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Professional
Employees
Association
**CONVENTION
2009**

DRAFT MINUTES

of the

8th CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION

of the

PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

held at the

Coast Victoria Harbourside Hotel

Victoria, B.C.

May 2, 2009

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MINUTES
of the
8th CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION
of the
PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION
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Coast Victoria Harbourside Hotel
May 2, 2009

CALL TO ORDER

President Mike Jobke called the 8th Constitutional Convention of the Professional Employees Association to order at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 2, 2009.

The President welcomed the delegates to the PEA's eighth constitutional convention.

CREDENTIALS REPORT

The President called on Frank Kohlberger, Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, to give a report.

The Chairperson reported that there were 74 delegates and Executive members and one Association Executive observer registered. He also reported that there were 6 staff in attendance.

The Chairperson reported that the following eight delegates were unable to attend as planned:

Dawn Barbeau of the Community Health Services & Support Chapter; Steve Edwards and Les Thiessen of the Government Licensed Professionals Chapter; and Jennifer Adsett, Nick Clewley, Erik Fleischer, Jonathan Foweraker and Jacquie Hovgaard of the University of Victoria Chapter.

The following alternates were registered:

Liz Magee-Davis, alternate for Dawn Barbeau, Community Health Services & Support chapter; Ron LaTorre, alternate for Steve Edwards, and Richard Voyer, alternate for Les Thiessen, Government Licensed Professionals Chapter.

M/S/C that these delegates be seated.

M/S/C that the Credentials Committee stand down, with thanks.

DELEGATES

The following delegates were registered.

Association Executive

Table Officers

President

Mike Jobke

First Vice-President

Jim Russell

Second Vice-President

Frank Kohlberger

Secretary-Treasurer

John Foxgord

Chapter Representatives

Government Licensed Professionals

Paul Albu

Bruce Barnewall

Susan Randle

Lawyer Chapters

Kathy Kendall

Education Chapters

Sean Holland

UVIC Administrative & Academic Professional Staff

Tom Gore

Cliff Haman

Community Health Services & Support Staff:

Raymond Boucher

Liz Magee-Davis

Chris Marek

Karen Whonnock

Family Maintenance Enforcement Program Lawyers:

Veronica Beier

Brent Hird

Government Licensed Professionals:

Julie Castonguay

Brian Chow

Kerry Clark

Gary Dolynchuk

Gord Dow

Steve Edwards

Philip Emberley

Ted Fuller

Trudy Goold

Jennifer Hardy

Mark Hayter

Glenn Hill

Government Licensed Professionals (cont'd):

Harry Jennings
Vanessa Johnson
Mike Madill
Craig Mount
Curt Nixon
Katherine O'Leary
Mary Lou Page
Paul Picard
Shaun Prodanuk
Gerald Reichenback
Scott Scholefield
John Stevenson
Albert Vandenberg
Richard Voyer
Megan Williams
Jason Yates
Rostam Yazdani
Tigerson Young

Health Science Professionals:

Amanda Bartlett
Laura Kuypers
Joanne Montgomery
Joanna Wall

Law Society Lawyers:

Jack Olsen
Carmel Wiseman

Legal Services Society Lawyers:

Karen Whonnock

Okanagan Regional Librarians:

James Laitenen
Annie Pope

Prince George School District Professionals:

Debbie Coxson
Marcia Waller

St. Margaret's School:

Ross Alden
Gregor Campbell
Patricia Mann
Sonny Wilson

**University of Victoria Administrative &
Academic Professional Staff:**

Vincent Connor
Catherine Franz
John Hall
Leslie Kenny
Bert Klatt

University Of Victoria Administrative &
Academic Professional Staff (cont'd):

Lynn McCaughey
Kevin McGinn
April McNeil
Rebecca Michaels
Jill Minnings Tate
Melissa Ozard

Observer

Shel Harris (Education Chapters)

STAFF

Executive Director
Labour Relations Officer
Labour Relations Officer
Labour Relations Officer
Communications Officer
Administrative Assistant

Jodi Jensen
Ernie Gorrie
Barinder Rasode
Frank Greenlay
Kyle Russell
Joanne Petersen

CONVENTION COMMITTEES

Resolutions Committee:

Jim Russell, *Chair*
Bruce Barnewall
Katherine O'Leary
Annie Pope
Jodi Jensen, *Secretary*

Ways & Means Committee:

John Foxgord, *Chair*
Tom Gore
Shaun Prodanuk
Sonny Wilson
Jodi Jensen, *Secretary*

Credentials Committee:

Frank Kohlberger, *Chair*
Gregor Campbell
Kathy Kendall
Carmel Wiseman
Frank Greenlay
Joanne Petersen, *Secretary*

Sergeant-at-Arms Committee:

