our organization has touted that we do not store personal information in servers outside of Canada, we can’t say this about google mail etc.

Action 03: Branches to make a plan/procedure to ensure preservation of Branch information/history in case of unplanned succession.

Action 04: BSC will discuss cloud storage options for Branches with National Office IT

Results of Membership Survey

Karen Ruttan, Manager, Communications and Marketing, joined the meeting via zoom to address an agenda item raised by the participants with respect to the membership survey. Karen indicated that responses from the Vancouver Island membership was very consistent with the National results. She noted a few of points of interest:

1. Survey results indicated low interest in Branch events, but that those who did participate love them.
2. Members like the preferred partners, although there is some confusion if those partners were National or Local.
3. Members wanted to hear about Branch events, even though they do not attend them.

These points, while seemingly contradictory, were also consistent nationally. They may present an opportunity. As members do prefer to hear news about advocacy way more than they like to hear about event announcements, try and include advocacy in branch events. Preferred partners are also a high point with membership, so incorporating them into meetings and promotions could increase engagement.

Action 05: Branches to to increase advocacy content in meetings and communications to members.

Action 06: Branches to try incorporating local representatives of our Preferred partners into meetings and communications.

National Office Banking Initiative

Sylvie Dobinson, CFO and Director of Corporate Services, joined us via zoom the address some questions on the Banking Initiative(BI) raised by the Victoria Fred Whitehouse Branch, as they are the only branch currently using the National Office Banking Services. Discussion ensued with some of the issues the Victoria Branch was experiencing with BI. Cost based on a percentage of membership, speed of processing for claims/payments and interest on deposits held by the branch.

Action 05: CFO to follow up with:

**Quicker turn around for claims/payments,
Provide monthly statements to Branches on BI,
Auto response email on receipt of claim/invoice,
Improve Transparency,
Review 10% costs charged to Branches on BI, and
Guidelines for interest to paid out on deposits by branches on BI.**

Speakers Program and Interests of Members

The issue of obtaining informative/entertaining speakers for Branch meeting was discussed. It was agreed to share contact information for potential speakers who are willing to travel. There was discussion around costs/compensation for speakers with everyone having different information as to what is acceptable, ie. Some speakers require a donation to their organization in lieu of expenses.

Action 06: BSC to liaise with National Office Finance to seek clarification on compensation for Speakers

Advocacy Update

Renate Sutherland updated the group on the status of advocacy initiatives in the district such as Reach 338 and the recently completed provincial election. She also indicated that now is the time to start preparing for a Federal election as it may happen at fairly short notice (see Author's note 1). It is also time to reach out to your local MPs with respect to Budget 2025.

Discussion ensued on the recent provincial election. It was recommended by the APO that we hold off with congratulation letters to MLAs until after the dust has settled from recounts. It was also noticed that candidates were much less available than in the past and there fewer town halls. The ones that did occur were very focused and all questions were vetted before hand no questions permitted from attendees. Even then, most had missing representation. It was also difficult to communicate with individual candidates, so letters were sent to the party and hopefully, forwarded to the candidate.

Action 07: Branches to send congratulatory letters to winning candidates.

Action 08: Branches to plan/budget for 2025 National election

Action 09: Presidents/Branch Advocacy Officers to meet with MPs with priorities for Budget 2025 as part of ongoing Reach 338 strategy

Action 10: Branches to keep APO apprised of any meeting with MPs

Author's note 1: A short conversation with local NDP MP on Remembrance Day indicates that he thinks the Government will fail before spring.

BCCI Workshop 2024 was wrapped up at 3:30pm to allow for travel time.

Record of Discussion prepared by: Rick Devlieger, BSC BCCI