

Atlantic Regional Council Meeting Minutes

April 5-6, 2025 Charlottetown PEI (*In-Person*)

April 16, 2025 (*Virtual Continuation*)

The Atlantic Regional Council held an in-person meeting on April 5-6, 2025. Due to time constraints, not all business was completed, and a virtual continuation meeting was held on April 16, 2025. These minutes document both sessions as part of the same meeting series.

Session 1: April 5-6, 2025 - Charlottetown, PEI

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am on April 5, with REVP Chris Di Liberatore in the chair and the following in attendance:

Director for Non-Treasury Board members NL, Natasha Mercer
Director for Non-Treasury Board Maritimes, Brian Oldford
Director for NL, Nancy Spearing
Director for NL, Leanne Moss
Director for NS, Ellen Cross
Director for NS and Alternate REVP, Denise Reynolds
Director for PEI, Lindsay MacLellan
Director for PEI, Kim Asling-Ing
Director for NB, Darlene Bembridge
Director for NB, Darren Smith
Director for Young Workers, Ryan Smith
Director for Francophone members, Caroline Morais Gregan
Director for Women - Maritimes, Jackie Ellis
Director for Women - Newfoundland & Labrador, Gail Budgell
Director for Members with Disabilities, Mireille Jaillet
Director for Racially Visible Members, Farid Tourkmani
Director for Indigenous Members, Angela Decker
Director for DCL's, Jonathan Cox
Director for 2SLGBTQIA+, Sarah Bolger

Guests & Observers:

Cathy O'Kane - RVP NPF UNDE
Mary Lynn Elms - A/REVP NS UNE
Dorothy McRae - RVP Western Atlantic AGR

2. Indigenous Opening

Chris invited Angela Decker, Indigenous Director, to introduce Elder Junior Peter-Paul.

Angela presented Elder Peter-Paul's bio before Elder Peter-Paul conducted the opening ceremony.

Chris provided housekeeping announcements:

- The meeting is being recorded for record-keeping purposes.
- Interpretation services are available; attendees are reminded to use microphones and speak slowly to assist interpreters.
- Attendees are encouraged to keep headphones on to facilitate interpretation for French-speaking participants.
- Grant will be seeking Council Members' participation in creating videos for the federal election campaign, highlighting the value of public services and encouraging voter support.

3. PSAC Statement on Harassment

The PSAC Statement on Harassment was read aloud by Caroline (English) and Sarah (French). Holmann was designated as the Anti-Harassment Coordinator for the meeting and his phone number was given.

4. PSAC Scent-Free Policy

Chris reminded everyone that all PSAC events are smoke-free and scent free. You can access the full policy on the PSAC website.

5. Hours of Session

As outlined in the agenda, the hours of session are:

- **Saturday:** 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
- **Sunday:** 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

6. Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed to honor those who have passed away since the last Regional Council meeting in September. The following names were read into the record:

- Darlene MacCormack UTE 90006

- Real Lacroix UTE 90006
- Cassandra Stevens Eskasoni local 80510
- Luke Payne UNE 90265
- Madonna Gardiner UTE 90001
- Brenda Parsons CEIU 90113
- Holmann Richards father
- Angela Deckers father

7. Adoption of the Agenda

A motion to adopt was made by Jackie Ellis, seconded by Jonathan Cox and carried unanimously.

8. REVP Welcome

Chris welcomed the new council directors and conducted the oath of office for:

- **Mireille Jaillet** - New Access Director, replacing Gerry Finnigan.
- **Lindsay MacLellan** - New PEI Director, replacing Heather Ford.

Gerry Finnigan and Heather Ford were thanked for their contributions. Gail Budgell was also recognized as the newly elected co-chair of the Central NL Women's Committee and oath of office administered.

A round of introductions followed for everyone in attendance.

Observers were reminded that they do not have voice or vote at Council Meetings but may speak during the Sunday morning roundtable if time permits.

9. REVP Update

Bargaining and Mobilization

Chris began the REVP update by celebrating the mobilization wins over the last few months. Several collective agreements have been successfully negotiated.