Cliff Haman, *Chair*
Amanda Bartlett
Vincent Connor
Karen Whonnock
Ernie Gorrie, *Secretary*

CONVENTION RULES OF ORDER

The Executive Director read the Rules of Order:

1. A member of the Association may bring any matter before a convention for consideration by means of a resolution. The resolution must be signed by the member and at least one other member before it can be considered.
2. A resolution, except a resolution to amend the constitution, can be considered from the convention floor only if at least two-thirds of the delegates present, and voting, vote to accept the resolution for consideration.
3. Convention reports cannot be amended from the convention floor but a motion to refer the report back to the committee for reconsideration is in order. A motion to refer is not debatable. When a referral motion is properly seconded, it must be put to a vote immediately. A delegate cannot move referral after speaking on the issue.
4. If the recommendation of a committee is defeated, the matter is automatically referred back to the committee.
5. Once presented, a motion is the property of the convention. It may be withdrawn only by a majority vote of the delegates present and voting.
6. A motion to reconsider can only be made by a voter in the majority. Such a motion requires a majority to pass.
7. A delegate wishing to speak on a motion on the floor must be at a microphone and be recognized by the chair of the convention.
8. If a point of order is raised while a delegate is speaking, the delegate shall, at the request of the chair, stand down until the question of order has been decided.
9. If two or more delegates rise to speak at the same time the chair of the convention will determine the order of speakers.
10. Except when a delegate is speaking, a delegate can request that a motion be re-read for information.
11. No delegate can interrupt a delegate who has the floor except to raise a point of order.
12. A delegate may not speak more than once on an issue until all others who wish to speak have had an opportunity to do so.
13. A delegate who refuses to stand down when requested by the chair to do so shall be subject to suspension for the remainder of the session.
14. Speeches are limited to three minutes.
15. Except as set out above the convention will be governed by Roberts Rules of Order.

M/S/C to accept the Rules of Order.

INVESTMENT REPORT

The President introduced Paul Siluch, PEA Investment Advisor, who reported on the investment portfolio's performance in 2008 and the first quarter of 2009.

ALLOCATION OF RESOLUTIONS

The President introduced Jim Russell, Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee, who advised that the committee had met on March 20 and referred the Secretary-Treasurer's Report and the 2007 & 2008 Audited Financial Statements to the Ways & Means Committee.

REPORT OF THE WAYS & MEANS COMMITTEE

The President called on John Foxgord, Chairperson of the Ways & Means Committee to give his report.

The Chairperson introduced the members of the committee and PEA auditor Chris Cowland of the accounting firm Cowland Paterson & Co.

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

(full report printed at the end of minutes)

In his report to delegates, Secretary-Treasurer John Foxgord reviewed the 2007 and 2008 audited financial statements, highlighting the increases in dues revenue, the surplus of operating expenditures, and the gains and losses in investment assets during those two fiscal years. He noted the new Convention/Conferences expense category introduced to eliminate large, alternating fluctuations in the Executive and Constitution and Membership Services and Administration categories. John reported that the beleaguered investment environment in 2008 generated the first ever end of year loss for the investment portfolio, of \$476,042, following on the heels of a gain of \$776,989 in 2007, including an extraordinary one-time gain of \$354,544 resulting from a change in accounting policy to carry investments at fair market value. He concluded his report by thanking the PEA's staff, investment advisor and auditor, and PEA members serving on the Finance & Investment and Ways & Means Committees.

M/S/C to accept the Secretary-Treasurer's Report.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

M/S/C to accept the 2007 & 2008 Audited Financial Statements.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

M/S/C that the firm Cowland Paterson & Co. be reappointed as Association auditors for the 2009 & 2010 fiscal years.

M/S/C that the Ways & Means Committee stand down, with thanks.

REPORT OF THE SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

The President called on Cliff Haman, Chairperson of the Scholarship Committee who announced the following 2009 PEA Scholarship winners:

- Caroline Baldwin
- Lauren Chor
- Craig Dedels
- Heather Gorder
- Laura Nelles
- Erin Palmer
- Daniel Penny
- Megan Rennie
- Paige Weismiller
- Laura Willis

REPORT OF THE BURSARY COMMITTEE

The President called on Paul Albu, Chairperson of the Bursaries Committee who announced the following 2009 PEA Bursary recipients:

- Brandy Assoon
- Laura Haskell
- Kelda Sholdice

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE

The President called on Jim Russell, Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee, who introduced the members of the committee.

The Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee called on the President to present his report.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(full report printed at the end of minutes)

President Mike Jobke reported on the Association's 35th anniversary and the many challenges faced by members in recent years, including protracted negotiations to achieve collective agreements with St. Margaret's School and the Law Society of B.C. and the elimination of half of the lawyer positions at the Legal Services Society. He also reported on strategies to increase membership participation and engagement, including the 2008 Education Conference, renewed strategic planning, communications initiatives and expanded opportunities for learning about the workings of the union and the unique challenges and interests of individual chapters. Mike reported that all chapter collective agreements would be up for renewal in the coming months and called on all facets of the union to work together as a team to achieve members' goals. Mike concluded his report by acknowledging the efforts of staff and volunteers, and thanking Kathy Danchuk and Jim Russell for their tireless service as President and First-Vice-President.

M/S/C to accept the President's Report.

The Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee called on the Executive Director to present her report.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

(full report printed at the end of minutes)

Executive Director Jodi Jensen opened her report by acknowledging the vision and leadership that gave birth to the PEA and ensured its continued success, manifested through professionalism, expert membership service, respect for independent thinking and prudent financial management. She reported on the results of a recent membership survey confirming members' continued high satisfaction with the PEA, its communication with members and the collective agreements it negotiates. Jodi reported that the economic downturn, provincial budget deficits and rising unemployment in B.C. posed challenges for bargaining committees in negotiating satisfactory collective agreement settlements, and asked members to engage in teamwork and dialogue in support of those committees. She closed her remarks by thanking volunteers and staff whose contributions ensure the PEA remains an effective union for professionals.

M/S/C to accept the Executive Director's report.

ELECTION OF TABLE OFFICERS

The President turned the gavel over to Jodi Jensen, Executive Director, who outlined the procedures for the election. J. Jensen called on the Chairperson of the Table Officer Nominating Committee to give his report.

Paul Albu, Chairperson of the Table Officer Nominating Committee reported on the nominees for the table officer positions.

President

Nominations were declared open for the position of President, for a two-year term. Mike Jobke was nominated and no further nominations were made. After agreeing that he would stand for the position of President, Mike Jobke was declared elected by acclamation.

Vice-Presidents

Nominations were declared open for the positions of 1st and 2nd Vice-President, for a two-year term. Kathy Kendall, Frank Kohlberger and Rostam Yazdani were nominated and agreed to stand for the election. Ballots were cast. After counting the ballots, the scrutineers reported the results to the Executive Director, who then declared Frank Kohlberger elected as 1st Vice-President.

M/S/C to destroy the ballots.

Ballots were cast for the position of 2nd Vice-President. After counting the ballots, the scrutineers reported the results to the Executive Director, who then declared Kathy Kendall elected as 2nd Vice-President.

M/S/C to destroy the ballots.

M/S/C to destroy all other pre-prepared ballots.

Secretary-Treasurer

Nominations were declared open for the position of Secretary-Treasurer, for a two-year term. John Foxgord was nominated and no further nominations were made. After agreeing that he would stand for the position of Secretary-Treasurer, John Foxgord was declared elected by acclamation.

REPORT OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE (cont'd)

The Chairperson of the Resolutions Committee read the following resolutions to the delegates and made recommendations on behalf of the committee. The delegates either adopted, referred or defeated the resolutions as follows:

RESOLUTION #1

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA urge the Attorney General of British Columbia to immediately restore legal aid funding for the citizens of British Columbia.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #1 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA urge the Attorney General of British Columbia to immediately restore legal aid funding to the 2002 funding levels for the citizens of British Columbia.

The committee further amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #1 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA urge the Attorney General of British Columbia to immediately restore legal aid funding to the funding level immediately prior to the 2002 cuts for the citizens of British Columbia.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #2

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA call on the provincial government to hold public hearings within the next year with the purpose of renewing the commitment to legal aid in all areas of law that affect an individual's ability to provide the necessities of life to him or herself or to his or her family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the PEA work with other organizations in lobbying the provincial government to launch public hearings and making representations to those hearings if and when they are called.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #2 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA call on the provincial government to hold public hearings within the next year with the purpose of renewing the commitment to legal aid in all areas of law that affect an individual's ability to provide the necessities of life to him or herself or to his or her family; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the PEA work with other organizations in lobbying the provincial government to launch public hearings and making representations to those hearings if and when they are called.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #3

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA lobby the BC government to adopt specific targets aimed at reducing poverty, eliminating child poverty and eradicating homelessness.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #4

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA develop a policy which integrates chapter executives into the decision making process for any issues involving compensation and master agreement issues applicable to multiple member groups within individual chapters.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #4 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA develop a policy which integrates chapter executives into the decision making process for any contemplated changes to a collective agreement during the life of the collective agreement.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #5

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA coordinate a specific communication (such as email) highlighting the opportunity for members to submit resolutions for consideration at convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the communication (email) to members be forwarded two weeks prior to the deadline for submission of resolutions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the communication (email) provide or link to more specific information on the resolution process and provide guidance and examples of format for resolution submissions.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #5 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA educate its members about the impact of resolutions on their working lives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that prior to the deadline for submission of resolutions the PEA coordinate a specific communication highlighting the opportunity for members to submit resolutions for consideration at convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the communication provide or link to more specific information on the resolution process and provide guidance and examples of resolutions.

