

DRAFT

SPECIAL UPDATE – MEETING WITH CSC COMMISSIONER DON HEAD

**Ontario Halfway House Association
Executive Committee Meeting Minutes**

October 21, 2009

Attending:

Art Rasmusson – The Salvation Army of Toronto
Louis Berube – Maison Decision House Ottawa
Sonya Spencer – St. Leonard’s Society of Toronto
Trish Crawford – Elizabeth Fry Society of Kingston
Terri Soukup – Elizabeth Fry Society of Barrie
Darrell Rowe – St. Leonard’s Society of Peterborough
Larry Cook - OHHA

Regrets:

Debra Riddle – Elizabeth Fry Society of Peel/Halton
Heather Kerr – Stonehenge Therapeutic Community
Don Wadel – The John Howard Society of Ottawa

Opening remarks:

The meeting was called to order at 11:05 hrs. Art Rasmusson welcomed the Executive Committee and thanked them for their participation. A special introduction was extended to Terri Soukup as she recently joined the Executive Committee.

Special Update Meeting with CSC Commissioner Don Head

The Executive Committee was advised that members of the Regional Halfway House Associations of Canada met with CSC Commissioner Don Head on October 15, 2009. This meeting was prompted from a meeting that occurred with Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan earlier this year and the recent staff safety issues. The group commenced the meeting expressing their commitment to structured reintegration of offender back to the community. The desire is to conduct necessary meetings in order to address key elements to ensure the viability of operation and safety for clients, communities and staff.

The focus of this meeting was to address:

- Staff Safety – Incidents across the country
- CRF Funding – Adequate Staffing/Sustainable Funding – An Examination of the Process
- Enhancing Communication/Engagement/Intelligence Information
- Institutional In Reach
- CBRF Review – A Look at the 52 Recommendations

Meeting Notables:

- An examination is required in order to develop a 'Modernized Funding Model'
- Each Regional Association was advised that they could receive \$50,000 in order to look at the identified issues prior to March 31, 2010
- RHHA will meet with Commissioner Head twice per year in order to ensure a collective discussion is occurring
- It will be difficult to have the necessary information in place on time for the 2010-2011 contracts – A request to review 'Bridge-Funding' in order to allow the research to occur
- Need to review Women's CRF's; Aboriginal Services and Small Houses

Other Notables:

- Due to the staff assaults some CRF's have reduced access to the CRF including a change in visitation practices
- CRF's continue to have good local relationships but are tasked with finding a way to tell the story in a positive way about the value of CRF's
- Gang affiliated offender numbers change from region to region
- There have been 3 gun related shootings in Canada in the recent months
- Need to look at resources in order to conduct pre-release planning
- Members should be encouraged to conduct a site Safety Protocol review
- An acknowledgement that there have been commitments in the past that have not taken place

Next Steps:

- Look at bringing the Membership together in order to review the issues and offer comments/feedback and ensure representation on local issues
- Executive Committee Endorsed:
 - Engagement of Membership
 - Need to attempt 100% inclusivity and ownership

Recent Assaults on Staff across Canada:**Incident at Dick Bell Irving CRF - Vancouver:**

On Tuesday September 29 at 2215 hrs two persons armed with handguns entered Dick Bell Irving CRF. The staff member was struck with the butt end of the gun several times, while the assailants requested information regarding a resident of the facility. One gunman then went room to room looking for their target. It remains unclear whether the same gunmen located the victim two blocks from the facility where their intended target was shot several times resulting in his death.

All residents were taken into custody by the Vancouver Police Department for questioning and later released. The house remains under crime scene investigation and is not in operation and believed reopened October 2, 2009. The residents were being housed at another CRF. The staff member was

released from hospital with eight stitches and a concussion. Though these injuries will heal the trauma he has experienced will remain for some time.

Many issues have arisen relating to staff safety within CRF's following this incident. OHHA will be seeking your input to gather ideas on how to increase staff safety. Up for review include locking doors, closing blinds after dark, installing and ensuring adequate lighting is on outside of CRF's and there has been a discussion regarding cameras placed on the exterior of facilities.

Incident at United Church Ministries – Winnipeg:

It was reported that a female staff person left the CRF on the way to a bus stop when she was assaulted by an UAL offender with a bicycle lock and was struck on the head several times requiring five stitches and an overnight stay in the hospital. It was suggested that her cries for assistance were received by other community people and they rushed to her assistance.

Quebec:

It is unclear at this time but it was believed that a female Parole Officer lost her life in the line of duty recently.