

Minutes of ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
October 14, 2020 6:00PM - 7:30PM

The Annual General Meeting on October 14, 2020 was held online over Zoom, due to COVID-19. The number of members registered for the annual meeting exceeded the quorum requirements and, in addition, staff, students and guests were present. There were approximately 40 attendees.

1. Welcome

Johanna Macdonald, Clinic Director, and Kalsang Dolma, Outgoing Co-chair, welcomed staff, students, volunteers, in and outgoing Board members, our funders, community organizations and community members and groups. Kalsang informed attendees that they were emailed copies of the documents that would be discussed during the meeting, including the Audited financial statements, Minutes from the 2019 AGM and AGM 2020 Agenda. The documents were also made available on the PCLS website.

Kalsang provided a land acknowledgement in Tibetan and English. Attendees then observed a moment of silence in memory of Bart Poesiat, a long-time PCLS community worker who passed away earlier this year.

2. Dorothy Leatch Award

The Dorothy Leatch Award, which celebrates a community member who selflessly contributes to the well-being of the community, was awarded to **Roma Rochester**. The award was presented by Dorothy Leatch's daughter Joanne Leach.

Roma was not in attendance to receive the award, but Joanne shared a few words about Roma. Roma is a retired healthcare worker who has lived in Parkdale for over 30 years. She was part of a successful rent strike in 2018 and helped campaign against legal aid cuts. Roma often connects people with PCLS

when they are in need of clinic services and inspires everyone to work together to defend the Parkdale neighbourhood.

3. Fred Zemans Award

The Frederick H. Zemans Prize in Poverty Law is awarded annually to an outstanding student enrolled in the Intensive Program in Poverty Law. The award was presented by Adrian Smith, Academic Director, and awarded to **Erin Sobat**.

Adrian highlighted Erin's fantastic case work, his role on the PCLS Board of Directors, his engagement in the campaign against legal aid cuts, as well as his involvement with research and editorial tasks related to PCLS' interventions in the Ocean and Uber cases at the Supreme Court of Canada this past year. He also highlighted Erin's classroom conduct in the academic seminar, and Erin's assistance in drafting a funding reconsideration request and drafting a response to propose amendments to the legal aid services act.

Erin briefly provided a few words and thanked everyone for the recognition.

4. Proposal for running the business portion

Kalsang proposed that to ensure this meeting is as effective as possible, that if attendees do not state they are opposed or abstaining from voting for a particular motion, then it will be assumed that attendees are in favour of the motion.

Motion by Dave Shellnut to accept this proposal.

Bryan Daley - seconded.

Motion is carried.

5. Approval of Agenda

Motion by Dave Shellnut to approve the agenda for the business portion of the AGM.

Bryan Daley - seconded.

Motion is carried.

6. Adoption of Minutes of Last AGM, September 25, 2019

Motion by Dave Shellnut to approve the minutes from the September 25 2019 AGM.

Bryan Daley - seconded.

Motion is carried.

7. Presentation of 2019-2020 Annual Report

Johanna Macdonald thanked PCLS' Board of Directors - including outgoing co-chairs, Kalsang Dolma and Fay Faraday, as well as Amar Bhatia, the outgoing Osgoode elected Board Member. Johanna thanks all the organizations that supported PCLS with space following funding cuts and the loss of our office space - including St. Mark's Church, KapaBayan Multicultural Centre, Parkdale Intercultural Association, and the Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre. Johanna recognized the loss of staff members due to funding cuts — Amarna, Linda, Chris, Rebecca, Marva-Lynn, Deborah, and noted the ceasing of PCLS' articling student program, and thanked current staff. Johanna thanked PCLS' core funders, including Legal Aid Ontario, Osgoode Hall Law School, and the Maytree Foundation. Johanna noted a 22.5% cut in funding from Legal Aid Ontario (a second year of cuts was reversed thanks to PCLS reviewing the funding cut decision)—and she thanked the community for providing an unprecedented amount of donations in response.

John No, Staff Lawyer, summarized case work highlights from PCLS' four areas of law practice this past year. The PCLS housing rights division represented hundreds of tenants against evictions at the Landlord-Tenant Board. The Housing Rights division also represented a group of tenants that were rendered homeless due to fire damage at a unit resulting from a landlord's inability to meet proper housing standards. The Immigration Division - with the support of Tibetan staff members at PCLS, was able to stop the CBSA from deporting a Tibetan

individual to China where he would have faced serious risk, engaging with Human Rights Watch for their assistance on the matter. The Immigration Division also successfully argued for a Roma refugee was able to stay in Canada on H&C grounds. The SAVAH division continued to intervene in hundreds of disputes regarding social assistance eligibility, calculation of benefits, spousal benefits, overpayments, etc... The SAVAH division also increased legal information referral support for ODSP and OW recipients during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Workers' Rights Division recovered \$568,000 for the workers this past year. Additional case highlights included strategic litigation against a multinational temp agency that requires employees to pay a \$30,000 penalty fee if they wished to quit, as well as intervening in two Supreme Court of Canada cases (*Matthew v Ocean Nutrition Ltd*, and also *Uber v Heller*).