- Sydney Airport Authority
 - A new collective agreement was ratified, including:
 - Strong economic increases, shift premiums, travel allowances, paid meals, and a signing bonus.

- A new paid holiday for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Updates to parental leave and sick leave provisions.
- Letter of Understanding (LOU) on the establishment of a pension plan.
- Deer Lake Regional Airport Authority
Agreement secured post-conciliation with:
 - Economic increases, mileage, meal and boot allowances, and premiums for trades.
 - Grievance process improvements and union representation rights.
 - Enhancements to pension, dental, and vision benefits.
 - Strengthened job protection: reduced probation, permanent status after 36 months.
- Greater Moncton Airport
Secured new agreement with:
 - Achieved a 16% economic increase over the agreement term.
 - Increased standby pay, shift premiums, pension improvements, and vision care enhancements.
- Transition Houses in Nova Scotia
 - Bryony House:
Classification adjustment, 26% wage increase, new statutory holiday, expanded sick leave, and mileage tied to provincial rates.
 - Chrysalis House:
23.5% classification adjustment and 30.5% total wage increase.
Improvements included vacation pay for relief workers, menstrual product provision, and increased family care reimbursements.

Treasury Board

Agreements for PA, TC, SV, and EB groups will all expire in the coming months. A notice to bargain has been filed.

- The Treasury Board bargaining conference was held in February. Chris informed everyone that he is the AEC officer assigned to the SV bargaining unit.

- Over 20,000 responses received to the bargaining survey (closed January 6).
- The first TB caucus is scheduled next week (April 8-11).

Parks Canada

- In 2023 PSAC filed an unfair labor practice against Parks Canada Agency regarding pensionable lump sum payments for seasonal and term workers.
- The employer claimed they had no authority to settle; and a hearing is scheduled for May 14, 2025 before the FPSLRB.

Pension and Benefits

- Public Service Pension Plan Surplus:
 - In November 2024, Minister Anand tabled a report written by the independent Chief Actuary who confirmed a \$1.9B surplus in the Public Service Pension Plan which exceeds the allowable surplus under the legislation. The government has transferred these funds into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. In doing so, the government failed workers by not using the surplus to reverse the unfair two-tier pension system introduced by the Harper Conservatives in 2012.
- Early Retirement Expansion Promise:
 - The Fall Economic Statement proposed \$173M to expand early retirement for frontline workers (e.g., border services, wildland firefighters, paramedics).
 - These changes stalled due to the prorogation of Parliament on March 24.

Chris stressed the importance of lobbying on pension fairness and preparing to pressure the next government on “25 and out” retirement reforms.

Site Visits

Chris plans to increase member engagement through site visits in Summer and Fall. Members are encouraged to notify the REVP, Katie, or Grant if planning a local event or if a worksite is a good candidate for a visit.

Black Class Action Lawsuit

The federal court has declined to certify the Black Class Action lawsuit aimed at addressing systemic racism in the federal public service. The Court acknowledged the presence of systemic racism but ruled it lacks jurisdiction, citing existing grievance mechanisms for public service employees.

PSAC has filed a human rights complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission on behalf of all Black PSAC members employed in the federal public service.

Chris acknowledged the emotional impact of the court's decision and reaffirmed the union's commitment to justice and will provide updates as he receives them.

Blue Communities Initiative

As the AEC officer on the Board of Director's Environment Committee, Chris is very proud of the Blue Communities Project rollout.

This project works with municipalities, Indigenous communities, and organizations to:

- Recognize water as a human right,
- Promote publicly financed and operated water services,
- Phase out or ban the sale of bottled water.

PSAC has implemented an immediate ban on single-use plastic water bottles at all offices and events. This initiative aligns with the Still Thirsty for Justice campaign which many of our members in the Atlantic have taken action on.

