

**VICTORIA FAMILY COURT & YOUTH JUSTICE COMMITTEE**  
**Notice of Meeting on Thursday, October 24, 2024 at 11:30 am**  
**Boardroom, 6th Floor, 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria, BC**

**Meeting to be conducted electronically and in-person.**

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Welcome to the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, on whose traditional territories we are blessed to live, work and play.

**1. Territorial Acknowledgement**

**2. Approval of the Agenda**

**Recommendation:** That the agenda for October 24, 2024 Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting be approved.

**3. Adoption of Minutes**

3.1. Adoption of the Minutes (**attached**)

**Recommendation:** That the minutes of September 26, 2024 Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting be adopted.

3.2. Receipt of the Steering Committee meeting notes of October 10, 2024 (**attached**)

**Recommendation:** That the notes of the October 10, 2024 Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Steering Committee be received.

**4. Chairperson's Remarks**

**5. Presentations/Delegations (10-minute max per participant)** including questions from committee)

5.1. Resource Agencies

5.2. Cathy Peters, BC Anti Human Trafficking Educator, Speaker, Advocate

**6. Sub-Committee Business**

6.1. Treasurer's Report (Esther Paterson)

6.2. Communications Committee

6.3. CRAT (Verbal Update)

**7. Committee Business**

7.1. Draft 2025 Budget (attached)

7.2. Coroner's Statistics (Rose Stanton)

7.3. Funding from VFCYJ committee for MYST

7.4. Scholarship - in recognition of Adam Flint

7.5. Officer and subcommittee positions - reminder

**8. Notice of Motion**

**9. New Business**

**10. Adjournment**

Next Scheduled Meeting November 28, 2024

**Links of interest:**

- Conversations That Matter on YouTube  
<https://youtu.be/ZlwRbxJn9ok?si=2c4RcRqNkAfQ3fjU>
- Careers That Matter <https://youtu.be/07ag2fq5Ojo?si=l6CKfn8rq4ihJYiB>
- Conversations That Matter on the Vancouver Sun  
<https://vancouversun.com/news/conversations-that-matter-child-sex-trafficking>



**Minutes of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting held  
Thursday September 26, 2024, CRD Boardroom, 6th floor, 625 Fisgard Street, Victoria BC**

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**PRESENT: Municipal Representatives:** Marie-Térèse Little (Metchosin); Jeff Bateman (Sooke); Krista Loughton (Victoria); Kimberley Guiry (Langford); Marcie McLean (Highlands); Esther Paterson (Oak Bay); Sara Duncan (Sidney) (EP); Cynthia Day (Colwood) Micayla Hayes (Saanich); Mena Westhaver (Saanich) (EP)

**School District Representatives:** Karin Kwan (School District 61 Trustee) (EP); Teri Vanwell (School District 63 Trustee).

**Capital Regional District (CRD) Representatives:** Cheryl Chaytors (EP); Samantha Rappaport (EP)

**Resource Agencies:** Gord Magee, Mobile Youth Services Team's Constable, Victoria Police Dept.; Mia Golden, Youth Counsellor, Pacific Centre Family Services Association; Kisae Petersen, Operations Manager, Victoria Youth Empowerment Society

Guests: Damian Kowalewich, Saanich Police Department Inspector; Jamie McRae, Victoria/Esquimalt Police Department, Deputy Chief Constable

**CRD Staff:** Sharon Orr, (Senior Committee Clerk; CRD); Steve Carey (CRD) and Marnie Essery, (Secretary & Recorder) (EP)

**Regrets:** Rose Stanton (Highlands-Alternate); Bill McElroy (CRAT); Ron Mattson (View Royal); Darlene Rotchford (Esquimalt); Jim Rondeau (Central Saanich); Jack McClintock (North Saanich); Andrew HOLETON (CRD Appointee); Nicole Duncan, (School District 61 Board Chair).

EP - Electronic Participation

The meeting was called to order at 11:30 am.

**1. Territorial Acknowledgement**

Chair Little provided the Territorial Acknowledgement.

**2. Welcome and Introductions**

Chair Little welcomed everyone in attendance.

**3. Approval of the Agenda**

**MOVED** by E. Paterson, **SECONDED** by C. Day,

**That the agenda for Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting of September 26, 2024 be approved as amended.**

**CARRIED**

#### **4. Adoption of Minutes**

##### **4.1. Adoption of the June 27, 2024 Minutes**

**MOVED** by K. Guiry, **SECONDED** by C. Day

That the minutes of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee meeting of June 27, 2024 be adopted.

