

Mayor's Report – July 28, 2026

This morning (July 28) I spoke with Ron Poole of the Northern Benefits Alliance, which is a coalition of 21 local governments in Northern BC that receive provincial funding for local infrastructure as a share of revenue generated by resource development. We spoke about how small agricultural municipalities could organize themselves in a similar way by forming an Alliance to advocate for an Agricultural Municipality Initiative (AMI). The idea is that rather than it being a Summerland initiative supported by other municipalities (essentially what it is now), it becomes a joint advocacy effort with each municipality appointing a council member as their representative to the Alliance and reporting back to their Councils, just like any other board representation. This is something we may wish to create in September when we all meet at UBCM.

Speaking of the UBCM meeting, I have been informed there is a hold in Minister Popham's calendar for her to attend but she needs to wait to see her full UBCM schedule before confirming the time. Meanwhile, my AMI roadshow wrapped up on July 21 with an in-person presentation to Lake Country council. The analysis from the various municipalities are starting to come in, and the media is paying attention, so the initiative is gaining momentum.

On July 20, Deputy Mayor Trainer, CAO Statt and I had a zoom call with the City of Vancouver's managers for transportation and transportation design. They spoke to us about suicide prevention measures taken on their main bridges. Ten years ago, they installed vertical pickets on the Burrard Bridge after working with their heritage planner to ensure the bridge's aesthetic appeal was retained. Since then, there have been no suicides from that bridge, when there used to be one or two a year. The City is now looking to integrate means prevention into a redesign of the Granville Bridge. Netting was not considered an option for either bridge due to the cost and complexity to both construct and maintain. We will be taking this information to the next meeting of the youth suicide group for consideration in context of the Trout Creek trestle.

On July 17, I had the honour of attending a special dinner at Legion Branch 22 to celebrate its 100th anniversary. The Summerland branch of the 'Canadian Legion of the British Empire Services League' was incorporated on July 17, 1926. Earlier in the day, I was joined by Deputy Mayor Trainer and Councillor Peake for the unveiling of a mural on the Legion building that was painted by local artist Tim Searles. Only half the mural is complete but Mr Searles told us that once finished it will tell a story. He wouldn't say what the story is; everyone will have to figure that out for themselves. But he did say a clue was all the airplanes flying around without a pilot, and also that the poppies in the painting are an important part of the story.

On July 16, Councillor Barkwill and I attended the regular board meeting of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) where the Board agreed to proceed with the development of a new Utility Acquisition Policy after reflecting on lessons learned from recent acquisitions. The revised policy will maintain the core approach that an acquisition must be in the best interests of the RDOS and the affected community, but it will set out clearer direction on technical, financial, legal, operational, and administrative requirements.

On July 11, I and I believe other members of Council called into the well attended Firehall open house, which also included participation from FireSmart, Emergency Support Services, RCMP, Ambulance Service and Citizens on Patrol.

And finally, on July 9, I was joined by Councillor Peake at the Art Gallery in the George Ryga Arts & Cultural Centre for the opening of a memorial exhibition celebrating the work of the late local artist, Jill Southern. The exhibit was organized by Jill Southern's family, and two of her daughters spoke about their mother and her work. The exhibition runs until August 2 and is worth checking out if you get the chance.

- Mayor Doug Holmes