

Pender Islands Health Care Society Newsletter

October 2019

The Pender Islands Health Care Society (PIHCS) is a non-profit society which owns and operates the Pender Islands Health Centre. The PIHCS directly provides a number of health and social services programs, leases space and provides support to private health practitioners and government agencies delivering services at the Health Centre.

The Society is governed by a Board of Directors which meets monthly and sets policy, supervises, and directs activities of the Society. The Directors appoint an Executive Director, presently Marion Alksne, to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of the Society.

The PIHCS AGM was held on September 16th, 2019. The following Directors had their 2 year terms renewed and will serve on the Board for 2019-20: Al Bloomenthal, Wendy MacDonald, Richard Piskor, and Kathleen Lightman. President Tom Caston retired from the Board at the end of his term. The Board thanked Tom for his years of service and his great contribution to the running of the Society. We will miss his strong business skills and ideas.

Alan Shapiro and David Chamberlain continue in year two of their first terms as Directors and Howard Cummer continues in his second term. Barb MacPherson will complete her third term in 2020. The new executive for 2019/20 were elected. They are Gary Steeves as President, Wendy MacDonald as Vice President, David Chamberland as Treasurer and Richard Piskor as Secretary.

The services at the Centre are evolving. With input and financing from the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) a teleconferencing service will soon be established, enabling some patients to consult with specialists without having to leave Pender.

The Health Care Centre is an aging facility with even the latest addition being more than a decade old. As the building ages, it becomes necessary to provide repairs and replacements at ever increasing costs. Structural investments required in the foreseeable future include a new well and a new heating and air conditioning system. We do not have funds in place to cover these significant costs. As well, the changing space requirements of medical service providers and the need to modernize centre equipment and amenities challenges the Building Committee, the Board of Directors as well as Staff to meet future needs efficiently and effectively.

The need to replace the old waiting room chairs and to resurface the front entrance to the building to mitigate tripping hazards are just two examples of what has been done recently. An upgrade to the telephone system has been ordered. Clinic Computers were replaced within the last year. Solar panels were installed on site and have been operating since late July. So far they have produced 4700 watts of power – enough to power 155 houses for one day. The Society will be closely tracking the savings to our power bills for the year!

The financial affairs of the Society have been carefully examined by the Finance Committee and the conclusions are sobering. The rent that the Society receives from our tenants does not cover the costs of operating the building. There is a short fall of about \$33,000 annually. The Society manages to balance the budget by depending on community donations which approximately equal the current operating deficit. However, these figures do not take into consideration any depreciation if there are to be funds in the future to replace the present facility. Considering depreciation, the shortfall is about \$60,000 – \$70,000 annually.

The goal of the Society should be to have a building that is self-supporting. Using donations to cover the annual loss is a stop gap measure. It is the view of the Finance Committee and in turn, the Board, that donations should ideally be used to fund future capital projects for the benefit of our residents.

The challenges facing the PIHCS Board include maintaining and renewing the present facility while dealing with an operating deficit. Cutting back operating expenditures is not feasible. The means to raise more revenue needs to be researched and acted upon. We are dedicated to bringing the best health and wellness services to our residents and are not prepared to do anything that might compromise this goal.

In terms of raising revenue there might be something to be gained from renegotiating leases as they come due. Yet, our tenants are providers of health and wellness services and, as such, cannot be expected to match the commercial rates charged for commercial space on Pender. A reduction in taxes can be examined since some other service facilities on the Islands have tax reductions or exemptions. A third possibility is to be placed on the CRD land tax rolls as some other Gulf Islands have done. This could stabilize income and help align revenue inflows to expenditures.

In conclusion it is clear that donations are essential to keeping the Pender Islands Health Care Facility open and operating. We require about \$33,000 annually in order to balance the operating budget. Please give generously. Tax receipts are issued for donations over \$10.

The wonderful support for the programs and services provided, that promote the health and well-being of the community, is made possible through donations of time and money from the community. We need and very much appreciate the support you are able to provide.