**CARRIED**

##### **4.2. Receipt of the Steering Committee meeting notes of September 12, 2024**

**MOVED** by J. Bateman, **SECONDED** by K. Guiry, That the meeting notes of the Steering Committee of September 12, 2024 be received.

**CARRIED**

#### **5. Chair Remarks**

It is a time to recognize foster caregivers throughout the province who provide nurturing, safety, inclusive and understanding homes for children and youth who need them. We thank foster families for their commitment. [BC Foster Parents Association – Another branch of the family tree.](#)

#### **6. Presentations/Delegations**

##### **6.1. Resource Agencies**

Resource Agencies were in attendance will be given an opportunity to ask any questions after the panel presentation.

##### **6.2 Panel Discussion**

Chair Little welcomed our guests and thanked them for being here today.

J. Bateman introduced Members of the Panel who are:

- Damian Kowalewich Saanich Police Department Inspector
- Jamie McRae Victoria/Esquimalt Police Departments Deputy Chief Constable
- Mia Golden Youth Counsellor , Pacific Centre Family Services Association
- Gord Magee Constable , Victoria P.D.

Together, there are 97 years of collective experience around the table today. The purpose of our committee is to educate and to advocate. Chair of School District 61, Nicole Duncan, has sent her regrets and best wishes.

##### **Damian Kowalewich, Saanich Police Department Inspector**

This is a timely discussion based on what is happening today in the CRD. I commend your committee for all that you do to help vulnerable youth.

There are major issues with gangs and sextortion. There is significant increase in gang activity. With the decrease in School District 61 police liaison officers there are real and perceived threats in the community.

The approach has shifted to be reactive instead of proactive. We want to continue to collaborate. Inspector Kowalewich offered to share his speaking notes (attached) and a link to the recommended study titled [Assessing the Effectiveness and Efficiency of School Liaison Officers in British Columbia: A Qualitative Study](#) (University of the Fraser Valley Centre for Public Safety and Criminal Justice Research).

**Jamie McRae, Victoria/Esquimalt Police Department's Deputy Chief Constable**

The recent University of Fraser Valley study linked above has valuable information.

Our community has changed. Individuals sending nude pictures to strangers is now an everyday reality and sextortion has become a major issue impacting youth. Perpetrators are often outside of Canada.

Gang recruitment is happening at a much younger age. Children and youth are getting involved in gangs when they don't even know what is happening.

Collaboration only works when everyone is at the table. Can't stress enough the importance of multi layered approach. Building those relationships is the only way to succeed.

We need to have the police officers back in schools. Traditional stereotypes no longer apply to modern officers. We are hiring officers who are committed and connected to the community. The inclusive and diverse backgrounds and skill sets of police officers are much different than 25 years ago.

M.Y.S.T. Reps have been attending VFCYJC meetings for 16 years. Issues are taking place at schools and M.Y.S.T. acts as a quarterback. Sextortion continues to be an ongoing issue. This is more alarming with the inception of artificial intelligence. The gang issue has morphed into middle schools and even elementary schools.

To say we are busy is an understatement. Education, advocacy and building relationships is key.

**Constable Gord Magee, Victoria P.D.**

Concern for me about lack of school liaison officers as this is contributing to more mental health challenges for children and youth.

The rates of depression are skyrocketing. Children don't have a sense of safety at school. They are not using the washroom because they don't want to get pepper sprayed, bullied or have someone brandish a knife.

Having a school liaison officer in schools allows safety for students and youths. Giving the message that police are villains creates harm and damage in the future.

**Mia Golden, Youth Counsellor, Pacific Centre Family Services Association**

Can't express enough the risks that children and youth face. Example: An alarming new acronym for child predators has been coined: M.A.P. (Minor Attracted Person). This minimalizes and normalizes criminal behaviour. Gangs and sextortion don't have borders.

Years later, observers and students helped are thanking school liaison officers for making a difference in their life. These people made an impact. We need to have more police mental health counsellor teams.

Greater Victoria's [Community-Led Crisis Response Team](#) (CLCR, pronounced 'clicker') pairs mental health professionals with persons with lived experience. It is proving extremely successful. More services of this kind are needed in future.

Congratulations to M.Y.S.T. for the award recognition they received from the International Conference in July 2024 for the Frederick Milton Thrasher Award.