M/S/C to refer back to the committee.

RESOLUTION #6

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA Executive concisely document the purpose/mandate of the PEA as an organization and communicate such to the PEA membership within 3 months of the passing of this resolution.

M/S/C Non-Concurrence

RESOLUTION #7

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA provide childcare options to enable members to attend PEA-sponsored events such as conventions, education conferences and rep training sessions; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these options include at least: 1) onsite childcare (if numbers warrant) 2) reimbursement for at home childcare.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #7 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA investigate providing expanded childcare options, including onsite childcare, to enable members to attend PEA-sponsored events such as conventions, education conferences and rep training sessions.

The committee further amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #7 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA investigate providing expanded dependent care options, including onsite childcare, to enable members to attend PEA-sponsored events such as conventions, education conferences and rep training sessions.

M/S/C Concurrence

RESOLUTION #8

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that those Chapters who have an observer sitting at the Executive table during a Convention year be given the authority to choose from amongst their delegates and their Executive observer, which member will attend Convention as an observer; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that those members who attend Convention as observers by virtue of their Chapter having an observer at the PEA Executive table, be permitted voice at Convention, but not vote.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #8 (amended)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that those members who attend Convention as observers by virtue of their Chapter having an observer at the PEA Executive table, be permitted voice but no vote at Convention.

M/S/C Concurrence.

RESOLUTION #9

BE IT RESOLVED that PEA join the B.C. Federation of Labour.

M/S to refer the resolution back to the committee with instruction to amend the resolution to include a membership referendum. Motion defeated.

M/S/C Non-Concurrence

RESOLUTION #5 (amended)

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA educate its members about the impact of resolutions on their working lives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that at least two weeks prior to the deadline for submission of resolutions the PEA coordinate a specific communication highlighting the opportunity for members to submit resolutions for consideration at convention; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the communication provide or link to more specific information on the resolution process and provide guidance and examples of resolutions.

M/S/C Concurrence

APPROVAL OF THE 7th CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION MINUTES

M/S/C that the minutes of the 7th Constitutional Convention be adopted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

Resolutions from the Floor

Two resolutions were received from the floor.

The delegates voted to allow the following resolution on the floor for debate.

RESOLUTION #1 FROM THE FLOOR:

BE IT RESOLVED that the PEA Convention resolutions process be reviewed regarding amending of resolutions, which are submitted in good faith by PEA members for consideration at PEA Convention, for consideration for consultation with submitting members regarding proposed amendments to their resolutions being implemented prior to convention.

The committee amended the resolution as follows:

RESOLUTION #1 FROM THE FLOOR (amended)

BE IT RESOLVED that the Association Executive review the process for submission of resolutions to convention to provide for consultation with the members submitting resolutions.

M/S/C Concurrence

M/S/C that the Resolutions Committee stand down, with thanks.

ADJOURNMENT

The 8th Constitutional Convention of the Professional Employees Association adjourned at 4:00 p.m, Saturday, May 2, 2009.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

At this, our eighth Constitutional Convention, we, the PEA, celebrate 35 years of representing professionals who are passionate about their jobs and make a difference in the everyday lives of all British Columbians. Over the years, Convention reports have typically portrayed each period between Conventions as unique, difficult and having many challenges. The past few years have been no different.

In early January of this year, to the surprise of both employees and clients, the Legal Services Society (LSS) of British Columbia announced a massive organizational re-structuring of their Lower Mainland Offices, including the layoff of half of the PEA lawyers at LSS, effective April 30, 2009. This is part of an overall 16% staffing reduction at LSS.

The LSS Chapter Executive has appointed a sub-committee consisting of Jim Russell, Alison Ward, and Manjit Chana to meet and work with various stakeholders such as the West Coast Legal Education and Action Fund, Pivot Legal Society, the Canadian Bar Association's BC Branch, and other interest groups for the purpose of restoring funding to legal aid. The Chapter is also working on a town hall meeting to further discuss these cuts. In order to help the LSS Chapter, the Association Executive has authorized funding for a campaign in support of legal aid, including production of a short video. We can all get involved in this campaign by either signing the on-line petition to restore legal aid in B.C. (thepetitionsite.com/1/access-to-justice) and/or get involved at the campaign website (accesstojustice.ca).

While collective bargaining wasn't a significant part of the past two years for many of our chapters, we reached collective agreements through mediation with both St. Margaret's School (SMS) and the Law Society of B.C. (LSL) after very difficult and challenging bargaining sessions. The experience gained by these chapters in these bargaining sessions has laid the ground work for the next round of bargaining.

