



What a pleasure it was to walk into municipal hall on Friday morning and see all of the mask-free smiles! Several times over the workday I reached for my mask, only to remember I no longer had to wear it if I needed to step outside my office.

On March 2, I volunteered at the United Way Drive-Thru Breakfast hosted by the Penticton Lakeside Resort. This, their largest annual fundraiser, is usually held in September. As always, folks were very generous and the Southern Interior Region United Way topped \$26,000—the best year on record. My best memory of the day was the group of preschool children who arrived just after the last few cars. They walked into the drive-through two by two with their care providers and after making a donation walked to the Penticton Fire Department volunteers to receive their breakfasts. One of the adults with the group told me the program was called “Kiddies for Kindness”. Never too early (or too late) to learn kindness.

I’ve read that the same generous response was enjoyed at a Barking Parrot event on the weekend to assist the people of Ukraine. Two of many examples of what our communities can do when we pull together, as so many of us have over the last two years.

March 3 I attended a webinar hosted by the BC Municipal Climate Leadership Council and the Community Energy Association. The topic was Local Government and Climate Action and both Environment and Climate Change Strategy Minister George Heyman and the new Minister of Municipal Affairs Nathan Cullen attended the meeting. We can expect details on the provincial program that will replace CARIP next month.

Last Council meeting we voted to send a letter of support for a grant application by the syilx-led Okanagan Lake Responsibility Planning Initiative and their partners to the Okanagan Basin Water Board. Unrelated to the grant application, but as part of the Initiative, on March 7 I was interviewed by UBCO PhD candidate Maria Correia, on the role our local government plays in protecting the Okanagan Lake ecosystem, what value we see in working collaboratively on this Initiative and what a healthy and restored ecosystem could look like. These interviews, expected to be completed by late April, are the next step in developing a collaborative strategy to protect the environmental and cultural values of Okanagan Lake and its watershed.

Several weeks ago WorkBC asked me to join a panel of BC women in politics to have a discussion for International Women’s Day. The theme this year was #BreaktheBias. Other panelists were City of Victoria Councillor Marianne Alto, Abbotsford-Mission MLA Pam Alexis and Sheila Malcolmsen, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions. It was an enlightening and enjoyable way to spend an hour and, while

gender and other biases are real across many sectors, the panel felt that there is growing momentum to address inequities.

On March 9 I attended a Southern Interior Local Government Association (SILGA) executive meeting. Other than Resolutions Committee meetings, this is the last executive meeting before the Convention being held in Salmon Arm at the end of April.

Thursday morning and Friday I attended my first Real Estate Foundation of BC (REFBC) Board meetings. Thursday afternoon (March 11) the CAO and I took part in a meeting with Minister Cullen and the Deputy Minister for the Ministry of Citizens' Services. As usual, there were a several topics brought forward with the top few being attainable housing, connectivity in rural areas, flood and fire recovery and climate mitigation and adaptation. The Province's commitment to welcoming potentially tens of thousands of people fleeing Ukraine was also a topic of discussion.

I will be absent from our next series of Council meetings on March 28 as I am attending an in-person Climate Solutions Council meeting. Thank you, Councillor Carlson, for stepping up to chair the meetings on my behalf.

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor Toni Boot