



Safe Schools Community Meeting Minutes

DATE Oct. 11, 2023

TIME 9:00 a.m. Zoom Video Conference Meeting

Welcome/Introductions

Confirmation of Agenda

Board of Education	
City of Kelowna	
COTA	Lori Dawson Bedard
COPAC	Jeannette Watson
CUPE	George York
District Administration	Al Lalonde, Kevin Kaardal, Jared Birkeland, Terry Beaudry (<i>assistant attending in place of</i>), Sherri Roche, Rick Taylor
Traffic Safety Officer	Dan Glasscock
Kelowna Fire Department	
RCMP	Federico Angulo, Brandwyn Rigby
West Kelowna Fire Department	
District of Lake Country Fire Department	Eric DeGelder, Fire Inspector
Brain Trust	Fernando Calderon
Regrets	<i>Michael Kube, Allison Goreas, Ron Cannan, Sherri Lund, Nathan Elliott, Candace Friesen, Michelle Price, Lee-Ann Tiede, Mohini Singh</i>

Welcome

Sherri welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting was being held on the traditional, unceded territory of the Okanagan Syilx People.

The Zoom meeting was recorded and will later be deleted after minutes are complete.

Introductions proceeded.

Update Re: Safer Communities HRVY Project: Sherri

- The City of Kelowna received a grant focused on the prevention of youth gun and gang violence. The grant was 2 million dollars over a 3-year period to build a prevention program and help identify an action plan to prevent gang activity and exploitation. Although it is a City of Kelowna grant, since it is with the school district, it covers the whole central Okanagan region (Peachland, Lake Country etc.) We need to give the City of Kelowna credit for partnering with the school district, as this does not happen in every district who received this grant.

- The HRVY Action Plan has 3 main focus areas: 1) prevention education for students, staff, and parents/caregivers. 2) prevention and intervention mentorship through prosocial activities, specifically between the hours of 3-6pm. 3) Wraparound intervention supports, which are interventions specifically for youth identified as high risk for gang association and exploitation.
- The HRVY (High risk vulnerable youth) Lead Team consists of Sherri Roche (District Principal), Allison Goreas (District VP), Cst. Federico Angulo, Pete Grinberg (HRVY outreach Coordinator, with a background in clinical counseling and adult programming in Corrections. He meets with community organizations to get innovative projects and ideas going.), Natassia Jahura (HRVY outreach youth worker, background working with the family wellness and addictions center and NOW Canada), Niki White (HRVY outreach youth worker, previous Okanagan College accessible educator liaison and CEA SD23)
- Having RCMP already sitting at the table shows how we are further ahead of many other districts, and we feel very fortunate for this.
- The HRVY community referral form was just launched. It is intended not just for the school district but rather for the whole community, City of Kelowna, RCMP etc. to keep our youth involved in healthier activities/pathways. The form has gone out to school admin. Involves customized planning and intervention for identified youth on a pathway for gang activity and exploitation.
- There will be a Community Information Evening on November 2nd, 2023. This is an opportunity for community partners to learn more about HRVY's goals, share ideas, work together, and brainstorm. It is also an opportunity to look at how to make the HRVY program sustainable after the three years of funding from government has ended. The information night will take place at City Hall in their new conference rooms. When we have more information on the event, we will send it to the group.
- No questions were asked.

Community Partners' Updates

Rick Taylor, District Health & Safety Manager - no updates

Lori Dawson-Bedard, 1st Vice President COTA- they are seeing increased called related to Covid.

Cst. Federico Angulo, RCMP- will not be running the "bring your kid to work day," this year. He is currently the only officer currently supporting our Kelowna schools. (We are grateful!) There has been an increase in problems with Lime scooters. However, geofencing is installed around all schools so that scooters cannot operate on school property. There is still the issue of personal electric devices and how we can ensure safety. Parents buy scooters for their children, so it is a hard battle to enforce rules with them- education instead of enforcing. We have been sending reminders to parents on safe scooter behaviour (one at a time use, wearing a helmet and following rules) and having educational talks with kids when individual incidents happen.

