



**VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ASSOCIATION**  
[virrja@ymail.com](mailto:virrja@ymail.com) <http://acjs.ca/VIRRJA.html>

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
MINUTES 17 October 2020**

The meeting was held via ZOOM with 18 attendees representing 13 programs, 1 independent practitioner, 1 program guest, Chirstianne Paras and Jordan Diplock.

At 10.03 AM Vanessa Ramsdale welcomed everyone to the AGM.

Introductory circle was held for attendees to give their name, program and the First Nations territory they were in.

Agenda: Gail Jewsbury conducted the business portion of the meeting. She asked for 2 additions to the agenda: Approval of signing officers and Recognition of long time members. The agenda was adopted as amended.

The minutes of 2019 AGM were approved as circulated.

Board Report: Vanessa read a board report. (See attached). A round of the circle elicited a thank you for the work done regarding the member survey.

Financial Report: Gail reported that the account has a balance of approximately \$7400. She has asked an accountant to review the financials.

Membership Report: Gail reported we have 17 paid up program members, 2 independent practitioners and no student members. She noted that 4 programs and 1 independent practitioner had not paid their membership for 2020. Members asked if they could pay their dues by e-transfer. Gail is working with the bank to modernize the account and allow for online access.

Review Committee Report: Caryl Wylie gave a report (See attached) on the work of the review committee. They have now finished their work and submitted a report to the board

2020-2021 Board members were nominated as approved at 25 May 2020 general meeting

President	Vanessa Ramsdale
Treasurer	Gail Jewsbury
Directors-at-large	Sue Saunders
	Richard Tarnoff,
	Genesis Hunt Higginson (3 required as Vanessa moving from director-at-large to President)

It was mentioned that all nominees had to be paid up members. The board will look into this at their next meeting. The terms of Vice-President and Secretary end in 2021.

Signing Officers: It was agreed that Gail Jewsbury and Bruce Curtis would continue as signing officers on the bank account for 2021.

Recognition of members: Bruce moved that PEARL HUNT become VIRRJA's first honorary member. "Pearl was among the founding partners of VIRRJA and served as President for several years (2013 – 2017). She was consistent in bringing the important Indigenous perspective and values to our organization and saw RJ as a valuable approach addressing a wide range of community issues such as spousal violence, family abuse, criminal actions, and other community issues. Pearl was also a leader in implementing the Aboriginal Justice Strategy and shared Alert Bay's Grant stream with numerous First Nations in the North Island to establish RJ programs in their communities. She was a deeply respected VIRRJA leader for many years." Caryl seconded the motion "I would like to second Bruce's nomination of Pearl Hunt. She was part of the organization from the beginning and was always ready to assist when asked. When we needed an annual conference organized, she was there. When we needed a president, she was there. From the time I first met Pearl, I was impressed by her wisdom and her sage advice on all aspects of restorative justice. For what she has given to the groundwork of forming this organization alone, she deserves the honor of being our first honorary member." There was unanimous agreement to this award.

Indigenous Justice Association: Vanessa Ramsdale gave an update:

#### Tasks of the IJA

- Advocating for the community based justice programs and offering their voices to the FNJC FN Justice Strategy.
- Seeking out and directing funding to the programs in the form of training opportunities- which is currently in progress. We will be doing a survey at the AGM to get input of the needs from the programs.
- Created and launched the IJA Website which outlines the regions and IJP Programs across BC. <https://indigenousjustice.ca/>
- Purchased Zoom and offered the platform to the IJP's to use for their needs as well as support.

#### Relationship Building

- Connecting and building a way to work together with LA BC- how we can work with the parent legal centers.
- Creating an MOU with The First Nations Justice Council
- Hosting the CoP calls for the IJP's which occur once a month.

#### Annual Conference/AGM

- The IJA will host their AGM this year through Zoom on Nov 12<sup>th</sup> from 10-2.

#### Board Changes

- There could potentially be 5 new members to the board this year, with a couple of us volunteering to stay on for a few months to do a transition into the roles.

Feel free to contact Vanessa with any questions: [vanessaramsdale@siws.ca](mailto:vanessaramsdale@siws.ca)

CHRISTIANNE PARAS spoke to us about “Colorizing Restorative Justice: Voicing Our Realities”, a recently published book of which she is one of the authors.

Christianne, Erica Littlewolf, Michelle Armster with help from Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz wrote the chapter “Burn the Bridge” in the above book. One of the first videos about RJ was a case where young people burnt a bridge and went through an RJ circle. The authors see the bridge as a symbol RJ uses to bridge current RJ to historic indigenous practices but this is a misrepresentation. Before colonization people gathered and the roles of peacekeepers and mediators existed long ago. The term Babaylon refers to the sacred role of women and this was seen as a threat to colonization. Burning the bridge is walking away. She asked the questions: Who determines access to RJ? What is harm? What is justice? What is healing? What is community – does it represent people of colour, indigenous people, Black people?

