

## Executive Meeting Highlights: January 22 - 23, 2004

Executive members held a full complement of meetings including: two meetings with provincial ministers (Hansen and Abbott), as well as seven Committee meetings in addition to the regular quarterly Executive meeting. Under the theme of **Looking Inward**, the Executive reviewed the activities of the association and considered options for improving its performance. A survey will be sent to all members in the coming weeks seeking your opinion.

President Frank Leonard opened the meeting by welcoming **Mayor Malcolm Brodie**, Mayor of Richmond as the new Greater Vancouver Regional District appointment to the UBCM Executive. Mayor Brodie has joined the Justice and Protective Services Committee.

During regular business the Executive:

- considered a variety of ongoing policy matters including:
- seeking further information from the provincial government about the **taxation of ports** outside the lower mainland
- assessment of commercial strata properties
- changes in the level of **air navigation** services provided at a number of local BC airports
- opportunities for UBCM involvement in activities of the **BC Resort Task Force**
- activities of the Development Finance Review Committee

- status of review of **1% in lieu of general municipal tax** for linear utilities
- proposed changes to the Cemetery and Funeral Services Act
- seeking provincial clarification of what local governments can expect in terms of **payments in lieu** and/or tax revenue for BC Rail/CN properties for 2004 and beyond.
- appointed **Mayor Lynn Nash** of Campbell River and **Mayor Herb Pond** of Prince Rupert to the Fisheries CEAL Steering Committee which will be reallocating some \$4 million back to communities affected by the pacific salmon treaty.
- received a report from Chair Hunt and Councillor Cannan on the results of the de-briefing sponsored by the Office of the Fire Commissioner on its review of the 2003 fire season. A report on the proceedings is expected shortly.
- received reports on UBCM activities, member reaction and media coverage on Bill 75 - Significant Projects Streamlining Act.
- received a report on the BC Utilities Hearings, including an update on current activity in the 2004 **BC Hydro** Revenue Requirements hearing and a review of the provincial government's response to the recommendations of the BC Utilities Commission 2003 inquiry into the BC Hydro Heritage Contract, Stepped Rates and Access Principles.
- noted that as of January 1, 2004 the

Community Charter is in place and work continues on finalizing the **concurrent regulatory jurisdiction** regulations (natural environment, public health, building standards) and the financial liabilities (assent free room, borrowing limits) regulation.

- adopted an approach to pursue non-legislative solutions to **regional district** issues identified by members, starting with boundary extensions, electronic meetings and accountability of Directors/definition of roles, while considering how to improve the understanding about regional district purposes and functions.
- agreed to provide financial **legal assistance** to the District of West Vancouver v. Hubbard regarding whether or not local government breaches the duty of procedural fairness when council receives a report from its staff after the close of a public hearing on a rezoning application.
- reviewed a number of letters from members in the **Columbia Basin Trust** region about the changes to the composition and appointment process to the Trust Board as a result of legislative changes under Bill 79. The matter was raised in discussions with Minister Abbott.
- received correspondence from the City of Victoria on the matter of cuts in funding to the **Heritage Branch**, an issue which was also raised in discussion with Minister Abbott.

# COMMITTEE REPORTS

## HEALTH

The Committee discussed various issues in connection with the current consultations on the proposed **meat inspection regulations**. It also dealt with correspondence related to views of members, individual elected officials, and industry on the meat inspection regulation consultation.

The Committee heard a presentation on the **LMMA Regional Drug Strategy** from Councillor Fearnley of North Vancouver City.

The Committee also received information reports on the status of the drafting of the **Concurrent Public Health Regulation under the Community Charter**; the status of the **implementation of the RHD Cost Sharing Review** and legislative rewrite; amendments to the Hospital Insurance Act Regulations; that the **ambulance service review** has not yet been made public; status of the **Assisted Living** registry development process and regulations consultations; appointment of a **national Health Council**, as recommended in the Romanow report; changes in the federal government relating to the health portfolio; the **health status of British Columbians**, as reported in the 2002 Provincial Health Officer's Annual Report.

### The Executive endorsed the following recommendations:

- That UBCM take the position with the Minister of Health Services that meat inspection is a provincial responsibility; and to convey the members' and industry concerns to the Minister to see if their interests can be accommodated within the overall provincial objectives; and
- That UBCM write to the Prime Minister and BC MPs to express support for the provincial government's proposal with respect to establishing the BC Centre for Disease Control as a national centre.

