SERIOUS MISREPRESENTATIONS AND OMISSIONS FROM THE RESIGNED BOARD’S MINUTES REPORT

PURPOSE:
A. SERIOUS MISREPRESENTATIONS AND OMISSIONS FROM THE RESIGNED BOARD’S MINUTES REPORT:

On September 01, 2015, the community group received the Minutes of Meeting Report and the Letter of Resignation from the Board of Directors of The Vietnamese Women Association of Toronto (VWAT) for the record, as well as from the website of VWAT.

After perusing the Minutes of Meeting report and comparing its content with the YouTube videos recording of the entire meeting proceeding of August 21, 2015, it is clear that the report contains many misrepresentations and omissions of what actually took place at the meeting as recorded by the video. The VWAT members and community group have decided that a different Minutes of Meeting Report must be produced based on the videos of the above-mentioned meeting and will be posted as an evidence to clearly illustrate the differences between the two versions of the same event. We will leave the original VWAT Minutes of Meeting Report "as is" without any modification and it will remain posted on the VWAT Website together with the new/ revised Minutes of Meeting Report with references to YouTube Video Records for viewers’ benefits.

B. PRE-MEETING PROGRESS AND THE REASON OF THE MEETING ON AUGUST 21, 2015:

This meeting of August 21st, 2015 is considered as a Special General meeting (not a regular meeting). The reasons that led to this special meeting are as follows:

The Board of Directors had twice agreed to hang the Yellow Flag, the Heritage and Freedom Flag representing our Vietnamese community, during the Lunar Festival 2015, but then reversed their decisions both times. Furthermore, the decision was announced and posted on the VWAT website to affirm that no Yellow Flag with Three Red Stripes will be used during the 2015 Lantern festival and for all the future events, and for the first time, citing the City of Toronto Funding Policy prohibits the use of the Heritage Flag for political activities. The VWAT organized a meeting to invite all VWAT members to hear its lawyers and the city funder’s position about the flag and its impact on the charitable status.

Two days prior to this special meeting of August 21, 2015, in response to the open letter from Ms. Pauline Ho (the interim VWAT Executive Director) to the Vietnamese-Canadians with concerns about the risks of VWAT losing its charitable status if “former South Vietnam Flag” is in display at any cultural events, Senator Ngo Thanh Hai sent a letter to Ms. Pauline Phoi Thi Ho and VWAT, as well as many other Vietnamese organizations across Canada, to confirm that the Yellow Flag is recognized by Canada, and is a heritage symbol of all the Vietnamese communities across Canada. It should be freely and proudly displayed without the risks of violations from the Canadian Revenue Agency (CRA) with respect to charitable status.

VWAT Family Services Established 1982 – Charitable No. 86061 5848 RR0001
1756 St. Clair Avenue West, Toronto, ON M6N 1J3

VWAT Meeting – City of Toronto, Board of Directors & Community Members
Date: August 21, 2015

Time: 1pm – 4:30pm
Mr. Location: VWAT office
**Attendance:**

Chair: Emillie Nguyen Nguyen  
Minutes Taker: Thuy Nguyen  
Chair/Moderator: Emillie Nguyen  
Pauline P. Thi Ho: Interim Executive Director  
Thang Trinh: Treasurer  
Thien Le: Internal Vice Pres.  
Khoa Huynh: External Vice Pres.  
Christine Huong: Interpreter  

Nicholas Cartel  
Lawyer  

Singa Bui  
Lawyer  

Barbara Finlay  
City of Toronto  

Various VWAT Staff  
Various VWAT members  
Various Community members  
*Approximately 50-60 (VWAT & Community) members in total*

**VWAT Meeting Among City of Toronto, Board of Directors & Community Members**

Meeting begins at approximately 1:10pm

1) Emillie Nguyen  
   • Opens the meeting by stating the ground rules:  
   • Introductions of Barbara Finlay and Nicholas Cartel  
   • Purpose of the meeting is to discuss the issues around the City of Toronto and the CRA’s regulations regarding political activities carried out by charity organizations

2) Member:  
   • Asks for an agenda and asks that a Question and Answer period be added to the agenda

3) Pauline Ho:  
   • Informs those in attendance that Barbara Finlay is not feeling well  
   • Questions for Barbara Finlay will be taken immediately after she finishes her speech, so she can leave for an appointment at the hospital  
   • Other questions will wait until the end of the meeting

