

Assayers Foundation of British Columbia



DRAFT MINUTES
of an
Meeting of the British Columbia Assayers Foundation Advisory Council
held by conference call

December 9th, 2009

Member	Role	Affiliation	Address
Mac Chaudhry	Examiners Board Chair	BC Gov. (Ret.)	Victoria, BC.
Scott Daniels	Chair-Advisory Council	Teck Metals	Trail, BC.
Dave Lefebure	Member, Advisory Council	BC Government	Victoria, BC.
Ray Lett	Secretary-Advisory Council	BC Government	Victoria, BC.
Stephen Rowins	Director, Geological Survey	BC Government	Victoria, BC.

Agenda

Vision for long-term sustainability

- a) Are we in agreement that we require significant change?
- b) Does that change involve the formation of a membership within ASTTBC? Realistic alternatives? Do we have a consensus of opinion?
- c) Review visions/models submitted to members area of www.bcassayer.com.
- d) How much money do we really need for long-term sustainability: examiners, board members & ASTTBC costs?
- e) How many members could we conceivably have?
- f) What would the annual dues need to be to cover costs?
- g) How do we feel the "membership" and Industry accept these costs?
- h) Likelihood of change to the ACT to reflect a new model/vision?
- i) Feedback from ASTTBC & APEGBC?

2. Short-term goals for 2010?

- a) Membership starting Jan, 2011?
- b) Achieve a vision/model consensus of opinion prior to Spring 2010 meeting, say by early February?
- c) Another "Membership" survey regarding membership proposal prior to Foundation meeting in spring, April-2010.

Discussion

Dave Lefebure - The Advisory Council needs to form a sub council or Steering committee to help council become more active. Council needs to decide on Steering Committee members.

Scott Daniels - A Steering Committee is needed to encourage all members to be involved and to share information about a vision for the program. More participation among members between

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the bi-annual council meetings is needed. There have only been three responses to a request for a Program vision statement by November 30. The program needs a more sustainable long-term future. The voluntary contributions to the BC Certified Assayers Program from Mac Chaudhry over 20 the past years are greatly appreciated. An examiner's term is presently three years and Council should not expect Mac to serve for of full three years if he decides to retire before the end three years.

Mac Chaudhry – In a vision statement sent to Scott Daniels before November 30th a focus on Assayers Program sustainability was based on an industry late model as an alternative to an association with an existing professional organization such as APEGBC. The Advisory Council approved at the October meeting that the examining board would be strengthened by the addition of two trainee examiners.

Scott Daniels- One vision for the Program's future was that the mining industry assumes patronage for the program with annual contributions of \$1000. However, in order for the program to be sustainable, assured funding independent of voluntary contributions is necessary. Mining companies have less interest in supporting the assaying industry than commercial laboratories. Assayers and laboratory technicians paying membership dues to an assayers association would be more sustainable because there is a certain likelihood that some employers might pay the dues for their employees. The concept would require that all individuals working in the assaying industry be licensed and would be required to pay an annual registration fee.

Dave Lefebure - All those who attended the July 23 Assayers council workshop recognized the benefits of strengthening the present organization. A present limitation to assayers forming a stronger association is the absence of communication between individuals. Also, members might object to the payment of annual registration fees.

Scott Daniels - The present Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources legislation needs to be changed so that fees for licensing can be applied.

Mac Chaudhry – The revenue from licensing fees will be small because there are only 50 to 70 certified Assayers in BC, and a laboratory only requires one certified assayer of staff to comply with the MEMPR Act.. However, revenue would be greater if all laboratory staff including certified assayers and technicians were licensed and were required to pay annual fees.

Dave Lefebure – Changes to the existing MEMPR legislation are feasible, but typically take 2 to 3 years for them to be enacted. However, the steering committee can propose legislation changes for discussion by the Advisory Council.

Scott Daniels - A motion must be made at the next full Advisory Council meeting that the MEMPR Act should be changed so that all people working in the assaying and mineral analytical laboratories must be licensed and pay annual fees.

Dave Lefebure - A political challenge exists to proposing a change to annual licensing fees in the MEMPR Act because if the assaying industry becomes aware of the initiative then they could oppose the changes with an aggressive political campaign [the initiative could crash and burn]. Support from laboratories should be lobbied before changes are proposed. One way of encouraging better communications among assayers and laboratory staff is to have an annual meeting of Assayers where the issues can be better discussed.

Mac Chaudhry - There is a need to canvass people to encourage industry support. A \$1000 requested contribution from industry sponsors may be too high give the present economic climate. Assayers are very independent people and, as individuals, might be reluctant to pay licensing fees unless compelled to do so by legislation.

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Scott Daniels - It is important to have laboratory support for an individual fee-payment structure by emphasizing to the assaying industry that, by paying annual fees, a public perception of assayer competency is enhanced. Also, annual registration fees are more in common with other professional regulatory bodies.

Mac Chaudhry - Laboratories have paid very little for their assayers licensing in the past. Senior management of commercial laboratories should be canvassed about proposed changes to the program. A questionnaire would establish the level of support.

Dave Lefebure - There is a challenge encouraging assayers to become more involved in governing themselves because assayers are presently not a cohesive group.

Scott Daniels - The nearest assayers have approached forming a group was at the celebration event for recognition of Pat Creighton's assayer service in June at Teck metals in Trail. The event attracted about 100 individuals working or associated with the assaying industry and there are probably 400-500 individuals (i.e. assayers, technicians) presently working in BC laboratories. Many of those who attended the celebration in June signed up to join the BC Certified Assayers Foundation.

