

Open Cabinet – December 5, 2001 (Part 2)

A December 6th Member Release was devoted to the presentation to Open Cabinet by Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Rich Coleman on directions for police financing. Also approved by Cabinet were “Strategic Shifts” or “Strategic Plans” for Attorney General, Management Services and Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services. Some of the approved directions of interest include:

Attorney General

- part of the strategy to manage government liability is to look at the law of liability. The Attorney General specifically referenced joint and several liability in relation to the Delta leaky condo decision. He said that he has begun a public discussion on the issue. (see p.1 and 23 of December UBCM News for more details – the UBCM News is being mailed today).
- in the strategy to strengthen partnerships he spoke of the longstanding concerns for municipalities not being able to get adequate access to provincial courts to enforce their bylaws. He mentioned a process underway (paralleling the Community Charter) to rethink processes for an improved and cost effective system for enforcing municipal bylaws. Not as part of Open Cabinet, but that same day the Attorney General is quoted as saying the Ministry is looking at closing court houses – maybe up to as many as 30.

Public Safety and Solicitor General

- work to consolidate victims services programs and encourage community ownership of community based programs.
- streamline and modernize liquor control regulations by reducing the number of licence categories and to introduce a system that will allow greater input by local government.
- changes for community groups in gam-

ing so that they can give to their communities the charity dollars they raise in a more seamless manner.

- major changes in gaming policy, standards, regulation, licencing, registration and enforcement.
- as part of Core Review processes confirmed the relationship with RCMP in the delivery of policing in BC.
- also, the Ministry is working on detailed plans to restructure police financing and a five year plan for policing (for a more complete discussion see the UBCM, December 6th Member Release).

Community, Aboriginal and Women’s Services

Minister Abbott presented the results of phase 1 of the Core Review – mandate, core functions and strategic shifts.

- on the infrastructure program he commented that the “program has not, to date, rolled out as quickly as we’d have liked, for a variety of reasons but we will continue to work on that”.

The Minister spent some time outlining the core services of the Ministry:

- enable effective local government, aboriginal and women’s services with emphasis on policy and governance rather than direct delivery. The Community Charter is a key initiative:

“The goal of all this is to create more local autonomy in decision-making. Really – and I

see it every day – the province needs to get out of the business of second-guessing local decisions. When completed, it’s certainly going to mark a new era in the relationship between the province and local government. It will also, and just as importantly, clarify the respective interests, aspirations and roles of local and provincial governments and strike a better balance between those interests.”

- ensuring safety and standards.
- enhance citizen access to government.
- support services for communities through efficient and effective delivery of services and programs – arts, heritage, culture, sports, women and children and child care.

He continued by addressing the strategic shifts:

- provincial control to local autonomy of which the Community Charter is a move to put decision making back at the local level or to communities.
- from direct delivery of programs and services by Provincial Government employees to delivery by communities and third parties; in part by more fully engaging the non-profit and volunteer sector.
- move from unfocussed funding to performance based funding that delivers results in terms of the mandate of supporting safe, secure and healthy communities.
- move from provincial regulation to self-regulation and compliance monitoring – through for instance, objective based codes.