4) Emillie Nguyen:  
   • Invites Pauline Ho to speak again
5) Pauline Ho:
- Thanks everyone for coming
- States her role at VWAT as the Executive Director (ED)

6) Public:
- Asks Pauline Ho to clarify if her role is ED or Interim ED

7) Pauline Ho:
- Clarifies as Interim Executive Director

8) Pauline Ho:
- States her commitment to stay until VWAT finds a suitable ED, which could happen at any time
- Her focus at this time is to ensure VWAT is following its mandate to provide educational programs, health information and services for newcomers, seniors and youth

9) Public:
- Asks Pauline Ho to speak both English and Vietnamese

10) Emillie Nguyen:
- Panel will speak in English so their message will be clear

11) Pauline Ho:
- VWAT is a community agency working towards assisting in the improvement of the status of new immigrants, maintaining services to bridge the gaps through direct services and educational programing on topics to reduce poverty and improve health and wellness
- Her role at VWAT, as the Interim ED and a member of the Board of Directors, is to make sure VWAT’s doors stay open, maintain programs and services, and find new dollars to grow the agency
- She welcomes all partnerships and opportunities as long as they meet the VWAT mandate and strategic plan
- She will explore all aspects of the opportunities, while keeping the best interest of VWAT in mind

Video 1
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEHRJ8QmwWg&feature=youtu.be

Barbara Finlay:

0:00 – 6.24:
- Thanks everyone for the invitation, apologizes for her health, comes to the meeting to deliver a message from the City Funder, take 1 or 2 questions
- The City of Toronto funds community organizations and is aware of the complicated political and settlement issues.
- The City of Toronto understands the challenges and are aware that there is no quick and easy answers to the communities competing interests
- She feels that the community must work them out amongst themselves, the funders will not interfere
- As a funder, the City of Toronto would have a concern if the competing interests affected the services that VWAT provides
- The City wants all Vietnamese people to feel free to access the services that they fund, without being concerned about religion, beliefs or sexual orientation.
Barbara Finlay:

0:00 – 3.00:

In summary:

• She believes that the competing interests should not impact the ability of an organization to deliver services to all residents of the City of Toronto
• She hopes the organization, the participants and the community can work out their differences so all residents will have full and fair access to VWAT services
• She states the City’s positions:
  1. No interference with internal matter
  2. Good service delivered
  3. Concern of services being impacted by community issues

Mr. Loc:

3:37 – 5.35:

• Thanking Ms. Barbara Finlay for coming and making a very clear presentation about the city positions with respect to the funding
• As a former VAT (Vietnamese Association, Toronto) president a few years ago, worked with VWAT and Emillie to help organize the Mid-Autumn Festival
• Children from the community came to participate in the festival, encouraged them to mingle and have fun together with no political questions about the flag
• He wants to come to listen to the City and to the Board members to make sure he understands the issues in order to resolve them among ourselves

5:40 – 6:50:

In Vietnamese

• He expresses that as a community, we should not use a small issue to divide our community

Mr. Duy:

0:00 – 3.30:

• He attended several meetings with VWAT to prepare for VLF 2015 and VWAT kept changing the decision about flying the flag
• Ask question about what issue VWAT brought to the City attention for today meeting

Barbara Finlay:
3:30 – 6.46:

• Hopes for a cooperation over administering of service structure and good service delivery
• States that she has some understanding that there is a competing interests in the community
• Asks everyone not to let the competing interests affect the service delivery
• Speaks for the City funder only and not for any other levels of government
• City wants an open and welcoming services for the community
• It is not uncommon that the community keeps her updated with their challenges and issues.

Video 4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-x1jAJJ3NQw&feature=youtu.be

Mr. Ky:

0:00 – 0.19:

• Introduces himself as former President of the VAT from 1982-1986…
• He used to work with VWAT to organize the Tet Festivals

Ms. Emillie Nguyen:

0:20 – 0.39:

• Receives a note from the public asking to remove the interpreter from the meeting
• She confirms with the others in attendance and there are no objections to removing the interpreter from the meeting

Mr. Ky:

0:40 – 8.19:

