

## Highlights of the April 14 -15 Executive Meeting

### Summary

The April meeting is the third meeting of the year for Executive members. In conjunction with the quarterly board meeting, seven committees also met over the two-day period. The meeting was held in Victoria and Executive members had an opportunity to undertake provincial government outreach efforts during their meetings. Executive members had the opportunity to meet with the newly appointed Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development, the Honourable Ida Chong and Committee members also met with several cabinet ministers including the Minister of Environment, Terry Lake; Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Shirley Bond; and the Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Mary Polak.

### Welcome to UBCM's Newest Member!

The Executive is pleased to welcome the Nisga'a Village of Gitlaxt'aamiks (formerly New Aiyansh) to the UBCM. The Village made application for UBCM membership and it was considered and approved by the Executive at the April meeting. We wish to welcome Chief Councillor George Williams and fellow Village councillors to the UBCM.

### General Executive decisions:

- received a report confirming receipt of all provincial responses to UBCM's 2010 resolutions, with a detailed analysis of the **provincial responses** proposing direction and action in follow up to the responses. All responses will be posted to the UBCM website at [www.ubcm.ca](http://www.ubcm.ca) under Resolutions & Policy > Resolutions > Resolutions & Responses.
- received reports on the provincial **Throne Speech and Budget** as well as the proposed federal budget.
- received a delegation from Trade Policy branch staff of the new Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Innovation on the **Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement** negotiations between Canada and the European Union.
- received a delegation from Allan Neilson-Welch to present the findings of the report "Comment on Fiscal Management in British Columbia's Municipalities".
- received a status report on Victoria Operations including the current provincially funded programs administered by UBCM under the **Local Government Program Services** and the **Gas Tax / Public Transit Programs**.
- requested that Minister Chong be asked to formally respond to UBCM with respect to whether or not the government would proceed with **elections legislation** in the spring sitting of the legislature (see separate release issued on April 21, 2011).
- received a report on four UBCM sponsored or co-sponsored **spring conferences** in 2011 including the Province-wide C2C Forum; Electoral Area Directors Meeting; LGLA CEO Forum; and Chairs/CAOs Forum.
- received a report on staff activities over the past three months.
- received a report on **electronic voting** and approved the purchase of an electronic voting

system for the 2011 Convention.

- received a report on the President's participation on the provincial **Sled Dog Task Force** and endorsed the proposed directions established in the Task Force recommendations.
- received a report on the roll out of the **Strategic Community Investment Funds** grant program.
- received a report on the feedback provided by local governments in response to the Land Title Survey Authority's initiative to move toward **electronic filing**.
- received a report on WorkSafe BC's implementation of new **asbestos regulations** in the demolition or renovation of homes and supported UBCM monitoring the impact, if any, for local governments.
- received a report on **provincial dike policy** and agreed to write the provincial government indicating that UBCM does not support the principles outlined in the new dike policy and request that action be taken to address ongoing problems associated with the operation and maintenance of dikes – technical assistance, approval process, legal access and

## Presidents

The Committee advised it received reports on UBCM's member services, group benefits; Local Government Awareness Week and Excellence Awards programs. As well it reviewed financial reports; received an enquiry regarding UBCM membership; reviewed a proposal for advancing local government interests during the federal election and discussed preparations for a meeting with the new Premier.

The following recommendations were presented and endorsed by the Executive:

- endorsed 'accessibility' as the focus for the

2011 Community Excellence Awards Program - Partnerships Category.

- approved preparation of a member release that would focus on two key federal issues – RCMP Contract Renewal and Infrastructure – that would assist local elected officials in directing questions to federal candidates during the election campaign; and correspond directly with each of the political parties requesting them to respond to the questions posed.
- approved preparation of a report that will outline options (pros and cons) for "other types of UBCM membership" categories.

## Convention

The Committee provided an overview of the Committee's discussions and work to date on a variety of Convention details, such as banquet entertainment options, catering plans and accommodations. The Committee also considered an updated version of the UBCM Host Community Responsibilities document.

## Environment

The Committee met with the Honourable Terry Lake, Minister of Environment and discussed local government responses to the policy proposal for the *Water Sustainability Act*, funding for the CCME Wastewater Strategy, and continued funding for the BC Brownfields Renewal Strategy. A discussion also took place on climate change as a provincial priority as well as on cosmetic pesticide use.

