



# Monthly RYAC Meeting

**Date:** 16 April 2015

11 Holland Avenue, Ottawa

**Co-Chairs:** Carl Laguerre and Zelma Buckley

**Minutes prepared by:** Elizabeth Pecana (Secretary)

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## **Present:**

Zelma Buckley  
Behiye Cinkilic  
Antoine Moise  
Paul Abi-Mansour  
Paulette Barker  
Elizabeth Pecana  
Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte  
Carl Laguerre (audio participation from home)

## **Regrets:**

Sandra DiGnagbo  
Hayley Millington

## **Guest**

Marie Françoise Bertrand

## **Resource Person**

**Amarkai Laryea**

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**Meeting called to order by Co-Chair Zelma Buckley at 6:15 PM.**

## **1 - Adoption of the Agenda**

A motion to accept the Agenda was made by Sister Behiye Cinkilic and seconded by Brother Antoine Moise. **All were in favour except Brother Paul Abi-Mansour.**

## **2 - Minutes of the March 2015 Meeting**

Motion to accept the minutes as recorded was made by Brother Paul and seconded by Sister Behiye. **All were in favour. Motion carried.**

## **3 - Business arising from March 2015 Minutes**

- The letter regarding the family reunification of Bhavna Bajaj and Aman Sood with their son Daksh, was drafted by Brother Amarkai Laryea and approved unanimously by the executive previously. This letter is pending the signatures of the Co-Chairs of RVAC before dispatch to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.
- International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination(debrief) – One member opined that though there were good speakers, there was no clear solution on how to resolve the problem, thus questioning the value of this human rights activity. Other members felt that the talks regarding Islamophobia and Bill C-51 were enlightening and moving coming from the perspectives of a lawyer, a Muslim woman human rights activist, an Imam and the CLC Director of Human Rights. The question and answer time generated sincere questions and heart-rending experiences encapsulating the reality of living under the fear of Bill C-51 and Islamophobia. Another member felt that the Panel Discussion resulted in dispelling cautiousness and instead created sympathy/awareness for those labelled “Terrorists”.

#### **4 – 2015 Health and Wellness Seminar (debrief)**

There were good talks on support for family caregivers, retirement planning, fraud prevention and estate planning. This event was organized by the Canadian Jamaican Association. There were tables set up all around the JK Wylie room with information related to healthy lifestyles and senior citizen interests. The JK Wylie room was packed. Other community groups representing St Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana, Jaku Konbit, and Trinidad and Tobago also participated.

#### **5 – RVAC Finances**

There were some questions regarding line items 5085 – loss of salary and expenses under 5010 – meals. Sister Paulette will clarify these line items with Sister Claudine.

#### **6- PSAC Convention**

The Seventeenth National Triennial Convention of the Public Service Alliance of Canada will be held at the Québec City Convention Centre in Québec City, Québec beginning Sunday, April 26 and concluding Friday, May 1, 2015.

There were concerns about strategy and how to get RVAC/Human Rights resolutions passed. There was an observation that previous positions strategically created for racially visible members are now occupied by non racially visible members.

Sister Pecana talked about the OFL initiative to have future OFL conventions more representative of the diversity of the membership. At the convention, OFL will now announce the attendance numbers of the different equity groups who self-identify on registration. This is a calculated effort to help affiliates become aware of the need to bolster the numbers of equity representation at Conventions. On that note, there was some discussion on how to introduce this initiative in our own setting. Sister Zelma said that the NCR Regional Meeting could be a place to start.

Sister Pecana talked about the frequent rejection of resolutions put on the floor by racially visible members both at the Component and PSAC level. Brother Paul observed that it is inevitable that our resolutions are voted down when they are/or appear to be detrimental to the majority. Sister Pecana suggested that instead of relying on votes, the portfolio of the different equity groups be assigned to the National Executive of PSAC.

## **7. Food**

Sister Sandra Griffith-Bonaparte suggested that we vary our menu at RVAC meetings. She recommended the Pili Pili restaurant. There was a general assent to diversify our menu and explore other take-out restaurants.

## **8 – The Ottawa Muslim Women’s Organization (OMWO)**

The OMWO will be organizing the Festival of Friendship Dinner 2015 on Sunday, April 26, 2015 at the St. Elias Centre. The Honourable Madam Louise Arbour, former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, will be the keynote speaker. Madam Arbour was created a Companion of the Order of Canada in 2007. Sisters Behiye and Elizabeth expressed their desire to attend this function. Sister Paulette motioned to purchase two tickets at the cost of \$55 each for Sisters Behiye and Elizabeth to attend the Friendship Dinner. Brother Carl seconded the motion. **All were in favour. Motion carried.**

## **9 – Cycling Cleric 2015**

Sister Behiye received an email from Imam Dr. Jebara, Cordova Academy who participated in the March 21 Panel Discussion. He is looking for support to raise awareness for organ donation in Ontario and to encourage 500 individuals to register as organ donors. Support can be provided in two ways – writing a letter of support and/or making a donation to raise this awareness. One pedal at a time, the Imam will be cycling from Ottawa to Toronto to make a positive difference in people’s lives.

RVAC pledged a letter of support. Brother Carl proposed a \$250.00 donation. There was concern on the floor whether this amount could be supported in our budget. After some discussion, Brother Carl amended the motion to approve

\$200 towards organ donation. Sister Paulette seconded the motion. **All were in favour. Motion carried.**

#### **10. Regional Council – NCR Annual General Meeting (AGM) June 13 & 14, 2015**

Sister Zelma encouraged RVAC members to attend the NCR AGM which will be held Saturday/Sunday on June 13 and 14, 2015 at the Marriott Hotel on Kent Street. Sister Behiye will go as the RVAC Delegate and Sister Elizabeth as an Observer.

#### **11. Amarkai Laryea**

Brother Amarkai Laryea indicated that his time with us as Resource Person would be coming to an end soon. He mentioned that he was working with Sister Johanne Labine in preparing training materials for RVAC. He did not have any final details about his replacement. It was consensus that Brother Amarkai had proved to be of great assistance to RVAC and that his presence would be greatly missed. On behalf of RVAC, Sister Zelma expressed her appreciation for his efforts and involvement with the committee.

With no further items to discuss a Motion to adjourn was made by Brother Paul and seconded by Sister Elizabeth. **Motion carried at 8:26 pm.**

**Next meeting, 21 May 2015 at 5:45pm**