
**MINUTES OF THE YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL
SERVICES COUNCIL MEETING
WHITEHORSE
June 2 & 3, 2006**

**MINUTES OF THE YUKON HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES COUNCIL
MEETING**

Windsor Boardroom of Edgewater Hotel

June 2 & 3, 2006

MEMBERS PRESENT: Colleen Wirth – Chair
Glenis Allen – Co-chair
David Ravensdale
Iris Cormier
Phil Dyke
Shirley Laverdure
Naresh Prasad
Penny Ferbey
Darcy Tkachuk
Maxwell Rispin

REGRETS: Jane McIntyre
Margaret Titus
Rosemary Rowlands
James Allen
Marie Fast, Manager, Mental Health Services
Brian Eaton, Coordinator, Second Opinion Society

SECRETARIAT: Amar Dhillon

ALSO PRESENT: Hon. Brad Cathers, Minister of H&SS
Alexia McKinnon, A/Executive Assistant to Hon. Cathers
Brian Kitchen, Director of Policy, Planning and Program
Development, H&SS
Bill Bennett, Principal, Individual Learning Center
Ann MacDonald, Director of Policy, Education
Noreen McGowan, ADM, Community Justice & Public
Safety
Debbie Parent, Executive Director, Yukon Learn
Cathy Cashen, Supervisor, Foster Care Team
Sharleen Patterson, Foster Care Social Worker

The Yukon Health and Social Services Council held its first meeting of 2006-07 on June 2 & 3, 2006. The meeting commenced at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, June 2, 2006 and was called to order at 9:10 a.m.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

None

FRIDAY, JUNE 2, 2006

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Chair advised that Jane McIntyre, James Allen, & Margaret Titus have extended regrets and are unable to attend this meeting.

INTRODUCTION & ORIENTATION OF NEW MEMBERS:

Following introductions, Chair provided brief information on Council's mandate, role, consensus-based decision-making, confidentiality, meetings, agenda, interface with community and media.

REVIEW OF AGENDA:

Chair reviewed the agenda and noted following amendment:

Due to unforeseen circumstances, Second Opinion Society is unable to come to the meeting.

Minister Cathers will attend the Council meeting at 1:00 a.m. and Brian's presentation will commence after.

Motion: Moved by Iris Cormier, seconded by Maxwell Rispin to accept the agenda with above-noted amendments – carried.

REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion: Moved by David Ravensdale, seconded by Naresh Prasad to accept the minutes as presented – carried.

FORUM PLANNING:

Chair provided information on a Forum Council is planning to host. Council formed a sub-committee to plan the event and invited any new members to join this sub-committee. To date, Sub-committee held two meetings with the Department staff mainly to brainstorm and accumulate ideas – both were very productive.

At the end of the Forum, Council would like to see participants walking away with some tools/skills to take ownership of their personal health and a shift towards prevention model of health care from current acute care model. Existing health care system simply is not sustainable over the long term.

In 1972, Yukon had highest rate in alcohol consumption and incarceration in Canada and now in 2006 this has not changed. The budget for related services has increased by far so we need to look at the root causes.

Minister Cathers is supportive of Council's initiative. Chair will meet with the Director of Policy to discuss budget for the forum.

TOUR OF ALTERNATIVE SCHOOL:

[Bill Bennett, Principal of Alternative School]

[Ann MacDonald, Director of Policy & Planning, Dept. of Education]

Bill Bennett gave Council a tour of the Alternative School and how much satisfaction is drawn from being able to help those students who need it most. Bill talked about innovative and unique approach to reintegrating students who dropped out of regular school for various reasons and helping them finish high school education.

Bill talked about the criteria and process by which a student is admitted to the school. The staff makes every effort to create a learning environment suited to each student's. There are stringent rules that guide students' behavior/conduct at the school, interaction with teachers and fellow students.

Members heard from a few students about their personal views on the school and the opportunity/second chance to complete Grade 12 and turn around their lives. The flexibility at the school and caring staff has made them feel as valuable members of the community.

Over lunch, Bill and his staff shared related information and answered numerous questions from Council members.

HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES:

[Hon. Brad Cather, Minister of Health & Social Services]

[Alexia McKinnon, A/Executive Assistant to the Minister]

Minister reiterated his support for the Forum Council is planning. The Co-chairs made him aware of a few issues when they met with him. He understands that Council's sub-committee has done some work towards Forum planning and is looking at the budget.

Minister supports Council's proposal for the Forum to address ownership and awareness of ones own health with Yukoners. He would also like Council to involve Yukon

Medical Officer of Health with the Forum with regards to Pandemic awareness and readiness. He would like Yukoners to recognize the potential and minimize the effects of a pandemic.