Mary Gellatly, Community Legal Worker, highlighted key organizing campaigns that PCLS was involved with over the past year, including the fight against Legal Aid Ontario cuts, tenant organizing to fight displacement in our communities, and migrant rights organizing amidst a rise in racist and anti-immigrant sentiments. Mary highlighted that the work must continue in fighting modernization of legal aid as well as extending the gains we have made around Employment Insurance, and ensuring that people on OW and ODSP are not left behind when it comes to income support, during COVID-19, and beyond.

Johanna Macdonald highlighted the work and memory of Bart Poesiat. PCLS was able to hold a celebration of life for him on September 26, 2020. A [link to a video](#) of Bart speaking about his experience as an organizer in Parkdale was also provided to attendees.

8. Presentation of Audited Financial Statements

Christine Andrews presented the Auditor's Report. The purpose of an annual audit, is to provide the membership with a "reasonable assurance" that the Financial Statements do not contain any misstatements, due to fraud or error. Parkdale's audit was performed by the accounting firm Segal LLP. The auditors

test the financial systems and assure you, the members, that the financial picture presented to you, is a fair description of Parkdale's financial position.

Christine presented the breakdown of revenue to PCLS for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. The breakdown was as follows:

- **Legal Aid Ontario** funds 84% of the Clinic's overall budget during the year
- **Project funding** (consisting of grants from Maytree and Trillium PARC) funded 6% of the clinic budget
- **The annual Osgoode Hall Law School Grant** accounted for 5% of annual revenue
- **Generous donations our community legal clinic** accounted for 5% each of the annual revenue.

Christine also presented the Financial Report. The full audited Financial Statements is available on our website at www.parkdalelegal.org.

Christine highlighted a key change to our revenue over the past year, stemming from the Province of Ontario's funding cuts to Legal Aid Ontario. **The direct annual funding that Parkdale Community Legal Services receives from Legal Aid Ontario was reduced by 22.5%** - a major blow, sadly impacting on how the clinic has historically operated and provided services to the community. Revenue from Legal Aid Ontario that was earmarked for PCLS' move to a new office was also cut.

However, Christine noted that thanks to community support, PCLS saw an increase of over 500% in donations received during the 2019 fiscal year, totalling approximately \$152,000. Christine thanked the community for their support.

Christine noted that staffing the clinic and maintaining our offices comprise the largest portion of expenditures for PCLS, and that this was a normal spending pattern in a community organization similar to ours.

Christine noted that PCLS received a clean audit with one exception—the only qualification in our audit is a standard one for most not-for-profit organizations. Auditors have no way of independently verifying the money that donors may send to a charity. Christine thanked Segal LLP for producing the audit.

Motion by Christine Andrews to accept the Audited Financial Statements for 2019-20.

Bryan Daley - seconded.

Motion is carried.

9. Reappointment of Segal LLP

Motion by Christine Andrews to reappoint Segal LLP as the PCLS Auditors for the 2020-21 Fiscal year.

Bryan Daley - seconded.

Motion is carried.

10. Board Elections: Class A

Presented by Dave Shellnut - I am a member of the Membership and Community Participation Committee. I wanted to confirm that we have continuing Class A Community Board members entering the 2nd year of their first terms: Dave Shellnut, Parmbir Gill and Tsering Lhundup

New Class A Community Board members for vacant positions are elected annually. In addition to nominations coming through the Membership and Community Participation Committee, members can provide nominations up to two days before the Annual Meeting.

Because no separate nominations have been received by PCLS, we are presenting the slate of candidates recommended by the Membership and Community Participation Committee.

- Allison Wood
- Nadia Rajaram
- Nicole Biros

In addition the new Class A Board members, we have three returning Class A Board member is standing for their second term of election and we are presenting this Directors in a slate for vote:

- Opal Sparks
- Arthur Kong
- Bryan Dale

Motion by Kalsang Dolma that the members vote their approve the slate of candidates – the new and returning Board members to be elected by the membership.

Bryan Daley seconds the motion

Motion is carried.

11. Board Elections: Class B

Dave Shelnut presented - Students enrolled in the Intensive Program in Poverty Law elect one Board member for the 2019-20 term. The student elected this year is Pri Sharma. Pri is a Workers' Rights Division student and will be back at PCLS for the Winter semester.

12. Board Elections: Class C

Dave Shellnut presented - PCLS' Membership Class 'C' is made up solely of the Dean of Osgoode Law School who elects four Board members. One member must be a full-time faculty at Osgoode Hall Law School. Luca Lucarini is entering his second year of his first term, and Jessica Chandrashekar was appointed with my approval to the Board in December 2019.

This year, there are two out-going Directors, Amar Bhatia and Fay Faraday who will stay on as part of the Academic Directors Roster. This year, the Dean elects two new Board members to the PCLS Board of Directors: Janet Mosher and Bruce Ryder, and elects Jessica Chandrashekar to continue in the role per her appointment last year.

13. Adjourn AGM

Motion by Dave Shellnut to adjourn the meeting.

Bryan Daley seconds the motion

Motion is carried.