J. Bateman stated that the committee is audio recording the panel discussion and the committee intends to prepare a report on the panel discussion in the near future.

Closing Statements: What can VFCYJC do?

Reducing M.Y.S.T. to 2 days a week is the opposite of what we need. Continued pressure is needed to ensure stable funding and expanded teams. All panellists again expressed thanks to VFCYJC for its steady and ongoing advocacy.

## **7. Sub-Committee Business**

### **7.1. Priorities and Grants**

#### **7.1.1. Human Nature Counselling Society**

**MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by C. Day That the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee support the Human Nature Counselling Society's grant request for the amount of \$5,500.00 for their 2024 New Roots program.  
CARRIED**

#### **7.1.2. Umbrella Society**

**MOVED by M. McLean, SECONDED by K. Loughton  
That Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee support the Umbrella Society's request of \$4,746.00 to be applied to their 2024 project titled: Umbrella 101-Navigating Substance Use and Mental Health for Students  
CARRIED**

## **8. Treasurer's Report**

The Treasurer's Report was circulated via email to the committee.  
E. Paterson will prepare the 2025 budget for next month's meeting.

## **9. Election of Vice Chair**

### **9.1. AGM (January 2025); Interest in Interim Vice-Chair**

Chair Little called for nominations for Vice Chair.  
J. Bateman nominated K. Guiry for Vice Chair.  
K. Guiry accepted the nomination.  
Chair Little called for nominations a second and a third time.  
Hearing no further nominations K. Guiry was named Vice Chair by acclamation.  
Chair M.T. Little thanked K. Guiry for putting her name forward.

## **10. New Business**

**MOVED by K. Loughton, SECONDED by K. Guiry  
That the VFCYJC directs the Communications subcommittee to write an op ed for the Times Colonist regarding continued and sustained funding for M.Y.S.T.  
CARRIED**

## **11. Notice of Motion**

There were no notices of motion.

## **12. Correspondence**

- 12.1.** Mobile Youth Service Team Business Case Report was circulated with the meeting mail out.
- 12.2.** The CRD Staff Report from Steve Carey was circulated with the meeting mail out.
- 12.3.** The letter from Minister Farnworth was circulated with the meeting mail out.

## **13. Adjournment**

**MOVED by C. Day, SECONDED by K. Loughton  
That the September 26, 2024 meeting of the Victoria Family Court & Youth Justice Committee be adjourned at 1:30 p.m.  
CARRIED**

Good morning members of the Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee and thank you so much for inviting us here today for this important and timely discussion.

My name is Damian Kowalewich and I serve as the Inspector In Charge of the Community Engagement Division of the Saanich Police.

Thank you to the CRD for hosting us here today. Also, I'd like to acknowledge and recognize the other panel members, Deputy Chief McRae and Cst. Magee and Mia Golden.

I know many of the folks here today and am so grateful that there are individuals like you who serve our communities and aim to advocate, protect, and learn about the challenges faced by youth in the Capital Regional District.

At the Saanich Police we are an organization who care deeply about the youth in our community. Our Strategic Plans speaks to how our services to youth in school settings are evolving and how we will continue to identify meaningful opportunities to proactively connect with youth.

We know that maintaining positive relationships with youth is an integral part of crime prevention and building trust and confidence in the police both now and into the future.

So, what are some of the major issues facing youth today? I will touch on two concerns today-----that being gangs and sextortion.

We will start with gang recruitment, something that has been active here as of late in Saanich.

For clarity, and as stated in the Criminal Code, a "gang" is a "Criminal Organization" that is a *group of organized people that is composed of three or more persons; and*

*has as one of its main purposes or main activities and facilitates or commits serious offences, that, would likely result in the direct or indirect receipt of a material benefit, including a financial benefit, by the group or by any of the persons who constitute the group. This does not include a group of persons that forms randomly.*

As part of our efforts to combat gang activity and recruitment, we have taken a multi-pronged approach. Through education, by way of the many Gang Education and Trends safety seminars, we were able to reach residents across the CRD. While partnering with other local police agencies, recreation and culture groups, and parent advisory committees, we informed attendees of ways to identify early risk factors, have awareness for social media and substance abuse trends and to understand how current and local gang activity operates. We also stressed the importance of community-based support and provided parent resources and guides.

We also conducted research. Our researcher found that the Saanich Police Major Crime Unit had been involved in 35 investigations, from mid-2022 to date, that were associated with gang activity in Saanich schools. More than 10 youths were identified as being involved in gang activity associated with schools over that same period.

