



## Mayor's Report – Sept 26, 2023

Last week, Team Summerland was in Vancouver for the annual Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention. I attended along with Deputy Mayor Trainer, Councillor Barkwill, Councillor Peake, and CAO Statt.

I say 'Team' Summerland because we went there with a sense of mission and purpose. To ensure a productive week, we went prepared and we worked long, hard hours, together.

UBCM is our most important tool for advocating and connecting with the provincial government. It's one week of the year where the entire government is focused on local concerns. We have access to everyone from the premier and cabinet ministers to senior ministry staff and partner agencies. We speak with them at official one-on-one meetings, as well as less formally in workshops and panel discussions, and at coffee breaks and during evening receptions.

One-on-one, we met with:

- Municipal Affairs Minister Anne Kang
- Health Minister Adrian Dix
- Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Rob Fleming
- Agriculture Minister Pam Alexis
- Minister of Energy, Mines and Low Carbon Innovation, Josie Osborne
- Fin Donnelly, the Parliamentary Secretary for Watershed Restoration.
- Opposition Leader Kevin Falcon
- Trevor Halford, the Shadow Minister for Transportation and Infrastructure
- senior officials from government agencies like BC Housing and BC Assessment.

Informally, we met and spoke with Premier David Eby as well as several other cabinet ministers and numerous MLA's.

Our MLA Dan Ashton attended and supported us in all our minister meetings, which was most helpful and much appreciated.

In all our meetings, we articulated Summerland's needs and emphasized opportunities to work together with the Province. Results included receipt of \$10,000 to complete trail redevelopment plans for Conkle and Cartwright Mountains, confirmation of the government's support for a

Summerland Food Hub, and strong interest in supporting a proposed primary health centre for Summerland.

At our meeting with the Health Minister, we were joined by Summerland family doctor Murali Venkataraman, the Community Foundation's Aaron McRann, and RDOS Area 'F' Director Riley Gettens. Their attendance helped demonstrate local support and the community-based partnership model of the proposed health centre.

Besides access to the provincial government, UBCM is also an opportunity for BC's 162 municipalities, 27 regional districts, and 8 member First Nation band councils to connect and share best practice with each other.

Among the municipalities are 49 districts, scattered around the province. As has been reported, the District of Summerland worked with UBCM organizers to host a meeting of municipal districts, and I'm happy to say it was well attended and well received.

We all talked about what it meant to be a district municipality. Many of us are a mix of rural and urban. Many of us have lots of agriculture, some rely on forestry, and others on mining. Many of us are surrounded by Crown land. Many of us neighbour Indigenous communities. And many of us are located in the shadow of a city which places expectations on us to deliver the same level of big city services.

For many districts, maintaining our dispersed infrastructure is a challenge given our small population relative to our land base. At the end of the meeting, it was agreed to stay connected and work together on some of our common issues.

Finally, Team Summerland came home with some hardware to put in the trophy case. We received not one, but two achievement awards.

One was a Climate & Energy Action Award from the Community Energy Association for our Solar and Storage Facility. It's our second Climate & Energy Action Award in the last three years, and once again recognizes the District of Summerland's commitment to sustainability and climate action.

This other was a UBCM Community Excellence Award for asset management. It is in recognition of our Water and Road Integrated Asset Management Plan. Asset management has been a priority of successive councils and the award is a testament to all the work gone into improving the way we maintain and upgrade our municipal infrastructure.

Doug Holmes

Mayor of Summerland