

## Highlights of January 24 - 25, 2002 UBCM Executive Meeting

The Executive held 8 committee meetings, as well as an Environment Protocol Committee meeting; met with the Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services; representatives of the Local Government Management Association and held its regular full meeting.

### EXECUTIVE DECIDES

UBCM's priority at this meeting was to inventory and summarize the impact of the **provincial governments restructuring** decisions. A location on CivicNet has been established to access UBCM documents or to link to associated sites.

The UBCM Executive reviewed an early staff analysis of the implications for local government. The analysis differentiated impacts in four areas:

- direct implication for local government
- secondary implications for local government
- other implications for local government
- implications for communities generally

It also said that local government must consider the broader context of:

- maintained transfers @ \$130 million
- prospect of 75% traffic fine revenue and of crown corporations paying equivalent to property taxes.

► **President Cunningham** reported to the Executive on his meetings and interventions he had made on small community / rural police costs; the local government representation at the Provincial Congress, representations to Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Deregulation.

<A site for members to review President's correspondence is under consideration>

► reviewed numerous ongoing policy files including:

- continuing advocacy with the provincial government to legislatively fix the loophole in the **property classification regulations** for "urban farms"

- continued support for the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services efforts to develop a substantive and enduring solution to the problem of classification of **short term accommodation properties**, and encouraging the ongoing efforts to seek a timely resolution of the problem

- continued advocacy to have the matter of regulating **pawnbrokers and second hand dealers** included within the scope of the regulatory review under the proposed Community Charter, and to ensure that the overlap of provincial and municipal jurisdiction is resolved
- information on the development of an addendum to the DCC Best Practices Guide to cover the issue of **Agricultural DCCs**

- a report on the activities of the **Energy Aware Committee**

- information from FCM on the status of the development of the proposed **Railway Grade Separation Regulation**

► received a letter from the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services indicating that the updating of **BC Rail's property assessments** is in progress and that

an inter-Ministry working group to review the current scheme and to update future payment calculations is being formed. UBCM will be kept apprised of progress. The UBCM Executive agreed to continue to advocate that the work to update the assessment data must be done soon so that any policy implications of implementing the government's commitment to payments equivalent to full taxation can be done expeditiously.

► agreed to approach Minister Abbott to jointly review aspects of **Bill 55** (restrictions on utility taxation and assessment, principally railways) that might be relaxed since the legislation was passed in 1996.

► received a report on **Community Charter Council** activities, policy issues considered, current status and the consultation plan after the release of the draft Charter and White Paper in early March.

► heard an overview of the obligations that local governments will be required to meet under the **Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT)** as of March 31, 2002 and reported on the results of the consultation with members on this matter. The Executive agreed to recommend the following position in discussions with the provincial government, with respect to the implementation of the Agreement on Internal Trade

- obligations by local governments:
- a. That the provincial government fulfill its commitment to assisting local governments on the following implementation matters:
    - training local governments on procurement obligations;
    - assisting local governments to upgrade their procurement policies, practices and prepare model tender documents, if requested; and
    - training local governments on the use of BC Bid, the provincial government's procurement opportunity web site, for local governments to post their tender notices;
  - b. That the provincial government commit to continue to make the BC Bidservice (or any future equivalent) available to local government at no cost, as is presently the case;
  - c. That local governments and other MASH sector organizations will be consulted prior to any anticipated amendments to the AIT, including revision of the dispute resolution provisions;
  - d. That local governments will be directly involved in any provincial efforts to harmonize terms and conditions in tender documents or to standardize complaint process procedures; and
  - e. That the province confirm that by its inclusion of local governments in the AIT, it indemnifies local governments and saves them harmless from any protest actions taken against them under the AIT, and commits to bear all costs arising from any protest against a local government procurement measure or policy that is taken in good faith.
    - The Executive reviewed the recommendations in the **Drinking Water Review Panel Interim Report**, the majority of which address a number of long standing local government concerns, such as the need to create a single agency to protect drinking water and the need to protect drinking water at its source. The report also raised a number of potential concerns regarding the financial cost of meeting new tap water and water treatment standards and the costs of upgrading small water systems. In addition, the report raised some issues concerning the operation and funding of a proposed new independent agency to manage drinking water.
    - 140 of 182 UBCM members have paid their **2002 dues** to date, which is slightly ahead of past history. Thank-you.
    - The Executive approved direction for UBCM to undertake the development of a coordinated response to the new **BC Gas Operating Agreement** that has been proposed to 46 UBCM members. UBCM will seek financial support from affected communities to undertake the work and make a submission to the BC Utilities Commission on the proposal.
    - The Executive approved legal assistance funding for the District of West Vancouver v. United Properties (Sunset) Ltd. The case deals with irrevocable letters of credit.
    - confirmed plans for holding the May Executive Meeting in Quesnel in conjunction with the **North Central Municipal Association's** annual meeting.

