

Upfront

IT'S REALLY NO WAY TO LIVE. 
Melissa Mewdell > 17

FUNDING

OUTGAMES LOBBIES PROVINCE

A lot hinges on getting gov't funding: Boychuk

Shauna Lewis

2011 NORTH AMERICAN OUTGAMES president John Boychuk has lobbied the province for funding to support the seven-day queer sport, culture and human rights event, which is just over four months away.

Boychuk attended a March 7 meeting in Victoria with representatives from the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Tourism, as well as officials from the offices of the solicitor general and attorney general. He presented an outline of the Games and requested funding support.

Boychuk would not say how much he asked for, explaining the issue is "quite sensitive" and that he wants to be professional and not divulge too much information about the application while

it is still being considered. He did say he was told that the amount requested was a "reasonable ask."

Asked why it took so long to approach the province, Boychuk explained that the process needed considerable planning, and the political climate has not been ideal in recent months.

"We have not been waiting," he assures. "There have been a lot of changes going on in politics," he maintains, pointing to the Liberal leadership race as one issue.

Boychuk says he has been in communication with the province about the Games since the summer of 2008, prior to winning the Games bid in the fall of that year. He says it took until fall of 2010 to set up a meeting with the province because it took time for organizers to contact and network with various community stakeholders. He

says it was important to be armed with as much information as possible before lobbying for funds.

Boychuk says a lot is riding on obtaining provincial and civic funding for the event, adding that the Outgames does not qualify for federal sport grant funds because they are considered to be a friendly, not competitive, sporting event.

Community fundraising is planned in the coming months, he adds. Websites and newsletters have been used to draw attention to the Games, says Boychuk. While he couldn't give the number of volunteers he has lined up, he did confirm that a volunteer base is in place and initiatives are in the works to attract more volunteers.

Gay MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert backed Boychuk's funding request and provided him with a letter of support for his meeting with the province.

Chandra Herbert says Boychuk was told the government would provide support for the Games after the bid went through in October 2008. Since then, Chandra Herbert says, the event has been overlooked.



Outgames president John Boychuk has lobbied the province for funding to support the seven-day queer sport, culture and human rights event, which is just over four months away. He would not say how much he requested, explaining the issue is "quite sensitive."
NATASHA BARSOTTI PHOTO

THEY [OUTGAMES] WERE PUT ON THE BACKBURNER.

— Spencer Chandra Herbert

"They [Outgames] were put on the backburner, or off the stove completely," he contends. "It's worrisome," he continues. "The BC Liberals have put money on the table for other sporting events of this nature."

"We could've had bigger games with a broader global impact," he adds.

A spokesperson for the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development confirms the province has received a formal funding request, which is being considered.

Meanwhile, Boychuk has reapplied to the city for a Vancouver 125th Anniversary Grant in the amount of \$35,000. He previously applied for \$100,000 but was turned down. Boychuk says he will know in May if his application to the city is successful.

Last month, The Vancouver Parks board officially awarded the Outgames a Sport Host grant in the sum of \$100,000.

EDUCATION

Progress in Burnaby

Nathaniel Christopher

"IT'S A HUGE BREAKTHROUGH FOR Burnaby," James Sanyshyn says of the school board's unanimous vote to implement an anti-homophobia policy Feb 22. But chair Larry Hayes says it took time to get everyone on board.

"I think it became blatantly obvious that this was something we were falling behind in, and it was getting to be embarrassing."

In 2009 Sanyshyn, the Burnaby Teachers' Association (BTA) vice-president, and teacher Debra Sutherland called for the establishment of an ad hoc committee tasked with addressing homophobia in the district's schools.

The new policy proposes gay-inclusive education initiatives and a commitment to promoting a systemic response to homophobia. Another recommendation calls for a permanent advisory committee to ensure the policy is upheld.

"Most of us know that a policy is a piece of paper that collects dust on the shelf unless there's a way to bring it to action."

Hayes is confident the board is up to the challenge.

"Hopefully nobody can sit back and say, 'Case closed; we've done our job. Next!'" he says. "I don't think there's any excuse for us to not be addressing issues that come up from this point."

CIVIL ELECTIONS

Ryan Clayton to run for school board

Wants homophobia addressed in elementary schools

Shauna Lewis

GAY EDUCATION ACTIVIST RYAN CLAYTON will run for Vancouver School Board (VSB) trustee on the Vision Vancouver slate in November's civic elections.

Clayton made the announcement at a small gathering of supporters, campaign associates and Vision party representatives at Britannia Community Centre on Feb 27.

"People don't go for school board unless they really care about students," Clayton told *Xtra*. "The pay is not great, it's hard work, and you're kind of at the bottom of the political food chain," he says.

Clayton, 23, says the discrimination he experienced as a gay student in the rural district of Salmon Arm, BC, made him aware of the work needed to combat homophobia in schools.

"I was the token gay guy," he says of growing up in Salmon Arm. "And as much as I once tried to escape from that [label], I realized that not only is that what defines me, but that is where my experience and the value of my voice really comes from," he adds.

"I went through a system that was really pitted against me in my school, and it was really challenging to get through," he elaborates. "I realize that for

a lot of my friends [the school system] failed them badly."

He says his political work, school facilitator lectures and experience as co-chair of the City of Vancouver's LGBTQ advisory committee has primed him for the trustee position.

"I can see what works for some and what works for others, and I can talk to teachers and even parents," he says.

Clayton, who moved to Vancouver five years ago and has been an active anti-homophobia facilitator in BC schools, applauds Vancouver for its work in fostering more gay-friendly schools.

While he supports the need for anti-homophobia policy, he says guidelines don't necessarily lead to a decline in homophobia in schools.

As trustee, Clayton says, he would encourage the Vancouver school district to take a hands-on approach to homophobia.

"What I'd like to see is more elementary work," he says. "We're coming into realizing that we can address homophobia at an elementary school level."

"They would have outreach programs where someone goes into the schools and teaches about homophobia, which now some elementary schools are getting and high schools pretty much have," he says.



Ryan Clayton, who announced his run for Vancouver School Board on Feb 27, says his political work, school facilitator lectures and experience as co-chair of the City of Vancouver's LGBTQ advisory committee has primed him for the trustee position.
SHAUNA LEWIS PHOTO

Clayton also wants to see both teachers and the Vancouver Police Department holding open discussions with students about what would make schools safer.

"It would build a relationship between students and the VPD, and it would give teachers and the VPD a chance to really hear from students on what students need."