In the past few years the need to promote membership involvement has always been on the forefront. Many chapters have been/are looking at strategies to engage their members and to build on existing involvement. The Government Licensed Professionals (GLP) Executive has, for example, been working for much of the past two years on a strategic planning process that began under the previous Chair, Jim Annunziello, and is now being led by the current Chair, Frank Kohlberger. The GLP Executive is incorporating the input provided by the GLP membership at meetings that were held across the province over the past year and hopes to publish a revised Strategic Plan document in the near future, guiding day-to-day business.

In a somewhat parallel process, the Association Executive continues to work on a strategic planning process that began in 2005. The current Association Executive is seeking a "strategic planning expert" to help facilitate the renewal of our Strategic Plan. The intent is to have this facilitator available to start the process at the first Association Executive meeting after Convention.

In April of 2008 the PEA held its Education Conference in Kelowna. The Education Conference topic was *creating a culture of engagement*. By using an adult education facilitated model, eight small groups comprising of 8 or 9 members from a variety of chapters explored questions related to the reasons for member participation in the PEA, the reasons for not participating, and methods to enhance member participation.

As part of the process of acknowledging change, a union needs to value its diversity. Over time, the PEA has grown to encompass members with a range of occupations and employers. Within the Association, we need to better understand our colleagues from different chapters. I believe that those who attended this conference will agree that they left the event having a better

understanding of the other chapters that belong to the PEA. In addition, the Association Executive and staff saw that participants were almost unanimous in a desire for practice changes in the PEA's culture and communications processes.

Those attending this conference agreed that the PEA must work to create a culture of engagement and belonging for all of its members – old and new. Members felt that one way to achieve this was through new communication strategies, such as new media and creating public relations and member relations campaigns. For new members, it was important to feel welcomed as a part of the union as soon as possible. In this regard, the introductory package sent to new members was overhauled and implemented in December. These packages are being made available to the new members as soon as our staff is made aware of the new member hire.

Use of communication technologies can help a union to become a pervasive presence in members' lives rather than an incidental event. The new PEA website includes photos of members at work to start the process of personalization. In July of 2008, we launched the PEA Blog, established a profile and fan page on Facebook, and we are constructing a password-protected area on the website. We have also expanded our presence on web 2.0 to include a YouTube channel, Facebook Group, and the Access to Justice social media campaign.

Effective communication includes developing a consistency of style and content of presentation. This helps to transform a union from an impersonal institutional structure to a vibrant personality that its members can identify with. In this regard, the slogans "*I am a professional. This is my union.*" and "*Professionals making a difference*" were unveiled in August of 2008.

Finally, we identified that we need to continue exploring ways to increase our learning. We need to learn and understand more about the workings of the union. We need to learn and understand more about each chapter, each other's challenges and unique differences. Conventions, Education Conferences and the newly revised Local Representative training will help to provide learning opportunities for our members.

Making predictions for the year ahead is difficult. With the current global economic crisis showing no signs of easing, a provincial election around the corner, and the unknown financial impacts of the 2010 Olympics, the future of our province is very unclear. This may be the biggest year for collective bargaining in the history of the PEA with ten collective agreements affecting over 99% of the PEA membership expiring between December 31, 2009 and September 30, 2010. As the majority of public sector contracts are also expiring at the same time, it will no doubt be a very busy and interesting year. The current provincial government has already indicated that, while they will adhere to the existing signed contracts that are in place for public service employees, there is no money budgeted for future wage increases and that the focus in the coming years will be the preservation of jobs.

Bargaining for many of our members is strongly influenced by the bargaining priorities of other unions or may be coordinated with other unions. For example, Health Science Professionals Chapter members are strongly influenced by the bargaining priorities of the Health Sciences Association, Community Health Services and Support Chapter members are influenced by the bargaining priorities of other members of the Health – Community Subsector Bargaining Association, and GLP members tend to be influenced by the BCGEU.

The Association and Chapter Executives are working to encourage membership participation. Collective Bargaining is both a major activity of the union and an issue that directly affects its members. It's a prime opportunity to engage members in the PEA. Many chapters have already started preparing for bargaining and their bargaining teams will be calling on your support to achieve your goals at the bargaining table.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge our staff and the volunteers who make up the Association and chapter executives, our various committees and our Local Representatives. The faces in our two offices have changed to some degree over the past few years. Frank Greenlay replaced Jennifer Duprey in the Lower Mainland office, joining Barinder Rasode and Joanne Petersen. In our Victoria office we saw the return of Jodi Jensen to her position of Executive Director. Caroline Ward and Tony Bute both retired, Deborah Service-Brewster helped out while Ernie Gorrie was filling in during Jodi's absence, and the Communications Officer position was filled by Kyle Russell. In Marianna Azouri's absence we have Rhiannon Bray keeping things in order. Teresa Humphries has been doing an excellent job of keeping our financial house in order. Our staff has done an excellent job in providing the members the service they need. With the onset of bargaining in the near future these people will be busier than ever and I hope that we can continue to show patience and appreciation for their efforts during this challenging period. Thank you from all of us.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our past President Kathy Danchuk for her 13 years of tireless service as president of our Association. While she is not here today I think that we all know that she can always be counted on to support our Association.

