



**MINUTES OF A MEETING
OF THE ASSOCIATION OF VANCOUVER ISLAND
AND COASTAL COMMUNITIES EXECUTIVE
HELD MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2021
BY ZOOM**

IN ATTENDANCE: Director Ian Morrison, Cowichan Valley RD, President
Director Penny Cote, Alberni-Clayoquot RD, 1st Vice President
Councillor Ben Geselbracht, City of Nanaimo, 2nd Vice President
Councillor Carl Jensen, District of Central Saanich, Past President
Director Vanessa Craig, RD of Nanaimo, Electoral Area Representative
Councillor Colleen Evans, City of Campbell River, Director at Large
Director Mark Gisborne, qathet RD, Director at Large
Director Travis Hall, Central Coast RD, Director at Large

STAFF ATTENDANCE: Liz Cookson, Executive Director

President Morrison called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and welcomed guests from the delegation from UBCM.

AGENDA

On motion by Director Gisborne, seconded by 1st Vice President Cote,
That the agenda for the September 13, 2021 meeting be adopted as presented was **CARRIED**

MINUTES

On motion by Past President Jensen, seconded by Director Evans,
That the minutes of the August 13, 2021 meeting be adopted was **CARRIED**

DELEGATION

Mayor Maja Tait, District of Sooke; Director Al Richmond, Cariboo Regional District; and Glen Brown, UBCM General Manager, Victoria Operations joined the meeting as a delegation. They appeared as representatives of the UBCM Select Committee on Local Government Finance to provide a briefing on the Select Committee's report: *"Ensuring Local Government Financial Resiliency – Today's Recovery and Tomorrow's New Economy"*. The report was being presented to UBCM members at the 2022 UBCM Convention as a resolution.

Mayor Tait provided background on the select committee's workplan, and the principles followed in preparing the report. She noted the strong engagement by provincial staff who attended several meetings and provided feedback.

Director Richmond reviewed the cost-drivers and recommendations, and outlined next steps for UBCM if the report is endorsed at the UBCM convention as part of Policy Paper 1. He advised that select committee representatives had met with the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Municipal Affairs to review the report with them.

Executive members had the opportunity to ask questions of the Select Committee representatives, and expressed their support and thanks for the report and for the opportunity to receive today's briefing.

President Morrison thanked Mayor Tait, Director Richmond, and Mr. Brown for attending the Executive meeting. The delegation left the meeting.

ADVOCACY FRAMEWORK - DISCUSSION

The Executive had a general discussion about AVICC's role as an advocacy organization. The goal of the discussion was to determine how the Executive would develop a framework and policy on long term advocacy for consideration by the membership at the in-person 2022 Convention. President Morrison had previously identified this as a task for the 2021/22 Executive in his annual report that was presented at the 2021 AGM.

President Morrison gave a summary of the discussions on advocacy at previous meetings this year. He commented that advocacy work has been a large topic of discussion for the past year, and that AVICC is currently not geared up to take on significant advocacy projects. AVICC has taken on advocacy projects in the past, and done them well, but the scope and cost weren't always understood or communicated to members at the time of the request. They were also individual one-off projects and requests for work that weren't considered as part of any overall strategy.

Liz Cookson was asked for comment, and advised that AVICC is an association that has historically operated a certain way with a certain level of resources. If there is a desire to change and expand what AVICC is and how it operates, the Executive needs to go back to the members and figure out how that can be funded and how it can be operationalized. If members want AVICC to be something really different than what it has been historically, the Executive will need to figure out how to transition to that new structure including office space, funding, and staffing. That could impact AVICC's ability to continue under the current working relationship with UBCM.

There was a round-table discussion with the key points raised as follows:

Funding: How would AVICC fund major advocacy work. There must be information supplied to members so they understand that additional levels of work could incur significant costs, and affect member dues. The reference to what is the scope and the cost of a project could be attached to resolutions requesting the work so there is awareness of the impacts on the association and members at the time of voting.

Member Dues: There was concern that raising member dues significantly could mean some members would leave AVICC. A 1% increase in dues would raise roughly \$900 which would not fund a lot of consultant time or extra staffing. A large increase in dues is needed to fund high levels of advocacy if other sources of funding (eg from the Province) is not available.

