



**VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION**

virrja@ymail.com

<http://acjs.ca/VIRRJA.html>

MINUTES GENERAL MEETING VIA ZOOM 6 APRIL 2020

Meeting began at 10:05

22 people in attendance. Genesis Hunt-Higginson and Vanessa Ramsdale co-chaired the meeting. They were complimented on their facilitation.

Opening round of introductions and acknowledgement of the territory in which they work and reside.

AGM and Conference. The Executive decided to de-couple the AGM and annual conference this year due to the uncertainty around COVID-19. The AGM will be held as scheduled: Saturday 17 October 2020 either in personal and ZOOM or just ZOOM depending on permitted gatherings. The annual conference is postponed until such gatherings are safe to hold and after sufficient time to organize it.

Nominations for the 2020-2021 board will be set at the 25 May 2020 general meeting. Terms for President and Treasurer expire this year. Jane Waterman is very happy to step down as Secretary if anyone would like to take that role.

Committee to revisit Purpose of VIRRJA, By-laws and Strategic Plan

8 people volunteered for this committee: Vanessa Ramsdale, Gail Jewsbury, Sue Saunders, Caryl Wylie, Myles Morrison, Tamara Alfred, Richard Tarnoff and Jane Waterman. They will meet every 2 weeks for 2 hours over Zoom. Work will start in April.

Use of VIRRJA's ZOOM account

Anyone can set up a ZOOM account and hold unlimited meetings up to 40 minutes with up to 100 attendees and unlimited 1 on 1 meetings for free.

VIRRJA has a PRO subscription at a cost of \$200/yr. Allows meeting duration of 24 hours, up to 100 attendees and offers user management and reporting features.

Can only schedule one meeting for any given time so will need to keep a calendar.

ZOOM has several online tutorials and webinars. Visit the website and look under the resources tab.

There has been some hacking into ZOOM meetings. Remember to download all updates ZOOM sends. They are upgrading their security.

Paid up members may request the use of VIRRJA's Zoom subscription for meetings relating to RJ. Giving one week's notice if possible, email both Jane: tjwaterman49@gmail.com and Vanessa: vanessaramsdale@siws.ca with the details of the meeting. One will set up the meeting and email the details.

All meetings will be tracked by VIRRJA's Zoom administrator. Meetings may be recorded. Organizer would seek out permission to record before the meeting.

The remainder of the meeting asked participants how they were doing business while dealing with COVID-19:

Darlene Gage, Saltspring. They have purchased a ZOOM PRO account and using it to hold team meetings, do some circle work and training. They do not hold any in-person meetings. If referrals received contact is made and how the case progresses depends on their comfort level with technology. If people have smart phones or tablets they can perhaps access free WIFI outside of libraries etc.

Caryl Wylie and Alyssa Noble-Cota, Arrowsmith CJ Parksville area. Program suspended until mid-June. They use ZOOM to keep in contact with board once a month. When receive referral co-ordinator contacts participants and notify them things will be set up once crisis over. Their office is in the RCMP detachment so Alyssa goes in once a week and keeps in touch with volunteers virtually.

Genesis Hunt-Higginson, Independent practitioner, Campbell River. President of VIRRJA. Working from home. Writing and incorporating RJ practices in that writing.

Jane Waterman, qathet Community Justice, Powell River region. Using ZOOM for team meetings. Putting cases on hold other than preliminary contact as preferable to hold circles in person. May revisit this with time.

Tamara Alfred, Whe-La-La-U area Council, Alert Bay. Has closed the office but on call online. Is dealing with more calls regarding mental health and addictions as people spending more time at home and together. Population is 1500-1700 so able to connect family members. Preparing and giving out bi-weekly care packages, putting the bag on the doorstep.

Vanessa Ramsdale, South Island Wellness Society. Not taking files but giving support by phone and ZOOM. Looking for ways to help vulnerable people, had thought of gift cards but this encourages people to go out. Can use platform DocuSign to get signatures virtually. 3-4 free uses and then a cost. Could have verbal agreement for RJ documents or use snail mail.

Bruce Curtis, Comox Valley Community Justice Centre. Office semi- closed. One volunteer at a time to answer phones. Giving people choices of how to proceed with pre-conference meetings, by phone, online or if in person at the office ensuring physical distancing. Many clients do not have computers. Working on next year's Iona Campagnola lecture by email and phone. This year's was held but Murray Sinclair appeared by video. Worked well. Slowdown in shoplifting cases but getting larger cases e.g. property damage >\$90K. E Division RJ coordinator changed.

Evelyn Zellerer, Peace of the Circle, Vancouver. Back from travelling with her business so in self-quarantine for 14 days. Happy to meet virtually with anyone.

Richard Tarnoff, Community Circles of RJ, Ladysmith. Just starting new program so no cases.

Arlene Fehr, Gold River RJ.

Sue Saunders, Barbara Whittington and Shelley Rose, Saanich Peninsula RJ. Have deferred 20 year celebration. Held AGM over email. Shelley Rose, new chair, was going to take RCMP training but postponed. Motivated to hold executive meetings virtually. Barbara one of program founders. She is a social worker, deemed essential service. Also on Emergency Response team so on alert. Suggested contacting teachers to give a lesson plan on RJ and circles as they are looking for innovative ideas.

Carmen Hildebrand and Melissa, Ladysmith Resource Centre RJ. Carmen has completed report on capacity building and given to Board of Resource Centre. 15 recommendations. Held a 3-way conference call on cell phone. Carmen is also a volunteer facilitator with Warmland RJ.

Tammy Morris, Warmland RJ. Rescheduled AGM and training. Using phone, ZOOM and email to stay in touch with Board. Referrals trickling in from RCMP. Facilitators contacting participants by phone and email but postponing forums until crisis over. Asked if anyone using Survey Monkey for evaluations. It is quite expensive and could VIRRJA take out subscription? Darlene said there is a free version that allows up to 10 questions – probably plenty for evaluation. They have not had a great return percentage. She has also used survey planet but you have to pay for the report. Terri Kalaski can give help with survey monkey.

Terri Kalaski, Independent, Campbell River. Not very busy with training. Diving back into manuals. Reaching out to bring restorative values into conversations. Can help with technology.

Andrea Gertz, John Howard Society RJ, Victoria. Program on hold. Accepting referrals but only initial contact and by phone. School program on hold as schools are closed. Weekly dialogue at William Head jail is continuing in house only. Andrea sending discussion questions for them to use.

Gail Jewsbury, Independent Practitioner, Nanaimo. Her work in tax services deemed essential so she is still going to the office. Hasn't done much with RJ recently. Reminder to mail in memberships and contact information form.

Myles Morrison, West Coast RJ, Ucluelet. Just before COVID closed everything Myles did a training in Ahousaht that was well received. Can be a consultant/reference for RCMP even if case not referred. Myles an army ranger reservist so may be deployed during the COVID crisis. Wondered if VIRRJA can upgrade ZOOM to allow multiple meetings at any given time.

Kristine Atkinson, Campbell River RJ. The new E Division RJ coordinator is Cst. Paula Haider: paula.haider@rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Forms of online communication platforms:

ZOOM

Skype

Facetime

What's App (using smart phone)

Facebook Messenger

Go To Meeting

Google Hangouts

A Closing round was held. Very positive comments about the meeting. Meeting ended at 12.35PM.