

Highlights of the UBCM Executive Meeting held July 15 - 17, 2009

The July Executive meeting was held in Victoria to coincide with the Official Opening of Local Government House – UBCM's new targeted LEED Gold office building. Following the Opening, a full slate of Executive and Committee meetings were held as well as six Cabinet Minister meetings.

The July meeting signals the year-end for the association, at which time the Executive approves the work plan and preliminary budget for the year ahead and considers the Annual Report and audited financial statements. The Executive also reviewed 226 resolutions, reports from 10 committees and the full Executive met with the new Minister of Community and Rural Development, the Honourable Bill Bennett.

General Executive decisions:

- received an update on the status of federal **infrastructure** funds and the implications of provincial matching funding given the present economic climate. Instructed that a communications update be provided to the membership once additional clarity is known with respect to levels of funding.
- discussed **industrial taxation** and determined that UBCM should participate in discussions with the Province on this matter; that efforts should be undertaken to collect the member's views and to gather local stories related to the industrial tax issue; and that consideration be given to developing a forum on industrial taxation at Convention.
- received correspondence from Minister of Health Services indicating that the Province does not support UBCM's request for an exemption to the Health Care Costs Recovery Act and the Executive agreed to work with the MIA and other local government agencies on

the issue and undertake further discussions with the Ministry of Health Services on this matter.

- continuing to monitor the implementation of the **Controlled Alien Species** Regulation to determine if the Regulation poses any challenges for local governments.
- continuing to monitor the new licensing requirements for **home inspectors**.
- continue to work with the Building and Safety Policy Branch to address some of the ongoing concerns identified in the implementation of **6-storey wood** buildings.
- advised that staff visited **40 members** as part of the annual member visits program.
- received a report on new **Cabinet** appointments as a result of the May 2009 provincial election.
- received a report highlighting the issues discussed at the **Electoral Area Forum** held in June.
- received a status report on the current provincially funded programs administered by UBCM under the **Local Government Program Services** and approved criteria that will be used by UBCM when considering whether to accept funding in the future.
- reviewed the status report on the federally funded **Gas Tax/Public Transit** Management Services, also administered by UBCM's Victoria Operations.
- approved preparation of three policy papers for consideration at the 2009 Convention

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- approved the following committee appointments:
Municipal Pension Board of Trustees
 - Chair Robert Hobson
 - Alternate: Richard Taylor**Building Policy Advisory Committee**
 - Patrick Shek, Assistant Chief Building Inspector, City of Burnaby
- received an update from the Nominating Committee on the 2009 Executive nominations process - July 31, 2009 being the deadline for nominations.
- approved the financial statements for the year ended

June 30, 2009 which showed a modest surplus.

- adopted the 2009-2010 work plan for special projects and the **preliminary budget**.
- received the annual report on UBCM's compliance with statutory requirements and the annual review of the MOU's, protocols and other agreements.
- updated on approved **legal assistance** cases.
- advised of the Jeff McKelvey scholarships approved for 2008/2009 and approved \$5,000 be made available for scholarships in 2009/2010.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Presidents

The Presidents Committee also serves as the Audit Committee and they met with the UBCM external auditors to review the 2008-09 financial statements. The Committee also reviewed the proposed budget for 2009-10. In addition, the Presidents Committee received updates on development of the new UBCM website and a new electronic convention registration program. Status reports were also reviewed on the UBCM Group Benefits Plan and the Network Book and information was provided regarding potential new group purchasing programs.

Convention

The Committee finalized much of the 2009 Convention agenda, including banquet entertainment and location, and other programming details. Renowned comedic songwriter Todd Butler will provide the entertainment at the Annual Banquet, and will be followed by The Hairfarmers, a popular Whistler-based band. Kelly Smith, a Paralympian, Air-traffic Controller and motivational speaker, will be offering this year's keynote address.

The workshops, Tuesday sessions and early morning clinics were also approved. Look for the UBCM News scheduled to go out at the end of August for a special pullout section providing further Convention details. Also, more information will be added to the UBCM website in the weeks ahead.

Environment

The Committee received updates on a number of files including the Riparian Areas Regulation Variance Protocol, and the Sewerage System Regulation, and reviewed the Wetland Stewardship Partnership agreement. The Committee focused most of its attention on meetings with the Honourable Barry Penner, Minister of Environment and the Honourable John Yap, Minister of State on Climate Action. The Committee discussed product stewardship, the Landfill Gas Management Regulation, cosmetic pesticide use, and climate action with the ministers. The Committee also received a delegation from James Quayle, Manager, Conservation Planning Section, with the Ministry of Environment on species at risk and shared stewardship.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- conduct additional consultation on the RAR Variance Protocol to determine whether there are any implementation challenges for affected local governments; and
- approve in principle becoming a signatory to the Wetland Stewardship Partnership agreement pending clarification of some definitions and roles and responsibilities within the agreement.

