



Chairperson Report 2020-21

After being a Loans committee member for 8 years, and a board member for 6 years, I was honoured to step into the role of Chairperson in 2020 and now be able to give my first report from this new lens. There is no doubt that 2020/2021 has brought many changes and challenges to every aspect of our lives. The introduction and continuation of the Covid 19 pandemic forced all to shift how we conduct ourselves personally, and professionally. Industries have been affected in one way or another and entrepreneurs have needed to redefine their way of doing business at almost every level. Internally, at Community Futures Revelstoke this has been no different.

As Steve Jobs once proclaimed 'Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.' This rang true for our office team over the last year. With the direction of our General Manager Kevin Dorrius, our staff were able to act quickly and mobilize. Supports were put in place so the office could run securely and remotely. Meetings became virtual and we got used to finding new ways to keep the organization functioning smoothly. Kevin navigated and worked with staff, contractors, partners, and board members through these uncharted times. He was able to adapt, remain calm, and present organized thoughtful information to the board so that decisions and motions could be made. While our office remained closed to the public Cindy Maloney our Business Analyst did not miss a beat staying connected, offering supports, and administering loans to our clients. Her actions allowed the organization to remain professional and open for business. Brooke Burke our Executive Assistant remained the central hub for communication, timelines, and logistics. Her work behind the scenes to keep everything organized and together is truly appreciated. She makes us look like the calm duck above water! In November of 2020 we said goodbye to Jamie Mays our CED Coordinator. Jamie's positive energy, new ideas, and contributions to our office are already missed. We wish you all the best and know you will thrive in your new endeavour. I very am proud to acknowledge the work of our staff throughout the year, who many times went above and beyond what was asked or required of them.

As the year progressed, we watched many businesses struggle with closures, restrictions, and safety issues. In reaction to this, Western Economic Diversification Canada set up a Regional Relief and Recovery Fund (RRRF). Community Futures Revelstoke was able to approve and administer these RRRF loans to businesses which provided them up to \$60,000 working capital at 0% interest. To date we have processed 37 loans totalling \$1,150,751.41 or just over \$1.15M in RRRF loan funding to our Revelstoke business community. I would like to commend Cindy and staff for the speed, and respectful manner in which these loans were processed.

Throughout the year new projects were conceived and implemented to help our local businesses navigate this new normal. A Business Outreach Coordinator contract position was created and funded. Carolyn Gibson stepped up to go one on one with businesses and assist them with their specific pandemic related needs. This ranged from conducting surveys, assisting with funding applications, creating new WorkSafe BC safety plans, new policies, and helping implement physical changes in store fronts. A new Facebook page was created and monitored by Community Futures Revelstoke called RevyOpen for Business. This provided a platform for businesses to promote their products and specials, while informing the public that they were open for business. It quickly became a central hub of activity with over 1,600 members.

Start up Revelstoke has continued to be a strong support in the community as many businesses found themselves needing to adapt and pivot their business model. New products were launched, online platforms were created, and new ideas sprang to life. Having a sounding board, and resources available, for any transition in business is a win and Community Futures is proud to be a part of this program.

Despite uncertainty we were privileged to see the resilience of our business community shine through adversity. Our year finished strong, with 52 business loans (regular and RRRF) being administered totalling \$1,587,935. We saw the creation of 8 full time jobs, 5 part time jobs, and 5 seasonal jobs. Some of the sectors to highlight this year are tourism, accommodation, construction, forestry, manufacturing and retail. Our Self Employment program also held steady. Our office saw 7 clients go through the program successfully in Revelstoke and 5 from Golden. This program includes income support, business plan development phase, one-on-one mentoring, and access to free business development skills sessions while the business is getting off the ground.

Our organization is effective due to the hours of service our board members contribute annually. This year we welcomed Nathan Weston and Christina Chong our Revelstoke Chamber of Commerce representative to the team. Having new members generates new questions and discussion and we are grateful to have you both on board. Our coveted 2021 Volunteer of the Year designation was awarded to Melissa Hemphill who has been an active board member since 2017. Melissa is also our representative with the Revelstoke Community Foundation. Her thoughtful and compassionate dialogue is always a pleasure to have at the table, and she is always willing to help. We appreciate you!

I would also like to thank outgoing board member Karilyn Kempton for her hard work as Chairperson for 3 years. She has been an active member of the Loans Committee and board for the last 9 years as well as serving on the Social Development committee. We will miss her inputs and enthusiasm and wish her and her family all the best. She has made it easier for me to step into the Chair position and carry on with business as usual. Thank you Karilyn!

As we look forward to the future and restrictions start to lift, we have much to be thankful and hopeful for. We will be able to welcome visitors again in a safe manner. We are still booked and ready to host the September 2021 BC Community Futures Annual Conference this fall after it was postponed in 2020. This year has made us pause and reflect on our busy lives. It has challenged us physically and emotionally. It has also given us an appreciation for one another. It has been proven that although we are apart, we cannot do any of this alone. From the bottom of my heart thank you to our staff, volunteers, partners, and businesses for being in this year together. It is a pleasure to be immersed with such a group.

Shannon van Goor
Chairperson
Community Futures Revelstoke