

13 Nov. 2025 – Ottawa Regional Women’s Committee (ORWC)

MEETING MINUTES:

Attendance:

- Burcu Gurkan – Chair **x**
- Nathalie Dumais (CEIU 10452) – Chair (absent)
- Holly Trojan (UNDE 70605) – Treasurer **x**
- Sharon Odell (DCL 70397)– Secretary **x**
- Julie Laska – Communications Officer (absent)
- Rose Touhey – PSAC Zoom Mtg. Host **x**
- Isabelle Beaudoin PSAC Zoom Mtg. Alt. Host (absent)

- Rasha Alnaqueeb **x**
- Renee Amiotte (absent)
- Gurpreet Bajwa (absent)
- Yagusha Bodnar (UCTE Local 7073) (absent)
- Anne-Marie Bostic (absent)
- Maureen Brennan 70165 USJE (absent)
- Beverly Brown (UNE/SEN Local 70181) (absent)
- Sonia Colterman (absent)
- Victoria Coxson (absent)
- Leah Dauphinee (Local 630) (absent)
- Abby Dionne UNE (Local 70080) (absent)
- Tracey Evans (UNDE70605) **x**
- Meaghan Forbes **x**
- Lisa Gregory UNE 70381 **x**
- Christine Griffin (absent)
- Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte (absent)

Sam Hall (absent)

Kathleen Hart (absent)

Noha Haydari x

Zainab Kadhom – Local 7038 x

Karen Kenniphaas (absent)

Zarina Khan (absent)

Hayley Millington (absent)

Jackie Monaghan x

Sandy Naidoo x

Edith Nganga (absent)

Annie Proulx (absent)

Joeli Reardon – IU 70705 x

Elissa Rogolino – UTE Local 70000 (absent)

Phoebe Webber (absent)

Land Acknowledgement 5:30 pm

Approval of Agenda for 13 Nov. 2025

Lisa Gregory - gives motion, 1st approval

Holly Trojan - 2nd approval

All approve.

10 Sept. 2025 Meeting Minutes

Amendment to Sept. 10 minutes, Burcu to update change prior to translation.

Holly Trojan - 1st vote to approve – move - Sept. Minutes amendment

Sandy Naidoo - 2nd vote to approve Sept. Minutes amendment

All approve, moved

In 10 Sept. 2025 minutes, the following will be edited; Lisa G. does watercolour paintings and can offer as prize at the October 2025 Women Regional Conference. Not on silk. Burcu G. to remove “silk” from the minutes.

Holly Trojan - 1st vote to approve - move

Lisa Gregory - 2nd vote to approve

All approve.

Chair's report

- PSAC 2025 Regional Women's Conference (3-5 Oct. 2025), Cartier Hotel QC

The conference was a success. 80 women in total attended.

It was highest record in attendance to a regional women's conference yet.

Rose T. and Isabelle B. did an incredible job with organizing, prep, and support during the conference – thank you. The conference atmosphere was a good balance of joy and smiles.

The raffle to support Ingrid Women's Shelter, was a success.

Photos were taken of this event, and will be shared in the near future by the photographer.

- NCR 2025 Council Fall Meeting (25 Oct. 2025), Meeting

Sharon O. and Holly T. attended this event for ORWC.

During the meeting, ways on how to save at conferences was discussed, and ensuring that those who say they are going to an event do attend, or at least give notice to allow another member to attend.

How to get more participants in PSAC courses, JPL workshops and other training was highlighted. Again, members who were registered need to report when they cannot attend so other members can join instead.

Especially, French courses, require more participation, and when numbers are low they often get cancelled. Bilingual participants should try to attend as well, in order to not have courses cancelled at last minute.

- PSAC 2025 National Health & Safety Conference (26-28 September), Sheraton Hotel T.O.

Holly T., Karen K., Yagusha B., and Sharon O. attended this event from ORWC members.

Climate Change and how it affects our Work was the focus at the H&S National Conference, including the topics on workers battling forest fires, floods, extreme temperatures and a highlight on women's PPE, how it is different from men's PPE but, not recognized as a safety hazard when men's PPE does not fit women workers. Women have bigger hips, and smaller in the waist. The majority of PPE clothing at Canadian work sites is still suited for men, leaving protective coverage gaps for women. Also, uncomfortable for women and do not protect the same way they should, as PPE does for men. The result for women who wear men PPE is risk of injury, improper protection, and many other safety concerns.

Its 2025-2026 and about time for PPE to be designed and created for women, with safety in mind, similar to why PPE was designed for men for their safety. This awareness must be shared.