## C O M M I T T E E S

### HEALTH

The Health Committee participated in a conference call with Ministry of Health Services staff regarding capital planning for Regional Hospital Districts under the health authority reorganization. The Committee also received two delegations: Dr. Perry Kendall, Provincial Health Officer; and senior staff from the Health Association of BC. The Committee also received information reports on a variety of health related issues, including: Report of the Select Standing Committee on

Health; federal Ministerial Advisory Council on Rural Health; new Environmental Tobacco Smoke regulation, and Advisory Committee on Health Goals of BC.

The Health Committee agreed to undertake the following actions:

- seek a meeting with the Ministers Hansen and Hawkins regarding the impacts of the health authority reorganization on the operation of Regional Hospital Districts;
- organize a meeting of regional hospital districts and Ministry staff at an appropriate time;

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The major focus of the Aboriginal Affairs Committee was the just announced elimination of Provincial funding to Treaty Advisory Committees (TACs) as well as local government interests at the Snuneymuxw (Nanaimo) treaty table, reported by a delegation of local government representatives from the Regional District of Nanaimo, Islands Trust and City of Nanaimo.

In relation to nine separate issue areas, the Committee decided on actions including the following:

- ▶ Formulate a strategy to ensure representation of local governments interests in the treaty process after more information is gathered through a meeting with the Ministers Plant and Abbott and a conference call with TAC Chairs.
- ▶ Advise Minister Plant of UBCM's support for the concerns and issues brought to the table by Nanaimo area local governments.
- ▶ Consider on receipt, signing a joint letter from stakeholder groups and the First Nations Summit to the provincial government on the impending referendum on treaty principles.
- ▶ Meet with Lands Advisory Board on First Nations Land Management and pursue best practices guide.
- ▶ Meet again with FCM Municipal-Aboriginal Relations Committee.
- ▶ Promote Community to Community Forum regional program, June 11 Province-wide forum and seek funding support.
- ▶ Continue implementation of agreements with First Nations Summit and Department of Indian Affairs, BC Region.

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## ENVIRONMENT

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The Environment Committee agreed to undertake the following actions:

- ▶ request that local government be consulted about streamlining of Crown land sales and on the development of a sustainable resource strategy prior to a final decision by the Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management.
- ▶ request that local government be involved in the development of the framework for environmental risk being developed by the Ministry of

Water, Land and Air Protection, particularly as the provincial government has indicated that it no longer intends to respond to:

- low/medium risk waste management sites;
  - low-risk environmental spills;
  - low-risk human-wildlife conflicts;
  - low-risk floodplain and dyke management.
- ▶ write the Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection to request the ongoing need for financial and technical assistance to local government to implement the Streamside Protection Regulation and the need for ongoing ministry staff involvement in local Environmental Review Committees.
  - ▶ write Environment Canada indicating that it would be opposed to an outright ban being placed on the use of road salt, but is supportive of measures to improve the management of road salt or replacement alternatives which are environmentally acceptable and cost-effective. The Committee agreed work with the FCM on new measures to improve the management of road salt.
  - ▶ write the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection indicating that local government is strongly opposed to the product stewardship proposal put forward by industry – which suggested that the deposit-refund system should be eliminated and that the products should be collected through the municipal solid waste system - and request that it be involved in the stewardship business plan being developed by the ministry.
  - ▶ write the Environmental Assessment Office seeking clarification concerning the changes in the threshold levels for projects and changes to the types of projects which may be reviewable under the regulation and request that local

government be consulted on future changes to the legislation and regulation which might affect it.