RJ needs to shift to a culture of anti-racism. This requires people to be comfortable with discomfort. Look at how issues of race, class and colour are recognized, what practices perpetuate colonization and oppression and how does power and privilege impact RJ.

Christianne is of Filipino ancestry, originally from the Ilocos region of the Philippines. She currently resides as an uninvited guest, an immigrant settler, on the unceded, ancestral and traditional lands of the Kwikwetlem peoples.

With over 20 years’ experience in the restorative justice field she is an accomplished facilitator with expertise in a variety of practice models including victim offender dialogue, family group conferencing and peacemaking circles.

She is currently Executive Director of Restorative Justice Association of BC. She is also an instructor at Simon Fraser University, and a long time anti-oppression/anti-racism facilitator with the North Shore Multicultural Society, providing workshops in schools and organizations across the Lower Mainland. Over the years she has helped establish a variety of social justice-related community initiatives including: Building Vibrant Communities Workshops; Community Dialogue Series; Speak Out Series; Widening the Lens Symposium.

She is a published researcher and author and has been involved in a variety of research projects such as safety in seniors’ living spaces, on-line gambling, race and the criminal justice system and restorative justice.

#### RJABC update

CHRISTIANNE gave a timeline of the establishment of RJABC, with a steering committee working 2016-2017, its formation as a BC non-profit society, the inaugural AGM held in 2019 with the election of 14 directors. She noted the second AGM is coming up 10 November 2020 6.00 – 8.30 pm. RJ ABC has established a relationship with IJA (Indigenous Justice Association) and has a website: [RJABC.com](http://RJABC.com).

JORDAN DIPLOCK gave an update on BC RCMP's views on use of Restorative Justice and what is needed from RJ programs to develop a strong relationship.

The RJ Coordinator role has been filled and Corporal Kara Dosanjh will start in the position Monday 26 October 2020. The 2018-2020 strategic plan is to increase the quantity and quality of RCMP referrals to RJ programs and Jordan expects this to continue. Referrals were up in 2019 but the COVID 19 pandemic has resulted in fewer referrals this year. BC RCMP have an official RJ referral form with proper PRIME scoring and consent forms which aid monitoring of referrals. They are developing a referral guide and RJ referral questions for officers. RJ programs should consider a letter of agreement with their local detachment, communicate regularly with the RJ liaison member, visit and talk to the

watches about 3 times a year, invite police participation in the RJ process, give regular updates on files, make use of Just Outcomes' evaluation tools, share results with the detachment.

Jordan has agreed to share his power point presentation with VIRRJA members but asks that it is not shared more widely. If you want a copy please email [virrja@ymail.com](mailto:virrja@ymail.com)

Jordan Diplock is the Criminal Intelligence / Research Analyst for "E" Division RCMP Crime Prevention Services (CPS). He has been in this position since 2010, providing research and related intelligence analysis support to study and improve the effectiveness of the RCMP's crime prevention and community safety activities in British Columbia. Jordan has been working with the "E" Division Restorative Justice Program (one of CPS' many program and subject areas) since 2011. Between 2012 and 2015, he conducted a large scale review of the role of the RCMP in restorative justice in BC. The recommendations from this review and his continued work on the police use of restorative justice are helping to guide the RCMP's current direction in restorative justice in the province.

He welcomes questions at [jordan.diplock@rcmp-grc.gc.ca](mailto:jordan.diplock@rcmp-grc.gc.ca)

12.10 PM A closing round was held.

## **2019/2020 BOARD REPORT FOR 2020 AGM**

### **ANNUAL CONFERENCE/AGM**

The day-long 2019 conference at University of Victoria was very well attended and generated positive feedback. Unfortunately COVID 19 hit this year and the board decided that it would not be possible to hold an annual conference this year.

### **MEMBER ENGAGEMENT SURVEY/ADVISORY VIRRJA REVIEW COMMITTEE**

The member Engagement committee presented a detailed report at the 2019 AGM. It was then addressed at the 20 January 2020 general meeting with a circle discussion facilitated by Darlene Gage and Vanessa Ramsdale. Members attended both in person and by ZOOM. At the 6 April 2020 general meeting 8 people volunteered to sit on the Advisory Review Committee. This committee met for the first time 24 April 2020, has had 11 meetings and will be presenting a final report to the board in October having reviewed the Vision and Mission statements and the purpose of VIRRJA. The report will include recommendations for the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

### **ZOOM**

As it happens Darlene Gage and Vanessa Ramsdale had wonderful foresight in introducing ZOOM to VIRRJA as it has been invaluable during these pandemic times. VIRRJA took out a “Standard Pro” subscription in February of this year at a cost of \$94.50 to Tech Soup which allowed us the ZOOM subscription at \$100, a 50% discount.