Social Justice Fund - Anti-Poverty Initiative Call-Out

Every year PSAC's Social Justice Fund, in consultation with each region, distributes an anti-poverty call for proposals to regional committees and area councils which are looking to work with and support organizations who:

- Demonstrate a collaboration between union members and community organizations.
- Defend public services, equity, and social rights through advocacy and outreach.

REVP Budgeting, Planning, and Deadlines

Chris reminded everyone that he has the responsibility of ensuring responsibility of members' dues by making cost-effective decisions.

An example of this was the decision to hold the regional summits and Indigenous Gathering in Halifax as this was the most cost-efficient location which allowed me to use the surplus funds wisely and ensure maximum participation.

A factor that contributes to budget issues is air travel. The cost of air travel has not only increased but flight options are limited. Deadlines to book travel are provided by PSAC staff and going forward must be adhered to. Chris advised that he will not be approving travel after the set deadline unless extenuating circumstances are communicated well in advance. Where the regional council is concerned, it will mean attendance will be virtual if the deadline to book travel is missed.

Chris also reminded everyone that expenses claims are to be submitted within 90 days of an event

8. Adoption of the REVP and Directors' Reports

The Directors' reports are available in the OneDrive folder previously shared via email.

Chris asked for a motion to approve all Director's reports and the REVP report as a whole.

**M/S Caroline Morais-Gregan and Natasha Mercer
That the Directors and REVP report be adopted
CARRIED**

9. Adoption of Previous Council Minutes - September 2024

Chris asked for a motion to adopt the meeting minutes from September 2024.

**M/S Sarah Bolger and Ellen Cross
That the previous minutes be adopted
CARRIED**

10. Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting is scheduled for October 3-5, 2025, to be held at the Moncton Regional Office, with accommodations at Delta Beausejour Hotel.

For this cycle, the original plan was to hold one in-person and one virtual council committee meeting annually. However, it seems in person meetings are the best option in conjunction with the Council Meetings.

Committee meetings will take place in the hotel boardrooms to minimize the back-and-forth travel to the Moncton RO.

11. Regional Coordinator Update - Holmann Richard

Chris welcomed Holmann Richard to provide regional office updates.

St. John's RO: A new representative has been approved for the St. John's RO. Once the staffing process has been finalized that will be shared. The anticipated start date is mid-May.

Moncton RO: A pipe burst in the boardroom in January that damaged 60% of the office. Repairs are nearly complete, with reopening expected by the end of April.

Halifax RO: Acoustics issues have been resolved. Nancy has returned to full-time work after part-time work with JLP and she will also be the recipient of the **NS Volunteer of the Year Award**.

Education:

Workforce Adjustment (WFA) training has begun; orientation for the reps was completed last week. The guides for TB and CRA are available electronically; printed copies to follow. We are awaiting guides for Parks and CFIA with no confirmed release dates. "Lunch and Learn" WFA sessions will be 30-45 minutes; some training may be scheduled evenings/weekends. For any weekend training, members would be entitled to an education allowance.

With respect to the education schedule; there will be more Indigenous focused training being prioritized. The REO may have shared this with the education committee the other day when they met.

Reps will travel to communities to deliver training where possible as opposed to travelling members into the RO continuously, as this will assist with stretching the education budget dollars.

For any specific training needs, please contact the REO as they can develop or tailor courses for specific training needs.

Varia:

When staff are assigned to various regional conferences, equity designations are considered. The Regional staff complement currently includes members of all equity-seeking groups.

With respect to summer staffing, each regional office will maintain minimal coverage (1 admin and 1 rep). PEI will receive support from another regional office as needed.

For any members wishing to book the boardroom or to use the BBQ (in Moncton & Halifax), advance booking is required. You can contact the admin in the regional office for these bookings.

Ongoing collaboration between the Regional Office and the REVP's Office continues.

Menstrual products are provided at no cost in all PSAC offices.

Bottled water is banned from all Atlantic offices and events as per the Blue Communities initiatives that Chris mentioned earlier.

12. Remarks from the PEIFL President, Carl Pursey

Brother Carl provided brief remarks and welcomed PSAC to the Island.