• Thanks Barbara Finlay for stating the City’s policy of not interfering with the conflict resolution
• Stated that both VAT and VWAT have always been raising the flag every year since 1983 until two years ago for certain reasons, VWAT stopped raising it.
• Said that at the TET festivals, there have been many representatives from the federal, provincial and municipal levels, including Prime Minister Harper, the Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism (the Honourable Jason Kenney). The Minister himself and the other distinguished guests (MPs, MPPs, councillors…) wore the scarves with the Yellow Flag without reservation.
• Emphasized that there is a huge number of people attending the TET festivals (*), and none complaints about the presence of our Yellow Flag and the singing the national anthem. On the contrary, guests and attendees stand with respect throughout the ceremony.
• Emphasized that the Honourable Jason Kenny’s official letter in 2009 stated that Canada recognizes the Yellow Flag as a Heritage and Freedom flag symbolizing our Vietnamese community.
• Emphasized that Bill S-219 (signed on April 22nd) recognizes April 30 as “Journey to Freedom Day” to commemorate the journey of many Vietnamese people to escape the communist regime. The bill is now in our Canadian law.
• He wondered why this VWAT Board raised the issue against the display of the Yellow Flag recently
• He stated he cannot understand their motives and reasons, acting against the wishes of the Vietnamese
• Emphasized the need for the community to be united, to speak with one voice on this issue and hopefully continue to do so instead of stirring up divisions and inside conflicts.
• Haven’t heard any complaints about VWAT’s services from newcomers that the flag display prevents them from coming to VWAT for services.
• He therefore advised the Board not to make the Yellow Flag display a so big issue in the community, then today we do not have to discuss this issue with the presence of the City of Toronto representatives and the outsiders.

Ms. Pauline Ho:

8:20 – 8.33:

• She wanted to address the flag issue and asked for an interpreter

Mr. Loc:

8:35 – 8.42:

• Ms. Pauline Ho raises many issues concerning the Vietnamese community and clearly she demonstrates that she doesn’t speak the Vietnamese language properly!

Ms. Pauline Ho:

8:43 – 9:37:

• She acknowledges the limitation of her Vietnamese language
• As a result, she did not apply for the VWAT’s Executive Director because of it
• She understands the need of somebody who speaks better Vietnamese to lead the organization

Video 5

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4SyqeZLiJE

Ms. Pauline Ho:

0:00 – 2.52:

• She stated that she meet with the city to discuss issues related:
  1. City policy
  2. Service disrupting
• At the AGM, there were complaints raised about lack of transparency from the Agency and the Board.
• She wants to be transparent with the community about what is going on and have an open dialogue with everyone.
• She asks Barbara Finlay for a meeting on Saturday, so that everyone could attend, but Barbara Finlay is only available today
• She hears the community desire for one voice.
• She hears from numerous newcomers about the flag and their feeling
• She hears the staff concerns about the flag at the events (festivals)
• She states that VWAT is concerned about accessibility of service to all members and users of the services
• Decision making takes all into account

Mr. Ky:
During the Tet Festivals, we also invite opposing political parties
Therefore the festival is not political at all

Ms. Thuan:

I heard that you’re concerned that there’s a conflict/conflicting interest in this community. But actually, even if it’s a conflict, it’s just between the members at large.
All of us here are on one side, and the board of directors represented mainly by the president are on one side, so that’s the only conflicting challenge.
If you ask a member here, if anybody has a problem with raising the flag at the ceremony? No, none of us have any issues.
But why the issue’s raised so many times by the board. The board is going one way, and the other members are going the other way, so that’s the conflict of interest here.
When we, even the past VWAT presidents, came to you to apply for renewal of the membership, they are requested to accept the board’s condition of not flying our heritage flag. Why doing this?
why you make us renounce flying our community’s flag.

Ms. Pauline Ho:

Denies that no such a document about the flag
Advises community members the letter in question has been addressed Re: supporting the mandate of the Board. If members wish to review this issue, she is willing to sit down with the community to discuss at a later date

Ms. Emillie Nguyen:

Reminds everyone of the focus of the meeting, which is Viet Lantern Festival 2015
Will move on to the next item if there are no questions for Barbara Finlay
Invites Nicolas to speak about CRA policy

Video 6

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJx-XieBaBY&feature=youtu.be

Mr. Nicolas Cartel:

Introduces himself and Singa Bui, and affirms that he is familiar with this kind of issue
He does not advocate on behalf of his law firms (Goodmans?) but from his personal experiences only
He explains the CRA policy regarding political activities carried out by charitable organizations
He says that advocating or promoting a political position or for change in a foreign country, an organization can
lose the charitable status
• Advocating for the flag from a historical or a cultural icon as the case of this community seems fine … but ...