The Committee also reviewed the Collaborative Watershed Governance Initiative's draft Accord, the draft Riparian Areas Regulation Variance Protocol, and the terms of reference for a new Subdivision Regulation Best Practices

Committee. In addition, the Committee discussed the proposed *Water Sustainability Act* and product stewardship concerns.

The Committee made a recommendation to submit the Collaborative Watershed Governance Initiative's draft accord on watershed governance for review by a lawyer specializing in First Nation relations.

## First Nations Relations

The Committee met with the Honourable Mary Polak, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation (MARR) and discussed treaty negotiations and the cost to local governments to participate in negotiations including implementation and requested re-instatement of MARR funding for treaty advisory committees (TACs). As well the Committee raised the issue of reviewing the implementation of the 2008 MOU on Local Government Participation in the New Relationship with the objective of improving consultation with local governments on non-treaty agreements. The Committee also requested a commitment from the Minister to consult with UBCM on the *First Nations Commercial and Industrial Act (FNCIDA)*.

Following the meeting with Minister Polak, the Committee received reports on a Joint TAC Chairs and Administrators meeting and discussed agenda items for the next Joint TAC meeting.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- invite MARR staff to the next meeting to discuss changes to the 2008 MOU on Local Government Participation in the New Relationship following completion of the UBCM report on local government

- experiences in non-treaty agreements; and
- write the MARR Minister asking what non-monetary supports her Ministry can provide TACs; and request provincial assistance in completing a report on local government experiences in non-treaty agreements.

## Healthy Communities

The Committee met with Andrew Hazlewood, ADM, Population and Public Health, Ministry of Health and Matt Herman, Director, Injury Prevention and Healthy Built Environments, from the Ministry of Health to discuss new initiatives around Healthy Communities at the provincial level. The Committee also discussed resolution 2010 – B112, Improved Training for Rural General Practitioners and a letter from the former Minister of Agriculture regarding permanent locations for farmers markets. Updates were also provided on ongoing projects.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- engage in the consultation process for the Province's Healthy Communities initiatives.
- write to the sponsor of resolution 2010-B112 to let them know how UBCM has addressed their resolution.
- write to the Minister of Agriculture and the BC Association of Farmer's Markets (BCAFM) and advise that, as each local government is unique in their ability to provide permanent locations for farmer's markets, BCAFM should work with individual local governments to secure permanent space.

## Community Economic Development

The Committee provided an overview of the

policy issues discussed related to forestry, energy, aquaculture matters and received correspondence and requests for UBCM partnership on some specific initiatives as well as an appointment to an advisory committee.

The Committee put forward recommendations on the following:

- provide a response to issues raised as part of BC Hydro's Integrated Resource Planning process based on established UBCM policy.
- accepted an invitation from Fortis BC to make a UBCM appointment to their Resource Planning Advisory Group (RPAG).
- write to the new provincial Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations reiterating our questions and concerns about the new aquaculture management agreement between the Province and the federal government; and following the federal election, write the new federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans reiterating the same questions and concerns.
- seek a meeting with the Director General of the Vancouver DFO office (or designate) to discuss how UBCM can engage and consult with DFO on policy matters of interest to local governments.

## Community Safety

The Committee met with the following representatives: the Honourable Shirley Bond, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General; Lori Wanamaker, Deputy Solicitor General, Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General; Kevin Begg, Consultant, RCMP Contract Negotiations and Mayor Peter Fassbender, City of Langley, the local government observer to the RCMP Contract Negotiations.

The following issues were discussed with Minister Bond:

### RCMP Contract Negotiations

The Minister briefed the Committee on the current status of the RCMP contract discussions and indicated that the intent was to keep the current block of provinces/territories together in negotiating further changes to the contract. Minister Bond indicated that she was very concerned about the decision by Alberta and Saskatchewan (not yet announced) to break away from the other provinces in the contract negotiations.

Minister Bond proposed going to Ottawa with local government representatives to meet with key federal Ministers to discuss the RCMP contract and other community safety issues, possibly in June 2011.