13. Council Committee Reports

A spokesperson for each regional council committee provided a verbal report of their recent virtual meetings held in advance of the regional council meeting. Chris reminded everyone that the next committee meetings will be held in person the day before the council meeting.

As a reminder, the committee minutes will include any recommendations they may have, but these will be voted on separately. In the past, there have been instances where recommendations were presented but didn't require a vote by Council. If that's the case, committees will be asked to remove them.

Education Committee

Jonathan Cox, chair of the committee read aloud the report and presented the proposed 2025-2027 education plan.

m/s Jonathan Cox and Ellen Cross

That the report be adopted.

CARRIED

Jonathan and Ellen presented the education plan for 2025-2027.

m/s Jonathan Cox and Ellen Cross
That the education plan be adopted.
CARRIED

Health & Safety Committee

Brian, committee chair read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Brian Oldford and Ryan Smith
That the report be adopted.
CARRIED

Women's Committee

Jackie Ellis, committee co-chair read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Jackie Ellis and Gail Budgell
That the report be adopted.
CARRIED

Environment Committee

Ryan Smith, co-chair of the committee read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Ryan Smith and Sarah Bolger
That the report be adopted.
CARRIED

Human Rights Committee

Sarah Bolger, co-chair of the committee, read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Sarah Bolger and Farid Tourkmani
That the report be adopted.
CARRIED

Finance Committee

Darlene Bembridge, chair of the committee, read aloud the report of the committee.

Darlene provided an update on the meeting of the finance committee.

Provide an overview of what the finance committee will be working on over the coming months which includes preparing a convention budget to present to council as well as proposing a budget for the next 3-year cycle.

m/s Darlene Bembridge and Brian Oldford

That the report be adopted.

CARRIED

14. Scott Sinclair “Trump’s Tariffs and the Future of the Public Service”

Scott Sinclair was a research associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Until his retirement in 2021 he directed the centre’s Trade and Investment Research Project.

He has written widely on the impacts of trade treaties on public services and public interest regulation. Prior to joining CCPA, Scott was a senior trade policy advisor with the Government of British Columbia.

Scott spoke about the US/Canada Tariffs and the impact on our country.

Indigenous Closing

The Elder was unable to attend the closing due to personal matters, however, Angela Decker provided remarks on his behalf and wished everyone safe travels home.

Adjournment

The meeting was temporarily adjourned at noon on April 6, 2025, with a plan to reconvene virtually with the date to be determined once the REVP’s schedule can be reviewed for availability and Katie would send out some options via doodle poll for majority availability.

Items Carried Forward to Virtual Session:

1. Continuation of Council Committee Reports
 - *Political Action Committee*
2. Federal Election
3. Remote Works Campaign
4. PSAC Atlantic Triennial Convention 2026
5. Other

In person meeting adjourned at noon

Session 2: April 16, 2025 (Virtual Continuation)

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm on April 16, with REVP Chris Di Liberatore in the chair and the following in attendance:

Director for Non-Treasury Board members NL, Natasha Mercer
Director for Non-Treasury Board Maritimes, Brian Oldford
Director for NL, Nancy Spearing
Director for NL, Leanne Moss
Director for NS, Ellen Cross
Director for NS and Alternate REVP, Denise Reynolds
Director for PEI, Lindsay MacLellan
Director for NB, Darren Smith
Director for Young Workers, Ryan Smith
Director for Francophone members, Caroline Morais Gregan
Director for Members with Disabilities, Mireille Jaillet
Director for Racially Visible Members, Farid Tourkmani
Director for Indigenous Members, Angela Decker
Director for DCL's, Jonathan Cox
Director for 2SLGBTQIA+, Sarah Bolger

Regrets:

Director for PEI, Kim Asling-Ings
Director for Women - Maritimes, Jackie Ellis
Director for Women - Newfoundland & Labrador, Gail Budgell
Director for NB, Darlene Bembridge

Chris acknowledged that everyone is joining from the territory of the Indigenous People of Turtle Island. Chris encouraged everyone to take the time to learn the Indigenous name of the place you call home and think about how those ongoing struggles against colonization's manifest on your community.