2:30 – 4.39:
• … There is a but: He warns that there was a litigation of the past that this community is prohibited by the Superior Court of Appeal, the highest court in Ontario, to fly the flag on the flag pole.
• He advises that the heritage yellow flag is safe be hold in the hands, or kept to the chest, and not to fly the flag on the stage where it could be associated with political activities by CRA and the organization can lose the charitable status.
• He states that the CRA has been very aggressive in the last couple years not 10 or 5 years ago. Be careful.

4:40 – 5.30:
• He states that you may not be overtly asking for the change of government of VN but you may be sending the signal back to VN of what was yesteryear and you may lose charitable status.
• He advises neither flags (implies red flag and heritage flag) should be flown on stage, public can have flags at their booths or on the persons, otherwise you may get caught and lose the charitable status.

5:30 – 8.22:
• He understands that the current yellow Vietnamese flag is not a symbol for many members of this community due to new members with affiliation to the red flag in VN.
• He stresses that you are the Vietnamese organization, not an advocate of the current or the past flags, you lose status if not careful.

Mr. Loc:
9:50 – End 6:
• Asks the lawyer if he is here to talk about the old law or the new law.
• Asks the lawyer if he knows the change on April 22nd, 2015.

Mr. Nicolas Cartel:
10:59 :
• Lawyer: There was a change!
• Mr. Loc: What is the change?
• Lawyer: There is more flexible with political position!
• Mr. Loc: What is it?
• Lawyer: Mr. Kenney allows more flexibility for the Vietnamese than others
• Mr. Loc: No, no, not Mr. Kenney! That is your problem!
• Lawyer: I talk about CRA rules/laws!
• Mr. Loc: No, I understand all of what you meant. But that is your problem!
• Lawyer: I don’t know! Tell me what is it?

Mr. Loc:
• I want to tell you, as a lawyer (advises the Vietnamese issue), you should know that on April 22nd, 2015, Bill S-219
was passed by the Canadian parliament and the Senate (to recognize April 30 as “The Journey to Freedom Day” and we have the right to fly our heritage flag everywhere across Canada.

- And the second point that I want to make: About newcomers and competing interests as mentioned by Ms. Barbara Finlay. You can see from the sample of audience here that no competing interest exists. That is a very clear picture.

Video 7

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QIfurGcM7vM

Mr. Nam:
0:00 – 1.20:
  • …. express …

Mr. Nicolas Cartel:

1:21 – 2.19:
  • He raises the issue about some charitable organizations combine together to purposely overthrow the government and the risk of such activities with respect to the CRA rules.
  • He affirms that S219 is a singular law and cannot override any other laws. Only the Charter of Rights and Freedoms can.

Ms. Pauline Ho:

2:20 – 6.00:
  • She highlights Ms. Barbara Finlay’s presentation
  • States her concern about service that it must be accessible to all Toronto residents
  • Emphasizes that the Board stands firm on the services and the programs at VWAT
  • States that the Board tries to find a way to fly the flag at the event & to work with the community
  • States that about 50 percent of the funding is for the newcomers with less than 3 years in Canada.

Mr. Loc:

6:01 – 8.33:
  • States that he respects the lawyer’s view, but his talk of personal experience (no relevant knowledge of current law in effect since April 22nd, 2015) has hurt the feeling of many people who come here today with experience of their own!
  • Wishes that as a lawyer, Mr. Cartel should know and talk about a wide spectrum of relevant laws related to the community concern
  • It is really an insult to our community
  • Ask if the lawyer has read the letter of Senator Ngo Thanh Hai in which it made reference to Minister Kenney’s letter in 2009 about the Yukon incident of the flag

Mr. Nicolas Cartel:

8:45 – 9.53:
• He says that it doesn’t matter what the politician such as an MP or a senator tries to advocate

Mr. Loc:
• Emphasize that it was from the minister of the government!
• Is it useless?