Some of the files investigated by the Major Crime Unit included assault with a weapon (stabbing), victim/witness intimidation, assault, break and enter, threats and drug trafficking. Some of these investigations are before the courts which precludes me from releasing any additional information today.

Other investigations use sources of information that are sensitive and cannot be disclosed to non-law enforcement individuals.



Of note, the significant increase in gang files documented in 2023 was related to the activities of one criminal organization that originated in the Greater Vancouver area. This quantitative data is critical to show the reality of what youth in Saanich have been involved in and the pressures they face.

Lastly, through intelligence gathering and dissemination, our patrol and community engagement officers are regularly updated and apprised of youth that are in or associated with gang activity and their known locations and hot spots are shared to encourage awareness and proactive patrols in these areas.

Sextortion is another troubling trend that has hit our region. We have been receiving a growing number of reports of “sextortion,” as are other agencies.

This is where someone threatens to reveal an individual’s online sexual behaviour if they don’t pay a certain amount of money — often using pictures or videos that victims have been convinced to send. The way this typically works is that teens, usually males are convinced by an individual online that they would like to start a romantic relationship, and then intimate photos are exchanged. Of course, the person, the person on the other end is not in fact who they say they are.

Our numbers of sextortion reports have been rising since last year, and they receive several every month. In Saanich the results are varied, yet shocking.

Victims have harmed themselves out of shame, taken up jobs to pay the criminals once the photos are sent and in Prince George, 12-year-

old Carson Cleland, killed himself in October after becoming a victim of sextortion.

Most sextortion scams are run by criminal organizations in eastern Europe and Africa. Our department has an Internet child-exploitation investigator who handled these cases, and we also partnered with media to spread this concerning trend.

Along with these troubling trends, we have also made efforts to grow and stay current with the changing social landscape. Law enforcement and public safety in Canada continues to evolve and adapt to our changing world. We listen to the needs and wants of our community and exercise a high degree of emotional intelligence when dealing with folks.

Our officers receive training in a range of topics including diversity, addressing unconscious biases and how to deal with vulnerable people, including youth.

Our internal policies reflect the same. We pay special attention to vulnerable populations and define them as:

- children and youth ages 0-18,
- Indigenous,
- low income or living in poverty,
- members of LGBTQ2+ communities,
- newcomers (immigrants, temporary residents and refugees),
- Official Language Minority Communities,
- people experiencing homelessness,
- people experiencing domestic or gender-based violence,
- people living in group homes or supportive living,
- people living with mental illness,
- people struggling with addiction,

- persons with disabilities,
- prison populations,
- all racialized groups, and
- seniors and elders (in and out of care).
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You would have noticed that almost all of those listed may have a direct connection or correlation to youth in our communities. As such we have policies that include:

OP15.5 – Young Persons

IN7.5 – Gender Diverse/Transgender People

IN1.3 – Trauma Informed Practices

IN1.4 – Victim Assistance ...and

IN 3.1 – Child Welfare

We take these topics very seriously and have put much thought and effort into properly serving our most vulnerable groups.

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As part of the ongoing discussions surrounding youth challenges in the community, a spotlight has been shone on the absence of SLO's and the real and perceived issues facing youth in the Greater Victoria Area.

With our partial footprint in local schools, we have continued to serve, educate and connect with schools in District 63 and private schools.

As mentioned, our departure from SD 61 required us to pivot and find new ways to educate youth on concerning trends by other means, such as social media, presentations, and mainstream media.

As part of our ongoing commitment to work with stakeholders during this period of SLO absence within SD 61, we have continued to

engage with the trustees to collaborate and restore and build relationships.

Moving forward, our hope is that discussions will continue, and collaboration will occur. Concerns have been raised about our content delivery within schools. To that, we are willing to work with educators and trustees to share our information and ensure that all academic stakeholders feel comfortable with our content delivery. That reason alone should never be the reason to cease a successful relationship between SLO's and schools that has lasted for over 45 years.

Our removal from SD 61 have caused our communication lines with schools, students and staff to suffer. We have shifted to being reactive as opposed to proactive. We know that Early education and intervention is something that allows us to engage and provide support at the earliest possible opportunity, which in many cases can keep youth out of the criminal justice system.

In order to remain effective, our presence in schools gives us a direct link to share information, bring awareness, and promote education from a public safety standpoint. All of this is needed to keep students and staff aware and engaged to help them stay safe in schools.