## CONVENTION

The committee discussed evaluation results of the 2003 convention, making note of its successes as well as areas in need of improvement. Building on this new information, the committee discussed several areas of planning for the 2004 event such as budget, theme, program, and policies that will provide internal and external improvements. The executive endorsed the following recommendations:

- That the early discount registration deadline be moved to 42 days prior to convention (ie: August 6, 2004). Increase surcharge rate from 20% to 30%, with a cut-off one week prior to the convention.
- That an additional registration surcharge rate of 20% on all

purchases made on-site be implemented (ie: \$395 (prior to Aug 6) -\$515 (Aug 6-Sept 10)-\$615 (Sept 11-on-site).

- That a 25% surcharge be implemented for those purchasing a day pass only for the Monday and Tuesday sessions.
- That the existing UBCM policy be changed to reflect that the "Leader of the Opposition or the elected designate" be invited to speak at convention.
- That the theme for the 2004 UBCM convention in Kelowna be "**Harvesting Opportunities**".

## ENVIRONMENT

Chair Robert Hobson presented the report from the committee. He highlighted the committee's considerations around the role of the **Environment Protocol** Steering Committee as an advisory body on the natural environment concurrent jurisdiction regulations, the need to schedule the upcoming Environment Protocol Steering Committee meeting, and UBCM input to the province around the **Integrated Pest Management** regulations and the **Waste Discharge** regulations.

The Executive endorsed the following actions:

- convey a letter of support for the natural environment concurrent jurisdiction regulation and consultation agreement once the regulations are complete and UBCM concerns are addressed.
- further clarify the role of the Environment Protocol Steering Committee as an advisory body on concurrent jurisdiction.
- respond to the Integrated Pest Management regulation discussion paper addressing the rationale and apportionment of fees, the potential conflict involved in the direct hiring of qualified monitors, and need for local government consultation where an industrial or commercial Pest Management Plan is prepared in the local jurisdiction.
- approve the appointment of two UBCM representatives to the province's Pest Control Service Licensing and Industrial Vegetation - Railway Sector working groups for the Integrated Pest Management regulations.
- write the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection and request that local government activities be included under Schedule 2 of the Waste Discharge Regulation, giving it the flexibility to operate under a Code of Practice.
- write the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection to request more detailed information on the future operation of the Waste Discharge Regulation - how the Code of Practice is intended to operate, on what basis fees will be calculated, and how the fees charged under a Code of Practice and the permit process will be determined.
- staff prepare a brief report on environmental management

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regulation and authority, including waste discharge, water quality, etc on First Nation lands and options for local government action when facing environmental impacts stemming from neighbouring First Nation's lands.

### COMMUNITIES AND RESOURCES

The Communities and Resources Committee dealt with forestry, fishing and energy matters as well as received a delegation from Bruce Sieffert, Ministry of Sustainable Resource Management on the status of the **working forest designation**. Based on their deliberations the Committee has taken the following actions:

- write the federal International Trade Minister outlining the UBCM position with respect to **softwood** including:
  - our 2002 Convention position supporting free and unfettered access to the US market;
  - advise that if a quota is instituted express support for providing provincial governments with the authority to make the allocations; noting our concerns about ensuring that new entrants and the value added sector are able to receive quota.
- write the Minister of Forests seeking an update on the **Mitigation Fund** announced as part of the forest revitalization plan to determine the status of the fund and criteria for accessing funding.
- seek an opportunity to jointly meet with the Environment Committee and the Fraser Basin Council on the matter of **invasive weeds** and what specific actions could be taken jointly to address the problem.
- confirmed that UBCM will re-sign the updated version of the National Forest Accord.
- support the development of a strategy paper that would seek to propose to the provincial government the establishment of a resource revenue sharing program between the province and local governments.

### JUSTICE AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES

The Committee met with two delegations. The first meeting was with Corporal Douglas Scott, BC Effective Policing Team, "E" Division Headquarters, RCMP and he outlined the new service delivery strategy being developed by the RCMP.

The second meeting was with Kevin Begg, Director, Police Services Division, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and he updated the Committee on the implementation of the new PRIME technology, organized crime issues, traffic police program, reserve police force program, and re-alignment of police services in the province.

The Committee took the following actions:

- indicated general support for the new **RCMP service deliv-**

**ery strategy** being developed and requested that local government be consulted further on the basic level of service required in a community, the accountability and the governance measures needed in the strategy to make it an effective process.

- appointed the Electoral Area Representative and the Small Community Representative on the UBCM Executive to a new federal/provincial committee to deal with the delivery of police services to small communities and rural areas.
- agreed to request the appointment of up to two representatives from each of the Area Associations to the new federal/provincial committee to deal with the delivery of police services to small communities and rural areas.
- agreed to explore with the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the RCMP the development of a stronger working relationship with each of them.

### ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS

The Committee reviewed the finalized UBCM Agreement in Principle (AIP) Analysis Paper and the Governance Policy Digest Paper and discussed an approach to further policy development on First Nations Governance issues. Staff from the province's Treaty Negotiations Office met with the committee to brief them on new provincial treaty table designations and to exchange information on current treaty related policy priorities.

The Committee reviewed activities in relation to implementation of Cooperation Agreements with the First Nations Summit and Department of Indian Affairs, including the finalization of a dispute resolution guide. They also discussed UBCM's interests in relation to resource revenue sharing and our input at the Province-wide Treaty Advisory Group.

The Committee took the following actions:

- Approved the UBCM's Comparative Analysis of 2003 **Agreements in Principle**, asking that the paper and its recommendations be sent to the federal and provincial governments, UBCM members, Treaty Advisory Committees (TACs), BC Treaty Commission and First Nations Summit.
- Approved a Governance Policy Digest paper and an approach to research and analysis regarding local government treaty-related interests in Governance issues.
- To proceed with organization of a second "Technical Workshop" for local government and First Nations staff in late spring or fall 2004.
- Approved the draft **Dispute Resolution User Guide** jointly supported with the First Nations Summit.
- In relation to Resource Revenue Sharing in treaty negotiations,

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to convey to the provincial and federal governments the position of our membership with respect to resource revenue sharing for local governments and the need for equity with First Nation communities.

- The Committee Chair write to the Minister Responsible for Treaty Negotiations, Geoff Plant, confirming renewal of our July 15, 2003 MOU on Local government Participation in the Negotiations of Treaties and Other Agreements.

### PRESIDENTS COMMITTEE

The Committee took the following actions:

- will develop an updated **BC Communities Agenda** policy paper for consideration at the 2004 Convention.

- Improvements in the on-line annual **financial surveys** to be undertaken.
- Access to Information and Privacy Policy updated to reflect new legislative requirements.
- **Community Excellence Awards** program for 2004 will be launched in February.
- UBCM/BCSTA protocol on cooperation to be renewed and a joint working group will promote success stories in school board-local government relations.
- **CivicNet** web site updated as part of improving organizational effectiveness .
- Survey of members satisfaction with UBCM services to be undertaken.

## DELEGATIONS

### THE HONOURABLE GEORGE ABBOTT, MINISTER OF COMMUNITY ABORIGINAL AND WOMEN'S SERVICES

Mayor Leonard welcomed the Minister and thanked him for meeting with the Executive. The Executive engaged the Minister in discussion on the following matters:

#### Immigration

The Minister opened with information that he recently attended a meeting of immigration ministers hosted by the Hon. Judy Sgro, federal minister responsible for immigration. Minister Sgro asked that Minister Abbott would host a meeting of BC mayors and regional district chairs to address immigration issues. The federal government is interested in incentives to assist in the settling of immigrants across the province and rather than into concentrated urban clusters. The Executive discussed the considerations of a need for a skilled work force in the rural areas and decline in population. It was suggested that this meeting be held outside the Lower Mainland.

#### 1% Utility Tax

The Minister indicated the need for a new model for the utility tax, given that deregulation and the restructuring of the industry does not suit the utility tax model. Work on this issue is ongoing with input being contributed by GFOA, UBCM, MCAWS and industry. The Minister notes that the question of the tax model is one aspect of this challenge, and the matter of including other new utility industries, such as satellite communications, into the tax scheme is another challenge.

#### Community Charter

The Minister updated the progress of the concurrent authority regulations, with building standards and health being most advanced at this point. Mayor Leonard indicated the priority that these matters should have, given that local government will not have the full slate of intended powers until the concurrent regulations are in place.

#### Best Regulatory Practices

Minister Abbott indicated that this document should be ready to go public within the next 7-10 days. The document will be a web based tool providing elected officials and staff guidance to deal with local issues, recommending regulatory approach as a last resort. The Minister notes the ministry is also looking at developing a best practices guide around secondary suites.

#### Home Owner Grants

Mayor Leonard asked about any work on Home Owner Grants, indicating there have been no changes to homeowner grants in 7 years. Due to the rising costs of housing in several regions, there is a need to increase the cap.

#### Required Consultation on Local Government Grants Act

Mayor Leonard asked about any changes to the Local Government Grants for 04/05. The Minister indicated no changes.

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## **New Era Commitments: Traffic Fine Revenues**

The Minister indicated his government intends to fulfill this commitment.

## **Court's Ruling: Receiving input after Public Hearing**

Chair Gimse noted recent court ruling that councils and boards should not accept staff reports on matters raised at a public hearing after the hearing. She suggested a change to LGA sec. 894 to address the problem.

