

MINUTES

1. **Speaker:** Dan Levitt, BC Seniors Advocate. Mr. Levitt has been a tireless champion of seniors' rights for over 30 years.
 - Office of the Seniors Advocate – 'senior' is defined as persons over 65.
 - 5 focusses of the office: HealthCare (from primary through to hospice); Transportation; Housing (owners, tenants); Income supports; Community supports.
 - Office phone number is 1-877-952-3181 and is answered by people, not a machine, during business hours.

1. Myth: '*seniors are dependent on the health care system*'. Truth: of the 5 million people in BC, only 1/5 are seniors. 95% of seniors are living independently. At 85, 1 in 3 require care, while 1/3 are providing care for over the 85s. 1/3 are living in long term care.
2. Myth: '*seniors get dementia*'. Truth: not true. Not everyone gets dementia.
3. Myth: '*people die of old age*'.
4. Myth: '*seniors lose their driving license*'. Truth: 80% of seniors drive. The charge to fill out the required form ranges \$125-\$250. The Seniors Advocate is advocating for BCMSP to pay for this service, in order to encourage socializing and mobility of seniors.

20% of BC are seniors. 14% work. 40% volunteer.

Recommendations regarding affordability

The Advocate released a report in JUNE 2024 'Forgotten Rights'

<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/osa-reports/forgotten-rights-seniors-not-afforded-equal-rent-protection/>

- Office of the Seniors Advocate is urging the provincial government to act quickly and enforce the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) to protect the 30,000 B.C. seniors in retirement homes from illegal rent increases and evictions. 'Forgotten Rights: Seniors Not Afforded Equal Rent Protection' highlights the practice of many landlords to ignore the RTA and leave seniors facing annual cost increases ranging from the rate of inflation to as much as 24%.

In July 2024, the Advocate and the RTA received double the complaints from clients in voluntary long term care facilities. The Tenancy Act originally only protected the rent portion (eg \$800/month) but not the services portion (eg \$4200/month) of the charges. Now, the increases on both portions are limited to inflation.

Note: approx. 30,000 people are in health authority care with another 30,000 are in voluntarily long term care.

Low income GIS recipients (1/4 BC seniors) also receive the BC Seniors supplement of \$99/month, which is indexed to inflation.

Low income renters are eligible for Safer, \$300 max; average is \$189. 30% of income on rent

Although BC has an 'Aging in place' policy, the co-payment for 1 hour/week of services to stay independent is beyond reach of many. The Advocate recommends eliminating the co-payment altogether. People are moving into long term care because they can't afford the co-payment for the help required to stay independent.

The Seniors Advocate recommends that BC provide the same level of specialized medical services for seniors as for youth. Currently, there is 1 geriatrician to 7 pediatricians.

Also recommend providing vaccinations for seniors for no charge: pneumonia, RSV, shingles. COVID and flu are currently covered.

New survey launched February 11 of caregivers regarding access to long term care (LTC)
<https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/current-issues/caregiver-survey-on-access-to-long-term-care/>

- The purpose of the survey is to develop recommendations as to the kind of care places to build
- Continuing care is the overarching legislation. If person is eligible for LTC, but aging in place
- In Fraser Health, there is a 2-year waiting list for LTC
- You are eligible for LTC if only you meet 3 requirements:
 - o You are in respite care
 - o You are in a day program
 - o ??
- Patients have resorted to getting into LTC by going through the hospital, 'bringing granny to the hospital and driving away'.
- 6500 people are on a waiting list for LTC. If you are a caregiver, fill in survey.

Survey on Ageism in 2024

- 14% of seniors continue working.
- 9000 respondents to the survey, 80% an issue with ageism. The majority (60%) of the issues are workplace related, eps benefits LTD, group life. At 72, if a senior is working, they can't contribute to an employers pension.
- regarding health care – seniors don't get the treatment that's required.

