

Executive Meeting Highlights: May 7, 2004

The Executive and Committee meetings were held May 7, 2004 in Kamloops in conjunction with the annual conference of the Okanagan Mainline Municipal Association. This continues the practice of holding the spring Executive meeting at one of the regional associations, usually every second year. The last Executive regional participation was with the North Central Municipal Association in 2002 and the last time the Executive joined OMMA was in 1994.

In addition to attending OMMA events and undertaking its usual Executive and Committee meetings, the Executive received four delegations:

- The Honourable Murray Coell, Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services;
- Premier Gordon Campbell with Minister Coell;
- The Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Sustainable Resource Management; and
- The Honourable Bill Barisoff, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection.

Highlights of these meetings are included in the *Delegations* section of this circular.

During regular business, the Executive considered a variety of policy matters including:

- Received the **Consultation Agreement** between UBCM and the Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, which outlines the process for consulting local governments on routine or substantive changes that impact local governments. The Agreement, enabled under the Charter, was officially signed at the OMMA conference on May 6, 2004.

- The President reported on his extensive schedule of activities and meetings including attendance at the Area Association conferences; announcements related to the Filmon report; as well as meetings on the New Deal for cities and communities; infrastructure grant programs and Order of BC.

- Executive members approved a number of policy directions including:

- considered a report on changes to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act* regarding exclusion applications related to treaty AIPs

- support a custom solution to address **STOCAPs** where necessary and seek member assistance in identifying **B&Bs** in their area to BC Assessment that are presently not on the tax rolls; and

- continue to monitor the implementation of new tax limiting provisions on ports.

- Received a status report on the implementation of the *Community*

Charter, specifically the areas of concurrent regulatory authority.

- Received a status report on the work underway to pursue non-legislative solutions to **regional district** issues, including purpose of regional districts, roles and accountability of directors and electronic meetings regulation. A work plan has also been drafted for work on boundary expansions.

- Provided staff with direction to indicate UBCM's interest in directly participating in the negotiations with the federal and provincial governments on the **Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund**.

- Executive members were apprised of the joint work being undertaken by UBCM and the provincial government to pursue a made-in-BC approach for the **New Deal**.

- Received a summary report of the recommendations from the **Filmon Report** on Firestorm 2003.

- Received a report on the results of the UBCM member survey, which indicated that most members feel UBCM is achieving its stated values, vision and purpose and approximately 81% reporting that they feel they are getting good value for the money they pay as a UBCM member.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

PRESIDENTS

Mayor Leonard highlighted the activities of the Committee since the last meeting including several conference calls. Specifically, he noted that the Committee had taken action in the following areas:

- modify and update the **BC Communities Agenda** to reflect current policy and prepare a revised version for Executive consideration in July.
- undertake further research on the issue of **class 4 taxation** and develop informational materials for the benefit of local governments, provincial government and the general public.

CONVENTION

Committee Chair Brenda Binnie gave an overview of discussions at March 12th and April 28th conference call meetings as well as the meeting on May 7th. She noted the following progress to date:

- approved six proposals from the City of Kelowna for the **pre-conference program**.
- approved Tuesday as **Forum Day**, similar to the 2003 program.
- confirmed registration fees at basically last year's levels as well as sponsorship goals for the 2004 Convention.

ENVIRONMENT

Committee Chair Robert Hobson highlighted the committee's meeting with Honourable Bill Barisoff, Minister of Water, Land and Air Protection and their discussions around shared stewardship principles and the work of the Environment Protocol Steering Committee on integrated environment management (see *Delegations* for further details).

The following recommendations were endorsed by the Executive:

- work with the Environment Protocol Steering Committee members on hosting a **joint environment conference** in late 2004 or early 2005.
- work with the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to facilitate regionally-based **training** for local government officials on the **new streamside protection assessment process**. Members will be informed once further details develop.
- correspond with the Ministry of Health and LWBC regarding **drinking water protection** and advance the position that local government should not be liable for impacts nor responsible for impact assessments in watersheds due to LWBC permits for recreation and access in the watershed.
- write the Ministry of Health and request to be consulted regarding the development and implementation of the drinking water regulations and policy.

COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES

Committee Vice Chair Mayor Sharon Hartwell provided an overview of the issues discussed at the Committee meeting related to forestry, energy and fisheries policy.

Committee recommendations endorsed by the Executive include:

- reiterate to the Minister for International Trade local government's desire for a successful and final conclusion to the **softwood** dispute.
- express support for the expansion of community forest opportunities and request that the Minister of Forests be open to new types of arrangements for **community forests** (i.e. community forests to contribute to the 20% allocated to BC Timber Sales fibre basket; reduced or removal of stumpage for community forests; considering applications developed jointly by more than one local government and/or First Nations).
- authorize staff to continue to provide input into the development of provincial policy on **IPP** and **wind power**.



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MEMBER RELEASE

COMMITTEE REPORTS....

HEALTH

Committee Chair Susan Gimse highlighted the activities and directions approved by the Executive:

- support for the draft **Public Health Consultation Agreement**.
- advise members when the new **Food Premises Regulation** is passed and suggest that it might be appropriate for them to review any historic food establishment bylaws whose provisions may have been superseded by the newer provincial regulations and policies.
- raise awareness among local governments of the positive actions they can take to prevent falls and injuries among the elderly in their communities.