## **Heritage Funding**

Chair Hobson noted resources for heritage activities is declining and asked the province's direction. The Minister indicated \$5M has recently been contributed to the Heritage Fund and that the province is looking at the Land Conservancy and Heritage BC to

match funds. However, core review directed no direct provincial operation of the operating heritage sites and that communities should be looking to private sector or non government resources to operate these sites. With respect to Barkerville, the ministry is hoping to reduce provincial subsidy significantly.

## **Infrastructure Works Program**

UBCM indicated concern that program will discontinue after 2006. The Minister recognizes that a successor program must be developed, as there remain many challenging projects to be completed and the infrastructure needs will be ongoing.

## **Columbia Basin Trust**

The Executive expressed concern with the Trust board appointments protocol. The Minister will follow up.

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## **THE HONOURABLE COLIN HANSEN, MINISTER OF HEALTH SERVICES**

The Health Committee was joined by several other members of the Executive in meeting with Health Services Minister Colin Hansen as part of the Committee's agenda. Attending with the Minister were Ministerial Assistant Kim Chan and Executive Assistant Alex McMillan. The Committee addressed the following issues with the Minister:

### **Ambulance Service Review**

The Committee asked when the Ambulance Service Review recommendations would be made public. The Minister indicated that he hopes this will be possible within eight weeks.

### **Public Health Concurrent Jurisdiction Regulation**

The Minister confirmed that he had not yet signed off on the Public Health concurrent regulation under the Community Charter. UBCM indicated that staff have been working together on draft language. The Minister advised that he would check into the status of the regulation. He also re-confirmed his intention to work closely with UBCM on all matters where there are joint concerns and issues.

### **Implementing the Recommendations of the RHD Cost Sharing Review**

The Committee advised of the varying degrees of success around the province in implementing the new joint RHD-Health Authority capital planning process, further to the RHD study. The Minister indicated that he thought that the Interior Health Authority was probably the farthest advanced, and he acknowledged the budgetary pressures that all Health Authorities are under. He

asked that he be advised if there are any Health Authorities that are having problems in complying with the new capital planning process.

### **Meat Inspection Regulations**

The Minister advised that he is aware of the concerns being expressed by the small meat industry producers, and knows that some of the smaller plants just won't be sustainable under the proposed new meat inspection regulations. He indicated that staff are trying to put some flexibility into the regulations to accommodate these interests, and they are open to suggestions. One possibility being explored is to certify more veterinarians to do local inspections.

### **National Health Council**

One recommendation of the Romanow Commission was the creation of a national health council. The Minister advised that the inaugural meeting of the new national Health Council will take place on Jan. 30<sup>th</sup> in Toronto. He has concerns that people not inflate the expectations about what the role of the Council is to be. The Council's role is to monitor accountability, and not set policy or standards. That is the role of the federal and provincial governments.

### **National Public Health Agency**

The Minister discussed the federal proposal to establish a national public health agency. He also emphasized the BC government's proposal to the federal government to have BC's Centre for Disease Control (CDC) take on a key role in a network of CDCs in

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Canada. At the moment, it is the only province to have its own CDC. The proposal is to have the federal government contribute \$120 million and BC would contribute \$72 million, to be used to further develop our CDC into national and possibly international resource. He will be meeting with the new federal Minister of State (Public Health), the Hon. Dr. Carolyn Bennett in two weeks to discuss this proposal.

### **Sewage Regulation**

Chair Hobson conveyed UBCM's views on the new Sewage Regulation. The Minister received written notes on this position. The Minister indicated that the regulations should be in place in a few months.

### **Funding of Addiction Services**

With respect to the funding of addiction services, the Minister indicated that there is a process in place for Health Authorities to account for the specific funding allocations for these services. Rather he is more concerned with the outcomes and how they are achieved by each Health Authority. Minister Cheema is currently engaged with the non-profit groups and Health Authorities in developing appropriate indicators for addictions programs outcomes.

### **Health Authority Accountability and Cost Management**

The Minister further discussed the mechanisms by which the government holds Health Authorities accountable for their performance.

The Minister also discussed some of the tools the government has made available to Health Authorities to help them get costs under control. He noted that the mandate for upcoming collective agreement negotiations is currently set at zero by the Finance Minister.

### **Communication by Health Authorities**

The Minister noted the ongoing concern about the poor quality of communications from Health Authorities to local governments. He is continuing to advocate to the Authorities that they need to work harder to keep local governments informed.

President Leonard thanked the Minister for his commitment to meet with the Health Committee. He also offered that UBCM would write to the Prime Minister and BC MPs to express support for the provincial government's proposal with respect to establishing the **BC Centre for Disease Control as a national centre**. The Minister welcomed this show of support.