Many years ago the assumption was that many will die but now with awareness, education, new prescription drugs, the long-term effects have been minimized. All jurisdictions are working together to work with expert advice. Minister talked about what measures are being considered and put in place – stockpiling is not one of the options due to expiring shelf-life versus putting the dollar into current medical needs of the population. Canada is unique in having established an agreement with pharmaceuticals to produce vaccine at a short notice. Inter-jurisdictional groups are actively working on preparedness in case of a pandemic so Yukon does not have to reinvent the wheel.

Recently, Minister attended meetings of F/P/T Ministers of Health and Western Premiers' and briefly talked about the agenda of both. He expressed concern regarding USA border crossing and health supplies transportation in an emergency situation.

Minister committed to discuss social assistance rates with the department. He noted that over the years the numbers of people receiving social assistance have declined but he would look into the root causes/issues as to why people are on social assistance.

Child Care is another important issue nation-wide since the change of federal government.

Council discussed the benefits of collaborative health service delivery in the Yukon with the Minister. He committed to discussing this item with Yukon Medical Association.

JUSTICE ACTIVITIES/INITIATIVES : UPDATE

[Noreen McGowan, ADM, Community Justice & Public Safety]

Deputy Minister, Dennis Cooley, had to attend F/P/T Deputy Ministers of Justice Meeting. Noreen extended his regrets.

Correction Action Plan: Final report was released and is accessible on internet via Department of Justice site. This report outlines a number of recommendations including a new Whitehorse Correctional Centre, developing corrections act, community-based programs and supports. Implementation framework negotiations are underway with Council of Yukon for First Nations (CYFN) to provide organization plan to carry out the work. A Committee chaired by the Deputy Minister and CYFN participant will oversee the work to address action plan. Task is to develop three options for a Forum scheduled for September and look at new approaches to programs. Building Advisory Committee and Legislative Committee are now established to work on building and to review legislative work, e.g., Corrections Act. Implementation will take approximately two years.

Policing Review: In 2002, Treasury Board decided that the First Nation policing policy does not apply in territories and had discussions on how to deal with this issue. So, Federal Government decided to review policing policy in all three territories. A consultant, Dr. Clark, noted that drug trafficking, response time, gangs, cultural awareness and orientation to communities need to identify policing priorities. Meetings were held in May in Yukon to review consultant's draft report and plan is to have a policy developed by March 2007.

Substance Abuse Action Plan: The Premier has put aside \$2 Million for the action items stemming from this report and its overall implementation. The Departments that do not require any new funds to implement action items that fall under their purview have already started to implement.

Effect of Federal Budget: It is not possible to assess it at this time. Deputy Minister is at the meeting and we will find out upon his return how conditional sentences and minimum sentences from new government's platform will affect the budget.

Whitehorse Correctional Centre: Renovations have been completed and programming is being improved upon as much as allowed by the current facility. Remedial work on air quality and mould is being dealt with.

Northern Institute of Justice: Collaborative work is underway between Departments of Education, Public Service Commission and Justice to develop human resources in the area of justice. A consultant is working on needs assessment within the government and will discuss the outcome in March.

EDUCATION INITIATIVES/ACTIVITIES : UPDATE

[Ann MacDonald, Director of Policy & Planning, Department of Education]

Ann advised that the Department is working on following two new policies:

1. Field Trip Policy – circulated copies of draft policy
2. Volunteers in School Policy

Fair amount of consultations were held to develop Field Trip Policy which will provide framework for planning the trips. This policy is stemming from the tragic outcome of a field trip in Calgary where students were faced with an avalanche, as well as due to recent amendments to the criminal code which holds public sector responsible for the safety of their clients subsequent to the mining incident in NWT. This policy is based on following basic principles:

- Obligation of school authority to provide care to students
- Risk managements during the trips
- Parents to provide informed consent
- Trip documentation

Established an off site committee that would look at each situation and make an appropriate call. A First Nation Perspective Review Committee will look at situations from FN perspective.

Ann briefly reviewed the Volunteers in School Policy with the Council members and requested their comments.

YUKON LEARN : PROGRAM INFORMATION:

[Debbie Parent, Executive Director]

Debbie provided background information on Yukon Learn Society (YLS) which was registered in 1993. Its mandate is to promote and provide free adult literacy services throughout the Yukon to 16 years and older people. There are approximately 200 members of the Society and eight board of directors to whom Executive Director reports to. Membership fee is \$5/adult and \$2 for student and seniors/year. If anyone who cannot afford the fee, YLS arranges for them.