JUSTICE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

Councillor Cannan, Committee Chair, provided an overview of the actions approved by the Executive:

- request that discussions be undertaken and a process developed to make the **bylaw adjudication process** available to other local governments around the province.
- authorize staff to work with staff from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to prepare a consultation agreement if the province indicates a willingness to address administrative issues in the **Keep of Prisoner Program** or, if the province indicates a willingness to discuss a new formula, to determine if the local governments are interested in undertaking discussions on a new formula which may re-distribute the tangible and non-tangible benefits obtained from the program.
- express the need for a smooth transition with respect to **policing costs** and the 5,000 population threshold, but wait until after the 2005 election to reassess the provincial government's position at that time with regard to the 2007 effective date for changing the financing formula for police services.

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

Chair Armstrong provided an overview of the Executive approved actions taken by the Committee:

- directed that the Governance Technical Team proceed with defining local government interests in **treaty-related governance issues** for consideration at the next meeting as a basis for a possible UBCM policy paper.
- request that the provincial Treaty Negotiation Office take a more consistent approach to **funding local government participation** in treaty negotiations.
- provide provincial negotiators with a session on **regional districts** as a basic 'primer', to better equip them for any treaty table discussions regarding the relationship of First Nations with regional districts.
- with respect to the **Westbank First Nation Self Government Act**, Bill C-11, advise the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and provide the reasons why UBCM opposes any further bi-lateral self-government agreements being negotiated in BC outside the BC Treaty Process with this letter to be copied to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.
- approved four new applications for **2004 Community to Community Forum funding** for Regional District of Bulkley Nechako, City of Vernon, Northwest Tribal Treaty Nations and Village of Hazelton.
- directed that organization of the three June 2004 **Servicing Agreement Workshops** with the Local Government Management Association proceed and a binder of resource materials be prepared.



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DELEGATIONS

THE HONOURABLE MURRAY COELL, MINISTER OF COMMUNITY, ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES

The following provides an overview of the issues discussed at the meeting with Minister Coell. During the meeting the Minister:

- thanked UBCM for assisting in the delivery of the **new provincial programs** related to Seniors Housing, Picture BC and the three Filmon related programs.
- confirmed the province's commitment to match federal dollars for the **Municipal-Rural Infrastructure Fund**.
- noted that the Finance Minister will be reviewing the **Home Owner Grant** program next year in response to concerns around the threshold and ever increasing property values.
- indicated that community concerns with respect to **flooding and gravel extraction** would be brought to the attention of the federal Minister responsible.

Other issues raised with the Minister included provincial consideration to reinstating the downtown revitalization program as it had proven to be a good investment for communities and the development of the traffic fine revenue sharing formulas. As well concerns were raised about cuts in funding to services and programs that support women, including women's centres and legal aid.

THE HONOURABLE GORDON CAMPBELL, PREMIER AND THE HONOURABLE MURRAY COELL

Premier Gordon Campbell met the Executive and addressed the following matters:

- indicated that consideration would be given to expanding the **bylaw forums** beyond the present North Shore pilot if expressions of interest were provided.
- advised that the transfer of **BC Rail** to CN was presently before the Competition Board and that was expected to be completed by the end of May.
- indicated support for moving the **New Deal** initiative forward with the federal government and support for a made-in-BC approach.
- in regard to **BC Rail payments in lieu of taxes** that that full taxes will apply once lease arrangements are complete.
- expressed interest in engaging UBCM in a broad discussion around local - provincial relations to discuss how to re-balance responsibilities to create the best programs possible.
- indication that consideration would be given to implementing a staged approach for implementing the Filmon recommendation around the development of **emergency plans** with a focus on priority areas first.

Other issues raised by the Executive included: flood hazard management, affordable housing, dealing with aggressive panhandlers, 2010 Legacy Fund, E&N Railway, tax incentives for the movie industry and the effect of rising gasoline prices on businesses.

THE HONOURABLE GEORGE ABBOTT, MINISTER OF SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Executive members welcomed Minister Abbott in his new portfolio as Minister of Sustainable Resource Management. The following issues were raised during their meeting:

- indicated that consideration would be given to reviewing the **farm class property tax** rates to address the issue of those who receive the tax benefits of farm class while only undertaking intermittent or minimal farm class activities.
- advised that by the end of May, a solution should be brought forward to address the problems associated with **STOCAPs** and **B&B** classified properties.
- noted that provisions for **free crown land tenures** and grants have been made in the current budget, and that the province, as it moves toward Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, needs to formally expense these types of grants and tenures.
- advised that with respect to **resort development**, developers still have to work through the established land use process for the area in question.
- discussed the issue of shared **environmental stewardship** and the harmonization of local government and provincial processes around noxious weeds, interface hazards, brownfield management, wildlife and streamside regulations.
- noted that the **Resort Task Force** is looking at integrating local government with the provincial approval process in the interest of harmonization, reducing duplication and enhancing efficiency.
- indicated that work is still underway on establishing the **working forest designation**.
- acknowledged the need to protect **watersheds** and ensure tenures issued by Land and Water BC are compatible to avoid treating water after contamination has occurred.