Mr. Nicolas Cartel:
• Says that he doesn’t care what the government official says

(An uproar erupted in the audiences due to such an answer from the lawyer)

Video 8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6MeiVkJpXU

Mr. Loc:

0:18 – 1.40:
• Affirms that there was no issue of the flag in the past
• Regrets that the change is only recently, but it doesn’t have a good reason or evidence for it
• Here in Toronto and the GTA there are about 100,000 Vietnameses and we have no problems so far and most of these people were from refugees’ camps, they had suffered terribly. Do you know why?

@1:20: Mr. Cartel: No.
@1:38: Ms. Pauline Ho: Ok, I want to cut you now!
@1:42: Mr. Loc: Why? Are you scared (to talk about our community background)?
@1:47: Ms. Pauline Ho: No, I am not.
@1:49: Mr. Loc: Then you should let me finish what I want to say
@1:51: Ms. Pauline Ho: We can talk about this at another meeting.

(The room was again in an uproar to protest against the suggestion)

(Emillie tried to calm the audiences who protested the lawyer’s use of threats)

Ms. Pauline Ho:

1:53 – 3:30:
• The Board is committed to protecting the agency
• Therefore, VWAT will not fly the flag in the agency
• Given what Barbara Finlay has said, VWAT will try to find a way to have the flag flown at the festival
• The Board has heard a lot about newcomers wanting to be included in the conversation
• The Board at VWAT will work towards a win-win situation

@3:33: Ms. Emillie: We should let the lawyer have the last word before he leave.

Mr. Nicolas Cartel:

3:38 – 4.35:
• He mentions the Ontario Court of Appeal rulings about the flag
• He states that the flag should be kept at the back of the room
• He advises that CRA rules to be observed or risk to charitable status

Video 9
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CBwTX2J5MNk

Ms. Emillie Nguyen:

0:00 – 9.48:
• Restates the ground rules and reminds everyone to show respect and unity by allowing each person time to speak
• This year, the City of Toronto does not fund this event, it only funds our programs
• All expenses for this year’s VLF event will be covered by fundraising
• This year, VWAT has only raised approximately $1100 from the car wash and yard sale fundraising events
• She asks for support from all the participants for this year’s event
• Since the middle of July, when the former ED left, VWAT has only received 4 non-Vietnamese and 2 Vietnamese candidates for the position
• As this is a crucial position, it will take a very long time before the Board can find a suitable candidate
• She asked everyone to help the Board by bringing applicants to VWAT
• Emillie states that if you (the members) can do fundraising for this year’s Lantern festival. Then it is your Lantern festival, not ours.

Mr. Duy:
• Asks it VWAT has put the ED job posting in the Community News section of the newspaper.

Ms. Emillie Nguyen:

• VWAT did not post the ED job posting in the Viet newspaper because the cost was so high
• If the members want it in the Viet newspaper, VWAT will post it

Video 10
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M42WSISWac

Mr. Loc:

0:00 – 4.58:
• If the Board members have the right direction money can be raised from the community for the festivals
• To raise fund from the community we must respect the community’s wishes
• You should consider the Vietnamese who had miserable experiences and left their beloved country as refugees escaping from communists.
• You should understand if you do things opposite, people’s hearts are in pain. So, for the community’s sake, you should avoid this.
• Not having a clear direction you may hurt their feelings and any betray their experience in VN. That can create a protest from the community
• Confirmed that he does not want any division in the community. But please, no ridiculous reasons, no excuses.
Follow a proper direction and do it right.

- Explained to the Board: Ms. Barbara talked about competing interests, because you raised this issue but there is none.
- Raising the flag is adopted from the Canadian sport event such as hockey where one witness win and loss at the end. The flag ceremony is to remind people to be responsible for their behaviour, to remind them also of the dignity, the honour and the duty for the society they live and their country.
- Our fathers/pioneers in this country adopt the tradition to remind our people of our responsibility and our roots. Raising the flag is a way to remind the young generation of their responsibilities to their families, their country and society

Ms. Kim Bao Nguyen:

5:00 – 11.30:

- Confirmed VWAT had been with the Yellow Flag, cooperated well with the other Vietnamese Associations since 1983, except for these 2 years.
- The community wanted to have a meeting to confirm whether or not it will raise the flag
- Through several meeting, the VWAT Board kept changing its decision and it is considered to be “not honest”
- Their decisions have hurt everyone and therefore, it is hard to talk about partnerships after all this
- Confirmed to work in Board, but Emillie said that there must be 1 year working as a volunteer before being able to be nominated for the Board positions.
- Asked bylaws for this. Emillie and Kim Phuong (the previous ED) were delaying for more than 2 months.
- Finally, Emillie sent the bylaws, but could not find this condition at all in the bylaws, means that any VWAT member can have the right to be nominated to the Board. Why, she said, was it different before?
- Regarding the funding, Emillie and the Board promised to have the Yellow Flag flying. So, we prepared well for the money from our fundraising for The Lantern festival.
- Reminded Pauline send the Minutes Report having the Board’s agreement on the Yellow Flag, but instead, Pauline changed the agreement and refused hanging the Yellow Flag
- We explained that VWAT always offers the good services for the newcomers. They need helps, VWAT helps. VWAT helps all kind of people.
- Explained that their Flag is up to them, our Yellow Flag has been with VWAT for so many years. After our explanation, the Board agreed to hang the Yellow Flag again.
- We had prepared so many things for the Lantern festival with the Yellow Flag, but finally received the open letter of Pauline about not hanging the Flag this year and further future.
- We appreciated the Board’s spirit of volunteering and understanding the difficulties. But confirmed that the Board are not honest, so we are unable to co-operated with.
- Stated that the Board members are young, should not do such things, especially because promises and honesty are important.

Ms. Emillie Nguyen:

11:35– 11.37:

- VWAT had to inform the funder and had to wait until they heard from them
- As a result, the Board had changed its decisions after its promises

Video 11
Mr. Duy:

- In the previous meeting, the community became aware the VWAT had been under a tight budget while having to abide by funding policies.
- Stated that he and many friends were trying the best for the festival, understanding the difficulties of funding and shortage of volunteers, and the pressure of the Board.
- Pauline, instead, sent the letter to break the promise of hanging the Flag.
- Pauline called our Yellow Flag, a Heritage and Freedom Flag of our community, representing for our community as “the Former Vietnamese Flag” in the open letter.
- Confirmed that it is a serious matter. Why she called our Flag by that name?
- Stated if the Canadians do not know about our Flag, we understand. But as a Vietnamese person living here, trying by all means to deny the Yellow Flag, against the wish of the Vietnamese community, it is so disappointing.
- Stated that with such dishonesty, we cannot take it. We will not support and will withdraw from the VWAT membership if the Board persistent on denying the Yellow Flag.

An Audience to Emilie:

3:00 – 4.15:

- You (Emilie) are not listening to the voices of the members.
- You (Emilie) have brought lawyers to threaten the members.
- We don’t understand why you are providing misleading information about the Heritage flag, which has hurt the members.
- You (Emilie) are not fulfilling your responsibilities, so senior members feel uncomfortable working with the association but cannot find alternate places to continue their activities.
- One who brings out the community to mislead them about the Heritage flag and who brings lawyers to threaten the members is one with no heart.
- You (Emilie) should reconsider your actions and immediately resign from your position.

Mr. Loc:

4:20 – 6.05:

- States that he understands that this is not Emilie Nguyen’s direction because the problem had never existed before.
- Suggests the Board to reconsider their direction. This change cannot happen overnight
- He shows understanding and sympathy for the difficulties of Emilie and suggested not to talk about the mistakes of the past.
- He asks Emilie to face the future with the sincerity.
- He asks why Emilie could work well with the Yellow Flag for so many years without any problems.
- Asks that the Board must have a proper direction from now, expresses the concern for the Board and for the community by the Board’s attitude.
- Reminds that Ms. B. Finlay’s concerned about “competing interests”, perhaps because someone has concocted the story with no clear proof as we clearly see the united spirit of VWAT members here, it is a clear evidence of
unity.
• Suggests that we all should move forward and work with the Board in the Lantern Festival

**Mr. Thang Trinh:**

6:08 – 7.55:

• 3 weeks ago, Barbara Finlay called for a meeting. VWAT Board did not know the reason for this meeting
• Barbara Finlay said that she heard VWAT allowed the presence of the flag at the event
• The City was considering pulling the funding
  (Someone in the audience was trying to interrupt! But Thang urged him/her to hear him out!)
• VWAT Board said they would organize a meeting with her and the community
• VWAT Board, Ms. Pauline Ho wrote an open letter to the community for this purpose
• Two (2) days before the meeting, Senator Ngo Thanh Hai wrote a letter to the VWAT and Pauline Ho, the Board sent it to Ms. B. Finlay.
• After Ms. B. Finlay read the letter she considered cancel the meeting but it was too late to do so.
• Now at the meeting, she changes her stand.

