

## Highlights of the July 20 - 21, 2006 UBCM Executive Meeting

The UBCM Executive met July 20 and 21 in one of its key meetings of the year to deal with events around the official year end. A full series of Committee meetings were held in conjunction with the Executive meeting. The Executive also met with the Minister of Community Services, the Honourable Ida Chong.

The Executive took action in a number of policy areas, including:

- approved future discussions with the government as part of the Modernizing the Building Regulatory System that would address **civil liability** reforms – consideration given to compulsory insurance coupled with an ultimate limitation period.
- monitor the process and consult with the Ministry of Health in the development of a **pandemic flu** strategy for the province and in identifying the role of local government in this process.
- monitor and support the direction by the **ATV/ORV Coalition** to move ahead with the proposed recommendations for the regulation and licensing of ORVs and ATVs.
- continue to be kept apprised of the status of enhanced AIT trade discussions between Alberta and BC and implications for local government.
- indicated support of the FCM report on the **Fiscal Imbalance**.
- received the evaluation of the 2005-06 Work Plan and approved the 2006-07 Work Program.
- conducted the annual review of MOUs and agreements.
- received status and financial reports on the various **Local Government Programs Services**, to be posted on UBCM website.
- received a status report on UBCM's legal assistance funding program.
- received a report on 2006 **member visits**, which included visits to 31 members.
- received an update from the Nominating Committee on the 2006 Executive **nominations process** - July 31, 2006 being the deadline for nominations.
- reviewed the preliminary audited **financial statements** and the **preliminary budget** for 2006-07 which proposes a 3% dues increase, subject to final approval at the October Executive meeting.
- received the **Supreme Court of Canada** ruling in favour of local governments on the issue of RCMP support staff.
- in response to **Bill 30**, staff indicated that they were awaiting

- a response from the Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources on next steps with respect to consulting local governments on independent power project developments.
- were advised that the first of four year increases to **small community grants** had been announced. Also considered alterations to **regional district** basic administration grants and will be seeking further discussions on changes for subsequent years.
- were provided with an analysis of the final report of the **Competition Council**. There have been some subtle changes in tone but in some respects the scope of their recommendations has broadened and the areas that needed to be clarified have not been addressed. The Executive will follow up with government to determine what the next steps might be.
- were advised of the roll out of **Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF)** recently announced is expected in the fall. UBCM will also be seeking opportunities to advise the federal government on the scope and priorities to the second phase of MRIF that will follow.
- were advised of the roll out the Strategic Priorities Fund and the Innovations Fund under the Gas Tax Agreement, if technically feasible, be done with the roll out of MRIF.
- were advised that fund raising for the **Local Government Leadership Academy** is still active. The Executive initiated the process to solicit nominations for the inaugural LGLA Board from selected organizations. In addition, nominations for two Directors at Large will be sought.
- were advised that the formal rezoning process for **Municipal House** is about to be set in motion.

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## COMMITTEES

### Presidents

The Committee addressed a number of organizational and administrative matters as well as meeting with the auditors to address the year-end financial statements. The Committee took action on a variety of issues:

- support in principle the BC Municipal Safety Association's proposal to fund a full-time Association coordinator;
- undertake a review of UBCM communications;
- establish an ad hoc Committee to determine Phase II of the Community Tourism program design; and
- establish an annual regulatory compliance report in response to the new responsibilities of the Executive under the "revised" UBCM Act.

### Environment

The Environment Committee reviewed the status of several policy and regulatory issues, including the Riparian Areas Regulation, Contaminated Sites, and the Environment Management Act. The Committee also discussed the Local Government Stewardship Council.

### Community Economic Development

The Committee discussed a variety of issues related to the new softwood lumber agreement, community forests review, provincial energy policy renewal, community tourism and various economic development issues.

The Committee also had the opportunity to meet with Ministry of Small Business and Revenue staff on the BizPal program, an electronic program designed to streamline the federal, provincial and local government process for business permit and licensing information.

The Executive approved the following directions and actions:

- decided that UBCM would not take a position on the softwood lumber deal;
- determine what further input may be required in response to the Province's energy plan renewal process (Committee has made submission to Phase I);

- provide input into the progress report of the National Forest Accord; and
- establish a site within the UBCM website to host the presentations and materials related to the Offshore Oil and Gas working group.

### Healthy Communities

In addition to the items for which it made recommendations, the Executive was advised that full funding (\$440k) had been received for the BC Healthy Communities Initiative, that is housed with UBCM. The Executive:

- approved plans for the second application in-take for Community Health Promotion Funds and will send an invitation for Expressions of Interest in Community Health Promotion Funds to all UBCM members in early August;
- continue gathering and analyzing survey results on local government – Health Authority interaction and report out on the full findings at the UBCM Convention with a view to sparking action on expanding and improving communications and consultations;
- recommended the development of a communications vehicle on BC Healthy Communities specifically designed for local governments that will advise how they can engage with this initiative; and
- gather information about the concerns of rural, small and isolated communities regarding ambulance services and prepare a report for the Committee to be the basis of a submission to the Province to remedy these problems.

### Convention

The Committee met in both Richmond and Victoria to review the status of several key Convention program items. A number of decisions were made and the Executive approved the following directions:

- approved recommendations for clinics, workshops, Tuesday afternoon sessions and Thursday afternoon workshops and tours;
- invite Minister Rona Ambrose to address the Convention;
- begin elections for the new UBCM Executive at 11:30 a.m. on Thursday; and
- secure Chantal Hébert as the Keynote speaker.

