

March 6, 2023

Mayor Megan Knight
City of White Rock
15322 Buena Vista Avenue
White Rock, BC V4B 1Y6

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CITY OF WHITE ROCK
ADMINISTRATION

Dear Mayor Knight:

Re: Provincial Response to 2022 Resolutions

UBCM has received the Province's response to your Council resolution(s) from 2022. Please find the enclosed resolution(s) and their provincial response(s).

All responses from the Province have been posted to the UBCM web site under Convention & Resolutions, then under Resolutions & Responses.

Please feel free to contact Jamee Justason, Resolutions and Policy Analyst, if you have any questions about this process.

Tel: 604.270.8226 ext. 100 Email: jjustason@ubcm.ca

Sincerely,



Jen Ford
UBCM President

Enclosure

Whereas Bill 26 – 2021: *Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act* (No. 2), 2021 does not require a local government to adopt a Code of Conduct for Council members;

And whereas many local governments in British Columbia cannot afford or do not have an independent non-partisan Ethics Commissioner to review and resolve allegations of misconduct:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM call upon the provincial government to immediately create an Office of the Municipal Ethics Commissioner within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that will:

- 1) respond to allegations of misconduct by an elected official of a municipal government and conduct an inquiry if warranted;
- 2) review decisions imposed on an elected official of a municipal government and conduct an inquiry if warranted; and
- 3) require local governments to adopt a “code of conduct” for council members.

Convention Decision: Endorsed

Provincial Response

Ministry of Municipal Affairs

The Ministry recognizes that how elected officials conduct themselves in their relationships with elected colleagues, staff and the public is directly connected to how a community is governed. Since 2016, the Ministry, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), and the Local Government Management Association have been working collaboratively through the Working Group on Responsible Conduct (WGRC) to research and develop new responsible conduct tools to support local governments. In the past year, the WGRC has been implementing tools requested in the UBCM Resolution 2021-SR3 (Strengthening Responsible Conduct), which included amendments to the prescribed oath of office, a new education module, and code of conduct legislation.

The new code of conduct provisions introduced in the Municipal Affairs Statutes Amendment Act (No.2), 2021 require councils and boards to consider establishing or updating a code of conduct within six months of their term of office. This new requirement builds upon and complements the existing responsible conduct framework by providing an additional tool to support local government elected officials. The requirements came into effect following the 2022 general local elections, and it will take time to gain a full understanding of the impact this tool will have on the conduct of elected officials. The province will continue to monitor and evaluate the current responsible conduct tools with our local government partners to determine any further actions needed.

The WGRC recognizes that embedding a culture of responsible conduct in the daily activities of local government elected officials is an incremental process and further work and collaboration is required. Any future work related to independent third-party approaches (e.g., integrity or ethics commissioners) would involve working with our local government partners and include an evaluation of current responsible conduct tools. Changes in this policy area are complex and multi- faceted and require consideration of issues such as the role of council and boards, funding arrangements, and the impact on existing responsible conduct tools.

Currently, local government legislation does not authorize or prohibit the voluntary establishment of an integrity commissioner for individual local governments. Both the City of Surrey and the City of Vancouver recently established their own integrity commissioner to operate independently for their local governments.

The Ministry will continue to work through the WGRC and with other local government partners to explore ways to embed responsible conduct principles into the local government system and to support inclusive and safe working environments.