

Councillor Olsen
Report 2011 UBCM Convention

Monday Sept 26th, 2011

This being my second UBCM Convention, I checked in early at the Vancouver Convention Centre and headed immediately to my first study session at 9am, which was titled Building Communities, Building the Future: Local Government-First Nations Relations. Highlights of the session were comments made by Mayor Lois Jackson, District of Delta that, "Relationship building is ongoing through communication." Chief Kim Baird, Tsawassen First Nation, reminded the audience that, "there is a lack of jurisdictional understanding between all parties and to review service plans between First Nation neighbors and local governments at the very least every 5 years." Chair Glenn Wong of the Alberni-Clayoquot RD asked, "What are the realities of cost sharing regarding hospitals and RD services between First Nations, Local Governments, The Province, and The Federal Government?" After the panel discussion, Dr. Robert Bish presented on First Nations as part of the Local Government system and expressed the opportunities within the current RD system with the support of BC Assessment as a mechanism to ensure equitable remittances from governments to pay for the services everyone uses. I attended my second study session at 1pm titled, The Forest Economy: A Vital Economic Resource for all BC Communities. The session started with a panel discussing perspectives on the future of forestry in BC. John MacDonald of MacDonald, Dettwiler and Associates informed the audience about future firm energy requirements provincially, nationally, and internationally. Fortunately, BC has options, unlike many regions throughout the world. Another panel followed with a discussion on how BC is preparing for the new forest economy, which really seemed to go around in a circle, which left me frustrated.

Tuesday Sept. 27th, 2011

The morning started at 9am with The Small Talk Forum, which was hosted by Kevin Brown who also is a communication representative for Enbridge, which hosted a lunch at the convention. The forum highlighted success stories from small Local Governments across BC. At 1pm our council met at the Douglas Room for a discussion with Northern Health. Cathy Ulrich, President and CEO and Dr. Charles Jago, Chair of Northern Health were in attendance as information regarding the proposed construction of our new hospital was being reviewed by the Provincial Government. I brought up the past financial support Northern Health had once granted for youth coordinators in rural communities and how these positions are a proactive way to support young people. I was informed that changes had occurred in the mandate of the Ministry and that I should contact the Ministry of Child and Family Development. After the meeting, I checked into the Ministry Services booth and requested a meeting with MCFD and was surprised to find out that the MCFD did not have staff at the convention. At 2:30pm Carol, Leslie and myself met with staff from the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism, and Innovation to discuss the benefits of the Haida Gwaii Higher Education Society and their need for an endowment to ensure the long-term support of their programs. At 3pm Councillor Leslie Johnson and

myself attended the Municipal Insurance Associations AGM. After the meeting we headed over to the New Vancouver Convention Centre for the UBCM welcome reception. I met up with Evan Puterill and Gary Coons along with the Terrace MLA. The four of us attended the Port Edward party before heading to the Enbridge Northern Gateway Reception. I had an extended opportunity to speak with John Carruthers (not correct spelling) the president of the project. What I found interesting was that every time I brought up a point regarding the economy or the environment he immediately said, "I could argue that." It appeared to me that he was not interesting in listening to the conversation, but rather asserting his ability to argue the merits of the project over the issues I brought up. After almost a half hour of his ear I was able to glean from his own mouth the admission that most of the construction jobs would be filled with outside experienced workers.

Wednesday Sept. 28th, 2011

The day started with a meeting in the Premier's office where Christy Clark met us with Michael de Jong, the Minister of Health where she unfortunately told us the woes of the HST situation and how the Province is reviewing the capital program funding process and will get back to us next year. At 11am, Carol, Leslie and myself met with staff from the Ministry of Advanced Education and discussed the benefits of the HGHEs. Before we went into the meeting I talked with Ministry Services staff responsible for meeting coordination and expressed my desire to speak with the MCFD. One of the ladies at the desk took my contact information and said, "I will do what I can." The rest of Wednesday afternoon was spent at my eye doctors as I picked up an infection in my eye during the convention.

Thursday, Sept. 29th, 2011

I was contacted in my hotel room at 8am from Debbie MacLean, Ministerial Assistant to the Honorable Mary McNeil, Minister of Child and Family Development. She told me that I could speak to the Minister after a Child Poverty talk this afternoon at the convention. I spent the morning at the resolution policy sessions. At 2 pm, council met with Minister Ida Chong, Minister Community, Sports, and Cultural Development to bring her up to speed on the benefits and progress of our water treatment facilities. We also talked about how important the small community funding that the Province provides us as a major part of the operations in our municipality. At 2:30pm, I went into the Child Poverty session with Gary Coons and listened to the panel talk about empowering organizations and individuals through innovative community based opportunities. After the discussion I asked about why funding for rural community youth coordinators no longer exists. Minister Mary McNeil said she could speak with me after the session to look into the situation. After the session we met and traded contact info. I am happy to say I have already received e-mail and phone contact from the Ministry to organize regional representatives from MCFD and Northern Health to discuss opportunities. Stephen Brown the Deputy Minister has contacted me at work and is looking into getting started on this right away.

Friday Sept. 30th, 2011

The morning started by helping out with the set up for MP Nathan Cullen's announcement to run for the NDP leadership at the SFU Business School. I had a chance to watch Nathan rehearse his speech, while CBC was setting up satellite feeds for their news network. Afterwards I walked back to the convention with Councillor Johnson where we participated in the final policy session. I was unhappy to see that a resolution to have seniors not contribute to the MSP was endorsed. I worry about our future ability to maintain our current health care system with the majority of Canadians reaching those senior years. This action might strip the health care system of valuable future revenue. I was happy to see the UBCM not support actions into the recreational Halibut sector. At 11am, I had a chance to listen to Premier Christy Clark address the UBCM convention and announce only one recreational funding opportunity for Local Governments.

After 5 days at the convention, I would have to say that it was a valuable experience for myself. I was able to make key contacts with the MCFD and speak with the president of Enbridge Northern Gateway. I also had the opportunity to maintain relationships with many of the RD and NCLGA delegates that I have met in the past.