

**14 June 2024 – OTTAWA REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE (ORWC) MEETING  
MINUTES:**

**Attendance:**

Burcu Gurkan – Co-Chair  
Candice McMullen – Co-Chair  
Karen Kenniphaas - Treasurer  
Sharon Odell – Secretary  
Julie Laska – Informal Communications Officer

Rose Touhey – PSAC Zoom Mtg. Host

Noha --  
Tracey Evans  
Sandy Naidoo  
Holly Trojan UNDE\_70605  
Nathalie Dumais PSAC  
Maureen 70165 USJE  
Elissa Rogolino UTE Local 70000  
Zarina Khan  
Yagusha Bodnar UCTE Local 70703  
Sharon Bulger

**Agenda:**

Greetings – opening meeting at 5:35 p.m.

- Minutes taken at NCR Council Retreat
- June 14-15 NCR Council Retreat – Attending, Rose Touhey, Burcu Gurkan, Candice McMullen, Sharon Odell

Reminder: skipping July / August ORWC meetings, as proposed in last June meet-up – in which consensus agreed at last May 2024 meeting.

**PSAC COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS**

-\_RVP office posts minutes to committees.

These are very delayed due to translation requirements prior to post.

Need to send after meeting as per members accessibility and transparency.

Coaching secretaries for turn-around – place deadlines on :

\*translation

\*access

\*up-to-date info.

When received late, dampens and makes zero representation.

- OAC continue intersectionality (no silos)
- collaboration to find events, budget and joint ventures
- to generate understanding and sense of how to navigate.
- secretary minutes have been an issue for years.

-Some already done this way for example B.C. PSAC pull work from a shared drive/ site.  
To have access to documents gives PSAC strength across the country, how are we to engage our neighboring PSAC committees without cross-over information available?

### TRIENNIAL CONVENTION 2024

-We have people at PSAC who do not want to go to another triennial convention again due to repeat issues.

- With so many at the mics we do not communicate enough, need townhalls in between these large meetings to improve communication.
  - We need better collaboration we would like to extend this discussion by having a meeting over the summer or in fall to open up a line of
- communication and reach out to other regional committees – start with regions.
- Ask OAC to have that space 2 weeks advance notice to be virtually together in a meeting on this topic.
- Hybrid is important, and we have a election next year 2025, we need to start mobilizing now.
- MDAC committee is tired of not being heard during planning of events such as triennial conventions.
- We need events like this clearly thought out, with decompression room. Those with accessibility needs, are required to be at the table.
  - Need to know how to work in collaboration, some PSAC members are angry, frustrated and disappointed about this
- and hope that resolve can be found to prevent this from occurring again.

### T- SHIRT/ STICKERS for ORWC

-What about sticker design for our ORWC committee?  
We could look into designs for t-shirts, etc.

### COMMUNITY ISSUES

-Homelessness/-Housing crisis, suicide, addictions, trauma, mental health, incarceration – no reform/support.

On going challenges. Racism – institutional systemic and internal. No clean water, malnourishment in communities.

Indigenous are found to be behind others economically.

-Supplies are only generic to help with any of this, generic and only so many can help – to cut cost.

-An imposing process on Canadian economy – Oka and Wet'suwet'en, these protests are managing, not helping indigenous people.

History of “wards of the state” – children controlled.

-Canada viewed as a country of excess in the world, however some are treated like 2<sup>nd</sup> class citizens.

-No one should be illegal – advocacy required for immigration as well.

### WORKPLACE HIRING PROCESSES

-There are systemic issues in workplaces with automated screening used by government Human Resources depts.

-There are filter tools on new applicants for jobs i.e. 80% psychometric test usage in which neurodivergent applicants are more likely to be weeded out of new staffing.

-Management can now contradict what HR proposes as inclusive. -HR can advise but, managers do not have to follow – they have control to choose staff they want or not.

-It should not be about people's disabilities, it should be about resolving hiring barriers.

-Management should be about people in the workplace, not money and power

### COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP

- To understand you do not have all the answers or skill sets to tackle a challenge.

- Source or information is often more than what is sitting on the table with PSAC membership.

- All PSAC committees should pool resources to obtain certain goals. -That would be inclusivity and intersectionality at its best!

-Show solidarity!

-There are limitations for everyone and when there are wider council meetings it gives a chance to network knowledge.

