PSAC North Regional Council meeting minutes
September 27, 2023, 4pm MT/ 3pm Yukon/ 6pm ET

In attendance: Quorum reached = 13

Regional Council members:
Josee-Anne Spirito, Regional Executive Vice President, PSAC North
Reyhan Sarikaya, Alternate REVP, PSAC North
Gayla Thunstrom, President, Union of Northern Workers (UNW)
Jason Rochon, President, Nunavut Employees Union (NEU)
Donna-Marie, YT Territorial Director
Sherry Masters, Chair, Yukon Access Committee
Gordon Reed, Yukon Regional Indigenous Peoples' Committee
Lisa Keenan, Yukon Regional Health and Safety Committee
Stephanie Crocker, NWT Territorial Director
Horatio Sam-Aggrey, NWT Racially Visible Committee
Derek Allerton, NU Regional Health and Safety Committee
Kushalini Naidoo, NWT Regional Women's Committee
Steve Geick, President, Yukon Employees Union (YEU)

Regrets:
Geoff Ryan, NU Territorial Director
Lisa Kirk, NU Area Council
Roberta Wurtak, Yukon Regional Pride Committee
Linda Moen, Yukon Regional Women's Committee
Derek Yap, Yukon Racially Visible Committee
Mary Kootoo, NU Regional Women's Committee

Add to the Agenda #11 Joint national council – from Reyhan shelter cost differential

Staff:
Francois Picard, Regional Coordinator, North
Eveen Mohammad, Executive Assistant to the REVP North

1. Call to order at 4:05 pm

2. Roll Call

3. Adoption of agenda

4. Adoption of previous meeting minutes
   Deferred to next meeting.

5. Activity Reports

Report of the REVP North
Moved by Reyhan Sarikaya.
Seconded by Gayla Thunstrom.
Carried.

Comments – Gord Reed – Took part in the special AGM
Jason Rochon– Thank you for all the work you've done in Nunavut, for the 130 strike and see the results and be at the ratification vote. Thank you and I appreciate it.
Josee-Anne Spirito– I've also appreciated being there and the group fought really hard, what they achieved was unbelievable.
Gord Reed – I think your participation can broaden some considerations that wouldn't have been considered. Thank you for your input.

Report of the UNW President
Moved by Gayla Thunstrom.
Seconded by Reyhan Sarikaya.
Carried.

Questions: Horatio – What is her take on current negotiations with the GNWT?
Answer - Gayla Thunstrom – It's going to be tough, there will be some updates going around. We're currently looking at doing some of those. Reach out to the RVP's or BT members, there have been economic improvements but some concessions on the table. We're heading into mediation with the employer but I don't have dates yet. We may end up doing some virtual updates for the membership.

Report of the NWT Racially Visible Committee Chair
Moved by Horatio Sam-Aggrey.
Seconded by Gordon Reed.
Carried.

Report of the NEU President
Moved by Jason Rochon.
Seconded Gayla Thunstrom.
Carried.

Report of the Yukon Access Committee Chair
Moved by Sherry Masters.
Seconded by Jason Rochon.
Carried.

Report of the Yukon Health and Safety Committee Chair
Moved by Lisa Keenan.
Seconded by Gordon Reed.
Carried.

Question –Resolution that passed on pan-territory health and safety should be moved to regional. Answer - Josee-Anne – The by-laws should be updated by the pol comms and this position has not been filled since I started my position but the position should be posted and closed so we're hoping the position is filled soon and can be updated soon.

Report of the Yukon Territorial Director
Moved by Donna-Marie.
Seconded by Stephanie Crocker.
Carried.

Point of Privilege – Gord – on being new – there is a network and support within when we come together like this, what's lacking is a way to reach out to others when we need that support. Can we put a list of emails or contact to be able to reach out to others to help us to come together in a unified way.
Josee-Anne – Good idea, I will work with council on getting everyone's consent so that we can get everyone's contact to come together. I think it's a great idea.
Horatio – It would be useful to have some sort of training for the executives, especially for the equity committee – there's a lot of turnover, to have some sort of training on how to chair a meeting and what it requires and what is expected of them.
Josee-Anne – Your point is well taken as well, I wanted to bring this up in roles and responsibilities. What do we want to see happen? There may be a need for a training so we're better affected in our roles.
Gayla – I wanted to comment, I totally agree with Horatio, national leadership training is happening mid – dec. and some folks on this call will be in that training.
Josee-Anne – I'm not sure if it's out yet but the communication with the membership hasn't started yet, it's something that I strongly encourage you to attend, I found it very beneficial as a leader.
Francois – I wanted to add, I've been having conversations with Ian and Dawn to provide training for all execs for various human rights committees and we've had prelim convos with Josee-Anne for providing these opportunities to at least some of you.
Reyhan – I'm looking for more clarification, quite a bit of communication sent out on social media and the websites, but there are prerequisites that need to be filled. Is the messaging that everyone on the council would be receiving this training?
Gayla – There are 2 programs, union development program – it's a year long that there are prerequisites for that, the training I'm talking about is down in Ottawa, it's a 3 day period, usually happens every period. It has to do with learning your roles. I'm not sure which elected positions are going to be at it, please look out for it.
Josee-Anne – I'll inquire to know when the info will be coming out. Union leadership training – if you're missing a requirement somewhere, I would still encourage you to apply. I think PSAC will want to work with you , it's a yearlong training and I think it will be really valuable.

