

MEMO

To Bev Lapointe

From Ruth Beck, Employment Equity Coordinator
West Kootenay Women's Association

Dated May 17, 2000

Re: Request for Information

This package of information has been put together in response to your request. The following list itemizes 17 resources in the package and gives my comments on them. I have included things that may be useful in getting the City of Nelson to undertake proactive steps to promote equity in hiring and retaining workers. Most of these resources are consistent with the City's perspective of wanting to protect the "merit principle" or "hiring the best person for the job." A couple of resources give examples of preferential hiring language, FYI.

I have also included some resources on prevention of harassment and creation of safer communities. Let me know if you would like more information on this topic.

Resource list:

- 1. Collective agreement clauses from the City of Vancouver and CUPE Locals 15 ("inside" workers) and 1004 ("outside" workers).**
 - Both agreements have clauses related to equity but only the inside workers' agreement has a specific schedule outlining the employment equity programs that the union and management agree to.
 - Most of the equity programs are about increasing the participation of visible minorities and accommodating people with disabilities. However, at least these give examples of language you can use to put equity into the collective agreements. Also, it's important to note that the City of Vancouver approaches equity from the perspective of hiring the best person for the job (protecting the "merit" principle). Their approach is the same as the City of Nelson in that regard. Therefore, these clauses are consistent with the City of Nelson's overall approach to equity.
- 2. PSERC Outreach Recruitment Directory – excerpts, updated plus my additions**
 - Outreach recruitment is one way the City of Nelson could pro-actively ensure that its job postings reach equity candidates. This directory was compiled by the provincial Public Service Employee Relations Commission as a way to assist provincial ministries to conduct outreach recruitment. I have just copied the entries for Nelson, updated the information and added an entry for First Nations. In terms of precedents in the construction sector, the Kootenay Ferry project used outreach recruitment – job advertisements were sent to all women's centres in the Kootenays.

3. PSERC Preferential Hiring of Under-Represented Groups...

- This is a memo issued by the provincial PSERC announcing a decision by 16 provincial ministries to pro-actively conduct preferential hiring of equity candidates for auxiliary positions. They had to obtain approval from the BC Human Rights Commission – samples of the approvals are attached.
- This is not likely a route that the City of Nelson would be prepared to go because it means preferentially hiring women etc. rather than hiring “the best person for the job” where that person may or may not be a woman, aboriginal person etc. However, this is an example of the pro-active measures the provincial government is taking at this time in order to increase its competitiveness as an employer. The BC government has recognized that it is losing talent to the private sector and has engaged in a strong pro-active equity recruitment and awareness campaign to try to stay competitive. The government is looking at equity from a self-interested perspective.

4. The CHC-AHC Collective Agreement re. the Keenleyside Powerplant Project

- The collective agreement, itself, has strong equity language. However, equity language alone doesn't ensure implementation. There has to be willingness by the parties or some kind of external means to ensure or enforce compliance.
- The main clauses related to equity are 6.220, 6.221, 6.222 and 19.600. The mechanisms for creating equity are the setting of equity targets, preferential hiring of equity groups to achieve targets and agreeing to bridging and outreach programs to facilitate training so that equity groups can compete for employment (ie. so an equity candidate can become “the best person for the job”).
- This, again, is a preferential hire approach that the City may not endorse. However, it identifies bridging, outreach and training commitments as pro-active measures an employer can use to assist equity groups to compete effectively. These may be things the City can do that would still be consistent with hiring the best person for the job.

5. City of Vancouver, Equal Employment Opportunity Program Progress Report 1986 – 1996; May, 1997.

- This document is full of lots of good examples of what a municipality can do to increase equity. As I've mentioned, the City of Vancouver is committed to hiring the best person for the job so all of these activities are consistent with that fundamental approach to hiring. Notice that they have a multi-pronged, comprehensive approach. The other thing I should say is that they went about their work slowly, making sure that attitudinal change was part of the equation. This means that the first steps are likely to be those where there is easy agreement and willingness on the part of the City. Have a look through and see what ideas seem to be the most likely to gain support. Be sure to look at engineering services starting on page 23. Overall, some pro-active ideas that are consistent with the merit principle may include:
 - Work experience practicums for LVR or Selkirk College students, targetting under-represented groups for outdoor and other “non-traditional” work etc.
 - Career counselling and training assistance
 - Special recruitment outreach re. non-traditional work areas
 - Using an outreach recruitment directory to send postings to community groups

- Selection policies that support equity in the case of equal qualifications e.g. “Where candidates applying for a job are essentially equally qualified, then the policy of representative recruitment should be used to determine hiring, in order to increase the diversity of the workforce.”

6. Guidelines for hiring a diverse workforce- from the City of Vancouver

7. Newsletters on equity from the City of Vancouver

- The myths and realities article provides answers to frequently asked questions about equity. This might be of use to the City in any communication around equity.
- The “best practices” article identifies the key elements of the City of Vancouver’s approach.

8. City of Vancouver’s Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

9. Recommendations from the employment opportunity program director to a committee of Council as reported by the City Manager – City of Vancouver, Jan. 1986.

- This was the document that got the equal employment opportunity mandate more fully endorsed by the City including a commitment of resources. Basically, if you read through the recommendations, you will see some good ideas for a comprehensive equity program by a B.C. municipality.

10. City of Vancouver Policy on Sexual Harassment

11. City of Vancouver, EEO Office, Communication on Harassment

12. Gender Lens:a guide to gender-inclusive policy and program development – excerpts

- I have included excerpts that give a good, brief introduction to the concept of equity. The last page has a glossary. In the text itself, there is some good language about real differences between men and women in the workforce and why equity means recognizing and accounting for differences rather than treating people the same.

13. Developing a Harassment Prevention Policy, from Employers Guide:A Time for Action on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace, Ontario Women’s Directorate

- I included this “how to” resource on how to write a good sexual harassment policy in case it is of use. I have some sample policies in my files, though not from municipalities.

14. Federation of Canadian Municipalities – excerpts from 1998 Policy Statement on Community Safety and Crime Prevention

- These excerpts show how the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is taking a strong stance on crime prevention (there are some projects going on in Nelson right now about this). Point 15 about making the prevention of sexual assault an integral part of municipal policies and programs is interesting because it frames sexual!

harassment and violence against women issues in the context of civic crime prevention strategies.

15. New Rural Partnerships Project – What is Safer Communities Approach to Crime Prevention and What is the Role of the Workplace in Creating a Safer Community?

- Two more “thought pieces” about workplace violence and harassment in the context of creating a safer community. One of the articles links a safe community to economic development and identifies an employer’s responsibilities for workplace safety under the WCB. Also there’s a reference to a Federation of Canadian Municipalities document “How to Build a Safer Community for Women:a Handbook for Community Leaders”, 1996. You might see if the City has a copy or wants to order one.

16. Who’s Doing What for Employment Equity in the West Kootenays? Business, Government, Non-Profits, Co-operatives and Unions

- This is a copy of the results of the research I conducted over the winter. It contains highlights of “best practices” to promote equity in the region. It may have more good ideas of pro-active practices consistent with the City’s perspective. Also, there may be good contacts that the City could connect with on equity and human resources issues.

17. The Business Case for Employment Equity

- This is a little two-pager I put together for the research interviewees. It looks at equity from an organization’s “bottom line” perspective. It contains references to a couple of good Web sites. The diversity at work Web site comes from a consulting firm in Toronto. The main consultant, Trevor Wilson, has written a book on the business case for equity. This is an excellent resource for any government or private sector organization wanting to improve its performance by recognizing diversity and merit.