Since this meeting is a reconvene from April 5-6 the PSAC anti-harassment statement remains in effect.

The hours of session are from 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm.

2. Regional Committee Report

Political Action Committee

Darren Smith, committee co-chair, read aloud the report of the committee.

m/s Darren Smith and Mireille Jaillet

That the report be adopted.

CARRIED

3. Federal Election

The PSAC's election strategy hinges on regional engagement and localized implementation. This ensures member mobilization and empowers them with the tools and knowledge to influence the election outcome positively. Some key aspects of the election plan include Area Councils and Components lead on-the-ground efforts, with the regional offices providing support and guidance to ensure an inclusive and collaborative campaign across the Atlantic region.

Regional Objectives:

- Support candidates who advocate for PSAC values and workers' rights, as identified by national data.
- Educate members on key PSAC issues and the value of public services.
- Direct members to the national *For You, Canada* campaign.
- Encourage voter participation and provide the necessary tools for informed voting.

Proposed Tactics:

- Utilize the regional email list (approx. 45,000 subscribers) to amplify the national message.
- Target social media outreach across the region.
- Distribute video and email messages from the REVP, Council Members, and members encouraging support for pro-worker candidates.
- Promote participation in Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and provincial federation-led election activities.
- Support local Area Council initiatives, such as all-candidate meetings and phone banking.

National Strategy

The national campaign centers on *For You, Canada*, with a focus on highlighting the value of public service. Materials include advertisements, door knockers, platform

analyses, and interactive tools such as debate night bingo. The campaign builds on past successful efforts and incorporates learnings from U.S. union campaigns.

Budget & Compliance

Components are reminded to submit their election plans to ensure coordination and compliance with Elections Canada regulations. Local-level initiatives, such as meet-and-greets and Q&A events with candidates, are encouraged.

Area Councils and locals are urged to collaborate with staff reps to support *Get Out the Vote* efforts.

Members were reminded of the importance of acting in coordination to stay within legal spending limits. Non-compliance could result in a breach of Elections Canada rules and potentially trigger audits.

4. Remote Works Campaign

The Remote Works Campaign is ongoing. Regional offices have received campaign materials, including stickers, magnets, and toques. Local presidents are encouraged to coordinate with their Regional Offices for access to materials if they wish to utilize them.

You all received a small package of these items for your personal use during the meeting in Charlottetown.

5. PSAC Atlantic Triennial Convention 2026

Logistics:

The next PSAC Atlantic Triennial Convention will be held June 27–29, 2026, at the Halifax Trade and Convention Centre, located on Argyle Street in Halifax, NS. A brief Regional Council meeting will precede the Convention on Thursday, June 26, officially marking the start of Convention for council directors.

The Convention Centre's ballroom level will house all convention meeting rooms, keeping the event on a single floor. The venue's food and beverage staff as well as cleaning staff are unionized, meeting PSAC's requirement to use unionized facilities. However, the Sutton Hotel, which is attached to the Convention Centre, is not unionized and therefore cannot be used for any delegate accommodation.

Confirmed hotel blocks for the Convention are:

- The Hollis
- The Lord Nelson
- Hotel Halifax (formerly Delta Halifax)
- Hampton Inn & Homewood Suites

The largest block is secured at the Hampton Inn & Homewood Suites, which will accommodate most delegates. Council directors will be housed here in suite-style accommodations. A shuttle service will be provided in the mornings and at the end of the day for those who are unable or decide not to walk the approximately 11-minute distance to the Convention Centre. No evening shuttle service will be provided for the optional events. Members who have identified accessibility needs are encouraged to reach out directly for any additional assistance.