## COMMITTEES continued...

### Community Safety

The Committee met with Kevin Begg, Assistant Deputy Minister and Director of Police Services, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and a number of ministry staff to discuss the delivery of policing services. Mr. Begg updated the Committee on a broad range of issues facing police services in the coming years and indicated that the Province expected to receive a proposal from the federal government in 2007 regarding the renewal of the RCMP contract and indicated that he intended to consult with local government on the contract renewal.

The Community Safety Committee discussed a number of different issues – federal crime initiatives, liquor policy, BC211, BC Progress Board Report: Personal and Property Crime – and the following key actions were approved by the Executive:

- write the federal government indicating that local governments in British Columbia had endorsed resolutions supporting action on the following issues - gun registry (long gun), minimum sentences, street racing and age of consent;
- write the federal government requesting information about the new cost-shared program with provincial and municipal governments to hire new police officers and the new money to fund youth-at-risk programs and request that there be no surprises about the financing of these new measures; and
- notify local government of a changes in liquor policy regarding the interpretation of public interest in liquor retail licensee applications.

### First Nations Relations

The Committee focused their discussions on an analysis of recently signed Agreements in Principle (AiPs) with respect to local government interests, as well as the preparation of an upcoming Joint Treaty Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting.

The Executive approved the following actions:

- forward a draft analysis of recent AiPs to TACs for feedback;
- forward analysis of final agreement draft chapters dealing with local government relationships, when complete, to TACs and send letter to the provincial government regarding issues of concern to local governments;
- forward UBCM legal opinion on additions to treaty settlement

lands – municipal consent (language in Tsawwassen AiP) to the provincial government, TACs and The Corporation of Delta; and

- write a letter to the provincial government asking the Province to commit to predictable funding arrangements for TACs.

### Police Financing Task Force

The Police Financing Task Force discussed a number of issues:

- considered a framework for police accountability in electoral areas; and
- reviewed the establishment of a local government working group to look at the new police financing model proposed by the province and a time frame for reporting back to the Task Force.

### Resolutions

The Committee provided an overview of the number of resolutions received for the 2006 Convention, their categorization and implications for the Convention program. The Committee determined recommendations and placement of resolutions within the various categories and authorized staff to begin scanning for Gold Star and Honourable Mention candidates according to established criteria.

The Executive approved the Resolutions Committee recommendations on 2006 resolutions.

#### REMINDER:

**Deadline for UBCM  
Executive Nominations is  
Monday, July 31, 2006.**

## DELEGATION

### EXECUTIVE MEETS WITH THE HONOURABLE IDA CHONG, MINISTER OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

The Executive met with the Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community Services. The Minister provided an update on several initiatives of concern to local governments.

#### Public Transit Capital Trust

The Minister acknowledged that the Public Transit Capital Trust Agreement had been signed, and that the Agreement is contingent upon the anticipated federal surplus of \$2 billion. The Agreement would allocate \$119 million for British Columbia.

#### Small Communities and Regional District Grants

The Premier announced in September 2005 that the Province would double small community and regional district grants within four years. The Minister acknowledged that a new formula had been devised in consultation with UBCM for small community grants, and that Cabinet had approved the revised formula. Local governments have been notified of the status of their grants. The Minister also acknowledged that there are still some issues with regional districts, and that her Ministry will continue to work with UBCM to address regional district funding issues.

#### Traffic Fine Revenue Sharing

The Minister noted that her Ministry would be sending out the traffic fine revenue sharing funding letters shortly, and that the letters would be accompanied by a survey requesting information on how traffic fine revenue has been spent. The survey will be used to share information amongst local governments and the public on how the revenue has been utilized to enhance safety.

#### Resorts Initiative

The Minister addressed the issue of resort communities, where seasonal influxes place significant demands on local infrastructure and services. The Minister outlined plans, a funding formula, and eligibility criteria that would allow "resort" communities to share in a percentage of the hotel tax. Those local governments that are eligible for a percentage of the hotel tax revenue must impose the 2% hotel tax and outline how the new revenue is building the local tourist economy.

The UBCM Executive also raised several issues in regards to policing costs, regional district grants, the public transit trust, and industrial taxation. In particular, the UBCM Executive asked when the Minister would comment on the Competition Council's report on industrial taxation. The Minister requested that local governments provide her ministry with information on the provision of local government services to industry.

### UBCM ACT OF INCORPORATION REVISED

The provincial Cabinet has approved the revision of the UBCM Act to bring it up to date in terms of its language and structure.

This was a project that was initiated as part of UBCM's 100th Anniversary. The objective was to produce a revised Act so that all UBCM members could easily understand the statutory basis of their organization. The original 1959 Act of Incorporation was full of cross-references to legislation then in place that had been updated, moved or even repealed. It was increasingly difficult to understand the scope of UBCM authority and, more importantly, our governance responsibilities.

The modernization process was undertaken through a process where the Chief Legislative Council can "revise" an Act and eventually it is presented to the Legislative Assembly for approval (but not debate) and then to Cabinet to bring into force. It is important to note that the "revision" cannot alter any policy or other substantive matters.

The new and old versions are both posted on the website and illustrate the dramatic improvements. See About UBCM/General Information/Act on the CivicNet website at [www.civicnet.bc.ca](http://www.civicnet.bc.ca).