**Ms. Pauline Ho:**

7:58 – 9.13:

• We actually advocate your point of views
• We raised the evidence that at the Tet Festival, PM, Ministers and other party leaders came to the event with the heritage flags in display everywhere and no issues with this
• We told her (Finlay) that flying the flag is to celebrate the achievements of the Vietnamese people, one of the most accomplished communities in the world.
• The City (Finlay) laughed at us and said that: That is not how we see it at the City
• The City put us in the awkward position

**Mr. Thang Trinh:**

9:13 – 10.54:

• We support the flag
• The organization receives 675K-700K annually, with 400K-500K coming from the federal government
• We talk about one voice, but not really, we may have another meeting with the newcomers

**Mr. Loc:**

10:55 – 12.07:

• If that is what you want, we need a larger forum for everyone to attend: newcomers and the people of our community
• We will help them, we are here for each other
• We will mingle with them in unity
• One more question I want to ask: Who is this lawyer? I want to launch a complaint against him

*Video 12*
Mr. Thang Trinh:

0:00 – 0.43:
• In terms of funding distribution, more than 400K is from the federal government
• The City of Toronto is not the ONLY funder (but put a lot of pressure on the board)
• CRA rules are very important

A Senior (Public):

0:45 – 2:43:
• The Vietnamese refugees have been very successful.
• Most of the Vietnamese came here, not for an economic reason, but escaping the communist regime.
• The scenarios of the communists penetrating into Vancouver’s community recently have made the Vietnamese community here so worried.
• We should respect the Flag since it’s a representing symbol for the community, and for a free Vietnam.
• We know that VWAT expenses are so far properly handled, or else how can the funders still continue to give VWAT fundings?
• So, do not waste people’s time by bringing up that kind of reason of the funding’s problem.

Ms. Thuan Trieu:

@ 2:57
• Asks how much VWAT paid the lawyer and where that money came from

Ms. Pauline Ho:

@ 3:00
. States that it was a donation

Ms. Thuan Trieu:

@ 3:02
• Asks why VWAT did not use that money to pay for the ED job posting in the Viet newspaper

Ms. Emillie Nguyen:

@ X:57
• Due to the tight budget, VWAT will put a free ads in the Viet newspaper and refer the readers to the VWAT website for more information

Mr. Tien:

4:27 – 5.05:
• He has 2 questions:
1. Does the Board know when VWAT organization was established that its members now help to run?
2. Does VWAT have a concrete evidence/survey of how many service users who don’t feel comfortable with the heritage flag?

Ms. Pauline Ho:
5:15 – 5.55:

• There is no statistics of newcomers at VWAT, only verbal & no proper evaluation paper
• VWAT is in the process of compiling it from now to the next AGM, for presentation

Public:
5:57 : It is not acceptable, when one does community work and says things without proof

Mr. Loc:
7:44– 8:22

• Asks VWAT to establish the survey or registration process that could be verified randomly
• Suggests to list phone numbers and other relevant detail for this purpose
• Stress the importance of verification

Ms. Pauline Ho:
8:24– 10:04

• States that she agrees with the concept
• Advises that system is in the works to measure all aspects of community and services
• Describes her credential and her job involved managing change in management for institute in the range of $15

Video 13
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D3voxLI_Txc

Ms. Han Trinh:
0:00 – 1.05:

• States that she has been helping with the Hai Ba Trung Commemoration and the Lantern Festivals in the last couple of years and she was very disappointed with the Board.
• The Board changed their minds 2 times, making our efforts and preparation for the festival become invalid and under the scrutiny and questions of many Vietnamese for the broken promises on the presence of the Yellow Flag
• We expressed our appreciation towards the Board, but you should understand our pressure and shame caused by your changes
• We wondered if the Board has been doing this intentionally with opposing the wishes of our Vietnamese community.
• Expressed disappointment towards the Board, just like the disappointment that Senator Ngo had on this VWAT Board.
• We confirmed the board lack of thinking and lack of good direction for the Vietnamese community.
• Argued that if there is any risk anticipated beforehand, the Board can be worried, but no risk at all when the Yellow Flag is present.
• There are so many successful Vietnamese festivals with the presence of the Yellow Flag, more than 10,000
people happily visit in every Tet festival with the Yellow Flag. The prime Minister stood with the Yellow Flag!