Advantages:

- A wide range of ideas – ones that others would not have thought of.

Disadvantages:

- Ideas can be “stolen”- or credited to originating somewhere else.
- Too many “cooks in the kitchen” differing opinions
- Agenda's not on par with others.
- Too many decision makers giving input
- People taking an idea and “-running with it” in a different direction than intended

Ideas to help:

-Keep discussion topic simple (set parameters so that it remains on track).

Too much input slows down the process i.e., possibly leads to never coming to a resolution.

More advantages:

- Willing to share, invitational – sense of belonging offered.

- Better results across the board
- Get something done in a shorter period.

-There is room for intersectionality but not inherent to the collaborative PSAC leadership and membership.

This topic should be raised. – potential for conflict if divisive.

Also sometimes not good to have a quick resolution may need more time to digest resolution depending on context.

- Too much input and then never coming to a resolution should be avoided.
- Bias exists when training new members and having it shape in only one direction, creates stigma.
- If we understand differences, we may be able to balance and move forward better solutions and strategies.
- Must combat this and take collaborative energy and be more productive with use of best strengths
- Announce what challenges can fare first to direct the solutions properly.

#### WHAT IS A TRUE ALLY-?: -

- Placing your needs and goals aside to think of a marginalized group.

- Listen and understand their views take over counter productivity – need to engage and connect —to not do more harm than good.

- Work with, not against – come forward and work a-mass.

- Listen to understand, not just to respond.

- An ally combines methods together to unite for mutual benefit. -This means you do not get to call yourself an ally, instead those you support will decide to call you, to plan together.

- Must understand how directly affected, the needs, the knowledge before starting to help.
- There is a difference between dictating help and working with.
- Need to have a real collaboration – Ask what can I, or what can we do?

-Do not take control or influence to support own personal agenda.

-Should remain on the main point of help required, to stay in synch to avoid 2 different agendas or campaigns.

-Cannot place empathy into an ally-ship when you do not speak of experience either. Must listen instead and understand.

-Listen first and accept any criticism with grace. Feelings are not facts; chastising is also not helpful. However, expressing frustration politely is okay.

-Make spaces safe & inclusive for gender and/ or disability as well.

Do Not:

Rely on media articles or news churning an agenda.

Do not assume answers and run with them. i.e. documents without questioning and send outs – wrong goal.

Do not speak on behalf of a group, get context and consent first.

Do not hijack an initiative – get direction from the group you are considering giving help to.

- Asking what your intent to help is makes a big difference, in providing actual support instead of just being seen as support.
- Also, do not be a “sling-shot”, do not pick and choose what you want to help with, and be there for the entire commitment.
- Not a photo op must remain connected. They know you are helpful through your actions, not by one saying they are helpful.
- Remember it is not always possible for sharing experiences of trauma, can be triggering. Sometimes not compatible to hear.

#### MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING/ FIRST AID:

- OFL and Ottawa District Labour Council have training for mental health.-
- Cost is covered to help with resources for PSAC members and self labour advocacy.
- Touches on the subject of vicarious trauma that some workers are exposed to.
- Must look at content, intention and currency on this trauma topic, especially if it is for activism.
- First Aid training such as this is also for teleworkers, no longer just for in-person jobs.
- Did we get to learn what we were trained for? There are online sessions for training – no wait for courses to be offered.
- With more PSAC recognition however there is usually a certificate at the end.
- Each committee can work together and put funds together to achieve this training.

#### OTHER PSAC TRAINING for COMMITTEES

- What could also be discussed?
- How to grieve before 25-day rule is up, so many members do not know these deadlines and resolve on issues depend on timely filed grievances.  
i.e. enter into voluntary discussion – this helps freeze time so that grievances can still be filed if the discussion does not work out.
- Informal Conflict resolution
- New trend in accommodations becoming difficult to achieve with employers, disrespect. Use of operational requirements as being the challenge to accommodate.
- Some disabilities are used as a disciplinary issue as well.
- Fitness work evaluation – often cancelled and must complete again after the pandemic. If permanent disability before, what has changed?
- Members come first with PSAC not committees, as members are the spine of the union.
- Keep offering classes they are always filled.
- Feminist groups are 1 out of 5 within government workers now. – Need a supportive environment – spiral pressure to continue voicing concerns.

Meeting Closes 6:35\_p.m.

Next meeting: **12 Sept. 2024**

|