Dan Glasscock, Traffic Safety Officer- working with the City, \$120,000 worth of infrastructure in front of Spring Valley elementary and middle schools; working on Raymer right now to get parking extended; trying to get to Webber Road Elementary with the City of West Kelowna to help with infrastructure changes around the school.

Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO- thankful to our firefighters during wildfires for protecting our buildings, and for the coordination with the district and emergency management with moving the center to Mt. Boucherie to meet all the demands.

Has concerns about the polarization and the current protests, guised as parents' rights, taking place outside of our schools (Anti-SOGI movements etc.) They are spreading misinformation (pamphlets etc.) about things that are not actually happening in our schools; teachers are too busy meeting the curriculum requirements to have another agenda. Teachers have autonomy as to when to use SOGI policies and are providing safe spaces for kids.

The polarization continues to get worse, and we need to think of how to respond from a safety perspective. We need to pay special attention to support newcomers fleeing war torn countries (Ukraine etc.) - might be coming from different cultures that think differently about gangs, i.e. provide resources etc. We also need to pay attention to what kids are being exposed to on the media.

Fernando Calderon, Brain Trust Strategic Partnerships Coordinator- Brain Trust focuses on improving the lives of those affected by brain injury, raising awareness, and reducing preventable brain injuries. Helmet Safety program in every community from Enderby to Peachland and is in the process of being revitalized. This organization is also working with Lime scooters to help prevent injuries. We cannot stop people from using scooters, but we can try to make them safer riders, provide them with knowledge on how to wear helmets, and provide them with necessary safety equipment. Other programs Brain Trust has is a drug overdose educational program, an intimate partner violence program, and a crime prevention and reduction program.

Jared Birkeland, Casorso Elementary School Principal, COTA representative- shares concern over protests and misinformation being handed out. They had a guest member at PAC, sat in on the last meeting, but never said anything. The person was most likely a protester. Such situations, as well as people handing out misinformation around the schools, are creating discomfort for staff and students.

George York, Vice President CUPE- the year has been off to a busy start; Covid is still happening; vaccinations coming and will hopefully be effective.

Eric DeGelder, District of Lake Country Fire Inspector- no updates.

Jeannette Watson, Member of Large COPAC- no significant updates from COPAC; has a student at OKM and on the PAC so happy to disseminate information there. Looking for speakers at future COPAC meetings.

Cst. Branwyn Rigby, RCMP- SRO Lake Country, mentioned that Eric had done a great job with a partnership program on impaired driving and safe behaviours workshop for grade 12s. They would like to do the program starting with grade 11s this year. It was very well-received, and they have already seen it change some peoples' lives/behaviours made at grad.

Regarding Scooters- there are no Lime scooter in Lake Country, but they do receive calls about personal scooter incidents. If you see an incident, report it at the time. They are creating more public awareness at schools and in the community and then will be ticketing if need be.

Al Lalonde, Assistant Superintendent K-12- has been on this committee for 20 years and hopes that people commit to coming to meetings, as it is a great network. He appreciates all the work done with the HRVY project, as it is a lot of work to get federal money and they have never had that before.

As for gangs in our community, we do have an adult gang problem, but is less visible in our schools.

Research shows that we do still have challenges getting mental health support in our community. We are also very concerned about neighboring communities (such as Abbotsford and Langley) with newcomers, and how we can encourage prosocial behavior and activities, especially if they do not have money/resources for activities.

New Business

Upcoming focus steps for HRVY Project will be more community education sessions about gang landscape, such as recognizing signs for parents. It is not just youth that need to be educated- parents need to be too, and they need to have open dialogue with youth.

It was noted that people often do not attend big presentations on gang topics; therefore, we need to be mindful of how we word the events.

Summary and Wrap Up:

Please continue to attend our meetings that occur 4 times a year. It is a great way to network, discuss, and work together to keep our youth safe. It takes a village to help our youth.

The next meeting will be November 15th. If you have any items that you would like discussed at the meeting, please email them to Sherri and she will add to the agenda. You can also call Sherri to run anything by her.

Thanks to everyone for participating- you are appreciated.

Meeting ended at 9:45am.

Next Meeting Dates: Nov. 15, Feb. 14, & May 15