THE HONOURABLE BILL BARISOFF, MINISTER OF WATER, LAND AND AIR PROTECTION

The Environment Committee and members of the Executive met with Minister Barisoff. Key points of interest raised by the Minister included:

- indicated the importance of collaboration and communication to a successful shared stewardship approach with local governments and finding flexible approaches that work for all parties is the goal.
- signaled support for a joint **environment conference** in late 2004 or early 2005.
- his ministry is now involved in **noxious weed management**.
- noted that the **contaminated sites regulation** is underway which will see Ministry oversight of only high risk sites – this could encompass about 30% of all sites identified as contaminated, while sites identified with localized or low risk contamination will be managed by qualified professionals.
- advised of upcoming **legislation and regulations** on species at risk legislation, streamside protection regulations; an amendment to the **Floodplain Management Act** to address liability concerns; and Ground Water regulations in Fall 2004.

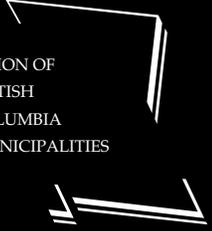


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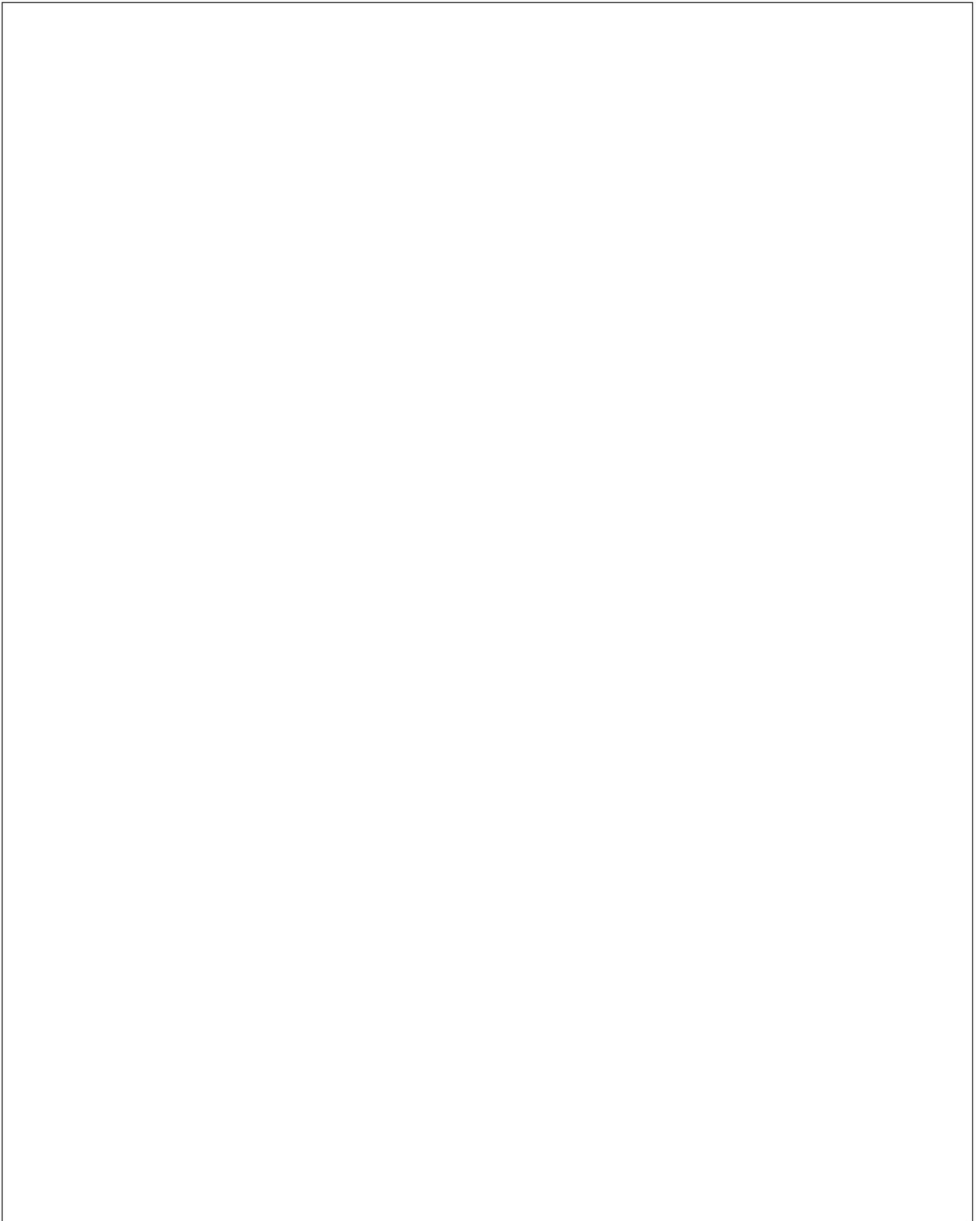
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