It has been used for 3 general meetings, 4 board meetings and the 11 review committee meetings. 2 programs have also used VIRRJA’s account to hold program meetings and circles.

### **PRESENTATION TO BC GOVERNMENT FINANCE COMMITTEE 2021 BUDGET CONSULTATION**

Bruce Curtis and Gail Jewsbury submitted a very detailed brief “Regional Restorative Justice: Enhancing Services to the Region” under the following headings:

1. Enhance funding to Restorative Justice Programs generally and to fund support for the increased costs of their service delivery during this time when conflict so easily arises due to the stress of COVID
2. Allocate funding specifically to Attorney General Ministry to enable it to proceed with expansion of Crown Referrals to Restorative Justice
3. Establish funding for the Ministry of Education to institute broad-based adoption of Restorative Justice within the school system
4. Establish funding for the Ministry of Health to institute broad-based adoption of restorative Justice within the Elder care system to deal with Elder Abuse in a non-criminal manner
5. Establish funding for the development of specialized training for the judiciary on the value of referrals to Restorative Justice, even when the case has entered or completed the court process.

We look forward to the 2021 budget to see if any of these proposals gained traction.

### **BOARD EXPANSION**

Greater member participation on the VIRRJA board was requested as a result of the engagement survey and feedback. At the 25 May 2020 general meeting a motion was passed to add 2 Directors-at-large to the board of directors. Therefore at this year’s AGM we will be nominating a President, Treasurer and 3 Directors-at-large. The terms of the Vice-president and Secretary end in 2021.

Advisory Committee Report  
AGM-17 Oct 2020

- March 20 – committee established with 8 members: Gail Jewsbury, Jane Waterman, Vanessa Ramsdale, Myles Morrison, Richard Tarnoff, Tamara Alfred, Sue Saunders and Caryl Wylie.
  - Mandate: to develop a strategic plan or VIRRJA which included revisiting the Mission, Vision and Purposes of the organization. Committee added: the need for a definition as to the “region” stated in the name as it was open to interpretation.
  - Hope to get it to the VIRRJA board early enough to make this meeting but we didn’t get it finished until last weekend. I’m sure once they have had a chance to review it, it will be shared with everyone.
  
  - Summary of Mission, Vision & Purpose:
    - o “Region” – we suggest that all documents show the definition **“Region to be defined as Vancouver Island, Sunshine Coast and all Gulf Islands”**
    - o Mission Statement: **To bring together all restorative justice programs and practitioners in the Vancouver Island region; to guide, share and inspire best practices and processes.**
    - o Vision Statement: **A future in which restorative [justice] practices are embedded throughout our communities.**
    - o Purpose Statement: **The purpose of VIRRJA is to mentor, serve and support our diverse restorative justice communities while modelling restorative justice values and leadership.**
- Purposes are:**
- 1. To provide a collective voice for Restorative Justice programs and practitioners;**
  - 2. To liaise with other Restorative Justice organizations in BC, Canada and Internationally;**
  - 3. To promote an understanding of the principles of Restorative Justice; and,**
  - 4. To identify and support best practices within Restorative Justice Programs.**

**Strategic planning** is a management activity used to set priorities, focus energy & resources, strengthen operations, ensure inclusion, establish desired outcomes and assess & adjust the organizations direction in response to a changing environment. The document states the organizations goals, the actions needed to achieve those goals and a time frame to complete it.

- o Started with a list of what each of through that long list and discussed every item until we were satisfied with the product.
- o Then we looked at
  - the last 2016-2020 Strategic Plan & The Membership Engagement survey
  - Incorporated uncompleted or any desired items into our goals.
- o End product has 7 Goal Headings with 3-8 items under each heading:

1. Indigenous Values & Diverse Communities – the need for training on the culture of & how to show respect for - indigenous peoples, diverse ethnicities and special needs groups.
2. Internal Communication with Members – how we can communicate better with our members, what communication platforms are needed and how to receive feedback.
3. External Communication with Others – developing and maintaining a contact list and how these contacts could benefit the membership.
4. Education – a big part of VIRRJA. The sharing of best practices and information, the improvement of programs by expanding their knowledge base and training needs.
5. Meetings – what meetings should look like and the frequency.
6. Membership – how to promote membership and what is required of the members and how VIRRJA can honour those that have given so much to the growth of VIRRJA.
7. Operational – What is needed to promote operational inclusion and efficiency such as changes to the bylaws and formation of committees.