



Social Planning Council of Williams Lake and Area

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SPC Monthly Meeting Minutes April 29, 2019 - 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

Location: Williams Lake Work BC Centre (281 First Avenue North, downtown Williams Lake)

In attendance (from sign-in sheet): Larry Stranberg, Kathie Vilkas, Barb Jones, Carla Bullinger, Shannon Thom, Beth Veenkamp, Anne Burrill, Lindsey Shewchuk, Natasha Poyser, Marnie Sellars, Diane Wright, Janie Breck, Leah Martin, Marnie Brenner, Sheila Boehm and Jessica Dunn (recording).

Review Agenda and Minutes

- Reviewed meeting agenda for Apr 29, 2019
 - 1) Add: Colin Oleary training opportunity
 - 2) Add: Northern Healthy Communities FormMOTION to approve agenda as amended was made, seconded, all in favour, CARRIED
- Reviewed meeting minutes from Mar 25, 2019
MOTION to approve minutes as presented was made, seconded, all in favour, CARRIED

New Williams Lake Work BC Centre

Welcome to the new Williams Lake Work BC Centre – information for both job seekers & employers.

The new services are similar to those before (all free)– Self-serve options (e.g. copiers), Employment Services (Case Management for those who are not self-servicing) call, email or apply online – then appointment is made. Follow-ups are also made for self-serve clients. Very low wait lists at this time (primarily because of the current local job market).

Wage subsidy for employers – if the client is less skilled. This is typically used by small businesses.

Interview space (or mini job fair space) – classroom space is available as well. Recruitment opportunity tool for employers and provides learning experiences for seekers (e.g. interview skills).

Job sustainment program – for employers who are struggling with a challenging employee (service opportunities to prevent a job loss). E.g. transit passes for those without a vehicle which is preventing them from working.

Annual job fairs will take place – in development at this time

Customization and job development services - for those who cannot perform the job right away (needs more training).

Referrals – connect with provincial programs, and local networks.

Job postings – for employers.

Focus on *keeping* employment (more follow-ups to ensure jobs are kept).

Facility is now available outside regular hours on Mondays (open from 9 am – 7 pm).

Q: Is there help available for those who are on assistance, but who want to work a small amount of hours (within legal limits to prevent assistance from stopping)?

A: Work BC works with the individual client to determine their goals in advance (e.g. 4 – 40 hours a week). If there is no fit, other options are explored (as above). Start with what the client wants – client focused services with all choices made *by* the client.

Q: Lots of great changes at Work BC – is Work BC connecting with or advertising to local businesses?

A: Yes, marketing strategy is now rolling out. In addition, there are zoom appointments, phone call meetings (e.g. services all the way to Bella Coola).

Q: What is the difference between job development versus “customized” employment?

A: Both are customized employment services, but job development creates *new positions*).

Q: Are Opportunities funds still available?

A: Yes, funding initiative of the federal government is available in Prince George. Training, wage subsidies and equipment.

WorkBC.ca has lots of resources and information for both seekers and employers (employer resources → BC employer training grant info).

Self-employment programs – a program with Community Futures – to get formal training and support for 48 weeks. CF provides formal training (Larry, Tanis, and Sue). Bring an idea to CF, workshops, then within 6 weeks a business plan is due (reviewed to determine a high success rate). Larry is able to assist with the business plan (sometime this can be a very difficult process). Walk-through the process with clients – helps success rate. Twenty year program.

C-best program is also offered through CF (for those not eligible for other programs e.g. IE or assistance attached).

Q: What is the difference in self-employment programs? (difference is eligibility, and that C-best provides no financials)

A: Classes run regularly all year long – helps clients know if the program is for them.

Q: Child care supports with local high waitlists? – financial supports for chosen service provider after affordable child care benefit rate consideration (step one: apply for affordable child care benefits).

A: We work with the individual client (e.g. nanny options, family member options).

In addition there is the Work Skills program at TRU.

