

SASW Governance.

In late 2002 the Association set up a project to develop a strategic plan. The committee to lead the project was chaired by Deb Buettner and it included Bernie Zaharik, David Macknak, Wanda Seidlikoski-Yurach, Maureen Kraemer, me and Valerie Sluth who was the consultant hired to guide us through the process. The project was formally initiated in November 2002 and it had four phases: planning to plan, articulating draft vision and mission statements, assessing the environment and developing the plan. There were working sessions at each meeting of the Advisory Board, focus groups around the province and a set of information gathering interviews and tasks. The process culminated with a planning session June 6 and 7, 2003 attended by branch and committee representatives and which developed a set of recommendations from all the information that had been gathered and analyzed. A full record of the project to this stage appears on our website under the 'Council/Branch Information' tab. In the months since June, the implementation of the strategic plan has remained on the agendas of the Advisory Board and Council.

During the strategic planning process a number of directions and recommendations addressing the governance of SASW emerged. Adding to these, the consultant who supported the process provided her further recommendations on organization structure, roles and accountability. The consultant's recommendations were about the Association establishing the structure necessary to manage the implementation of the recommendations. Since last August, Council and Advisory Board have been working out the Association's response to all of this. Work remains to be done, but much has already been accomplished. What follows is an accounting of this progress and identification of what remains to be done.

First, it has been concluded that strategic planning will be an ongoing process for SASW. We will be revisiting key issues over time. Secondly, there was approval at the AGM of the vision and mission statements that were developed by the Advisory Board last year. These statements presented elsewhere in this newsletter proclaim what we are about: Regulation, Promotion of the profession, Advocacy for social justice and Support of the membership. All of our efforts are being aligned with these purposes.

Council, as defined in *The Social Workers Act*, is comprised of the elected officials of SASW plus the public representative and this is the group that carries the management responsibility for the Association. Members of Council are listed on the page opposite in the shaded section. The Registrar and I are ex-officio members of Council. Advisory Board is comprised of Council plus committee chairs, branch representatives and the CASW Board Representative. The role of the Advisory Board, as suggested by its name, is to provide Council with advice on key decisions before it. Advisory Board is also the main mechanism for communication with the branches of the Association. Council usually meets in August, October, December,

February and April and/or May. Advisory Board meets in the months between Council meetings.

In line with our new vision/mission we have accomplished the following:

- **Association's structure has been aligned to support the four priorities within the vision and mission statements.**
- **ongoing committees have been formalized for ongoing functions and the option of task teams has been implemented for short-term developmental work and projects.**
- **new terms of reference using a consistent format and containing purpose and outcome statements are almost complete for all committees/task teams, including Council.**
- **a Volunteer Development Committee has been defined and will shortly be initiated. This is intended to ensure membership engagement, executive recruitment and the allocation of volunteers where they are most needed.**
- **an Advocacy Task Team has been initiated from within three branches (Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Yellowhead East). They have developed their initial process and how they may be accessed, and this information appears in the committee information section.**
- **an action plan has been drafted that captures all of the recommendations coming out of the strategic planning project. It is a key element of our developing focus on accountability and it is currently under review at the Advisory Board table.**
- **Council has determined it will look to improve the transparency of its planning and decision-making.**
- **Council Liaison roles have been defined and assigned to three members of Council. These changes are designed to improve accountability of all committees/task teams and ensure that Council has the ability to provide clear direction and support to committees, task teams and branches.**

If you have questions and observations about what is outlined here, please provide them to our office and we will place them before Council for their consideration and response.

*August 31, 2004
Richard Hazel*