Equity: Would the work requested need to be relevant to all AVICC members? There are differences in member size, type, areas of responsibility, and geographical area. Allowing members to choose whether or not they are going to be paying into something that benefits everyone could be sticky. Being part of AVICC helps smaller and remote communities have the opportunity to have their voices heard even if they aren't able to contribute much in the way of funding. There should be consideration of who pays, and who benefits – AVICC would need to put the costs in front of the members recognizing some have more voting power than others.

Reserves: An option for funding advocacy would be to build up reserves to tap into for future work, and not wait until there is a resolution. Instead of a case by case basis for funding projects, there could be a benefit to building up a fund to use – so not going back and checking on individual projects. Possible equity and transparency concerns were identified with this approach.

Tiered Approach: Asking the membership for approval of projects in iterations is another option. AVICC could do some work one year, and check back for approval to do more. This kind of tiered approach would mean taking the project back to the annual convention for member endorsement to move to the next level.

Reflecting Endorsed Resolutions: Focus on what AVICC does to add value to the members on issues and topics that have been approved and endorsed by the membership. Question around how recent resolutions can be and still be considered current policy. How does AVICC determine membership priorities for advocacy?

Regional Convenor: Is there a role for AVICC to play as a regional facilitator, to convene annual meetings with multiple regional districts around a particular topic to share ideas and collaborate, and help build staff relationships. These meetings could be a platform for developing advocacy points (this has happened at the EA Forum during the annual convention for issues like active transportation and funding for first nations and regional district services). AVICC could use Zoom to hold regional meetings at a lower cost those does not require a full day of travel. If there is a shared regional identity on issues, AVICC can set up an annual meeting where participants can share information, and identify where the gaps are, and this forms the basis of an advocacy plan. Maybe that is what AVICC's advocacy looks like: an annual regional meeting, shared vision of where members want to go with that vision, identify the gaps and that builds or forms the basis for an advocacy plan.

Inward Facing Advocacy: Advocacy work can be either inward facing or outward facing. Examples of inward facing would be internally organizing and facilitating conversations among AVICC members, and acting as an incubator and facility for sharing issues and ideas. AVICC could organize workshops for members beyond an annual convention, and show members how AVICC can help them achieve their strategic objectives. The focus would be on facilitating conversations with a regional perspective. AVICC does not currently fund operations or programs, but can help educate and share information. This would help give members the ability to carry out their own advocacy initiatives, but it is not AVICC's role to take that on. AVICC is not set up for for that level of advocacy, and does not have the ability to do that at this point.

Outward Facing Advocacy: In discussing outward facing advocacy, the Executive considered whether AVICC has the ability to have a bigger voice, and be more of a regional representative at the provincial level. They also considered whether this would be replicating the work that UBCM already does. Discussion was that AVICC should not be taking on a role that UBCM is already doing and has the capacity for when AVICC does not. Outward advocacy requires a process to be maintained, and not started and stopped. Local governments have power and need to recognize that and utilize it, leverage it.

Strategic Planning Session: Consideration of having an Executive meeting to focus on the role of AVICC including advocacy. Need a fulsome plan or package to take to the membership in April at the convention for direction, this may need a face to face workshop with the Executive and an external facilitator to develop. The Executive has previously talked about having a strategic planning session to consider what the role of AVICC should be, what does AVICC want to do, how can AVICC move to a new role. This could mean a significant change in how the organization functions. For example, to do a policy

piece like UBCM's 2021 finance report required a lot of resources pulled from across UBCM and from external consultants. AVICC can not replicate that level of work without significant expansion, and maybe shouldn't try when an organization that does that type of work exists already. It may be more effective to partner with UBCM on joint projects as was done for the BC Ferry Fares report. 20% of AVICC members only pay \$245 a year in member dues. That does not provide a lot of resources to pay for consultants or additional staff.

Other Area Associations: What type of advocacy do they carry out, and how do they resource it? Following the Executive's discussion, staff was requested to talk to the other area associations about what each does for advocacy, and how they resource their work.

The purpose of the advocacy framework review is to have options to take to members for the 2022 convention in order to get direction from members on what they want to see from AVICC as well as their willingness to fund any new direction.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 9 am on October 15, 2021.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:00 am, on motion by 1st Vice President Cote, seconded by Past President Jensen, that the meeting be adjourned was

CARRIED



Ian Morrison
President



Liz Cookson
Executive Director