Finally, I thank all of you for attending this Convention and taking the time to get involved in shaping the future of our Association. It's through the efforts of people like you that our Association will grow stronger and continue to withstand the challenges that are presented to us. I sincerely hope that you found the past few days a positive experience and will go back to your offices and share your learning and experiences with your colleagues. It's through dialogues such as this that we will continue to engage members and increase the involvement of our membership as a whole.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Jobke, R.P.F.
President

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Anniversaries are occasions for celebration and for looking back to past accomplishments. As we mark the PEA's 35th anniversary, we celebrate the leadership that brought the vision of a union for professionals to life, and the accomplishments of all who have sustained that vision over the intervening years.

I am a professional. This is my union.

The birth of the PEA required an act of imagination, to envision a different kind of union, where the unique interests of professionals would be not only tolerated or accommodated, but celebrated. Where professional interests would form the bedrock of who we are and what we do – from how we make decisions to how we approach labour relations and collective bargaining.

Bringing that vision to life required hard work, collective organizing and a leap of faith. Professionals successfully lobbied the Higgins Commission of Inquiry into Employer-Employee Relations in the Public Service of B.C. to recommend the establishment of a separate bargaining unit for licensed professionals. Our founding members made considerable personal and financial sacrifices to establish the PEA and begin the sign-up campaign that resulted in our first certification in 1974.

Having a shared vision – collectively refined time and again – has sustained the PEA through 35 years of growth, struggle and success. Never have we lost our focus on who we are and what makes the PEA an effective voice for employed professionals.

On an organizational level, that vision has manifested in four key areas:

- *Professionalism.* The PEA recognizes and supports our members' professionalism and professional obligations. Our collective agreements include unique arrangements to recognize professional ethics, on-going educational requirements, and work patterns.
- *Membership service.* Professionals recognize the value of expertise. The PEA provides professional representation by labour relations experts and direct access to those experts by individual members.
- *Independence.* The PEA is an independent, non-partisan union. Our constitution does not include a traditional union "discipline" clause. Recognizing that professionals are independent thinkers, trained to exercise judgement, we focus on our core business of negotiating and enforcing collective agreements. We do our members' bidding and no one else's.
- *Prudent financial management.* The PEA has the lowest dues rate of any public sector union and exercises prudent financial management. We have effective financial controls and oversight to ensure transparency and accountability in how we manage members' funds for members' benefit.

Looking back

Over the past two years, the PEA has focused our efforts on membership communications and membership engagement and participation. Each are vital to our ability to successfully negotiate collective agreement settlements.

Just weeks after the conclusion of the 2007 convention, we began the groundwork to renew our membership communications. We listened to what members had to say in focus groups about what they liked and valued, what worked and what didn't. That feedback drove major changes to the newsletter, *The Professional*, and the website that were implemented in 2008.

In the fall of 2007, the Association Executive approved the establishment of a new Communications Officer position, and Kyle Russell joined the PEA staff early in 2008, resulting in a whirlwind of activity on the communications front. Kyle has done an incredible job of bringing the PEA into the modern age, taking advantage of social media, overhauling our welcome package and significantly reducing the amount of time it takes to get it into the hands of new members. The Association Executive approved advertising campaigns to attract new members and get the PEA's presence into communities across the province; and the production of video content for our website, to celebrate our 35th anniversary and in support of a community campaign on legal aid. On the horizon for 2009 are the introduction of electronic balloting and a members-only area on the website.

Much of our work over the past year has also been informed by the 2008 Education Conference. The 2007 Convention mandated that the conference focus on improving membership engagement and participation in PEA activities. We listened to what conference participants had to say about creating and improving opportunities for members to participate in PEA activities and developed a work plan to implement conference outcomes.

As part of our membership education initiatives, the PEA has expanded its Local Representative training and opportunities to access training, with the first session held in March 2009. The Association Executive also decided to dedicate the education sessions at Convention on preparation for collective bargaining.

Challenges ahead

The PEA will go to the table in 2009 to seek renewed collective agreements for members employed by the Okanagan Regional Library and the Law Society of BC. In 2010, the remaining nine PEA collective agreements will expire, on March 31, June 30, and September 30.