Report of the Yukon Indigenous People's Committee
Moved by Gordon Reed.
Seconded by Jason Rochon.
Carried.

Gord Reed – I need some guidance on a resolution regarding opioids and another for women's access to shelters. The Opioid resolution is high priority in the Yukon, but it didn't' get any further. I got the impression it would be brought forward at the regional council meeting. It's important to us in the territory.

Question - Gayla Thunstrom– How many resolutions were not covered at convention?
Answer - Josee-Anne Spirito – I would have to find that out.
Gayla Thunstrom – I believe that anything that does not have a costing to it this council can deal with it
Josee-Anne Spirito – The next council meetings will be in person, and we have 2 days for it and we'll have more time to discuss this particular topic.

6. New Business
7. Change to council – **Update on Regional Council Members** –
Kisandra Reid, YT Regional Young Workers Committee – Resigned
Michael Critch, NWT Health and Safety Committee – Resigned
Michael Barwell, Yukon Area Council – Retired

8. **REVP Staffing Update –** Josee-Anne Spirito
   - Staffing has been challenging when I first started there was no staff in the office. Thank you to Francois and the 3 territories for the support.
   - Eveen Mohammad, EA temporary until Theresa Baird comes back from leave.
   - Political communications – been posted and closed as of sept. 15

9. **Regional Update –** Francois Picard
   - My first full regular regional council meeting
   - Staffing – Iqaluit
     Jordan Mota join to support he members on the picket line on Iqaluit housing as a term regional rep. Finished his term, labour relations officer at NEU currently. IQ – Admin will be posted soon, the posting will represent for Inuit beneficiaries, process on working with HR on this.
   - Yellowknife – challenging circumstance with the evacuation of the town. Tip my hat to everyone who's remained available and accessible to colleagues and members. Last august, Catherine Kelner??? As a rep, working remotely but she will in YK RO as of next Monday. A third rep position closed as well, we should have someone in the position soon.
   - Whitehorse- not much change to report. I want to tip my hat to the folks in the Whitehorse office for pulling the convention in Iqaluit. Many thanks goes to them for that. Congratulations to Shauna for being selected for the CEP program, so very shortly, we will have a term AA position posted for the Whitehorse RO.

11. **Financial Update -** Presented by Regional Coordinator, North – Francois Picard

- Finance Report:

Note – proven to be challenging to have the audit done – some work was completed by Eveen and Francois while she was in the office, but unfortunately we do not have an audited budget to report to council. I'm disappointed but it's not anyone's fault but

Francois – following the regional convention, at that time the work with the auditor in the month of June. Many documents that were created lead up to the convention so I was able to provide that. But some physical copies were provided, a lot of the documents have been provided, the auditors need to complete the work. A lot of work has been done , the list of documents first appeared intimidating, folks at PSAC national and finance have been very helpful. The process is never as fast as we think we are but there's been a lot of progress on that front.
JA – I do apologize for not having the document today for council but we are close and we'll have the documents for our next meeting.
Jason – I totally understand I was in a similar situation, it's probably better this way anyway because it will be in person so we can discuss it then.
JA – I think it will be a good opportunity because it will be the end of 2023 and we can look at the year end.

No report to pass.

12. Roles and Responsibilities

- I have sent the by-laws, but it can be vague. But take a look it can be helpful, it's the 2017 and it's a priority to update these by-laws. And the pol comms will be updating this.
- I invite you to read them and what it says about your role.
- Under the by-laws – we are supposed to have regional committees. Section 9, finance, political action and education. It's quite vague. What I want to focus on suggestions on training needs on council or in your position.

Jason – I think Gord was asking about training for some of the goals we have on regional council. Maybe it's something we have during our in-person meeting.
And then on a personal note, I'll be reaching out to you on local development training.
Gord – the idea that I have is thinking about training but coming at it from a different perspective, start off with a workshop and see if a training would be required at all. What I'm thinking about is reconciliation and what it means for the org. as whole from a union perspective and what may be seen as some best practices to see how some folks are doing. Or gives us the opportunity to identify what needs to change or closing the gap on some things. I don't know what it would actually look like.
JA – These are some very fair points, that's why I'm welcoming your thoughts to know what would be beneficial to this council.
Steph Crocker – training for directors, is it possible to send an intro email to the directors for the 3 territories introducing themselves. If I can bounce ideas off those people
-list of unions involved in the 3 territories of presidents of those locals. It would be helpful to be able to have that conversation to see if that's something that works for them. I plan on setting up an NWT email so that all that goes to one email and doesn't get lost in the personal email. I'm all for working as a collab group.
JA- that's something we can do out of my office.
Donna – Marie – I agree.