Kevin Begg suggested that the Province had three key goals in the RCMP contract negotiations. The first goal was to build a partnership with both local government and the federal government. The intent was to develop a model that provided an opportunity for local government to provide increased input into RCMP decision-making and to also create a structure with the federal government to ensure more notice and more input into the decision-making process. The second goal was to enhance accountability, by improving public trust in the RCMP through a better public complaints process, and by exercising more control over the services and financial information provided. The third goal was to implement a process that would help identify and contain future cost drivers (i.e. accommodation, medical costs etc.) in the RCMP contract.

Mayor Peter Fassbender, City of Langley provided an update on the current status of the RCMP Contract Negotiations, in particular the

nature of the agreement that Alberta signed off on with the federal government and the impact on the other provinces. Mayor Fassbender indicated that there was a need to continue negotiations on the RCMP contract, particularly if local government concerns around cost containment were to be met. He highlighted the need to deal with RCMP medical costs, noting that the medical costs for a Victoria officer (own force) were \$5,000 and the medical costs for an RCMP officer were \$9,000.

## **Independent Police Review Agency**

The Minister briefed the Committee on provincial action regarding a police review agency. She indicated that the Province was developing legislation to establish an independent agency to review police complaints and that it would be introduced at the next sitting of Legislature.

The following Committee recommendations were endorsed:

- forward the draft Terms of Reference for the British Columbia Local Government Contract Management Committee to local government for their review and comment.
- write the Province to request a meeting to discuss an increase in KOP costs and the need for provincial funding for municipal jails.
- write the new federal Minister of Public Safety concerning the RCMP contract negotiation process, particularly given the actions by Alberta.
- work with the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General to organize a meeting to Ottawa to discuss the RCMP contract and other community safety issues of concern to local government.

## **Ferry Fares Advisory Committee**

The Committee reported out on its activities including a conference call meeting in February and advised of the specific actions coming out of that meeting to advance the concerns of local governments with respect to proposed ferry fare increases.

The Committee put forward the following recommendations:

- seek a meeting with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure, the Honourable Blair Lekstrom to convey the concerns of coastal communities with respect to proposed ferry fare increases; and
- prepare a submission on behalf of local governments for conveyance to the BC Ferries Commissioner by the June 30, 2011 deadline.

## **Meeting with Hon. Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development**

The Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community Sport and Cultural Development met with the UBCM Executive. Deputy Minister, Don Fast; Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government, Mike Furey and Ministerial Assistant Christine Lewis were also in attendance.

This was the first meeting with the Executive for Minister Chong in her capacity as the new Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.

The following issues were discussed with the Minister.

## **Elections Task Force Update**

The Minister advised that the Province will likely not be bringing in legislation, as there will only be a short spring sitting of the House. The Minister indicated that the government continues to be supportive of the Elections Task Force recommendations and confirmed new legislation would be in place for the 2014 elections (see April 21 UBCM news release on follow up announcement by Minister Chong.)

## **Strategic Community Initiatives Fund Program**

The Minister indicated that the total amount for this program has not changed and that funds will be distributed over the next 3 years. The Executive also discussed the Towns for Tomorrow Program. The Minister noted that there are 133 applications. The Province has carefully reviewed the applications and hopes to provide further information on the program soon.

## **Government of Canada Wastewater Regulations**

The President expressed UBCM's position that local governments would need to cost share with the provincial and federal governments due to the high financial costs on some local governments to meet the wastewater regulations. The Minister advised that when there are changes at the federal level, costs are generally shared between local, provincial and federal governments (1/3 each).

## **Sun Peaks-Adams Lake Appeal**

The Minister advised that this legal case resides with the Ministry of Attorney General but acknowledged that the Province has appealed the decision. The Minister also noted that, through UBCM, the Province has provided funding for Community to Community workshops and that this grant is an opportunity for local governments to work with neighbouring

First Nations to avoid future legal proceedings of this nature.

## **Gaming Grants**

The Minister advised that the distribution of gaming grants is a new responsibility of the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. She indicated that the Province will engage an independent review of gaming grants and the role that government should play with respect to these grants for arts and community groups. The Minister anticipated that a review on this issue would likely be concluded by late fall.

## **Presidents Committee Meets with New Premier**

Members of the Presidents Committee had the opportunity to meet with Premier Christy Clark on April 18th. This was the first meeting between UBCM and the new Premier. The President, Councillor Barbara Steele, along with Third Vice President, Director Rhona Martin and Metro Vancouver Representative, Mayor Greg Moore had an opportunity to discuss some local government matters with the Premier, who was accompanied by the Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development.