We are once again facing a difficult bargaining environment. The global economic crisis has affected both public and private sector employers, and in some sectors, softened demand for skilled workers. In February, the B.C. Liberal government pronounced that there would be no wage increases in the public service, as it unveiled a budget reliant on staffing reductions. We don't expect to see the details of the impact on Government Licensed Professionals until after the provincial election.

By contrast, in early January the Legal Services Society announced a major re-organization of their services in the Lower Mainland, resulting in the layoff of 14 staff lawyers. This is the second major hit on legal aid staff lawyers since 2002, which has reduced their numbers from 75 to 15. The decimation of legal aid in this province has wide-ranging implications, as access to the justice system is fundamental to social, economic and gender equality.

In March, the government made deals delivering compensation increases with the organizations representing doctors and nurses. Contrary to what we've seen in the past, the government's bargaining strategy in this round appears to be one of "different strokes for different folks."

At its core, collective bargaining is a market activity involving the sale of labour at a particular price structure for specific periods of time, under specific conditions. In recent years B.C.'s economic boom and demographics reduced the supply of skilled labour generally, and we were able to use that to our advantage to make financial gains. A recession coupled with rising unemployment rates changes the market conditions for labour. The challenge for the PEA will be to ensure that all members receive fair deals when employers may only be motivated to recognize the value of small groups or "pockets" of members within each chapter.

In these times, our bargaining teams will be challenged to find workable, pragmatic solutions that balance the sometimes competing interests of members. That's a challenge not just for bargaining teams but for all members – whether involved in committees, as Local Representatives, executive members or simply in workplace discussions or meetings. We need to ask ourselves – how do we best serve our collective interests? – knowing that teamwork and dialogue are key to realizing our goals.

Professionals making a difference

The PEA is a team effort. Day in and day out, our success depends on the coordinated efforts, dedication and passion of members, local representatives, executives and staff.

Literally hundreds of members volunteer their time each year to make a difference. To all of you who contribute to the PEA's continuing growth, vitality and success, I extend thanks and appreciation. From local representatives who help to defend our collective agreements through grievances and appeals, to chapter executive members who provide leadership for their colleagues, to convention delegates who provide thoughtful debate in setting policy and priorities, to members who raise issues and ask questions – you make this union what it is and I am privileged to work on your behalf.

I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the contributions of two remarkable and long-serving members of the Association Executive, Kathy Danchuk and Jim Russell. While Kathy stepped down as President earlier this year, Jim is leaving his role as First Vice-President following convention, being one of the lawyers impacted by layoffs at the Legal Services Society. Since I joined the PEA in early 1998, both Kathy and Jim have played key roles on the Association Executive and their commitment and dedication to serving members' interests has been inspiring. On a personal level, I will miss working with them both.

I am fortunate to lead the PEA's talented and dedicated team of staff. Labour Relations Officers Barinder Rasode, Ernie Gorrie and Frank Greenlay work tirelessly to answer members' questions, provide advice, advocate grievances and appeals, negotiate collective agreements and support member committees and chapter executives. Their work is the "bread and butter" of the PEA. Rhiannon Bray, who joined the Victoria office for the duration of Marianna Azouri's leave of absence, has capably stepped in to provide exemplary support to all of our activities and Teresa Humphries has done remarkable work to strengthen and improve our financial systems. Once again, Joanne Petersen has my admiration and appreciation for so capably handling all aspects of convention planning to ensure a successful event. And this year, a special shout out goes to Kyle Russell who has accomplished great things in just one short year as the PEA's Communications Officer. We're looking forward to more.

Respectfully submitted,

Jodi Jensen
Executive Director

SECRETARY-TREASURER'S REPORT

This report covers the fiscal years 2007 and 2008. First, sources of revenue from dues and investments are examined, and then an overview of operating expenses is presented.

The Professional Employees Association's revenue comes from members' dues and investment income. Dues totaled \$1,468,490 in 2007, an increase of \$76,895 from 2006, while our budget anticipated dues of \$1,421,932. In 2008, actual dues totaled \$1,581,724, an increase of \$55,466 from 2007, while our budget anticipated dues of \$1,523,956. Budgets for both years projected bargained salary increases, and in 2008, dues from the new LSL Chapter were budgeted. Nevertheless, dues received exceeded expectations. Over the past two years, the association has grown by approximately 200 members; this has been a significant factor in increasing revenues from dues.

The PEA's investment policy calls for a minimum of 60 percent of our portfolio to be held in bonds, with no more than 40 percent to be held in equities. At present, the policy restricts the PEA from holding shares in companies whose major activity is the manufacture of guns or weapons of war, tobacco products, or those companies that use exploitive labor practices, engage in human rights abuses, or contribute to carbon emissions. Policy also mandates that our reserves always be sufficient to support members of the PEA's largest bargaining unit through a two month dispute, as well as costs associated with a grievance going through the courts to the Supreme Court of Canada. Investment performance is evaluated quarterly and to ensure that performance matches or surpasses benchmarks measured over four year rolling periods.