Horatio – I was looking at it from the equity community Point of view and that would be dependent on the budget, and Francois mentioned training, but if the training would be what is expected at the national level. Chairing a meeting, bylaws, how to activate your membership.
JA – that's helpful, thank you. That gives me a lot of feedback , I can talk to the REO and have a chat with him.

13. Committees

- We have some standing committees – finance, political action, education committee, I would like to create a hardship fund committee so that we can take it to the national level.
- I did create a hardship fund committee during the strike and we were able to submit some stuff to the AEC, ideally someone from all 3 territories. And same for the other committees. I would say there's been some challenges on reporting finances, but it's very important to accountability to our members. So I would invite people to simply sending an email if you're interested in sitting on one or more of the standing committee's of council. Knowing we have to accommodate diff. time zones, I'm willing to explore different avenues.

14. By-Law Updates

- 2 things, one I've touched on. Once we get a political communications officer, we will update the by-laws it is a priority.
- There was a lot of discussion on the fact that our by-laws are not gender neutral at convention. We do have a national resolution back in 2017, the pathway to accomplishing this would be to bring forward our own resolution, but what I found out, the NBOD may give us the ability to bring forward that change before Convention to do this. It's a priority to address this before convention.

15. Shelter cost differential – Reyhan

JA – update, I've had a lot of discussion around this topic and I have an update. The interpretation of the review of how it's being administered, it's that the shelter cost differential allowance would only be given to those who rent, not own their own homes. Historically it's been given to both. This is a problem for a lot of people in the North, it's an issue around the country. The union's position is let's not implement this. What I'm hearing is that that's not the communication that's being brought to the members. It has been high on the priority list on the impact on the north.
Reyhan – there was an info session while we were evacuated, next week on the 4th there's another info session – I can share the link . $675 less in my pay every month, massive financial blow to any homeowner. A precedent for 25 years, to taken away this allowance. Unacceptable, and I can't fathom any explanation that would justify this, one of our members USJE – Sam has already written up the grievance wording, hopefully we can come up with a class-action or policy grievance , you can advocate on our behalf and give ppl a sense of house security. Any ounce of support is gladly appreciated.
Steph – who is being affected - if you are in federal housing, it's not going to affect you. But if you are renting or own your own house they will be affected. It's Important we get all the locals that will be affected to have a meeting to make sure everyone is aware. Are you aware of who will be affected and that there's a meeting on the 4th. USJE, UHEW, Military cohorts, this needs to grow heads and legs, lets come together and stop this nonsense.

JA – it's not the NGAC, its TB that interpreted this. They use rent prices, so it doesn't affect home owners, but the language hasn't changed; it has been interpreted this way now. You can be certain the PSAC has been taking this very seriously, myself and other component presidents have raised this as a serious issue. Especially because we know how hard it is to retain and recruit workers, to come after the northern allowance.
Steph – history - beginning of this year, federal employees, in federal housing got notice that they reworked numbers and things will be changing. My rent went up, but to hear other people that are renting and trying to make the North their home by buying, and our northern allowance already was slashed when they put the bridge in in port providence. Through the process of the years, we just got off the strike line, picketing. Greatly appreciate it being added to the convo for tonight.
Sherry – acting chair for area council met last night to write a resolution. I work at the casino, I have federal workers, one of them said that this is the difference for working for the federal govt. He is a renter, that's the thing that makes him keep job, and that being removed he would think about leaving his job. We worked on the resolution tonight and we finished it but having more eyes on it to submit if before the 29th because it would be due by then.
JA – I would be happy to have a look.
Sherry – Lisa can you send that to Josee
Lisa –yes, I can do that.
JA – my suggestion would be to bring back the conference of the North, the last one was in 2009 I think, but people would get together to speak about these challenges. And these conferences would be one of the options of a solution going forward. I'd be happy to work with you.

15. Q&A's
- Thank you for coming together, it's my first one in a long time.
- Steph – the dates for the meetings are they preset?
- JA – we're looking at JAN 25/26th in Yellowknife. Because convention was in Iqaluit.
- We'll build the agenda, if we have time to squeeze the training session in so I'll try my best to make that happen.

16. Upcoming Meeting Dates
    - January 25/26, 2024 – In person Yellowknife
    - April 23rd, 2024 – Tentative

17. Adjournment – Adjourned at 5:36pm MT