Follow Up: What Works Employment Summit (Anne Burrill)

Event Report summary distributed – 50 people attended on Feb 26th with a great panel who shared success stories, and a keynote speaker. Spent afternoon discussing employment challenges within the community.

Currently there is a shallow labour pool with many openings (but not enough skilled workers). Q: How do we work to close this gap?

Five ideas to implement within our area were identified (see summary handout)

Positive feedback from participants (and a diverse group of people) – inspiring discussions and networking took place.

What Works Employment Summit: What is *next*? (plan by the end of May)

Additional Agenda Items

1) Colin O’Leary training opportunity (Business Continuity planning): May 10th 8:30 am – 2:30 pm (at Pioneer or CF). Registration is required (event is free). From 14 pages – a plan is made! Contact CF to register.

-Northern Resiliency and Healthy Communities Form: In the Gibraltar room (free event) 8:30 – 4:00 pm (Monday May 6). Nclga.ca for more information.

SPC Updates

This will be the last meeting where Jessica Dunn is Coordinator for the SPC. Jessica has been in this role since 2009 and has recently taken on the position of Operations Manager for the Cariboo Chilcotin Child Development Centre starting May 1, 2019. The SPC Board thanked Jessica for all her hard work with a wrapped gift, and recognized her dedicated contributions to the SPC over the last 10 years.

SPC Strategic Planning – current strategic planning is taking place (which will also establish the role of the new Coordinator). It has been a very busy year and a half with the new projects and the role of Coordinator needs to grow with the organizational needs.

Roundtable Updates

Diane Wright – as insider feedback, the Community Futures program mentioned in part one (from a personal perspective) is an *excellent* program.

Sheila Boehm – Mayor Walt Cobb is getting much better (even already walking around!). Williams Lake is hosting the Northern Leadership Conference. Graduation is on the horizon (raffle fundraiser – please support Dry grad).

Kathie Vilkas – started working on Training program in 2019 for Community Futures (CF). Much research has been completed (includes the needs of our community). Updates on this project include: Charity Village courses (online and self-directed training) is now available through this program. CF is reaching many people who usually get missed (e.g. Not-for-profits). May 31st Gaming Grant workshop (including capital purchase application process). Vantage point – working on getting them up here.

Barb Jones – Communities That Care (CTC) has another playbox for Williams Lake (CTC neighbourhood attachment piece). These are boxes with play items (e.g. hula hoops) that any family can access and use for free when at these parks (three currently in Williams Lake). Canada Learning Bond/grant project (free grant for all children – all families are eligible) is still underway. Barb will be at Children’s Festival.

Carla Bullinger – Reminder - Cariboo Chilcotin Partners for Literacy has literacy programs and ESL programs in Williams Lake.

Janice Breck – Canadian Mental Health Association announced that from May 6 – 10th it is Mental Health Awareness week (event on May 14th in Boitano Park from 2 – 6 pm with a booth and live music).

Beth Veenkamp – 1) opportunity for local organizations to get involved in providing a summer camp for international students. Excellent opportunity to run a parallel program for those already working with kids (income generator for a small local non-profit). 2) Working with TRU (since Ray has left) the Assistant Dean (committed locally until 2020). Beth met with the new Dean and strongly advocated for a local and consistent ECE program *now...* not in eighteen months!, 3) Online learning opportunities/expanded training options e.g. allow City of WL to use one classroom. Ideas for local classes (e.g. get ten people who want to take something – let Beth know). Our population does need ABE programs to support the low skilled workers. 4) The City of Williams Lake is rolling out a hiring initiative (that came out of a What Works Summit community recommendation) and are currently recruiting a City business liason who will work out of an office in CF.

Anne Burill - Poverty Reduction simulator event has been postponed until the fall. BC Housing – new coordinator hired. MCFD funding contract to do Childcare Needs Assessment in partnership with the City was approved and will start soon.

MOTION to end the meeting at 12:59 pm was made, seconded, all in favour, and CARRIED.