The 2025 National H&S conference also focused on work during time of Climate Change. For example, when staff, including women, have to work outside during extreme heat and humidity or in extreme cold to perform their job, not only do we have to think of changes to PPE to make it helpful, but also how to access this proper equipment to fit times of extreme weather occurrence. Or possibly the work must wait until safe, to research and add to policies, collective agreements on having proper coverage for time off until it is safe to work. Another example, concerning Canada Post letter carriers. In Canada in some parts of the country it can be -40C, very cold with additional windchill to think of, when carrying mail door to door outside in such a climate.

Need to advocate for all workers health and safety on this matter, as heat stroke has become more common too, and the risk rises with age of worker – the difference for older workers could be 15C more heat temp that is not tolerated, as well as it is for a younger worker.

Additionally, there was an introduction to the new “PSAC Health and Safety TOOL KIT” guide. This guide was provided to all delegates at the conference through the electronic platform portal.

- PSAC 2025 NCR Health & Safety Conference 8-9 November - Hilton Leamy Lake Casino,

Noha H., Holly T., Karen K., Yagusha B., Beverly B. and Sharon O. attended this event from ORWC members.

The issue with online registration for this conference was fixed with a new invitation.

There was good attendance. Gilles Lavigne chair and Karen Kenniphaas vice-chair, co-hosted from the Health and Safety NCR Committee.

The focus on Mental Health in the workplace within health and safety education was a welcome subject. Often mental health is not reviewed as much as physical health.

There were presentations on work place hazards for mental health, how to notice and prevent them.

Noha recommended one of the speakers Berak Hussain, Registered Psychotherapist. She spoke on Nurturing Resilient Workplaces: Psychological Health and Safety Through Practical, Trauma-Informed, and Culturally Sensitive Strategies.

The other speakers were; Julie Lavergne, critical thinking, PPE for your brain. Denis St.Jean, health and safety, useful tools and new challenges with intro to the new “PSAC Health and Safety TOOL KIT” guide, with slides detailing its use. (Note this same tool kit was introduced at the National Health and Safety Conference in Sept. 2025 too). Stefanie Holmden, beyond burnout to moral trauma in the workplace. Mary Ann Baynton, health and safety’s evolving role addressing psychosocial hazards. Dr. Kevin Hedges, OHCOW -Air quality in the workplace, and a panel discussion was conducted on National insights to regional action for strengthening health and safety in the NCR.

- **Budget 2025 Workforce Adjustments (WFA), PSAC Website Education & Info. Seminars Fall 2025**

Info. on PSAC website will be updated as we learn more about the early retirement packages the Canadian Govt. is working on with the Treasury Board. The PSAC is concerned about where the money for these packages is coming from. Canadian seniors in retirement now, paid into the pension system that had a buffer fund. That buffer is now being used to pay out present Public Service staff in the new govt. proposal that federal govt. staff volunteer to go on early retirement, age 50 – and gap in years service will not be penalized.

PSAC also does not know where all cuts will be yet. The WFA training sessions are in areas where cuts have already happened during past summer/ fall 2025 but, for reference the PSAC website is for self reference education on this subject. All govt. departments will be affected, especially staff that will remain, workloads are expected to balloon in size. Will need to watch out for numbers of staff burn-out.

We need to mobilize and share information on this topic, fast track resources for training for those effected. PSAC asks the government for more input and for a timeline that is fair. DND department will likely not see cuts, they are hiring instead, mostly engineers. In most departments now there is already not enough staff, and cutting more will be a challenge. 3,000 jobs were cut the last time with little to no notification. PSAC will have more meetings in future to deliver education on WFA. Please attend these meetings to be up to date. There is a pattern the employer often follows before cuts occur.

There is also a concern that AI will eventually replace staff within the Public Service jobs, as this is what the current Cdn. Govt. is pushing for, as another cost savings. Likely there will be further cuts. PSAC is trying its best to implement protective language with WFA, to limit the unemployment numbers, and to keep a record on the membership that remain during low staffing periods. Will there be more burn-out numbers? How will these cuts effect Canadian Communities with stoppage or delay on important services?

Looking Ahead;

Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW) Seminar on Ending Gender Based Violence 19 Nov. 7pm, at the National Gallery of Canada.

ORWC highly recommends members to attend this event if they can. There is a cost for in-person participation, but online registration is free. The link to register is in the 13 Nov. 2025 ORWC Agenda.

PSAC 2025 National Women's Conference 21-23 Nov. at Westin Castle Harbour Hotel, TO
Reminder that ORWC has entered a resolution on domestic violence education– that will need member support. There will be 5 or more delegates within our ORWC members attending this conference. Rose T. will be facilitating a workshop.

PSAC 2025 National Equity Conference 3-7 May 2026 at Royal Bank of Canada Convention Center, Winnipeg, Manitoba. The deadline for resolution submissions is 14 Nov. 2025. Results of delegates chosen will be heard in February 2026.