- ▶ write a letter to the Ministry of Water, Land and Parks supporting continued government funding for the Recycling Hotline Program.

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## COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES

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The Communities and Resources Committee dealt with a wide range of policy matters under the resource policy portfolios. A delegation was received from Gary Livingstone of the BC Mining Association to update the Committee on the Association's five point plan to facilitate mining in BC and the Committee reviewed the impacts of restructuring on the four key Ministries of interest to the Committee. The Committee confirmed its new Terms of Reference as follows: *The Communities and Resources Committee represents and is an advocate for BC's resource-based communities. It monitors, develops and makes recommendations on policy related to fish, forests, energy, mining, agriculture and water (as a commodity); that has the potential to impact the stability, viability and sustainability of BC communities.* Specific direction was taken on the following issues:

- ▶ That a copy of the UBCM summary of the Pearse Report on the coast forest industry be circulated to UBCM members.
- ▶ That a letter be conveyed to the Honourable David Anderson, copied to the Honourable Herb Dhaliwal, expressing our support for the CEAI program and encourage the federal government to consider this as a model for future joint ventures with local governments.
- ▶ That staff prepare a response to the Energy Policy Task Force's Interim

Report based on the comments and directions outlined in the staff report.

- That UBCM send a letter to the Minister of Sustainable Resource Management indicating UBCM support for the review of the Kootenay Boundary higher level plan.

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## PROTECTIVE SERVICES

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The Protective Services Committee identified a number of issues for the UBCM Executive to include in its development of a strategy to the provincial government cutbacks :

- Closure of 24 court houses around the province;
- Elimination of funding for delivery of Criminal Documents services (\$25 paid to local government/police to deliver court documents - \$1.25);
- Elimination of funding for flood protection program, which provides grants to local governments for floodplain management (2 years);
- Reduce costs by 50% to the Keep of Prisoners Program (provincial prisoners in local police lock-ups);
- Criminal Record Review Program will recover costs from agencies whose employees work with children.

The UBCM agreed to write the provincial government to request information on the extent and types of gaming to take place at tele-theatre gaming locations.

The UBCM agreed to write the federal and provincial government indicating its support for a regulation to classify violent video games in order to protect young children from obtaining them.

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## RESOLUTIONS

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The Resolutions Committee has confirmed that its objectives for 2002 are to complete all resolutions in

the allocated timeframe at the Convention, to improve the process of resolutions consideration and to work to improve attendance at the policy sessions. In order to meet these objectives the Committee has determined:

- That 7.5 hours be allocated for resolutions and policy paper discussion.
- That a "short-form" Procedures for Handling Resolutions is drafted to make the procedures more accessible, to shorten the introductory session and if possible, available on the back of the voter card.
- That session Chairs ensure that speakers adhere to their allocated time and that members refrain from repetitive debate.
- That the Committee continue with current technological improvements.
- That a request be made to members that those who have submitted resolutions ensure a representative of the sponsoring local government is present to introduce the resolution to the floor at Convention.
- That the Resolutions Committee work with the Convention Committee to identify and mitigate root causes of poor attendance; looking at programming and the benefit of improving the plenary environment.

That an amendment be made to section 6.3 (b) of the Executive Policy to provide for the further delineation of Section B resolutions into three parts in order to ensure that those new policy issues in Section B that are within local jurisdiction are debated first:

- Part I - Resolutions to be Considered as a Block
- Part II - Resolutions within the Jurisdiction of Local Government for Individual Debate
- Part III - Resolutions of Concern to Local Communities for Individual Debate

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## CONVENTION

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The Convention committee reviewed survey and comments from the 2001 convention. The committee discussed planning details for the 2002 convention including program, partners program, whistler facilities and hotels blocks. Members are reminded to book your 2002 convention hotels now. Facilities for the 2003 convention are being confirmed.

