



Writing Guidelines for Resolutions

1. Structure of a Resolution

All resolutions consist of a preamble and an enactment. The preamble describes the issue and the enactment outlines the action being requested. A resolution should answer three questions:

- (a) What is the problem?
- (b) What is causing the problem?
- (c) What is the best way to solve the problem?

Preamble

The preamble begins with "WHEREAS", and is a concise sentence about the nature of the problem or the reason for the request. It answers questions (a) and (b) above, stating the problem and its cause, and should explain, clearly and briefly, the reasons for the resolution.

The preamble should contain no more than two "WHEREAS" clauses. If explaining the problem requires more than two clauses, then provide supporting documents to describe the problem more fully. Do not add extra clauses.

Enactment

The enactment begins with the phrase "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED", and is a concise sentence that answers question (c) above, suggesting the best way to solve the problem. The enactment should propose a specific action by UBCM.

Keep the enactment as short as possible, and clearly describe the action being requested. The wording should leave no doubt about the proposed action.

2. Writing Tips

(a) Address one subject in the text of the resolution.

Since your community seeks to influence attitudes and inspire action, limit the scope of a resolution to one specific subject or issue. Delegates will not support a resolution if it is too complex for them to understand quickly.

(b) Use simple, action-oriented language and avoid ambiguous terms.

Explain the situation briefly and state the desired action clearly. Delegates can then consider the resolution without having to parse complicated wording or vague concepts.

(c) Provide factual background information.

Even a carefully written resolution may not be able to convey the full scope of the problem or the action being requested. Provide factual background information to ensure that the resolution is understood fully.

Submit background information in one of the following two formats:

- i. **Supplementary Memo**
A brief, one-page memo from the sponsor local government, which outlines the background that led to the adoption of the resolution by the council or board.
- ii. **Council/Board Report**
A report on the subject matter, presented to council or board in conjunction with the resolution. If it is not possible to send the entire report, then extract the essential information and submit it with the resolution.

Resolutions submitted without background information will not be considered until the sponsor has provided adequate background information.

(d) Construct a brief, descriptive title.

A title identifies the intent of the resolution and is usually drawn from the "enactment clause". For ease of printing in the Resolutions Book and for clarity, the title should be no more than three or four words.

(e) Check legislative references for accuracy.

Where necessary, identify:

- the correct legislation, including the title of the act or regulation
- the correct jurisdictional responsibility (responsible ministry or department, and whether it is provincial or federal)

(f) Focus on issues that are province-wide.

The issue identified in the resolution should be relevant to other local governments across the province. This will support productive debate and assist UBCM to represent your concern effectively to the provincial or federal government on behalf of all BC regional districts and municipalities.