Resolution Committees:

Chris is recommending changes from the previous Convention Resolutions Committee composition, as follows:

- Each committee will have a Council Director elected as Chair, with a Co-Chair elected from among national officers (i.e., RVPs, NVPs, and Branch Presidents).
- The final composition will depend on budget availability as these committees would meet in person.
- Regional Council submits only Bylaws resolutions, while General resolutions should come from locals, area councils, and regional committees. There is a perceived bias to support resolutions when the regional council can submit both.

Leanne asked for clarification noting that previously, Regional Council could submit both bylaw and general resolutions. Leanne asked Chris *“What is your recommendation on this as to why an individual directors cannot submit resolutions for Council to debate and vote on?”*

Chris responded that when individual directors or Regional Council submits resolutions, it can add or create undue weight and influence stating that *“It tends to sway folks to believe this is an issue they should support just because it comes from elected officers in the region and that is not ideal”*.

Chris explained that directors can still influence resolutions through affiliated bodies such as, regional committees, locals, and area councils. This avenue ensures the resolutions aren't given extra weight simply due to who is submitting them, Chris stated.

Leanne followed up by asking if this approach excludes the Political Action committee of council and other regional council committees from submitting resolutions.

Chris clarified that regional council committees in past nor present cannot submit resolutions. However, he recommended that the council political action committee as well as the other regional council committees could communicate with the area councils and regional committees to submit resolutions to regional convention.

Resolutions Committees:

- Bylaws Resolutions Committee: Typically, it is a committee of 5-6 and covers the current bylaws as adopted at the 2023 Regional Convention. The committee will prepare a list of resolution priorities and rationales.
- General Resolutions Committee: Typically, is a committee of 5-6 and will review all general resolutions and establish the priorities and provide rationale.
- Finance Resolutions Committee: Consists of the 3-person finance committee of regional council and will handle resolutions related to costing. Katie will serve as the staff advisor for this committee.

Ad Hoc Bylaws Committee:

A committee will be struck to review and tidy the current bylaws and prepare related resolutions. Interested members should email Katie and Grant. Initial meetings will be held virtually, followed by an in-person session during the October Council meeting.

Host Committee:

This committee will plan social events and entertainment for the Convention and should consist of non-delegate members who reside in the Halifax area. One Council member will act as liaison. The staff advisor will come from the Halifax Regional Office.

Awards Committee:

Will follow the format from the previous Convention and include awards such as the Atlantic Voice Award. Staff advisor: Political Communications Officer.

Convention Theme:

Please submit ideas for the 2026 Convention theme to Katie and Grant. A reminder and deadline will be circulated. The goal is to finalize the theme by the end of summer.

Keynote Speaker:

Costs associated with keynote speakers can be quite high - often starting at \$15,000. With that in mind, the preference is to secure a labour movement leader. The Finance Committee will soon be preparing a Convention budget and will present it at the next Council meeting in October. Everyone is encouraged to submit speakers' suggestions to Katie and Grant.

Committee Participation:

Katie will be reaching out to gauge interest in serving on the following committees:

- Resolutions
- Bylaws

- Host
- Awards

Participation is voluntary. Members will be asked to indicate their order of preference, with placements based on availability and balance.

Delegate Status:

Delegate entitlement lists are expected from the Executive Office in November or early December. Members are reminded:

- You may only attend Convention as a delegate under one role (either as a national officer or a council director).
- Alternates (locals, regional council) are not permitted to attend in your place.

6. Other Business

Leanne Moss asked for clarity around the process of inviting local members to attend Regional Council meetings. She noted that one of the intentions behind rotating council meetings across provinces, she thought was to provide local members with the opportunity to attend if they wish.

Chris clarified that the primary purpose of these meetings is to include RVPs, NVPs, and Branch Presidents. If a meet-and-greet is scheduled, a notice can be sent to locals in the area to advise them, but the intention is not to invite all locals' members to observe council meeting business as there are a few challenges around space and budget.

Chris explained that if a general member is interested in observing a council meeting, they are welcome to contact Chris directly to discuss options.

In closing, Chris reminded everyone to support worker friendly candidates and shared the *For You Canada* resources website and thanked everyone for taking the time to join the call.

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 pm.