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## MEMBER SERVICES/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT AWARENESS

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The Committee reviewed the Member Services Programs and the Executive endorsed the following Committee recommendations:

- the appointments of Mayor Leonard, Chair of Member Services Committee and Barbara Ingamells, Manager of Member Services as primary trustees and Richard Taylor as Alternate Trustee of the Municipal Pension Plan (MPP) Board of Trustees;
- the Member Services Committee to affect the Group Benefits Plan renewal with Pacific Blue Cross and Canada Life;
- the continued expansion of the CivicNet website; and
- the 2002 Local Government Awareness work program and the associated program awards.

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## R U R A L / S M A L L COMMUNITIES POLICE COST TASK FORCE

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The Executive confirmed the membership of the Committee and the direction of the Task Force. The Task Force has requested a meeting with the

Solicitor General to discuss the nature of the consultation that will take place on policing costs, the direction that the province intends to take on this issue, the nature of the policing costs that rural/small communities might be asked to take on and the timing for this initiative. The Task Force has asked to review the discussion paper that the Solicitor General indicated was being prepared on this issue.

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### UBCM/MIA JOINT LIABILITY TASK FORCE

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The Executive received a report on the Task Force's meeting with the Attorney General and authorized the Task Force to continue to press the Minister on this matter and encourage members to do so as well.

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### INFRASTRUCTURE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Executive members were advised that despite a small number of **infrastructure announcements** so far (in December 2001) there was prospect of a large number of green projects now moving through the approval system.

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### DELEGATIONS

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**M**inister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services

The Executive engaged in a wide-ranging discussion with Minister Abbott. Many of the issues related to the restructuring announcements made by the provincial government on January 17th as well as other recent policy announcements including:

- Courthouse Closures

- TAC Funding Eliminated
- Maintained Status of Fire Commissioner's Office - Executive expressed thanks to Minister
- Rural subdivision approval – issue of fees being unrealistic
- Ministry of CAWS Core Review Process; Crown corporations review still underway, including BC Housing
- Health Region Reorganization – Impact on Regional Hospital Districts
- Funding cuts for maintaining forest service roads

The Executive also raised with the Minister:

- Canada-BC Infrastructure program – timing of next round of announcements
- Consultation under the *Local Government Grants Act* – local government grants are being maintained, including small communities and libraries
- Other Consultation Opportunities – coordination of inter-Ministry consultation requirements / Memorandum of Agreement on Gaming
- Local Government / Aboriginal Relationship Building – request for funding of Community to Community Forum
- Canada-BC Affordable Housing Agreement
- Agreement on Internal Trade – local government consultations and recommendations to government
- BC Rail – Review of Assessment Base
- Bill 55 Revisited
- Small and Rural Community Police Cost Review
- Forest Policy / Softwood Lumber Agreement
- Environment – drinking water / streamside directive

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### LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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**T**he UBCM Executive met with Mr. Kingston and Ms. Comis and discussed the role of the LGMA in the Community Charter process. Mr. Kingston reiterated LGMA's goal is to cooperate more closely with the UBCM on policy issues and offered the input of their Legislative Committee. The delegation also expressed their wish to receive the endorsement of the Executive to work closely with UBCM staff and Executive on development of the Community Charter and other legislative issues. The Executive indicated that it recognized the importance of LGMA's input in legislative development, but that it did not control the consultative process related to the Community Charter. It was noted that the LGMA will have opportunity to provide input once the Charter is released as an exposure bill and welcomes LGMA advice to UBCM.

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### UPCOMING UBCM SPONSORED CONFERENCES

The following conferences were confirmed for the coming year:

- Forest Policy February 7-8
- Benefits Program (local gov't staff) April 10-11
- Community Charter Symposium spring
- Community to Community Forum June 11