

Annual Report from the Chair of the Board, Doug Hayman

November, 26, 2016

Thank you to our members and friends for your continuing support for the Board Voice movement. **Together we are Board Voice.** Since 2009, we have used this voice to make our province a better place to live, love, work and play - the words heard often around a Board Voice table from our friend and former board member, the departed Carol Matusicky.

This year, we struggled with a big agenda and found ourselves with a human resource shortfall that stretched us as a board. We lost our Chair, Michael Davis last spring, after which I was asked by the board to assume this responsibility. Several other members had to leave the board due to unforeseen circumstances.

We had to find a new way to manage when the Federation of Community Social Services was no longer able to provide contracted administrative support to Board Voice due to their own workload. The Fed had been with us since the beginning and it was difficult to say goodbye. Thankfully, our Executive Coordinator, Christine Thomas, working with our Treasurer, Craig East, restructured the work, with Christine assuming some of these tasks and OPTIONS Community Services taking on the financial administration role. I want to thank OPTIONS, Craig and Christine and all the members of this board for their hard work, under some difficult conditions. And, of course, our thanks to the Federation.

The focus of the board this year and what has required countless volunteer hours, has been organizing our project - ***There is a Better Way – A BC Framework for Wellbeing***. (I want to thank Leslie Welin, in particular, who took on the big task of chairing the project committee.)

Funding from the Vancouver Foundation, via FCSSBC has allowed Board Voice the opportunity to mobilize our membership to undertake a community consultation process in 15 communities.

Over the course of this past year, we created a Partnership Table which includes, the Union of BC Municipalities, Federation of Community Social Services, BC Community Resource Networks Society, BC Government Employees Union, BC Association of Social Workers and Volunteer BC. Each of these organizations has agreed to support this initiative in various ways, including finding volunteers who can help organize these local consultations. If you want to get involved in this organizing process, please let us know and we can link you up.

We reached out to individuals, such as Dr. Trevor Hancock, School of Public Health and Social Policy, and Dr. Shelagh Seaton from the Okanagan College Scotiabank Centre for Non-Profit Excellence, who are Advisors to the project. Additionally, we contracted with journalist Jody Paterson to provide communications support and the Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria for research support.

With the information we collect from community meetings and surveys and from a survey with provincial organizations and other advisors, we hope to be able to provide more meat to the bones about what a Social Policy Framework could mean for this province. We hope to inform the debate about this important idea and further, inspire new ideas about how we can help to create wellbeing in our communities.

This is a big idea. In its fullest manifestation, a BC Framework for Wellbeing (or social policy framework) could shift the paradigm about how human services are developed and delivered in this province. With human wellbeing at the centre of all discussions, and integrated thinking, a prevention orientation and the social determinants of health guiding decisions, we believe resources would be better utilized and British Columbians better off.

While this work has taken up most of our board time this past year, in 2017 we will be looking forward to taking up some of your time, as we organize this consultation across the province. This work is only now just beginning and will move forward quickly in 2017. I hope that you will stay tuned to this initiative and get your board involved when the time comes.

Board Voice has been advocating for a social policy framework since 2014. We have received public support for the idea from many municipalities, organizations and individuals. Our board members have spoken to and provided information on the topic to organizations across the province. We engaged the School of Public Policy at SFU to undertake research about the potential of this idea, which was then shared with the provincial government. Now the BC public service is examining the idea internally at the Deputy Minister level. We hope that eventually, Board Voice will have the opportunity to contribute to these deliberations.

In conclusion, Board Voice, your voice, is being heard. If we can continue to pool our resources and focus our energy, we can continue to 'punch beyond our weight class' as they say. 2017 is an election year. Let's bring our voice to the table.