

# YUKON WORKERS' COMPENSATION HEALTH AND SAFETY BOARD

## ANNUAL INFORMATION MEETING

HELD SEPTEMBER 28, 2004 AT 2:00 P.M.  
at the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board Training Room

WHITEHORSE, YUKON

### Summary Notes

CRAIG TUTON  
PHIL DYKE  
BARB EVANS  
MICHELLE KOLLA  
DON FRIZZELL  
DOUG HEYNEN

CHAIR  
ALTERNATE CHAIR  
LABOUR REPRESENTATIVE  
LABOUR REPRESENTATIVE  
EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVE  
ACTING PRESIDENT & C.E.O.,  
W.C.H.S.B.

LYN HARTLEY

FACILITATOR

REPORTER:

DOUG AYERS

DOUG AYERS REPORTING  
SERVICES

1       **Summary of the Annual Information Meeting Held**  
2       **September 28, 2004, at 2:00 p.m.**

3                               The        facilitator,        Ms  
4       Hartley, called the meeting to order at 2:00  
5       p.m. She explained that the purpose of the  
6       meeting was to allow an opportunity for people  
7       to raise issues and communicate directly with  
8       the Board. Ms Hartley generally outlined the  
9       way in which the meeting would be conducted,  
10      and took care of a few housekeeping matters.

11                              At this time, there were  
12      roundtable introductions.

13       **OPENING REMARKS**

14                              Mr. Tuton welcomed everyone  
15      to the meeting. He then spoke about the fact  
16      that Yukon hosted Congress in August; this was  
17      a tremendous success, and the status of the  
18      Yukon WCB was raised across the country.

19                              Mr. Tuton then explained  
20      that the Annual Information Meeting was  
21      advertised ahead of time, and had asked  
22      interested parties to submit specific  
23      questions or issues ahead of time, so that the  
24      Board would be properly prepared to respond.  
25      No questions or issues were submitted;  
26      therefore, it is the intent to respond fully,  
27      at this time, to any matters raised during the

1 meeting; however, where an immediate response  
2 is not available, proper responses will be  
3 provided in a timely manner.

4 It was pointed out that  
5 Tony Armstrong was not present at today's  
6 meeting due to medical reasons.

7 Mr. Tuton then outlined  
8 some of the things the Board has been involved  
9 in, in the past year:

- 10 • looking at how to proceed in making the  
11 workplace a safer and friendlier environment  
12 for the workers;
- 13 • looking at how to assure the employer that  
14 they have supplied the workers with a  
15 comfortable work environment;
- 16 • starting on a process to try to reduce the  
17 number of incidents or injuries in a year;
- 18 • focusing on the educational front, by forming  
19 a partnership with the Yukon Contractors  
20 Association, with the hope of expanding that  
21 to include other than the confines of the  
22 contractors and make it more open and  
23 accessible to other parts of the community;
- 24 • introducing Paul Kells and Candace Carnahan to  
25 the community, to speak to employers and youth  
26 about worker safety;
- 27 • structuring a partnership to form a Prevention

1           and Safety Committee, in an attempt to address  
2           the urgent issue of reducing lost time due to  
3           injury in the workplace;

- 4           • investigating the possibility of working with  
5           the Yukon Teachers' Association to see if  
6           workplace safety can be taught in the schools;
- 7           • forming partnerships between Occupational  
8           Health and Safety and various employers, in  
9           the COR program, with the hope to expand the  
10          program so that smaller employers can take  
11          advantage of what it has to offer;
- 12          • working hard on the area of policy, having  
13          introduced at least half a dozen new policies  
14          (an example would be in regard to vocational  
15          rehabilitation);
- 16          • launching an educational campaign dealing with  
17          preventing violence in the workplace;

18                       Mr. Tuton then went on to  
19                       talk about assessment premium subsidies. He  
20                       explained that the Board has been subsidizing  
21                       private sector premiums since 1999, as part of  
22                       a planned drawdown of reserves. However,  
23                       following extensive consultation in 2002, a  
24                       program of reducing the subsidies was begun in  
25                       2003, and it is contemplated to continue this  
26                       gradual subsidy reduction through 2005. In  
27                       the meantime, new consultations will be held

1 with the Worker and Employer Stakeholders, in  
2 order to determine what the assessment  
3 premiums must be in 2006 in order to maintain  
4 the present level of funding and the ability  
5 to make sure that the commitment to the  
6 injured worker is maintained. The reserves  
7 are very important to the long-term stability  
8 of assessment premiums and the fund. The goal  
9 is to try to maintain a 100% funded liability.

10 With regard to the  
11 consultations, in the interests of time and  
12 time management, if there are concerns  
13 surrounding reserve and assessment subsidy  
14 issues, the Board would prefer, where possible  
15 and practical, to deal with groups or  
16 associations, as opposed to individuals.  
17 However, it is recognized that there will be  
18 circumstances where individuals will want to  
19 ask questions or raise concerns, and that will  
20 be acceptable; it is requested that these  
21 questions and concerns be received in writing.  
22 The Board commits to provide responses in as  
23 timely a manner as possible.

24 It is the intent, during  
25 the consultation process, to make the Board  
26 more visible in the community. If there is a  
27 group that wishes Mr. Tuton to come and

1 address them, he would be happy to hear from  
2 them.

3 Mr. Tuton pointed out that  
4 this year was the first year in which the  
5 Annual Information Meeting is only being held  
6 during the afternoon, and not in the evening.  
7 Past experience has shown that past evening  
8 sessions were not well attended and,  
9 therefore, it was felt that one meeting would  
10 be sufficient.

