



WEEKLY MEETING Minutes
Wednesday, February 5, 2025

Collins Acheampong, Frank Adamson, Bob Eamer, Hugh Graham, Ann Harrison, Paul Hewitt, Annie Holtby, Carolyn Mullin, Sharon Pfeifer, Dave Schulz, David Sherlock, Paul Snack, Mike Taylor, Lance Wiebe, YE Maria Araujo, Guest Speaker, Rob Lebel, Mary Lebel, Michele D. Starwalt-Woods

1. **Welcome – Collins** welcomed Rob (speaker) and Mary Lebel, and Dave Schulz welcomed Michele Starwalt-Woods on zoom – a dear District friend of Fonthill.

2. **Land Acknowledgement – Hugh**

We begin this gathering by acknowledging the land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabe peoples, many of whom continue to live and work here today. This territory is covered by the Upper Canada Treaties and is within the land protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum agreement. Today this gathering place is home to many First Nations, Metis and Inuit people and acknowledging reminds us that our great standard of living is directly related to the resources and friendship of Indigenous people

3. **National Anthem - Sharon & All**

4. **4-WAY TEST – Sharon**

Of the things we think, say, or do
Is it the truth?
Is it fair to all concerned?
Will it build good will and better friendships?
Will it be beneficial to all concerned?

5. **Invocation - Paul H**

May we appreciate and use each day that comes to us.
We pray for strength and guidance for each day as it comes, for each day's duties, for each day's problems.
May we be challenged to give our best selves and may we be assured of your presence with us.

6. **Collins – Welcome everyone.** Welcome also to our guest speaker who will be introduced later by Lance, **Rob Lebel.**

Dues are Due. \$200 for January through June. Please e-transfer.

Board Meeting tonight on zoom tonight on budget only.

Mike. Algonquin is all set. All drivers are in place.

Curling at Welland is next week. The 11th.

Carol Nagy of Hospice is next week's speaker.

Rotary sponsored Free Skate is 11-1230 on Family Day, February 17.

Community Expo Space is having the **Service Groups there**. There will be some Rotary information, looking for new members, etc., from 11-3. We've traditionally collected food for Food4Kids – Nancie is trying to find a member to come – has some materials to hand out.

The District Conference is April 5th. It's a wonderful experience.

I'll call on Lance to introduce our Guest Speaker.

7. **Introduction of Ron Lebel by Lance.**

I'm very pleased to introduce Ron Lebel and his work in Disability Programs for Niagara Casinos. He assists employees return to work after being on occupational/non-occupational illness/injury. He's worked in Human Resources for 35 years with the last 10 years focused on Disability Management. Throughout his HR career, he's worked in unconventional settings anywhere from Remote hydro construction sites in Northern Ontario and Northern Manitoba to spending the summer of 2015 in the Athletes Village in Toronto PanAm/ParaPan Games. Ron is a proud Indigenous person from the Iroquois Confederacy. He is Oneida Nation, and his clan is Turtle. Being Indigenous with a hearing disability, he's passionate about IDEA -Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility.

8. **Ron Lebel's Presentation.** Thank you, Lance.

I'm an Indigenous person – They were the first people in Canada to start with. There are 7 Grandfather Teachings. We live by them, all of us. They are based on 7 generations past and into the future. Talking about after our children's children. I belong to the Haudenosaunee tribe. The Mohawk Tribe of Connecticut owns the Casino in Niagara Falls. 13 generations into the future. Look at incorporating these teachings into your life. **Truth and Reconciliation** resulted from the discoveries at Residential Schools. My grandfather was at a Residential School. He shut down and didn't want to talk about it. I spent three summers working at Fort George. Truth and Reconciliation is **not for assigning blame. It's for moving forward**. Its principles are found at several web sites. There are 94! Only 3 have been addressed in the last 10 years. We want to keep moving it along! **Look at the BC site and calls to action**. There's a blog every two weeks about Indigenous Learning. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly – be aware and know what happened.

I'm proud of my heritage and I do a lot of volunteer work. With Indigenous people, the traditional perspective is seeing the elder as a counsellor from where we can get some wisdom. I'm also Chair for Indigenous Diabetes – it's pretty much #1 illness in the community. I was there (on insulin) and now I want to give back.

Human Resources, where I've worked for many years, is often thought of as 'hire and fire.' On page 3 of handout, you'll see HR role is more People and Culture. When I started, I was in a summer contract. **My Boss said there was an opening in Disability**. I found a 26 course program from BC which took 2 years to finish. **2020 was the year that news broke about the Residential Schools. It hit me hard. A National Friendship Centre opened in Toronto and I took on that role of Disability Human Resources Chair.**

Human Resources was my niche -how to accommodate. The sense of routine helps and making them part of the process. I want them to take ownership. It's hard work, you need to do self-work and stay grounded.

Last thing. **Diversity and Inclusion.** We need to collectively look at how we can work together. Diversity work on community at the Casino is a celebration of success but also a continued learning. The employee base is Asian. The consumer base is Asian.

There's also **ACCESS. Be open to Explore and Learn.**

One truth of the Haudenosaunee, which includes Mohawk, Onondaga and Oneida, is that women have more power. My mother was a Turtle and so I am a Turtle. As a kid I didn't want to be a turtle! It seemed so small.

Some reservation chiefs are elected, some are hereditary. We share a lot of values, different languages and dialects (Languages are dying).

On reserve, there are different opinions. We had to diversify, we had to improve communities; We all wanted to be self-sufficient, we all wanted an improved standard of living.

Question. As part of Truth and Reconciliation, would you say that the school system is helping? What's your suggestion for helping with this change?

Rob. Putting indigenous people in these helping positions. Niagara College has an indigenous program. It's lacking but perspective is changing. There's still a long way to go.

Mike. It's like an onion! Do you foresee problems with recent events?

Rob. Don't let one person's view block your goals. I do what I can do. We just have to start.

Rob's Presentation notes and 7 Grandfathers' Teachings in colour. Copy into your search line, please and thank you.

<https://portal.clubrunner.ca/289/Documents/en-ca/5a8cbc2e-5eea-4f2e-8040-250e26d3f222/1/>

9. **Rotary Moment and Happy Loonies –**

Paul S. I'd like to thank our guests.

Paul H. 'Be My Eyes.' Sherry does that.

Ann. I'm heading to Spain. Hugh has the cheque book till Mel gets back.

Sharon. All safe and well.

David Sherwood. Happy to be here.

Lance. Out of our four kids, our 3rd is getting married. One more off the payroll.

Maria. I'm excited for Algonquin! I'm with the Fyfes now, Greg and Family.

Mike. I'm reacclimated up north! Eagles and ducks!

Hugh. Rob IS a role model! I looked back at the Auction – 16 years as a group. Raised 2 ¼ Million Kudos to all Rotarians.

Dave Schulz. I echo David's sentiments. Happy to be here. It's great to listen to a man pursuing his dreams and focus on the good things that are happening.

Annie. An e transfer Happy Loonie. So true what David said about Ron's presentation. Heading To Puerto Escondido Friday. See you again on zoom.

Carolyn. I've been writing proposals for 10 million dollars for NC. There are new pockets of money. Concerning Equity, we've gone from 'should do' to 'will do!'

Frank. Great meeting today! The presentation, the Happy Loonies!

Collins. **6 more weeks of Winter! Superbowl Weekend! Enjoy!**

Meetings to come

February 12, MCC, Weekly Meeting - Carol Nagy of Hospice, Guest speaker

February 19, MCC, Weekly Meeting – Paul Hewitt, Classification Talk

February 26, MCC, Board Meeting – in MCC Concession Area -All members welcome