On December 31, 2007 the PEA held an investment portfolio consisting of \$2,862,929 in equities, \$4,574,117 in bonds and \$428,906 in cash and equivalents for a total of

\$7,900,471. Our equities are managed by three professional fund managers for which the PEA was charged an average of 0.91 percent of the market value of the portfolio. Our entire portfolio returned 1.86 percent for 2007, slightly more than our benchmark which yielded 1.67 percent. Investment income for 2007 totaled \$776,989, after expenses; this included an extraordinary one-time inclusion of \$354,544 which reflected a change in accounting policy, requiring us to carry investments at fair market value. That investment income, added to dues revenue, resulted in total revenue of \$2,245,479 for 2007.

During the past year, we experienced a beleaguered investment environment that generated the first ever end of year loss for our portfolio. On December 31, 2008 the PEA held an investment portfolio consisting of \$2,184,664 in equities, \$4,754,332 in bonds and \$592,126 in cash and equivalents for a total of \$7,561,999. Our equity fund managers charged an average of 0.9269 percent of the market value of the portfolio. Our entire portfolio returned -5.83 percent for 2008, less than our benchmark which yielded -4.58 percent. Looking at the components behind our portfolio's performance, our bonds returned 4.23 percent versus 6.48 percent from our bond benchmark, and our equities returned -27.90 percent versus -29.85 percent from the equity benchmark. Investment revenue for 2008 was deficient by \$476,042. This deficiency is primarily due to a loss of \$305,440 on the sale of investments and a decrease of portfolio value by \$428,022; these are offset by an income of \$320,968 on invested funds. The deficiency in investment revenue resulted in total revenue of \$1,105,682 for 2008.

Investment reserves of \$77,481 were held in 2007 to fund retirement leave costs for PEA staff. For 2008, these reserves increased to \$159,800; however, this included \$100,000 which was set aside to help offset bargaining expenses in 2010.

Our operating expenses for 2007 totaled \$1,285,006, a decrease of \$84,682 over 2006. Many of our expense categories showed little change from 2006, with a two exceptions. Negotiation expenditures showed a drastic decrease, reflecting the bargaining push of 2006. The introduction of the Communications Redesign category captured expenses towards redesigning of *The Professional*, and a complete reengineering of our website. The Negotiations expense category showed significant spending in excess of the 2007 budget; expenditures were over by \$57,346 primarily due to negotiations for a first contract with the Law Society of British Columbia, GLP post-ratification activities, and SMS bargaining.

Our operating expenses for 2008 totaled \$1,455,502, an increase of \$170,496 over 2007. Of that, \$147,985 was attributed to increased Staff Salaries and Benefits expenses. Many of our other expense categories showed little change from 2007, with some exceptions. Starting in the 2008 financial statements, the convention and conference expenses are collected under the Convention/Conference expenses category, thus preventing large fluctuations in the Executive and Constitution, and Membership Services and Administration categories. Nevertheless, expenses captured in the Membership Services and Administration category grew significantly from 2007; the two main contributors to this increase were Local Rep training and increased grievance and arbitration expenses for several chapters, with the UVic chapter contributing the largest increase. Only three categories showed significant spending in excess of the 2008 budget. The Staff Salaries and Benefits expense category was over by \$79,563, primarily due to the introduction of the Communications Officer position, and to some extent, several retirement leave payouts, and backfill for leave taken. For Executive and Constitution, expenses were over budget by \$28,737, primarily due to increased GLP Executive meeting expenses and bargaining activities with PEA staff. Also, the Negotiations expense category was over by \$20,893 primarily due to protracted negotiations for SMS and LSL.

When I started as Secretary-Treasurer, I had the privilege to work with then Financial Officer, Caroline Ward; I thank Caroline for her valuable assistance and many years of dedication to the PEA. We are now fortunate to have Teresa Humphries working in our office. In addition to providing us with financial services, Teresa is implementing new financial processes which will improve efficiencies and simplify our reporting and audits. Thanks also to our portfolio manager Paul Siluch, of Raymond James, for navigating us through the risks and opportunities in the investment markets, and also to our auditor, Chris Cowland, of Cowland Paterson & Co., for keeping us on track with our accounting. Thanks to the recent members of the PEA Finance & Investment Committee, Tom Gore, Frank Kohlberger, Jim Russell and Guido Vanderheyden, along with ex officio members Kathy Danchuk, Mike Jobke, Jodi Jensen, and finally our Convention Ways & Means Committee members, Tom Gore, Shaun Prodanuk, and Sonny Wilson.

Respectfully submitted,

John Foxgord
Secretary-Treasurer