11 **QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS**

12 • With regard to the assessment review, is  
13 the input from stakeholders requested  
14 before December, so that the Board has  
15 some sort of outline or format to present  
16 to stakeholders during consultations?

17 Mr. Tuton answered that it  
18 is the intent to deal with the reserves first,  
19 and allow up until December 1<sup>st</sup> for input and  
20 comments. Once the Board is able to make a  
21 decision with respect to the reserves, then  
22 they would move into the consultation process  
23 on the assessment premiums.

24 • In 2003, the financials show losses of  
25 about 1.1 million after the evaluation of  
26 the benefit/liability; what does 2004  
27 look like?

1 Mr. Stephens explained that if things are  
2 similar to last year (i.e. claims costs and  
3 investment revenues), it is anticipated that  
4 there will be deficits, anywhere between \$3  
5 million to \$7 million, depending on claims  
6 costs in particular. However, the return on  
7 investments is also going to play a role in  
8 this.

9 Mr. Tuton indicated that  
10 the Board is looking at it more in a positive  
11 light, as there has been a gradual decrease in  
12 the deficit. However, the Act Review could  
13 have an effect on the bottom line as well, as  
14 was evidenced in 2002.

15 • When are the financial statements made  
16 public?

17 Mr. Stephens answered that  
18 they are required to be submitted to the  
19 Minister by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

20 • With regard to the Achieving Better  
21 Customer Service project, what did the  
22 Board learn during last June's  
23 consultation with stakeholders; what  
24 steps are being taken now?

25 Doug Heynen indicated that  
26 only one stakeholder was heard from. The  
27 project is still moving forward, and there are

1 two vendors interested that will be coming up  
2 in October/November to give demonstrations.  
3 The Board has not made any decisions at this  
4 time.

5 Ms Evans commented further  
6 that the project has been scaled back. The  
7 financial areas, particularly accounting and  
8 assessments, were upgraded to try to integrate  
9 the assessments with the financial statements  
10 and changing all the codes, etc.

11 The first presentation  
12 received, regarding claims management, was  
13 outside the financial range for a one-time  
14 implementation, so the presenter has been  
15 asked for options for a stepped integration.

16 In the interim, there are  
17 some new technical developments in the area of  
18 database management, and two companies are  
19 coming to demonstrate these new systems.

20 • The Yukon Chamber of Commerce did respond  
21 to this consultation, and one of its  
22 major concerns was the huge variance  
23 between best case/worst case scenarios.  
24 Can this topic be addressed?

25 Ms Evans replied that it  
26 was agreed that the Chambers concern was  
27 valid. As a result, until the exact

1 requirements are known, and someone can  
2 provide a price, the project will be scaled  
3 down into smaller pieces so that a more stable  
4 response can be received from the vendors. It  
5 is anticipated that the responses received in  
6 October/November are going to be much better  
7 from the perspective of relating to the  
8 Board's fiduciary responsibilities.

9 • Now that the oil and gas part of the  
10 draft OH&S regulations has been passed,  
11 has the Minister indicated to the Board  
12 when the rest of the regulations might be  
13 passed? Will they go through as a  
14 complete package; will they be done part  
15 by part?

16 Craig Tuton indicated that,  
17 on behalf of the Board, the issue of the OH&S  
18 regulations has been raised in every meeting  
19 he has had with the Minister. The Minister  
20 has been made aware of the time and effort  
21 that has been expended by all parties in  
22 preparing and moving forward with the draft  
23 regulations.

24 The Minister has indicated  
25 that there are a number of issues and concerns  
26 throughout the business community. The Board  
27 has been responding in a timely manner to the

1 concerns as they are raised by the Minister's  
2 office. Other than that, all that can be done  
3 is to wait.

4 • Has the Minister provided a list of  
5 concerns about the regulations that have  
6 been raised by the industry? If there  
7 are some rewrites, the Safety  
8 Construction Association would be willing  
9 to step in and help with that.

10 Mr. Tuton responded that  
11 the Board is keeping separate from that  
12 process, as it is a political process.  
13 However, if the Construction Safety  
14 Association wanted to get involved, it would  
15 probably be a good idea.

16 • These regulations were drafted  
17 approximately six years ago. Have you  
18 heard any concerns from staff in OH&S  
19 about the validity or the relevance of  
20 the draft regulations?

21 Mr. Tuton answered that the  
22 staff are careful not to get involved in the  
23 political side of the picture, but they are  
24 very concerned from a practical point of view.  
25 There has been a great deal of time and effort  
26 spent in drafting and developing these  
27 regulations.

1                   If there are concerns or  
2 issues, it is respectfully suggested that they  
3 be addressed directly to the Minister.

4           • A pat on the Board's backback for the  
5 implementation of the Construction Safety  
6 Association. It is quite rewarding to  
7 see the improvement that has been made  
8 over the past year in the change of  
9 attitude and safety things that have been  
10 happening in the workplace.

11                   Mr. Tuton expressed  
12 gratitude for hearing that comment. Everyone  
13 wants to insure that there is a safe and happy  
14 workplace for the workers. The approach that  
15 has been taken is, if you don't get injured,  
16 there is no need to pay out on claims; if  
17 claims don't have to be paid out, assessments  
18 don't have to be high.

19                   Mr. Tuton explained that  
20 part of the agreement with the Contractors  
21 Safety Association is the ability to expand  
22 that program to other groups. The Board has  
23 an appetite to be more concerned with  
24 prevention and results; and that work in the  
25 prevention and safety area is going to provide  
26 long-term benefits for employers and  
27 employees.

- 1           • The Contractors Safety Association is  
2           already expanding. They are offering  
3           courses to YTG (for example, supervisory  
4           safety training in October).

5           **ADJOURNMENT**

6           The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.)