



Nanaimo
Homeless
Coalition

NHC Meeting

10am - 12pm, April 2, 2020

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://zoom.us/j/671610943>

In attendance:

Jason Harrison (CMHS), Yvonne Borrows (Salvation Army), Lisa Bhopalsingh (CoN), Karin Kronstal (CoN), Signy Madden (UWCNVI), Dave LaBerge (CoN), Grace Kerr (Service Canada), Andrew Thornton (JHS), John McCormick (JHS), Heidi Hartman (BC Housing), Nadia Boukhouali (MSDPR), Karly Fennell (IH), Terra Kaethler (UWCNVI), Nicole Benson (UWCNVI), Emily Sorensen (UWCNVI), Violet Hayes (ICCS), Inga Cooper (Tillicum Lelum), Theresa MacDonald (SEIA), Kix Citton (NBIS), Laurie MacMillan (MP Assistant), Lois Peterson (Unitarian Shelter), Paul Sibley (Nanaimo Hospice), Gord Fuller (7-10 Club), Chantale Roelens (SEIA), Kim Maandag (Salvation Army), Steve Arnett (Indigenous Community Member), Don Bonner (City Councillor), Erin Hemmens (City Councillor), Shelley Maunula (Haven), Rana Van Tuyl (Celebrate our Differences), Kim Smythe (Chamber of Commerce), Theo Boere (The Mens Centre), E. Jane Osborne (Public Health), Amanda Lemon (Island Health), Andrew Ferguson (JHS), Dennis Creighton and Alexis Petersen (Harewood Neighbourhood House), Paul Manley (MP), Jill Smith (AVI), Taryn O'Flanagan (VIMHS), Sheila Malcolmson (MLA), Keith Wilson (NYSAs), Carolyn Sampson (Correction Services Canada), Lisa Murphy (Island Health), Tanis Dagert (VIU), Melissa Giles (Rent Bank), Brenda Fowler, Joy Bremner, Kerry Watters, Tanya Buxton

Chair: Jason

Agenda:

1. Confirm minutes of February 9, 2020 NHC meeting.
 - **MOTION to accept the Minutes**
 - Moved by Inga Cooper Seconded by Yvonne Borrows **PASSED**
2. Confirm agenda
 - **MOTION to accept the Agenda**
 - Moved by Inga Cooper Seconded by Yvonne Borrows **PASSED**

Sheila Malcolmson gave an update on 2 items:

- 1) B.C. Attorney-General **David Eby**, has brought in an insurance waiver or exemption, for service providers and business for dealing with COVID-19:
Those providing essential services now cannot be held liable for damages caused by exposure to COVID-19 while continuing to operate, so long as they are complying with orders from the provincial health officer and other authorities:
<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020AG0029-000616>

- 2) Shane Simpson (MLA) made an announcement of a \$300 bump up for those that don't qualify for federal support:
"For people in B.C. currently receiving income assistance or disability assistance, the Province will temporarily exempt federal employment insurance benefits, including the new \$2,000 Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB). These payments will be fully exempted for the next three months so people receiving income assistance and disability assistance in B.C. will benefit from these new emergency federal support programs, without any reductions to their monthly assistance payments.
For everyone on income assistance or disability assistance who is not eligible for the emergency federal support programs, including the CERB, the Province will provide an automatic \$300-monthly COVID-19 crisis supplement for the next three months. This supplement will also be provided to low-income seniors who receive the B.C. Senior's Supplement and recipients of income assistance or disability assistance who reside in special care facilities." And more at <https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020SDPR0012-000620>

3. Debrief current situation with COVID-19

- Emergency response working group
 - Jason Harrison emailed a document yesterday around the shelter response and current needs. It has gone to the City, BC Housing and Island Health and everyone is working really hard on the pieces that they can affect.
 - Homeless folks are not able to stay home and wash their hands frequently, so this poses a big risk to them and the community. We are looking at how to support individuals that have symptoms or are recovering. Things are moving very fast. We are advocating to be part of the conversation. The City is making more washrooms and water available fairly quickly and have reinstated the HHTF so the leadership groups can share information and support others.
 - We will send out short surveys for who wants to be on working groups - food security, people sleeping rough, shelters, harm reduction.
 - We are hopeful that the HHTF can talk about who is funding what, how we can access the funds and how we support the shelters or set up an emergency shelter.
 - We need a plan for risk stratification and prioritizing and triaging sick people and prioritizing beds.
- Update on Turner Strategies initiative: Design labs/Taskforce/Helpseeker response to COVID-19
- City update by Lisa Bhopalsingh
 - City Council approved 2 motions at an emergency Council meeting:

- i. Additional washrooms and hand sanitizing stations downtown. Washrooms at Maffeo Sutton and Diana Krall continue to be open. We will share a map of sites.
 - ii. The second is to restart the Health and Housing Task Force.
- Lisa Murphy (IH) and Heidi Hartman (BC Housing) have been actively in conversations around shelters and different health facilities, City run and other facilities, and will be hearing from the province as to which is to be used in the near future, for warehousing medical supplies, homeless, etc.
 - We are also looking at trying to adapt the Helpseeker system with Turner Strategies. We have a meeting with them this afternoon to look at timelines and work plans around the system mapping project.
 - St. Peter winter shelter closed March 31, 2020 and SEIA is offering up some of the shelter staff to other shelters to assist in staffing challenges.
 - We are also looking at supporting food and have been talking to Loaves and Fishes, Salvation Army, 7-10 club, and other to see where we go next with this.
 - Thank you for being nimble and adaptive in difficult times.
 - Shower program run by Unitarian shelter still in operation.
 - Council meeting was live streamed and taped and Karin will send the link to Terra to share out.
 - Heidi Hartman added that conversations are happening and BC Housing is looking at options. These are unprecedented times and it is quite challenging. There have been different responses in each community on the island.
 - Lisa Murphy and Amanda Lemons have stepped into Norma Winspers role at Island Health. Stephanie McEwan is leading along with Amanda and working closely with Lisa and Heidi.
- RH funding update (Grace/Signy)
 - We received some additional Reaching Home funding about \$200k Designated and \$200K Indigenous in Nanaimo and \$200K Indigenous in Duncan. The parameters are pretty flexible for service providers to serve their clients' needs.
 - Signy added that there is a desire to hear what IH, BC Housing and the City is doing so that we can see how to best invest dollars and not be duplicating efforts.
 - The City will take initiative in acquiring sites and perhaps food efforts may be a good place for UW to put their efforts, once different facilities are established.
 - We are aware that this crisis will throw people into a high level of vulnerability, so we are looking to support that ongoing.
 - Heidi added that there are still procedures that need to be followed, but that doesn't need to stop the work in our communities. We need to all work together to bring forward solutions to BC housing so that we can be responsive to the needs of each community. We will do all we can to support all the good work. 2 hotel sites are being looked at in Nanaimo as well.
 - Sheila Malcolmson added that the best solution is one that is community driven. Island Health and BC Housing have money to spend on solutions needed to protect the most vulnerable people. Because of Nanaimo recent history with Tent City, there is particular sensitive on proposing a solution on Nanaimo, so I am glad there is a strong NHC to advocate for the community so that there where there is a solution we will have community buy in.
 - Jason added that protecting the most vulnerable isn't just the homeless groups, it's their families, and our service workers, and the community. Yes, we need to communicate more so that we are working collaboratively and use everyone's connections and networks. We can only move this forward together.

- Signy got a call yesterday from steel workers and their members want to help on the island and provincially – and also corporate partners want to be involved.
 - Sheila Malcolmson said that the Hospitality Association was extensively surveyed and she has talked with them lots. Some have offered assistance and were told they wouldn't be needed/weren't appropriate. I don't recommend contacting them again until we get feedback from BCHousing about the results.
4. Pit Count debrief (Andrew Thorton)
- Screen share info – power point – presentation will be attached to Minutes.
 - Signy asked if the number includes the 2 modular sites? No it doesn't as they are considered housed by the RH homeless count definitions
 - Jason has 200+ plus people on a daily basis that outreach team connect with and they saw very few on the day of the count, so we know that they were not captured in the PiT count.
 - CMHA meet on daily basis and we have been highlighting nationally and provincially that there will be a flood of people in a dire situation and we have to be prepared for more people who were on the edge to end up in a homeless situation. Need to capture this as part of the conversation. Right now we are in the crisis response, but we will be transitioning into the new normal in the future and need to prepare for that as well.
5. BC Rent Bank presentation and discussion (Melissa Giles)
- Homelessness prevention program
 - Melissa is the project lead for BC rent bank – powerpoint presentation to be attached to Minutes.
 - Province of BC and Van City community foundation – \$10M dollars to fund the project. There are 8-9 existing rent banks already in the province and we are looking to test and develop different models to run a provincial run bank, but we are not at that place right now
 - This is not a Grant but a loan that is repaid in 6-24 months to maintain housing and utilities or security deposits
 - Most Rent banks you can only have one loan out at a time
 - Administrative costs are much more than providing loans, assessing people, helping people navigate systems and access resources
 - We have to look at what model works best for each area
 - Budgets are always a big thing North Shore and Tri-City, around \$90K each– the amount you put into your loan capital will harvest itself in years to come
 - There is a 25-35% default rate on loans – legally could send out collections, but we do try to build relationships with these vulnerable people to work out a process for repayment instead.
 - Is the long term vision to run the program Provincially rather than from local sites? Possibly, yes
 - What makes it better than money mart?
We want to divert people from those places as we have a strong social purpose and are committed to these individuals and working with them on solutions.
6. Communications update - Nicole Benson (UWCNVI)
- Thanks for sending in service updates for us to share out.
 - We are going forward with regular communications to centralize info and resources and be the direct place for changes that are happening.
 - Job posting for NHC Comms 2020 – please let me know if you have anyone interested.
 - We are taking info as it comes and communicating out in these changing times.

- Draft of Comms strategy in the works
 - Any updates to share please send along to me at communications@uwcncvi.ca
 - We are grateful to be working so closely with the City
7. Update on NHC Governance committee – NHC structure (Jason)
- We did have 1 meeting before COVID, and looked at the structure that was there and looked back to the terms of reference and at the various committees to see what is important to add at this time on specific topics.
 - We got together with shelter providers to create a response around COVID and also a community consultation group with some Coalition members, IH, BC Housing and the City to keep people in the loop and to keep information flowing.
 - We will look at who it makes sense to be on what group.
 - For questions and updates we will send out a google form that you can click a link to respond to agenda items and can add questions and comments
 - We are working to create a way for meaningful engagement with the group as things are moving really fast.
8. Round table: Service provider updates as time permits – No time available

Next Meeting May 7, 10-12am TBD