First Nations Relations

The Committee focused its attention on preparing for a meeting with the Honourable George Abbott, Minister

of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, to discuss the proposed indigenous recognition act and the Common Table. The Committee also received a copy of the confidential report prepared by the BC Treaty Commission on the Common Table discussions.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- the Presidents Committee approve the final draft of a policy paper on the proposed indigenous recognition act for consideration at Convention;
- UBCM renew its agreements with INAC and First Nations Summit; and
- write the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation restating the case for treaty adjustment funding for local governments.

Community Economic Development

The Committee received updates on the energy conservation and efficiency initiatives; working group on Offshore Oil and Gas; BCUC Long Term Transmission Inquiry; development of a Tourism Guidebook and the status of renewed research and survey work on local government practices in the area of economic development. The Committee also had an opportunity to meet with Minister of Forests and Range, Pat Bell to discuss the report and recommendations of the Working Roundtable on Forestry.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- continue to monitor and respond to the BCUC Long Term Transmission Inquiry process and respond as necessary;
- encourage members to respond to the economic development survey as part of the research work underway by the Committee on local governments' economic development practices;
- continue participation on the various energy efficiency and conservation working groups; and
- work with Minister of Forests staff to coordinate regular meetings with the Minister and the Committee to address forestry issues.

Healthy Communities

The Committee received updates on a number of files including the Public Health Act; RHD Cost Sharing

Review report implementation; Healthy Built Environment Alliance; Renewal of Consultation Agreement on Public Health Concurrent Jurisdiction. The Committee also received a delegation from Mary Ellen Turpel-Lafond, the Representative for Children and Youth, to discuss child poverty in BC.

The following recommendations were endorsed by the Executive:

- participate in a consultation process on emergency medical planning for special events, if it is initiated and led by the Province, and that the information in the proposal be forwarded to members for their use in special events planning;
- support the initiatives of the Representative for Children and Youth to address child poverty; and
- write a letter to Health Authorities requesting they provide information to local governments about pandemic preparedness, specifically around the H1N1 virus.

Community Safety

The Committee received updates on the provincial report on the use of cell phones, provincial strategy on metal theft, RCMP contract discussions, and a report on the Vancouver Community Court. The Committee also met with the Fire Commissioner Becky Denlinger who indicated the Office of the Fire Commissioner was in the process of developing a strategic plan and was looking at future legislative changes.

The Committee had an opportunity to meet with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Honourable Kash Heed to discuss the renewal of the RCMP Contract, gang and drug issues facing local governments, provincial crime prevention strategy, the expansion of the community court system into other communities, and liability protection for search and rescue groups.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- supported restricting the use of hand-held cell phones and the use of any electronic device to read, write, or send text messages while driving;
- supported the expansion of community courts to other local governments in the province; and

- requested that the province develop and fund a provincial strategy that addressed the needs of emergency staff who are required to respond to emergency situations where people have H1N1 flu symptoms (i.e. health protocol for first responder services).

Resolutions

The Committee noted that 226 resolutions had been submitted to UBCM for consideration at the 2009 Convention – exactly the same number as in 2008. In addition, the Committee received reports on the following matters:

- Resolutions Committee terms of reference;
- Gold Star Resolutions criteria and selection process; and

- Report and update on 2009 resolutions

The Executive approved the Resolutions Committee recommendations on the resolutions submitted to UBCM for consideration at the 2009 Convention.

Regional District Task Force

The Task Force had several meetings to explore in greater detail the three issues that were outlined to members at the 2008 UBCM Convention – Electoral Area Governance; Fringe Area Planning and Servicing Issues; and Crown Land/Regional District Interface. The Task Force examined a number of draft issue papers and held a meeting to get some preliminary feedback on the ideas being explored. The issue papers will be further developed based on the feedback of the members and presented for discussion at the 2009 UBCM Convention.

Meeting with Honourable Bill Bennett, Minister of Community and Rural Development

The Executive discussed the following issues with Minister Bennett:

- **Update on Infrastructure Funding** - President Hobson outlined local government concerns that the funding for infrastructure appeared to be limited and was not being directed at local government projects. The Minister provided an update on infrastructure funding and outlined the approach that the Province intended to take given the financial problems that it currently faced. He suggested that given the current situation matching funding from the Province for infrastructure was challenging.
- **Aboriginal Reconciliation and Recognition Act** - The Minister suggested that cabinet was waiting for the outcome of the consultations that the First Nations were undertaking on the proposed legislation before deciding further actions on this issue. The Minister announced that the "Guide to First Nations Engagement on Local Government Statutory Approvals" had been completed and would be made available to local government.
- **Industrial Taxation** - President Hobson outlined local government concerns about the non-payment of taxes and some of the problems this creates. The Minister supported the need for industry to pay its property taxes, however, he was concerned about the high industrial tax rate being charged by some local governments. The Minister indicated that the provincial government saw the need to take some type of action in relation to industrial taxation and wanted to work with local governments in determining the best way forward.
- **Regional District Task Force** - The Minister acknowledged the work of the Task Force and indicated government's interest in the outcomes.
- **Rural Resource Roads** - The Minister indicated that he was looking to expand the scope of the issue to include off-road vehicles. He proposed holding a meeting before the 2009 UBCM Convention to discuss the matter.

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