YLS provides following services:

- One-on-One Tutoring in all disciplines
- Literacy Library
- Computer Lab Drop in Services
- Scheduled Computer Classes
- Awards for Volunteer, Tutor, & Learner of the Year
- Tutor Training
- Community Visits
- Employment and Human Resource support and assistance
- Literacy and relevant Workshop
- Coordinate with other clients to deliver outreach literacy services
- Limited financial aid to learners continuing on with post secondary education
- Toll free learn line
- Computer training for band council staff and community members
- Website
- Training needs assessments

YLS' membership increased by 66% through radio and other media campaigns that also increased awareness. Website is updated weekly and YLA is major sponsor of the Yukon Native Hockey Tournament.

Numerous administrative improvements have occurred, e.g., position description were developed, new administrative forms, updated filing system, updated logo, mandate, vision and mission, and improved telephone and data network – all this helps serve clients better.

YLS increased Education Center Coordinator's position to full-time status, instituted travel subsidy component, extended hours of operation, instituted scheduled computer

classes. Currently, YLS is investigating the option of a full-time YLS Outreach Coordinator position.

A six-month pilot project “*Workplace Skills Reinforcement Program*” was implemented between October 2005 to March 2006 that emphasized on communications, applied mathematics, applied computer skills and problem solving.

It has taken on Self-Advocacy for Women in the Legal System program which was developed because of increased evidence that women are representing themselves in the legal system.

There are two major fundraising events that are currently pursued:

- Peter Gzowski Invitational (PGI)
- Sunflower Campaign

PGI has been an annual fundraiser in Yukon for the past 15 years and on average raises \$20 to \$25 thousand dollars. This is a national event. Funds from Sunflower Campaign will be utilized for outreach program. YLS is also looking at other fundraisers such as cookie dough. Department of Education provides \$115,000 to YLS. There are donation jars at local businesses. Some project specific funding is received from National Literacy and Human Resource Development Canada.

FOSTER PARENT PROGRAM : INFORMATION:

[Cathy Cashen, Supervisor, Foster Care Team]

[Sharleen Patterson, Foster Care Social Worker]

Foster Care Program is part of the Family and Children’s Services which is responsible for child welfare and is responsible for prevention, daycare services, healthy families, intervention, intake, children-in-care, adoption and foster care.

This unit provides safety, approves families for foster care, offers services to families and children, provides opportunity for families to heal, and the goal is to strengthen families. It is mainly for short-term care for children but in some instances children stay longer. Its mandate lies in Children’s Act and it follows Family Children’s Services’ policies and guidelines to work with.

It recruits and approves foster homes which are temporary substitutes but at time when children can not return to their family, some foster parents adopts the children.

Currently, there are total of 93 approved foster homes and numbers of children in these homes have remained the same for the past five years. The Unit would like to see more kinship foster families recruited as such extended family fostering is in the best interest of the children.

Children are referred to Foster Care Program through Intake, Prevention, Intervention, and Children in Care. Currently, foster care giver receives \$26.97/day except \$75/day for those children with high needs, clothing allowance and \$150 per month/child for recreational/health requirements.

Substance abuse and its effects are the most common reasons that children come into care. Yukon still is the highest consumer of alcohol per capita.

Foster Care Unit provides pre-service basic training to learn how to be foster parent and how to deal with the department. There are 106 trained people in Whitehorse and 61 in the communities. We try to match skills of the foster parent and children's needs. F&CS uses PRIDE (Parent, Resources, Information, Development & Education) model which was developed by Child Welfare League of Canada.

While assessing the family for fostering, records are checked very carefully – three personal references, RCMP, medical reference, carry a home study including genealogy, check with other provinces, what was modeled for them including education, grief, etc., income, living area, child rearing practices, disciplining practices so these are not punitive but learning experiences, etc. Supervisor then reviews the home study/assessment. If there is no barrier, the home study takes up to three months to complete and costs approximate \$3000.00 for the entire process.

Staffing is an issue that needs to be addressed as the ratio of clients and social workers is still quite high and not as prescribed by Child Welfare League of Canada. Other issue is to look at how foster parents are compensated.

DEPARTMENT OF H&SS : UPDATES

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

Pandemic New Release: Brian provided copies of a news release from Western Premiers' May 30, 2006, Meeting which Minister of H&SS attended on Premier's behalf.

Premiers recommend that the federal government work with provinces and territories to:

- Establish a dedicated national expert group to explore options for vaccine development that can result in the delivery of effective vaccines in the shortest possible time;
- Evaluate the ongoing requirements for a stockpile of antiviral drugs, explore options to maintain and extend the self life of the existing stockpile, conduct research on the use of the antiviral drugs, including the potential for resistance to emerge, and evaluate stockpile levels in that context; and
- Mutually develop an acceptable command and control mechanism to ensure effective management of pandemics.