Steve Rowins. There is a parallel between assayers and geologists in that growth of a governing organization can be encouraged based on the demonstrated benefits from forming an association or from an incentive that changes to legislation change might result in a modification to the existing program. Absorption of assayers and laboratory technicians into the BC Association of Licensed Technologists (ASTTBC) might keep annual fees at a modest level.

Scott Daniels – The main driver for a future structure must be to raise sufficient funds to finance the expenses needed to sustain the group. It is necessary to establish the potential number of members who would be expected to pay fees. Annual licensing fees in the \$200 to \$300 are in line with those currently paid by licenced Technologists. Also, companies might have to require mandatory licensing for all of their assayers and technicians and, ideally, pay the fees to maintain the license. Professional development could also become a requirement of licensing.

Dave Lefebure - There is still a structural problem because presently there is no coherence among assayers. The July 23rd survey indicates an interest in assayers forming an association, but this is unlikely to happen unless there is more of a sense of developing an assaying community. The July survey of assayers will be of little value unless the respondents can be encouraged to attend meetings and communicate with each other. An incentive for improving communication between individuals might a threat of cancelling the Assayers program. The Assayers advisory Council needs to invest energy in encouraging communication among members.

Steve Rowins. An initiative for encouraging better communications might be to approach the Canadian Institution of Mining and Metallurgy (CIM) to suggest that, at a future conference, they host a ½ day session devoted to assaying and mineral analysis. The CIM might also be encouraged to form an assaying sub-group to increase CIM membership. Another option might be to arrange an assaying session at a future AMBC Cordilleran Round-Up convention in Vancouver.

Mac Chaudhry – A barrier to assayers forming a sub-group in CIM is that individuals working in commercial laboratories tend to exchange information reluctantly with each other. Also, assayers and laboratory technicians are very much job-orientated and tend not to get involved in other activities.

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Scott Daniels. The July survey revealed that assayers have a high level in job pride and feel that standards need to be maintained. Their discipline is more aligned to a licensed technologist rather than a professional geoscientist.

Mac Chaudhry: That is not strictly true because there are assayers who have a graduate degree. Much depends on an individual's energy to advance in the assaying industry.

Steve Rowins – One incentive to assayers forming a more energetic and cohesive group would be to demonstrate to them the consequence of failure to communicate.

Scott Daniels – Among the consequences of program cancellation discussed at the October Advisors Council meeting was the impact on the BCIT training program. According to BCIT the training program would continue, but certificates of program completion might be issued by BCIT rather than by the BC government. The most vocal concerns about the loss of BC government certification were from BCIT students training for the assayers certification exam who considered certification gave them greater credibility in the work-place.

Dave Lefebure – Vancouver-based commercial laboratories gain most benefit from the credibility of the BC assayers certification program. One option would be to approach all BC laboratory technicians and assayers to gain support by promoting Vancouver as an international assaying center.

Mac Chaudhry – The benefits of the assayers program and the consequences of its cancellation needs to be stressed initially to laboratory management and then to the technical staff.

Scott Daniels – There is an urgency to move forward with deciding on a program plan because there is only sufficient funding to sustain it for another year. Adequate funding either from industry contributions or from licensing fees is essential for the program's survival.

Dave Lefebure – Ledgeislation changes might take several years to implement.

Steve Rowins – Support from commercial laboratories for the assayers program might be accelerated by using a consultant to write a credible report for presentation to government and laboratory management.

Mac Chaudhry – The late Dr. Alan Coope, a highly respected consultant geochemist, reviewed the BC Certified Assayers Program in 1991 at a cost of about \$10,000. Coope concluded from results of a survey that mining industry considered that the program was important.

Scott Daniels – The BC Assayers Foundation has no funds for hiring a consultant.

Mac Chaudhry – Government might be able to fund a consultant.

Dave Lefebure – Government has no funds available to hire a consultant. There are now no grants to organizations such as the Assayers Foundation and the BC Geological Survey has a very small operating budget. Support from industry for the assayers program is essential.

Scott Daniels – The advisors Council needs to work towards ensuring program sustainability before 2011 when the present funds will be depleted.

Dave Lefebure – If the advisors council can accelerate the process towards ensuring sustainability then the GSB will approach MEMPR Executive to consider changes to the assayers program in MEMPR legislation. The Advisors Council needs to decide Steering Committee members and the Committee priorities. January 27th 2010 from 9.30 to 10.30 am will be the next

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Advisors Council conference call and commercial laboratory representative must be involved.

Scott Daniels - Bill Clifford, Anachemia, agreed to approach industry for funds and will be contacted to determine if there has been any progress with fund raising.

Meeting Summary - Scott Daniels

- Chances of "Assayers" attending annual meetings. The belief that this is currently not likely for most.
- There is an urgency and need for coherency of Assayers through a membership or something similar.
- There's a need to get the management of assaying labs in the Province "on-side" and in support of a membership/licensing model. There's also a need to ensure that Assayers are on-side and in support of this.
- Ray's work with ASTTBC continues to be relevant and important.
- Hiring a professional consultant to make recommendations regarding a sustainable organizational structure for the Assayer Certification Program was discussed. Comment was made that this or something similar was done in 1991 and cost about \$10k. A conclusion of this consultation was the Assayer Certification Program should be continued. While an excellent idea to do this again, we really don't have the means to hire a consultant at this time.
- We need more carrot and less stick in any approach to membership.
- This group needs promotion.
- We have had some modest success with promotion of the Assayers through the political circles of a recent, Provincial budget review.
- Would there be any opportunity for promoting the work & discipline of Assaying at the BC Mineral Exploration Cordilleran Roundup? We were unable to see the resource ability to do this.