

Mayor's Report – May 27, 2025

On May 13, I attended the annual general meeting of the Southern Interior Municipal Employers Association (SIMEA), along with our new Manager of Human Resources, Michelle Pascoe, and our outgoing HR manager, Marnie Manders. SIMEA acts as an agent for benefit plan coverage for the City of Kelowna, City of Penticton, City of Revelstoke, District of Summerland, Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen, Town of Princeton, and Town of Oliver. There was discussion at the meeting about increasing membership to other local governments.

On May 14 and 15, I was in Victoria and met with the following Cabinet ministers:

- *Josie Osborne, Minister of Health*, with whom I discussed alternate solutions for addressing the local doctor shortage in Summerland, given that provincial funding for our proposed team-based primary care centre was turned down.
- *Mike Farnsworth, Minister of Transportation and Transit*, with whom I discussed the condition of the stretch of the Summerland-Princeton Rd within our municipal boundary, and the possibility of government support for upgrades given its provincial Highway 40 designation.
- *Lana Popham, Minister of Agriculture*, with whom I discussed the challenges of maintaining roads and other infrastructure to agricultural areas given the distances between parcels and the small tax base.
- *Jagrup Brar, Minister of Mining and Critical Minerals*, with whom I discussed the need for the Province to work with municipalities when aggregate activities do not conform to local zoning, in light of the government's approval of a gravel pit in an environmentally sensitive area at the end of Garnet Valley. Penticton-Summerland MLA Amelia Boulton joined me for this meeting, and together we're continuing to look for a political solution.
- *Brittney Anderson, Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities*, with whom I had a wide-ranging discussion on all the topics I raised with the other ministers. We also talked about her portfolio, which is a new role situated in the Premier's office.

I should note that each of the five ministers who I met are new to their portfolios since last fall's provincial election so the meetings were important for bringing them up to speed on issues of concern to Summerland and for maintaining constructive inter-governmental relationships.

On May 21, Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillor Betts joined me at the open house for the Conkle and Cartwright Mountain trail plans. About 70 members of the public were in attendance and some good questions were raised and there was good discussion around the room. It's always difficult finding a balance when there are different interests and visions at play but public engagement is continuing with the aim of bringing revised trail plans to Council for consideration in the Fall.

On May 22, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) which was held in the Town of Princeton rather than in Penticton as usual. It's good for open governance that the RDOS visits other communities in the region, especially the more rural and further away ones.

Earlier in the day, the directors and RDOS senior staff took a tour of the Copper Mountain Mine near Princeton, where we saw all stages of the mining operation from blasting to milling to tailings. I'd say the tour gave us a good sense of the benefits of the mine to the regional economy through job creation, local procurement, and infrastructure development.

- Mayor Doug Holmes