• No one had been scared of any risks, so why are you young people bringing up the risk of losing funding for VWAT, and insisting on removing the Yellow Flag during the festivals.

• Asked what the Board think about the letter of the senator Ngo after receiving it?

• Stated that the Board’s answer will decide our attitude to deem what the Board members are.

• Confirmed that we cannot trust your Board, we are so unhappy because of the Board, but we come here because of our community and to get back the members withdrawn due to the board’s decision to remove the Yellow Flag, as well as to recover VWAT to serve our community better in the future.

• asked again the Board’s opinions on the Senator Ngo’s letter when the Board still did not answer

Mrs. Hanh:
2:28 – 3.39:

• ‘Tôi đã làm việc hơn 30 năm. Khi nghe nói ở trên đó (city funder) không cho các em tiền vui Trung Thu vì treo lá cờ, thì chị rắt chua xót. Chúng tôi qua đây làm việc hơn 30 năm, đã hợp tác, làm việc, đóng thuế để chi tiêu vào nhiều chuyện. Tai sao khi cho các em cho các em vui chơi trong ngày Tết, thì phải ra điều kiện như vậy.”

Mr. Mien:
3:44 – 4.34:

• “Mình có muốn xây dựng cộng đồng không? Nếu có, và các em chịu treo cờ, tôi tinh nguyên làm lồng đèn. Minh phải bắt tay xây dựng cộng đồng, không thể nào chỉ nhiều sai trái. Ai cũng có sai làm”

Do we want to build our community or not? If we do and the board members agree to hang the heritage flag I will volunteer to make the lanterns for the children. We must be all together build our community and let bygones be bygones. Who didn’t make a mistake?

Participants agree
Public:
• VWAT is a community agency of free willed Vietnamese people
• If the Board does not agree to work with free willed Vietnamese, then they are asked to resign Emillie Nguyen:
• Requests 5 minutes for a discussion amongst the Board members

The Board leaves the room, then return 5 minutes

Emillie Nguyen:
• States that she hears everyone and she is aware the differences between the Board and the members present
• As such, the entire Board resigns immediately
• The Board will stay on to support a transition with the new Board
• Board asks the members to elect a new Board within 3 months to ensure the transition
• By November 30th, the transition must be complete and she hopes the new ED will bring VWAT to the next level
• She promises to ask the staff to post the ED job posting in the newspaper

Pauline Ho:
• Confirms that each of the Board members are submitting their resignation today
• She asks the members to be prepared for a transition of a large profile

Thien Le:
• Confirms that the Board will be out no later than November 30th
Thuan Trieu:
• Thanks the Board for giving the members 3 months to vote for the new Board members, she suggests having a meeting in 3 weeks
• The new Board will take over VWAT when they feel comfortable, which could be 3 months or sooner

Phuong Dan Nguyen:
• States that she is very happy to see VWAT growing
• The problem happened due to the Board not understanding the community, not working together properly which caused conflict
• She suggests having an advisory Board for the next meeting, which is 3 weeks from today

Emillie Nguyen:
• Suggests that the members nominate and vote amongst themselves
• VWAT’s current Board will stay away from the process
• After the new Board is formed, the current Board and new Board will work together to hire a new ED, then make the transfer

Ky Nguyen:
• Asks for the current Boards decision about the flag at the event

Emillie Nguyen:
• The Lantern Festival is for the community, the community can decide on that

Mr. Loc:
• Asks if anyone else on the Board agrees to fly the flag
All members of the Board agree

Mr. Loc:
• Suggests that everyone work with Emillie Nguyen towards the Lantern Festival

Pauline Ho:
• Explains why the Board has come to their decision, which is to protect the jobs of staff and because of the funding policy

Emillie Nguyen:
• Concludes the meeting
• Asks members to give them the names of the contact person for the transition

Mien Nguyen:
• Suggests having someone from the community contact VWAT regarding the Lantern Festival

Kim Bao Nguyen:
• Agrees to be the contact person for VLF

Thuan Trieu:
• Agrees to be the contact person for the transition
• Her contact information is 416-999-3479, trieuanne@gmail.com
Duy Nguyen:
• Suggests having the next meeting and any subsequent meetings on a Saturday

Emillie Nguyen:
• Adjourns the meeting at 4:30pm