Ageism

- Being turned away for services, due to birth year
- Not hired (external ageism) because of the year born
- Internal ageism - lie about age

Cease to use ageist language, eg

- wrong side of 40
- can't teach old dogs new tricks
- You look good for your age. (Responses: So do you. You don't. You What did you expect somebody my age to look.)
- Act/dress your age

2. **Call to Order:** 2:22 pm
3. **Adoption of Agenda:** M/S/C
4. **Adoption of Minutes:** from January 20, 2025 M/S/C

5. **Reports:**

President: Wilf Brodrick. Outside organization affiliate structure, depends on role and responsibility of the Branches, which is being sorted out.

Vice President: Renee Poley – no report

Secretary: Carol Paulson – won't be able to attend the meetings in March, April and possibly May due to surgery Feb. 28, but can do anything that utilizes electronics. Kim has volunteered to take notes for the March and May meetings. Sondra has volunteered to take the notes in April.

Treasurer: Lu Gaudet

- The Financial Audit of the Branch 2100 books by Gerry Nelson and Renee Poley took place on January 22 2025. They signed off Completed Branch Financials using templates provided by the Provincial Treasurer Johanna Morrow and were emailed. Lunch was approved and paid by the branch for the audit meeting. Thank you, Gerry and Renee for taking the time to audit the books.
- 2025 Branch Budget of \$7000 also emailed to the Provincial Treasurer on Jan 2.
- Further, thank you Janice for providing an excel spreadsheet with a list of 2025 Non DCO dues collected as of Jan 26. This was also sent to Johanna in this email. Non DCO dues payments were through E-transfers, Cheques, and cash in all totaling \$580.
- On Jan 20th a bank balance of \$2,263.97 was verified by the RBC. A Cheque was deposited for this amount on Jan 20 into the VanCity account. It could take until Tuesday Jan 28 to clear. Samantha Armstrong a relationship manager in Kelowna at the Royal Bank, was sent on Jan 28 a fully signed redirection letter with instructions to close the RBC bank account once the balance is zero. A confirmation email was received on Jan 30th that the account is now closed. RBC bank statement received.
- All unused bank cheques, bank deposit books, and financials for 2018-2019 for a total weight of 5 pounds went to the UPS Store for Shredding. They had a sale of 50% off the regular price. The total cost was \$4.20.
- Purchased 1000 raffle tickets for spent \$12.50

Membership: Janice Leonard – 706 members; 7 new. 2 NCO dues still to collect.

- Langley/Surrey branch section of the website is all updated.
<https://bcgrea.ca/branches/langley-surrey-branch-2100/>

Merchandising: Janice Leonard – gave BCGREA cap to Dan Levitt in appreciation

Newsletter: Janice Leonard – next one to be circulated at the end of March. The Branch thanks Janice and her team for fabulous newsletters.

Phoning: Chris Roberts – no report

Good and Welfare: Surrindar Angl – no report

Walking Group: Benita Antonio – walks scheduled for March 26, May 17

Convenor: Christine Sereda – no report. Enthusiastic thank you to Christine!

Guest Speaker Committee: Darryl Walker, Judy Gill, Margaret Mubanda, Benita Antonio
Many thanks to Judy Gill for arranging Dan Levitt's attendance today

March - Taxation

April - National dental program

May - Meals on Wheels, Langley

COSCO: Wilf Brodrick, Renee Poley, Margaret Mubanda

The current treasurer, is resigning; Renee has volunteered to be confirmed, at the meeting Friday February 14.

Motion to accept all reports: M/S/C

6. **Old Business:** Nil

7. **New Business:**

- a. BCGREA AGM is now at the end of April. The Branch has 2 delegates: the Branch president and one other, plus observers. Let Wilf know if you want to attend. The Treasurer and Membership chairs will be required to attend to meetings, as well.

8. Registration: Marina Stevens
51 Members and 9 guests

9. Door prizes – BCGREA pens

10. Member Donation: Marina Stevens
\$52.00

11. Adjournment: 2:57 pm

2025 meeting schedule:

March 17

April 14 – second Monday. The third Monday is Easter

May 12 – second Monday. The third Monday is Victoria Day

June 16

Sep 15

Oct 20

Nov 17

Dec 8 – second Monday to avoid being too close to Christmas

APPROVED: 2025.03.17

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