

January 27, 2026 | 7:30 – 9:30 | In-Person  
CFB Esquimalt Naval & Military Museum  
Naden 20 – Nelles St Victoria, BC V9A 6N7

**Attendance:** Christina Clarke, James Gatsi, Rose Arsenault, Elizabeth Brown, Uosue Dubon, Mary Lou Newbold, Inderbir Singh, Kelly Somogyi, Kara Udell, Spencer Walker, Capt(N) Kevin Whiteside, Ashka Wirk, Kris Wirk, John Wilson (CEO), Ashley McCartie (Staff Liaison), Julia Banks (Staff Liaison), Corrie Delisle (Staff)

**Regrets:** Corey Gillon

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*We acknowledge and respect the Lekwungen territory on whose land we are meeting on today and acknowledge that we are working towards economic reconciliation.*

**Motion to approve agenda as presented.**

MOVED BY Josue Dubon

SECONDED BY Rose Arsenault

CARRIED

**Motion to approve the minutes from previous Board of Directors meeting.**

MOVED BY Kevin Whiteside

SECONDED BY Christina Clarke

CARRIED

1. Chair's Report

- Welcome to 2026 & Final Comments on 2025: 2025 was a big year with lots of transitions, including office move and CEO transition. Chair feels we are well positioned for 2026. Welcome to new Directors.
- HR Committee Update: First meeting was held in January. Discussion around the goals of this committee and if it should be run as a Governance Committee. Committee will bring recommendations to the Board in March. Committee Vice Chair is completing scan of similar organizations to look for similar committees.
- Board Meeting Timing: Discussion around extending Board meeting time 30 minutes to ensure adequate time for committee reporting. Senior Operations Manager to send out poll to Board on preferred timing.
- CEO Probation: Board confirmed the CEO has successfully completed the probation period. Board expressed confidence in the CEO's leadership.

2. CEO's Report

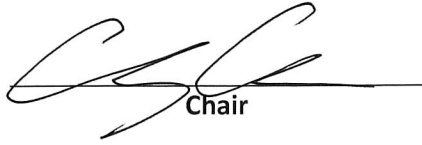
- Stakeholder Engagement
  - Exploring opportunity to bring Snowbirds back to Victoria in August 2026, with support from partner organizations. The event would be high-profile with minimal cost to the chamber, beyond staff time.
  - Launching new Chamber Chats panel with CHEK. Filming to start in February, filmed at the CHEK studios and on location.
  - Discussion identified three key issues affecting downtown activity: safety and disorder, parking and transportation access, and economic conditions impacting business vitality.

- Property owners have formed a group concerned about declining economic activity in the downtown core. Looking for support from the Chamber with communications and advocacy.
- Group of financial institutions have begun collaborating to bring clients downtown. Looking for support from the Chamber.
- CEO and select team members attended City of Victoria's Spark & Shift conference on January 21 and noted positive progress around police presence and initiatives, though concerns remain regarding the perception and reality of safety.
- Victoria Curling Club is seeking support to replace an aging ice machine and is exploring membership with the Chamber.
- Discussion around an upcoming municipal election and the opportunity to create a scorecard of key priorities to distribute before candidates are announced. Senior Director of Government Relations & Communications will take the lead on this.
- Hosted Roundtable with Chief Constable of the Victoria Police Department. Our relationship with VicPD has strengthened due to our support, hosting round tables and events, etc.
- Working with Island Savings Credit Union on a non-profit funding initiative that includes financial support and educational programming for eligible members. Incorporated Board feedback from December 2025 to narrow program eligibility. Working with Island Savings and legal team to come to final agreement.
- Staffing Update
  - Staff returned to working five days per week in office.
  - Hired new Senior Director of Government Relations & Communications.
  - Recruitment underway for an Events & Program Specialist and a Sales Executive.
  - Contracted past employee for Events Consulting support during transition period.
  - Transitioning graphic design work to external consultants.
- Office Update
  - Vancouver Island South Film & Media Commission has moved into the Chamber office.
- Upcoming Events
  - Discussion around Award of Distinction and current nominees. Update on Business Awards timeline and progress.
  - Business Awards Entry Tips Webinar – February 2
  - Working Towards a Better Future, Lunch with Chief Wilson – February 10 (nearing capacity)
  - Emerge Connector with Excel Career College – February 12
  - Business Mixer with IG Wealth Management – February 19
  - Sales Success Workshop with Sandler – February 27
  - BC Budget 2026 with BC Finance Minister – February 18 (launching soon)
  - Mixer with Pacific Opera Victoria – March 19 (launching soon)
  - Connector with MA Wellness and Yoga – March 12 (launching soon)
  - Networking 101 with Ambassadors – March 3 (launching soon)



# THE CHAMBER.

GREATER VICTORIA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Chair

4/21/26.

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Date



Secretary

March 31, 2026

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Date