Premiers recommended federal government to work with U.S. government to ensure that borders would remain open should a pandemic occur.

Same topic was also discussed at Ministers' of Health meeting on May 13th.

In Yukon, a plan was developed in 2001 which was recently updated. Within this plan, specific plans will be developed to address: a) public health; b) impact on government and businesses and to maintain essential services; and, c) general social disruption, e.g., supply lines for commodities, transportation, schools, etc.

Ministers of Social Services Meeting: One-day meeting between federal Minister, Diane Finley and the P/T Ministers was held to discuss following items:

- National Child Benefit
- Child Care Funding – Liberal government had committed \$5 Billion and the new government will provide \$1200/year/child and committed \$250 Million to create more child care spaces. A decision is required as to how the funding will flow, etc.

Children's Act: some political issues are being dealt with between Premier's Office and Council for Yukon First Nations Chiefs, as well as policy work is continuing. It is anticipated that draft legislation will be ready for the fall.

Water Regulations: Consultations are underway for small water systems while regulations for large municipal water system and bulk water delivery are being developed.

Primary Health Care Transition Fund: Brian provided a brief background for new members' benefit. Funding winds down this fall and most projects have been completed. Work on other initiatives will continue, e.g. nurse information line, health human resources, collaborative care, and information sharing. Jan Horton will continue to work on Health Human Resources Strategy development.

Brian reviewed the three funds in health care area that have been designated to three territories.

a) Territorial Access fund will support:

- Health Human Resource Strategy
- Planning & improving mental health services
- Dental Health
- Emergency Medical Services Plan & Quality Assurance
- Implementation of Palliative Care
- Health Promotion and Prevention

b) Medical Travel Fund – will assist with enhancements, e.g., travel subsidy will be increased, per Ministerial announcement.

c) Operational Secretariat Fund - \$10 Million for five years to look at improvement of services for three territories.

COUNCIL BUSINESS:

Discussion of Presentations

Tour of Alternative School – impressive, good to hear people talk about what they enjoy doing, four months wait is too long in Council’s view, good way to reach children who do not fit into the “box.” This set is rewarding for both the teachers and the students. Council appreciates the flexible approach in order to develop trust and relationships as it is important for the drop-outs to re-enter the school, stay long enough to finish, and to succeed.

H&SS Activities : Minister – The Chair will discuss the budget with Brian Kitchen and the Sub-Committee will meet in the near future.

All planning with regards to Pandemic is in Whitehorse – what about communities?

Justice Activities – accepted as information. Council wanted to know whether there would be any consultation process with regards to Corrections Act.

Education Activities – accepted as information and pleased to note that the department is practicing due diligence and putting the policies in place.

Yukon Learn – Council noted the enthusiasm and ambition of the presenter. YLS has broad mandate and branching into other services.

Foster Parents Program – accepted as information.

September Retreat: Council will have regular meeting in Whitehorse on Friday and on Saturday hold a retreat possibly at Sundog Retreat.

Chair suggested following items for the Retreat:

- Ministers of Justice, H&SS & Education
- Deputy Minister of H&SS
- ATIPP – invite Judy Pelchat
- Role, Responsibilities, & Accountability of Volunteers – invite Tracey Erman of Volunteer Bureau.

Action Plan 06-08 – Co-Chairs to work on preliminary document to be discussed at the Retreat.

Anti-Poverty Sub-Committee – Met with Anti-Poverty Coalition who is frustrated with lack of progress and concerned with diminishing food bank donations. They also expressed concern with S.A. Act/Regulation that gives too much power to the Director and none to the recipients.

Council is concerned that the Social Assistance rates have not changed since 1992 while the cost of living keeps rising each year. Council will work with the Department and obtain comparison of S.A. rates with other jurisdictions. Social services will be invited for a presentation and Council will forward specific questions prior to the presentation so these could be addressed during presentation.

Members held a lengthy discussion on inadequacy of social assistance rates, lack of incentives to move off of social assistance, integration of services to support S.A. clients to acquire self-sufficiency and become productive members of society. The issue is not providing funds to the recipients to live on but to enable them to gain skill-set, provide support systems so they could become self-sufficient where possible.

Following discussion, Council considered regrouping its Sub-committee on Social Assistance which could gather information and develop a policy paper on social assistance to present to the Minister of H&SS.

Yukon Committee on Environment & Economic (YCEE) – Update: Chair advised that the mandate of the Advisory Committee on YCEE has been reviewed and the Committee has not held a meeting since February 2005.

Meeting adjourned.