

Victoria Boards Together

Victoria Board Voice members

*BC Families in Transition

*Big Brothers & Big Sisters

*Boys & Girls Club Services

*Bridges for Women Society

*Community Living Victoria

*Community Options for Children

*Community Social Planning Council

*Esquimalt Neighborhood House Society

*Foster Parents Support Services Society

*Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre

*Mary Manning Centre

*The Cridge Centre for the Family

*Victoria Cool Aid Society

*Victoria Epilepsy & Parkinson's Centre

*Victoria Single Parent Resource Centre

Boards Together Meeting

April 4th, 2013

James Bay New Horizons

Summary notes

This meeting was attended by 31 representatives from 16 social service agencies and began with chili dinner hosted by staff and Board Members James Bay New Horizons. Many thanks to them for organizing the space and arranging the food.

June Preston, Victoria Lead for Board Voice and a Board Member, BC Families in Transition welcomed the group and lead review of Agenda and introductions/

Doug Hayman, Director of Strategic Development for the Federation of Community Social Services and the Secretariat for Board Voice gave an overview of strategies and Key Sector Messages from the Roundtable of Provincial Social Services Organizations and encouraged agencies to make their voices heard.

Linley Faulkner, Coordinator of the Victoria Community Boards in Action Pilot Project, provided the following report:

Boards Together is moving forward on a pilot project to encourage more people less than 35 years of age to participate in the governance of the non-profit sector as board members or directors. This exciting project will run in collaboration with Volunteer Victoria and use various networks to outreach to emerging professionals in the greater Victoria area. The project recognizes that including emerging community leaders allows for greater interagency collaboration and improved governance for social service agencies in the greater Victoria area.

Through a series of workshops, events and an online platform of resources, Boards Together Victoria will provide an opportunity for 10 Victoria-based social service agencies to achieve the following:

- Promote strategic succession planning for non-profit Boards through educational workshops on youth engagement.
- Increase board governance age diversity by matching them with motivated young leaders.

The project anticipates outreaching to at least 300 youth, members of Boards Together and other non-profits in the community. We believe, that because the non-profit social service sector is changing to fit the demands of their stakeholders, including a rising demographic on governing bodies will better reflect the growing Victoria community. We hope that Boards Together members will take the opportunity to either participate as a pilot site or to send prospective members our

Victoria Boards Together working in affiliation and with the support of



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direction. Please contact Linley Faulkner, Project Coordinator, at boardstogether@gmail.com or by cell at 250-893-5747.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Michael Prince, Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy at the University of Victoria

Thoughts and Forecasts Related to the Upcoming B.C. Election

Summary Notes:

Michael Prince spoke about the coming provincial election and the opportunities it presents to the social services sector. Both the election campaign and the post-election period represent windows into the political process where messages important to the sector can be conveyed. Board members can tell their own organization's stories and also help raise the visibility of the broad Social Services Sector.

The pre-election period is one in which candidates will be receptive and, in what promises to be a carefully managed campaign, the media will be looking for stories of interest.

If current polls are correct, the NDP will form a majority government, the Liberals will be a much reduced opposition, marginal parties will not figure significantly, and some independents may have enough local support to get elected. NDP candidates positioned to get a cabinet appointment in a ministry relevant to social service sector concerns are prime targets for engagement. Independents likely to win their ridings will also have the legitimacy based on clearly representing their local constituency and may also be important to engage as potential conduits for our stories. And of course, all parties should be engaged to show they understand sectoral issues and to take positive positions on them.

The NDP intends to present a modest platform and is already trying to moderate and manage the expectations of their supporters. Prince predicted that Dix will move "slowly and cautiously" which "gives us time to mobilize and organize. Initiatives that are not costly or that can be phased in over time are more likely to get a hearing. One such example is the adoption of a poverty reduction plan - already adopted in one form or another by various provinces. (B.C. and Alberta only provinces to lack such a plan. Quebec was the first a decade ago, followed by Newfoundland administration of Danny Williams.)

Some sense of what is being considered can be gathered from looking at Shane Simpson's private members bill. Simpson's bill commits the government to an anti-poverty strategy with a cabinet minister responsible. But an NDP government will probably develop this idea further through consultation. We should press to make that process is inclusive and ask that assistance be provided so that already stretched agencies can participate.

A new government is likely to announce a number of policy reviews. Community Living B.C., because of the attention it has already received, is likely to be one of these. The training and employment program, devolved by the federal government to the provinces, is another likely review. Federal-provincial labour market programs are coming up for renegotiation. Here the sector needs to emphasize its own role as a significant employer and job creator as the population grows and changes. Skilled trades are not the only area where BC will face a shortage. Our own training, recruitment and retention issues need to be made forcefully. If we

can't offer potential employees a living wage and reasonable benefits, then the crucial work that we do will be jeopardized.

Another likely review is of Gaming Commission funding. Aside from arguing for restoration of funding, the sector should be arguing for multi-year indexed funding to produce better stability. We need to show that we have been forced to be very efficient providers; we have been serving a growing population with no real growth in funding.

A new government represents a fresh opportunity to get the social services sector recognized as such - perhaps with a minister responsible for looking at the sector rather than the current fragmented bits and pieces visible to particular funding silos.

It presents opportunities, challenges and issues for "groups like ours" in the "people helping other people" sector -- a major employer in B.C., a job creator and a "job protector" for people with employment. "It's a sector where you can practice political citizenship. Whatever your passion or fancy, this sector covers quite a lot."

The election opens a "policy window of opportunity." It will be a campaign closely managed by the two major political parties, and unless there are big changes, there will be an NDP government in May.



Andy Wachtel Alision Campbell, Dr. Michael Prince, Bill McEvoy Doug Hayman

Some members of Victoria Boards Together with Michael Prince

Bio - Dr. Michael J. Prince is the Lansdowne Professor of Social Policy in the Faculty of Human and Social Development at the University of Victoria, a position he has held since 1987.

Dr. Prince works closely with the Council of Canadians with Disabilities and the Canadian Association for Community Living, among other national groups, and is a member of the BC Community Living Action Group.

*His recent books include *Absent Citizens: Disability Politics and Policy in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2009); and *Changing Politics of Canadian Social Policy, Second Edition*, with James J. Rice, (University of Toronto Press, 2013).*

Dr. Prince has been a board member of a community health clinic, a legal aid society, a hospital society and hospital foundation, the BC Association for Community Living, and the social policy committee of the Council of Canadians with Disabilities.

In 2007, Dr. Prince received a President's Award from the Canadian Association for Community Living, in recognition of "exceptional contribution to Canadians' understanding of public policy that builds an inclusive and accessible Canada." In 2011, he received the University of Victoria Community Leadership Award. In 2012, Professor Prince was given a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his public services.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm.