

SCOOP

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THE NEWSMAGAZINE FOR HOUSING CO-OPERATIVES IN BC



Inside:
A new co-op grows in the Village
Get ready for the Co-op Energy Survey



Leading Astray: Directors in Arrears

The arrears and bad-debts rate for the membership of co-ops with directors in arrears was four times the rate seen in co-ops without any.

Alexandra Wilson is the Chief Executive Officer of the Agency for Co-operative Housing.

Some co-op housing traditions are beyond price. Others should be allowed to pass from active use. The timeworn approach of allowing board members to have arrears is one of these. Co-ops don't want to doubt the good faith of board members who owe them money. So, provided they keep to a signed repayment agreement, these directors stay on the board, making decisions about households in arrears. Such board members can hardly be expected to deal firmly with others who owe the co-op money. And so word goes round that housing charges are pay-when-you-can. Too much sympathy for directors in financial trouble can set a co-op on the path to money problems of its own.

Harsh words? Once a year, co-ops tell the Agency what their members owe them, how much has been lost to bad debts and whether any directors are behind with their housing charges. Your answers point to a strong link between director arrears and membership-wide arrears. In the latest report to the Agency, one in four co-ops had at least one indebted director. The arrears and

bad-debts rate for the membership of these co-ops was four times the rate seen in co-ops without director arrears. Disturbingly, co-ops with financial workouts are more likely to have board members who owe them money (37% versus 22% for co-ops without workouts) and higher overall arrears. Together, these co-ops report an arrears/bad debts rate more than double that of co-ops without a workout.

The Agency encourages all housing co-ops to say in their rules that directors in arrears can't stay on the board. In the meantime, co-ops should remind board candidates that, as leaders, they'll be expected to set a good example by putting the interests of their co-op ahead of their own. ■



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Co-op listings are published separately.

Check www.chf.bc.ca in the 'Co-op Directory' or call 604-879-5111 or 1-866-879-5111 or by email to info@chf.bc.ca to get a free copy.

ON THE COVER: Athletes Village Housing Co-op is a brand new 84-unit housing co-op in the former Olympic Village on Southeast False Creek.



hot dates Mark your calendars for upcoming co-op housing events you don't want to miss.
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letters

Dear SCOOP,

I'm the new secretary of our board, but I'm nervous about taking minutes. Someone suggested that I should just record our board meetings and use the recording as a back-up in case I miss something. Is that a common practice in co-ops?

Answer:

Some co-op boards record their meetings, but SCOOP isn't a fan of the practice.

Board meetings are long enough without having to relive them again afterwards. And taking minutes isn't that difficult if you follow a few basic rules.

Most new secretaries write too much. Minutes are not transcripts and you don't need to write down everything that is said. Only the board's decision, or the outcome of the discussion, needs to be on the record.

In fact, some things should never be written in minutes. For example, minutes should never attribute comments on a particular issue to an individual director. Once a decision is made, it becomes a decision of the board, and every director should support it. That's more difficult if you are named in the minutes as being opposed to a decision. Directors need to be free to speak their minds in board meetings and then observe board solidarity after the meeting.

Audio recordings also raise some troubling privacy issues. If the board has to discuss a confidential matter involving a member's personal information, the minutes of the meeting can be locked in the office. But what about the audio recording? How long will it survive and how will it be used after the meeting? Who will have access to it?

As a new secretary, if you're unsure of what to write, or if the meeting is moving too quickly, ask the chair to stop for a moment so you can catch up. Ask the chair or other directors if what you've written is an accurate reflection of the business that was just done. Everyone should be concerned that the minutes are accurate, so no one should mind a brief pause.

CHF BC has sample minutes if you want a model to work from. Enjoy your new role as secretary. 🏠



hot dates

Come and get all fired up about co-op housing at these mainland events:

- Apr 20** 2020 Vision: What's in your future? webinar
- 30** SAGM, Burnaby
- May 9** Delegate Forum, Vancouver
- 11** What makes a good director? Vancouver
- 24** Co-op housing basics, Webinar
- 25-28** CHF Canada AGM, St. John's, Newfoundland
- Jun 25** CHF BC/CHF Canada Annual BBQ, Trout Lake

chip rates

Preferred rates for CHF BC member co-op operating accounts. These rates were effective January 1, 2011 and are subject to change.

| | |
|---|-------|
| CCEC – variable | 0.38% |
| CCEC – fixed 12-month | 1.35% |
| Coast Capital (Vancouver Island) | 1.00% |
| Vancity | 1.4% |



Co-ops on Social Media

CHF BC is now a social media player. Housing co-op members can join up and share with other members through CHF BC's Facebook page, see co-op housing photos on Flickr, watch videos about housing co-ops on YouTube and for the latest news that matters, follow us on Twitter. To find out more, or to sign up, visit our website: www.chf.bc.ca or contact Fiona Jackson at fjackson@chf.bc.ca or 604-879-5111 ext. 139.

CHF BC's new website

And speaking of social media, before the summer, CHF BC members will find a way to connect with all the tools and social media in one spot on the federation's new website – watch for it. New features include a map-based co-op directory.

Co-op Energy Survey – coming to you this spring

First mentioned last year, your co-op will be getting a letter from CHF BC this spring, asking you to take part in an online energy inventory survey.

We'll give you some guidelines and a link to the survey. Your board will need to appoint someone who can best answer questions about your co-op's current state of energy efficiency.

Here's why you should take part: we'll be able to use your energy-use data to see what kind of upgrades could help you save energy. But that's not all: having this information will make it possible to leverage funding to help you. That means more money for your co-op to get energy efficiency upgrades done and save even more money over the longer term. Project sponsors include BC Hydro, FortisBC and BC Housing.

CHF BC – carbon neutral again

In its third annual carbon footprint audit, CHF BC has lowered its annual carbon emissions again – from 54.65 tonnes of carbon emissions in 2007 to 50.037 in 2008 and now down to 36.54 tonnes. CHF BC used reduction strategies including switching to recycled paper use, an advanced

recycling program, alternative transportation for commuting, and carbon offsets from Offsetters to support projects that reduce as much carbon as we produce. The 2009-10 audit included a first time audit of CHF BC's affiliates, COHO Management Services Society and COHO Repair Services Inc. (CRS). Both COHO and CRS are now officially carbon neutral companies.

Speed networking

CHF BC and CHF Canada members met for an informal "speed networking" event in Vancouver on February 21. Participants were paired up and given seven minutes to ask and answer questions with a partner before they had to switch to new partners. The room buzzed with conversation and energy, and members' feedback was that this was, "an excellent opportunity to network with other co-ops," "Should be an annual event," and that "time passed very quickly." CHF BC plans more networking opportunities – stay tuned! ■



CHF BC members exchanged stories, answered questions at CHF BC's first-ever speed networking event on February 21.

Share Fair

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2010 AGM

On November 27, 2010, more than 100 co-op members, staff and guests came together at the Executive Inn in Burnaby for CHF BC's 2010 annual general meeting.

Members heard an exciting report from the board looking at the accomplishments of the year including a growth in the use of CHF BC's commercial and education services and ongoing work with CHF Canada to build a core education program for housing co-ops across the country.

Mark your calendars now for the Federation's semi-annual meeting: Saturday, April 30, 2011. ■

Delegates at the AGM broke into discussion groups to respond to the question: "What's your biggest concern for the future of your co-op?" The group also identified which of the CHF BC priorities was most important for their individual co-ops.





CHF BC directors pose for a photograph at the AGM in November. From L to R: Dianne Brubaker, Lisa Berting, Fred Silvergieter, Catherine Porter (president), Lawrence Boxall, Isabel Evans, Dave deRé, Alana Van Dam.

AGM ST. JOHN'S Newfoundland and Labrador 2011

May 25-28



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of Canada



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L'HABITATION
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Join us in St. John's for CHF Canada's 2011 Annual General Meeting.

CHF Canada will be offering another great education event with plenty of workshops to choose from. We've named 2011 *The Year of Getting Governance Right*, and we'll be highlighting its importance with an interactive Town Hall where we'll be listening closely to what you have tell us.

You'll be able to have your say at the national business meeting, and network with other co-operators from across the country. And for fun, the planning committee is organizing a great party, a scenic bus tour and lots of local entertainment

So come to the City of Legends for an AGM that's not to be missed!

FIND OUT MORE. REGISTER ONLINE. WWW.CHFCANADA.COOP

Pheasant Meadows Celebrates 25 Years and sets its sights on 2020

Pheasant Meadows Housing Co-operative in Victoria is named for its picturesque surroundings of trees, wetlands and wildlife. Members like that it backs onto a local park with a tidal creek and the E&N railway line that runs across the street.

But it may be better known for its trademark parties. One such event is

“Pheastiva” – something like a summer carnival with inflatable rides for kids, face-painting, music and great food.

The positive energy spills over into other aspects of their daily operation. “Our units are a good size and as a co-op we’ve managed to keep the co-op well maintained,” says Pheasant Meadows president, Helen Cave.

The co-op recently celebrated its 25th anniversary and the membership is preparing for its next 25 years.

“We are about to embark on the 2020 Compass,” says Cave. “I am looking forward to how those sessions will help our community spirit grow and assist us in planning so we will be well prepared when our mortgage is paid off in ten years.” ■

Pheasant Meadows Co-op members take a face-first approach to fun at their annual Pheastiva-!!



island

Building Safe, Compassionate Communities

by Maggie Kerr-Southin

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness is a partnership between local service providers, all levels of government, business, community and the faith community.

We are working with our partners to end homelessness by 2018.

The Coalition brings together the right partners for each housing and support project by helping with resource allocation, plans and home creation.

Homelessness is more than just the people you see on our streets. A person is homeless if they fit into any of the following categories:

- **Rooflessness** – without a shelter of any kind, sleeping rough.
- **Houselessness** – with a temporary place to sleep, such as a shelter, hospital or prison.
- **Insecure Housing** – threatened by insecure tenancy, impending eviction, or domestic violence. Also includes couch surfing.
- **Inadequate Housing** – unsafe, substandard, or overcrowded housing.

Studies show that people become homeless for a variety of reasons: seniors facing rent increases, women and their families leaving abusive relationships, the working poor, and people with health issues that limit their ability to work or find housing.

The Coalition wants to form partnerships where we can find secure housing for vulnerable people. We will provide the people with the assistance they need to be successful, from rent supplements to a regular support worker. If your co-op would like to learn more about the Coalition and our work, or book a speaker for your next meeting, please contact us. We would be pleased to discuss our work with you.

Maggie Kerr is the Communications and Planning Specialist, Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. ■

island dates

Come and get all fired up about co-op housing at these great events:

- Apr 30** SAGM, Burnaby
May 18 Vancouver Island Council, Victoria

For more information or to register for these events contact Kerry Panter at 250-384-9444 or kpanter@chf.bc.ca.

Learn more about the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness!

- **Visit our web page and blog:** www.solvehomelessness.ca
- **Join our Facebook fan page:** www.facebook.com/homeforhope
- **Follow us on Twitter:** twitter.com/homeforhope
- **Phone us:** 250-370-1512
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For the best pricing be sure to let them know that you're a CHF BC member co-op.

Cameo Co-op navigates the future with the 2020 Compass

As operating agreements with CMHC near their end many co-ops are looking to the future. Cameo Co-op has started the process to become certified as a 2020 Co-op to make sure it's ready.

The 2020 Compass is a process that sets co-ops on the path toward certification. Cameo Co-op was one of the first in Victoria to sign up for the Compass program.

A CHF BC facilitator led the members of Cameo through the 2020 Compass program over the course of several meetings. The results: a vision statement for the future, based on a mission statement and core values.

Cameo member, Candice Bunting, took part in the Compass. "It was great to see so many members on the same page concerning our overall goals," she says. Candice urges other co-ops to sign up and start the process too. "You will never regret the time and resources spent on creating a positive outcome for the co-op that you live in."

To find out how you can get your co-op on the Road to 2020: Contact Sue Moorhead at 1-866-879-5111 or 604-879-5111 ext. 136 or smoorhead@chf.bc.ca. ■



Cameo Co-op members contribute to a vision for their co-op's future at a Compass meeting in January.

*Cameo's new mission statement:
"Cameo Co-op through its members
is committed to providing a safe,
secure, affordable and sustainable
co-operative community."*

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commercial services news

Services for CHF BC member housing co-ops

Trail's new flagship Vancouver store

Trail Appliances is proud to announce the opening of our brand new flagship location at Rupert and Grandview Hwy in Vancouver this spring!



This store promises an ultimate appliance shopping experience with live displays, complete kitchens and almost every model you can imagine. CHF BC members are welcome!

www.trailappliances.com

RONA

RONA's rebate program helps co-ops save more

Edmonds Place Co-op in Burnaby saves money by buying RONA's recycled paint and hiring the painting contractor themselves. "Our RONA sales rep was very helpful in introducing us to their recycled paint," says Edmonds Place maintenance committee member Darcy Suehn. "We've done about eight units and are very pleased with the results." And with a price of \$65 for a 5-gallon pail compared to about \$120 everywhere else, Darcy adds, "you can't beat the price!"

Edmonds Place buys most of its supplies at RONA, from lighting and faucets, to plumbing supplies. They also bought a skid of ice melt on the

RONA promotion price last fall and it was delivered right to their co-op. "We've always used RONA because the location is convenient," says Darcy. "The service is great and you can make payments right on the spot. CHF BC's group-buying program just makes it better!"

At Mount Seymour Co-op in North Vancouver, co-op member Jay Wright was pleased with painting advice he got from his local RONA store too. "I have no background in painting but they've been good at pointing me in the right direction. The price of paint is good. They are convenient, have what we need, and their staff are knowledgeable."

With Mount Seymour's aging buildings, there are a lot of repairs and they get them done through RONA. The RONA rebate amount they received this year will allow the co-op to replace an appliance through CHF BC's program with Trail Appliances.

Julie Hunter, Commercial Services Director with CHF BC explains how it works. "Every CHF BC member co-op is assigned a RONA pro-ad number so RONA will know you are part of the program," she says. "And RONA has everything you need to keep your co-op in tip-top shape!" For more information, contact Julie Hunter, at 604.879.5111 or 1-866-879-5111 or jhunter@chf.bc.ca. ■

A new generation of fridge dimensions

Time to replace your co-op's fridges? Fridge dimensions have changed. In 1999, an 18-cubic foot fridge was shorter and wider than today. New fridges are taller, thinner, and not as deep as they used to be. Because cupboard space above a fridge is often under-used new fridges make use of it. Co-ops will need to consider this when ordering new fridges.

Here are a few tips to make sure you order the right size for your kitchen:

- Since fridges today are taller and thinner, measure the space that the fridge sits in, not the existing fridge.
- Focus on the dimensions of the fridge, not the cubic

feet. A fridge built today may have a smaller cubic foot rating but the dimensions could be larger and fit your kitchen better.

- To make best use of your kitchen space, you may need to adjust your cabinets to make room for today's models.

And don't forget to ask about our

Energy Star® line up of fridges!

Norm Turnbull, your appliance specialist will meet you at your co-op and help measure and provide options. To book an appointment, or get your updated Energy Star® qualified price list, call Norm Turnbull or Leanne Cheavins at 604.534.7461 or email aptreplacement@trailappliances.com. ■



Not all carpet fibre is created equal

99% of the fibre used by the carpet industry is synthetic, so chances are good it's what your co-op will choose. Here are some basics on the different types:



NYLON

PROS

- The most durable of the synthetics
- Good resiliency and abrasion resistance
- Good yarn memory to hold twist
- Good stain resistance with stain treatment applied
- Good soil hiding ability
- The strongest fibre, making it an excellent choice for heavy household traffic
- Soil and mildew resistant and resilient
- Continuous filament fibres minimize pilling and shedding
- Less expensive than wool

CONS

- Prone to static – but most nylon is treated with an anti-static treatment to reduce static
- Higher priced than other synthetics

POLYESTER FIBRE

PROS

- Available in a wide selection of textures and colors
- Quite durable and resists wear
- Extremely fade resistant
- Excellent resistance to stains
- Sheds moisture and resists moths and mildew
- Cleans fairly easily and is enhanced by stain treatments
- Less expensive than nylon

CONS

- Poorer resiliency which can lead to crushing.
- Avoid high pile heights with low-density construction: tends to flatten out
- Susceptible to pilling, shedding and oil-based materials can leave stains

POLYPROPYLENE, (also called olefin)

PROS

- Superior resistance to bleaches and sunlight fading
- Cleans very well and is stain resistant
- Less expensive than nylon or polyester

CONS

- Poorer resiliency, which can lead to crushing
- Avoid high pile heights with low-density construction: tends to flatten out
- Poor abrasion resistance
- Low melt point can cause fibres to fuse if furniture or other objects are dragged across its surface
- Oil-based materials can leave stains

CHF BC's flooring partners offer discounted prices to member co-ops on a variety of flooring products and installations. They would be happy to provide a quotation or more information about carpeting or other flooring products. Please contact:



Vancouver Island:

Hourigan's Carpets and Linos –
250.220.8811 or lee@hourigans.com



Lower Mainland:

CD Contract – 604.323.2027
or flooring@chf.bc.ca



BFI services CHF BC members on the Mainland and Vancouver Island.

BFI an industry leader

Following an extensive and particularly competitive bidding process CHF BC renewed our contract with BFI Canada in December to provide garbage and recycling collection services to our Lower Mainland members. A similar contract continues for our Island members.

Here are eight things that you should know about BFI Canada Waste Management:

1. BFI has a unionized workforce of 64 on the island and 140 in Metro Vancouver.
2. They worked closely with WorkSafe BC to develop industry-specific training material for their operators with driver safety programs, safe facility inspections and mechanical maintenance on a regular basis. In 2010, their Metro Vancouver operators had a 44% reduction in injuries over 2009. Their five front-end drivers in

Victoria have a combined total of more than 80 years of accident-free driving!

3. BFI has an A+ rating with the Better Business Bureau.
4. Customer service at BFI Canada has on-site staff answering your calls.
5. BFI is involved in the communities it serves, helping groups on Vancouver Island like Saanich Peninsula Hospital, The Mustard Seed, and First Nation communities and on the Mainland, White Rock fire department's charity tree chipping program, the Starlight Foundation which supports seriously ill children and Tim Hortons' Community Clean-Up.
6. BFI has the most fuel efficient trucks in the industry, with the latest particulate reducing technology which reduces carbon expelled by 85% or more. Some trucks produce less greenhouse gases per vehicle than a typical commuting vehicle!
7. In the Capital Regional District on Vancouver Island where there is no municipal recycling collection, BFI's five material recovery facilities process over 60% of all the recyclable materials.
 - BFI sends the recyclables to mills in domestic markets that support the Canadian economy.
 - In Victoria, BFI Canada offers free recycling "drop-off" seven days a week to the public at no cost.
8. Their "Prohibited Materials Program" was the first of its kind for waste management companies and helped educate employees and customers to keep recyclables out of the waste stream. ■



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in the spotlight

Athletes Village Housing Co-op:

First new housing co-op in a decade puts the spotlight back on co-ops

By Fiona Jackson

The spring sunlight that shines on the Athletes Village Housing Co-op at 151 West 1st Avenue in Vancouver highlights its newness. The horseshoe shaped concrete building is green: its brick façade is complemented with light green panels, balconies and green glass overhangs, but it's also an environmentally sustainable "green" building. Features include a rooftop garden or green roof, and a passive building design with triple pane windows and natural ventilation that reduces energy use. Inside, there is individual in-suite energy monitoring. And the building meets the prestigious LEED Gold certification for sustainability. But that's not all that's brand new. Athletes Village Housing Co-op is the first new housing co-op to be built in BC in a decade. The co-op, with its stunning

waterfront and city views at the Southeast end of False Creek, was finished just in time to accommodate international athletes at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Even before the 2010 Olympics, there was a plan to include affordable housing in the Southeast False Creek development. Olympics organizers also promised a legacy of affordable housing. And as most of us know, the decision about what percentage of the housing would be affordable sparked a lot of debate.

News of cost over-runs and unfilled condo units dominated the media after the Olympics were over. But in the midst of the controversy came good news for the co-operative housing sector. Of three buildings

identified as affordable housing, one is now a co-op. And for the next two years, the other two rental buildings are being managed by COHO, CHF BC's property management arm.

Co-ops have been an affordable housing option in BC for 35 years. And with more than ten co-ops already clustered around Vancouver's False Creek, it makes sense that the City would include another in its plan for the area. The City's vision for the neighbourhood has a lot in common with the spirit of the co-operative principles and the vision of many housing co-ops. Aiming to be a model of sustainability and community, the City wants to see a place "... where people will live, work, play, and learn ... and maintain and balance the highest possible levels of social

in the spotlight



"Co-ops have been an affordable housing option in BC for 35 years. And with more than ten co-ops already clustered around Vancouver's False Creek, it makes sense that the City would include another in its plan for the area."

equity, livability, ecological health and economic prosperity so as to support their choices to live in a sustainable manner."(from the City of Vancouver Planning Department's *Southeast False Creek Policy Statement* 1999) .

"This is a great opportunity for co-operative housing," says CHF BC's executive director, Thom Armstrong. "And it is what we've been saying to governments all along: housing co-ops are the best investment you can make in non-market housing. The 260 non-profit housing co-ops in BC continue to provide safe, secure housing for low and modest income members."

At first, 75% of the Athletes Village Housing Co-op members will pay

market rents and 25% will be set below market for those who qualify. But the percentage is expected to shift over time when the co-op's operating revenue becomes more stable so that, eventually, the co-op will be able to support closer to 40% of its members at below-market rates.

The co-op just secured a 60-year lease with the City and Vancity was the successful bidder to provide the long-term financing. Vancity also made a capital contribution of \$180,000 to help increase the affordability of the co-op.

In another first, there is now a partnership between the City, the co-op

and CHF BC with an agreement that once the co-op has fully funded all of its reserves, any further surpluses will be divided between the City and CHF BC to develop more housing co-ops in Vancouver.

The members who move into the brand new Athletes Village Co-op won't just be planting the seeds of a new co-operative community they just might be taking the first steps to spark a new wave of housing co-ops in the city.

To find out more about Athletes Village Housing Co-op see: avillagecoop.com. For the City-owned rentals managed by COHO Property Management see: sefcrental.com. 🏠

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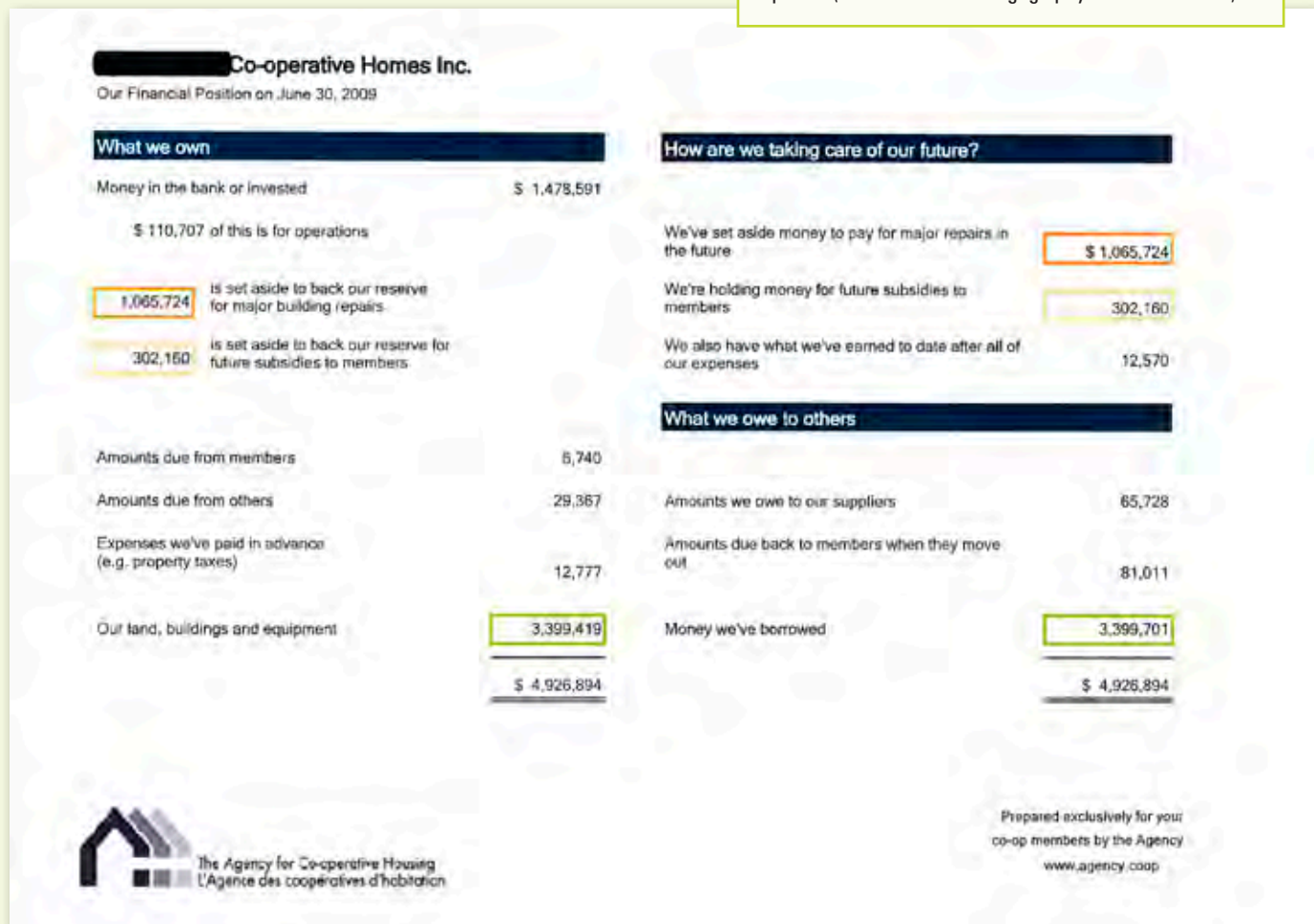


Seeing clearly now: Plain-Language Financials

by Sue Moorhead

SPECIAL FEATURES:

On page one (**below**), if two numbers are highlighted in the same colour, those numbers are related. On page two (**right**), a pie chart shows where your money came from (housing charges are the biggest wedge) and how you spent it (most went for mortgage payments and taxes).



We've heard from co-op members that even when their auditors do a great job of presenting the audited financial statements at their AGM, they find it hard to grasp what the information means for their co-op.

Now the Agency for Co-operative Housing has a solution. The Plain-Language Financials are a tool that will restate your co-op's audited financial statements in plain English (or French). And this will help you show the clearest possible picture of your financial situation to your members.

With easy on-line filing and the Agency's information system, each client's financial statements are turned into ordinary English or French. The Plain-Language Financials are only three pages that include:

1. A simplified balance sheet where "assets" are "What we own,"

"equity" is "How are we taking care of our future?" and "liabilities" are "What we owe to others."

2. Pie charts and numbers show what happened in the past year. For example, this means you can tell how big a wedge housing charges were in your co-op's financial life last year.
3. Yearly columns show you where your money came from and how you spent it in every year that your auditor filed your AIR (Annual Information Return) with the Agency. This will help your co-op prepare its budget and show you if there are any trends, such as a mysterious drop in laundry and parking revenue.

Co-operative Homes Inc.

Our Operations for the Year Ended June 30, 2009

How did we do this year?

We earned money from

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Housing charges from members | \$ 794,254 |
| Housing-charge subsidies from government | 250,854 |
| Operating funds from government | - |
| Other sources (e.g. parking, laundry) | 13,024 |
| | <u>1,058,132</u> |



We had these expenses

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Property taxes, insurance and utilities (e.g. water, electricity and heat) | 153,376 |
| Maintenance, repairs and security | 167,576 |
| Mortgage payments | 508,093 |
| Administration | 59,288 |
| Professional fees (e.g., audit) | 4,360 |
| Governing our co-op | 4,410 |
| Other expenses | 1,705 |
| Set aside for future building repairs | 131,661 |
| | <u>1,030,469</u> |



We ended the year with this much left over

\$ 27,663

Who doesn't tense up when it's time to talk money? These plain language statements will be most useful to your co-op when you file your AIR and other documents before your annual meeting. (Remember that the members don't need to approve the audited statements before you submit them.) As soon as the

Agency validates your return, your Plain-Language Financials will be ready. If your members get a copy before, or even at your annual meeting, you can be sure they'll understand your co-op's finances better than ever.

Co-ops can find their Plain-Language Financials on the Agency's secure client

website, under Agency Reports. You can reach the client website from www.agency.coop. Click on "Client login" and fill in your co-op's username and password. Or ask your relationship manager for help. The Agency's system generates a set of statements for every AIR (Annual Information Return) you've filed to date. 🏠



Co-op Energy Survey

Coming to your co-op this spring:

We'll be asking your co-op to take part in an online survey about your co-op's energy efficiency. With this information we hope to be able to match co-ops in BC to funding for energy upgrades. The survey is sponsored by BC Hydro, FortisBC and BC Housing. Watch for it!

For more information, contact Fiona Jackson at 1-866-879-5111, 604-879-5111 ext 139 or fjackson@chf.bc.ca

Getting governance right is the theme of CHF Canada's Annual Meeting in St John's, NL, and a motto for the rest of this year.

CHF Canada holds its AGM in the historic city of St. John's, Newfoundland this May.

2011: The Year of Getting Governance Right

By Scott Jackson, CHF Canada Program Manager, National Communications

CHF Canada and regional federations across the country have designated 2011 "The Year of Getting Governance Right". The idea is to raise the bar on governance and leadership in the co-op housing sector, to run co-operative communities better and showcase the benefits that good co-op housing has to offer.

Governance is how directors, and the members who elect them, set and control the overall direction of the co-op to ensure its success as a viable business and a co-operative community.

"Governance is the foundation on which the success of every housing co-op is built," says CHF Canada Executive Director Nicholas Gazzard. "That's why it's so important to get it right. Good governance leads to sound management, good service for co-op members and a thriving co-op community. It is also the commitment we've made to

government, when we've said that we can provide the leadership ourselves that co-ops need."

This year's governance theme applies not only to housing co-operatives but to the federations themselves. CHF Canada's own board is looking at how to strengthen the governance of your national federation with increased director education training and other initiatives.

Together with CHF BC and other regional federations, CHF Canada will be highlighting 2011 as The Year of Getting Governance Right in our publications, on our website, and at our events.

Of course, 2020 Vision is a key tool for addressing governance. We'll be challenging all our members to register for 2020 and meet at least the governance standard that's needed to become a 2020 Co-op.

Getting Governance Right is also the theme of CHF Canada's Annual

Meeting in St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, happening May 25 to 28, 2011. This year's AGM town hall meeting will focus on what good governance looks like and how it can help your co-op plan for a strong future. Also at the Annual Meeting is CHF Canada's Member Education Forum, the largest co-op housing education and training event in Canada, offering over 30 workshops to choose from on governance, management, and leadership.

Promoting a healthy, thriving co-op community is what it's all about. We hope you will join us this year to strengthen governance and leadership in our movement.

For more information about The Year of Getting Governance Right and CHF Canada's Annual Meeting, visit www.chfcanada.coop where you can also subscribe to CHF Canada eNEWS for regular email updates. 📧

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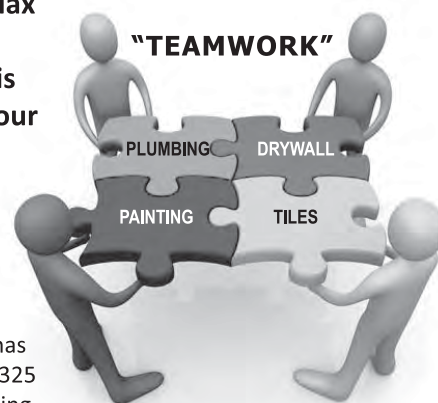
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Urban Food Connections from Africa to Canada

Francis Wachira is known as Nairobi's "Mr. Rabbit" as he practices intensive organic farming on the land between housing blocks where he lives in a rundown low-rise owned by the City. He also keeps about 500 rabbits and sells them for breeding, food and fur. He teaches other urban farmers how to raise rabbits too. Unfortunately, access to land is at the local government's discretion and the City is not supportive of urban farmers. Mr. Wachira advocates for city policies that will allow farmers to grow food in dense urban conditions. He is also a member of an urban farmers' network supported by Rooftops Canada's local partner, Mazingira Institute.

About 30 percent of Nairobi residents produce food and help improve the nutrition and food security of their city. Urban agriculture helps build sustainable communities for low-income urban African families and it also creates employment and enhances incomes. But there are a number of issues to consider including health concerns about raising animals in dense areas, and access to suitable land and water.

Rooftops Canada wants to help urban farmers and has implemented a one-year pilot urban food security program based on a three-city partnership involving Cape Town, Toronto and Nairobi.

In June 2010, the pilot had an exchange visit in Toronto followed by a return exchange in Nairobi in November 2010, hosted by Mazingira Institute and the Nairobi and Environs Food Security Agriculture



Francis Wachira prepares compost in his urban garden.

"It was striking how similar our issues are..." says Barbara Emanuel, Food Strategy, Toronto Public Health who took part in Rooftops Canada's food security exchange program with Nairobi, Kenya and Cape Town, South Africa.

and Livestock Forum in Nairobi.

Barbara Emanuel, Manager, Food Strategy for Toronto Public Health, participated in the exchange.

"It was striking how similar our issues are," Emanuel says. "The exchange enabled us all to critically reflect on the ways to promote linkages between urban politicians, policy-makers and communities in the urban planning process."

One of the highlights of the exchange was a meeting with members of the Mizuka Youth Reform Garden on the edge of Nairobi's notorious Kibera slum. This group of young men, previously engaged in illegal street

activities, now work on a long narrow plot by the side of the road. They use every square metre, gardening in sacks, raising chickens and rabbits, providing a communal shower and selling water.

Stanley Visser, responsible for urban agriculture in the City of Cape Town, says the exchange helped build a "global understanding of food security" while emphasizing "youth connections." He will be hosting the final exchange in Cape Town in May 2011.

For more information, please see the new urban food security page on Rooftops website: www.rooftops.ca



Barbara Emanuel (left), Food Strategy, Toronto Public Health with one of the staff of the Mazingira Institute.

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the co-op connection

Just say "YES"

Last year's winners of CHF BC's draw say 'thanks' and share some of the highlights of their YES Camp experiences:

Dear CHF BC,
Thank you for sponsoring my trip to the YES. It has been an amazing wonderful experience. During my week at camp I made friends with everybody, got to enjoy beautiful weather at an amazing beach, played numerous games of capture the flag and basically had fun in every aspect.
I learnt a lot about leadership, the workings of a good and healthy community making people smile, as well as a lot about myself.
Sincerely Abel Szegedi



Dear CHF BC,
Thank you so much for sending me to the YES. I learnt about leadership, communication, self awareness and many things I will use for the rest of my life. It was a life-changing camp.
I opened up to people like I never have. Thank you for this amazing opportunity.
Sincerely Keisha Jones



Dear CHF BC,
Thank you so much for sending me to camp. I'm very honoured and grateful that my name was picked for the draw. I had an absolutely spectacular, life-changing experience!
I'm going to bring my leadership knowledge and positivity to my community on my return.
Thanks again :)
Rebecca Turbic



CHF BC is accepting names for this year's YES camp draw for three lucky people age 14 to 15 to attend one free week of YES Camp. Email: info@chf.bc.ca. Draw deadline: June 15.

2012 is coming: Next year will be the International Year of

Co-operatives. Sign up for CHF BC e-news (see our website at www.chf.bc.ca to learn how) to get the latest information on our local celebrations through BC Co-operative Association's "I Choose Co-op" committee. 🏡

Winners show off their "I Choose Co-op" t-shirts at the CHF BC AGM





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