We will continue to take a collaborative approach and are pleased with the recent provincial order from Minister Singh to collaborate and develop a coordinated safety plan that meaningfully addresses increased gang activity, safety concerns and crime prevention and crisis response in SD 61 schools.

I'd like to end with a quote from an academic paper authored by Drs. Irwin, Osterberg and Lee. The report (and I can send the link if interested), sponsored by The Crime Reduction Research Program (CRRP), which is a joint-research model in British Columbia

between academics, the provincial government, and police agencies operated by the Office of Crime Reduction – Gang Outreach, concluded that:

“The presence of a consistent SLO in the school can strengthen relationships, partnerships, and enhanced collaboration between the students and their families, the school, and the police. If this consistency is not present, the value and impact of the program can be substantially reduced.”

Thank you, that concludes my time.



**Victoria Family Court and Youth Justice Committee  
Steering Committee Meeting**

**Notes**

Thursday Oct 10, 2024 from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

<https://www.victoriafamilycourt.ca>

Members present: Esther Paterson, Bill McElroy, Marcie Mclean, Kimberley Guiry, Rose Stanton, and Marie-Terese Little

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1. Committee went through proposed Agenda for the October 24, 2024 meeting.
2. Need to discuss potential MYST funding and potential scholarship with entire committee
3. To Dos: Marie-Terese to check with CRD regarding meeting room availability for other days than Thursday due to conflict with Victoria City Council days.
4. Chair's remarks to include information regarding officer positions -January-see annual reports on website for descriptions
5. Elections for Chair, Vice-Chair, and Treasurer positions will be held at 2025 AGM
6. Subcommittee chairs and members are selected by Chair and everyone encouraged to join subcommittees.
7. Speaker will be Cathy Peters this month and links will be provided.
8. Nothing from Priorities committee this month.
9. Minutes from September meeting will come from Marnie in next few days
10. Discussions regarding increasing honoraria, operating costs (zoom, website) transferred with cost of living increase, education previously budgeted to send members to Indigenous Perspectives training, received information from PCFSA on an extra day (bridge funding) for MYST to discuss with committee.
11. Discussion on impact of website management and impact on operating line and surplus of budget
12. Add Communications Committee to Sub-Committee business for update from Jeff, Marcie
13. Add CRAT, bridge funding for MYST, scholarship, and Coroner's report to New and Sub-Committee business

Next steering committee meeting on November 14th

<b>Victoria Family Court &amp; Youth Justice Committee</b>				
<b>Draft Budget January - December 2025</b>				
	<b>2024 Board Budget</b>	<b>2024 Jan-Aug Actual</b>	<b>2024 Jan-Dec Forecast</b>	<b>2025 Budget</b>
<b>OPERATING COSTS:</b>				
Internal Allocation	316.00	210.64	210.64	-
Honoraria		300.00	300.00	600.00
Meeting Costs	8,000.00	3,374.93	4,842.00	5,562.00
Operating - Other Costs	-	-	1,637.45	1,655.00
Grants in aid - unspecified	48,781.00	-	-	
Third Party Payments	1,500.00	10,500.00	20,746.00	15,323.00
<b>Total Operating Costs</b>	<b>58,597.00</b>	<b>14,385.57</b>	<b>27,736.09</b>	<b>23,140.00</b>
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>58,597.00</b>	<b>14,385.57</b>	<b>27,736.09</b>	<b>23,140.00</b>
Internal Recoveries				
Recoveries - Other				
<b>OPERATING COSTS LESS INTERNAL RECOVERIES</b>	<b>58,597.00</b>	<b>14,385.57</b>	<b>27,736.09</b>	<b>23,140.00</b>
<b>FUNDING SOURCES (REVENUE)</b>				
Balance C/F from Prior to Current Year	(42,773.00)	(42,773.54)	(42,773.54)	(31,700.12)
Interest Income	-	(838.54)	(838.54)	(621.00)
Grants in Lieu of Taxes	(824.00)	(824.12)	(824.12)	(824.12)
Requisition	(15,000.00)	(15,000.01)	(15,000.01)	(15,000.01)
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>(58,597.00)</b>	<b>(59,436.21)</b>	<b>(59,436.21)</b>	<b>(48,145.25)</b>
<b>(Surplus)Deficit</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(45,050.64)</b>	<b>(31,700.12)</b>	<b>(25,005.25)</b>