16 Days of Activism – Ending GBV and DV 25 Nov. to 10 Dec. 2025

City of Ottawa Heritage Building to be lit again this year in purple sponsored by Hydro Ottawa. 6 Dec. 2025 commemoration for victims of Polytechnique, 6-6:30pm, we need to have more PSAC reps at this event. When attending please dress well for the winter weather, it can be cold.

Human Rights Day, PSAC Event 10 Dec. 2025

This event will be organized by RMAC, and we need a member from each PSAC committee to attend to plan the preparations. We will be meeting online leading up to 10 Dec. We need to share the work, as last year 2024 event did not have enough volunteer to split the load on planning. We are having an event again this year in 2025 in honour of Gord's past involvement. Edith Nganga will chair these planning meeting, please contact her if you are able to volunteer help with the planning prep.

PSAC NCR Inter-Committee Holiday Party, 4 Dec. 2025

We will not have a ORWC meeting online on 11 December, instead our committee will participate in person at the inter-committee holiday party. The event will not be at PSAC HQ it will be somewhere else in the city. Last year we hired Chef Ric to cater food but, this year the PSAC holiday event will be at a different location, so the food will likely be a different source too.

ORWC needs wording for funding this holiday dinner. Last year, in 2024, we had a contribution to food and supplies up to \$1,000, because it was the first time committees were getting together to celebrate. Let's review before making a motion this year, because it was not clear on how inter-committee funding would happen, and not clear on who would make decisions on it either.

Motion for ORWC funding for holiday dinner Dec.4; Burcu G. to move that the ORWC provide funding for up to \$1,500.00 for venue rental, catering and/ or incidentals for the inter-committee holiday dinner taking place on Dec. 4, 2025.

Lisa Gregory - 1st vote to approve - move

Joeli Reardon - 2nd vote to approve

All approve, motion carries by consensus.

ORWC Meeting in January 2026

Normally the ORWC meetings occur the second Thursday of each month but, because January 1st is occurring during the holidays, committees have to shift dates, and ORWC committee will have to shift our date within the calendar for our meeting, to **Thursday 22 Jan. 2026**. Also, as discussed, we will have no ORWC meeting on 11 December, instead our Dec. meeting will be replaced with the inter-committee party on Dec. 4. Burcu proposes move of meeting dates for ORWC December 2025 and January 2026.

Lisa Gregory - 1st vote to approve – move

Holly Trojan - 2nd vote to approve

All approve, motion carries by consensus.

Round Table:

- **Water Colour Event Booking in 2026**

Some of our ORWC members won the water colouring event tickets during the prize draw at the Women Regional Conference in October. The date for this class with Lisa Gregory, will need to be planned for the new year 2026. Thank you, Lisa for your donation of time in respect to the draw and helping the Gatineau Women's Shelter. Lisa will decide on a date to hold the event, and Burcu can connect winners, and register a space for meeting at PSAC.

- **ORWC Sweater/ Hoodies**

There are still hoodies that need to be delivered to members who ordered them. Those members who have not received please send an email to the ORWC email so that Burcu can connect with you for the delivery of the sweaters.

- **Bingo Night – AGM in March 2026**

Would this be an interesting event for ORWC?
We can discuss more during the next meeting in January 2026

- **Feedback on the Women's Regional Conference 2025**

This conference was considered a success, but we would like your feedback for ideas, comments that will be taken into consideration for the next conference event – in 3 years. We saw more partners and delegates remaining in the main room during evenings, which tells us there was interest in the subjects being discussed. There were comments on meals and evening entertainment was positive. Others confirmed that when we were speaking of sensitive info., during daytime sessions, it was just as important to protect the space by having no men in the room. Members also really liked the additions of being part of the community such as the prize draw to help the women shelter in Gatineau, and the info. tables/ volunteers of Interval House Ottawa, and Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW).

We really need to do more community outreach. This narrative can change, as ORWC members are part of the community too. Joeli R. commented that the conference was amazing. Noha H. commented that the ORWC executive team (Burcu G., Sharon O., Natalie D. and Holly T.) did an amazing job. Rose T. comments that at each conference something more is learned; at the 2025 National Women's Conference on 20-23 Nov, there will be a regional caucus for our group to discuss the Regional Conference feedback again.

****Reminder;** there will be no ORWC meeting on **11 Dec. 2025**,
An inter-committee holiday party will occur instead on **4 Dec. 2025**.

Meeting Ends 6:52 pm

(Next meeting date, shifted from 8 Jan. 2025, as per vote detailed above)

Next Meeting: 22 Jan. 2026