File: 7130-30

December 3, 2020

Sent via email only

Clayton Postings, CAO
Village of Cumberland
2673 Dunsmuir Avenue, Box 340
Cumberland, BC V0R 1S0

Jordan Wall, CAO
Town of Comox
1809 Beaufort Avenue
Comox, BC V9M 1R9

Trevor Kushner, Interim CAO
City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Russell Dyson, CAO
Comox Valley Regional District
770 Harmston Avenue
Courtenay, BC V9N 0G8

Dear Chief Administrative Officers:

Re: Emergency Operations Centre Policy Group

The Director of an Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) receives overall emergency policy and direction from a Policy Group. In an emergency or disaster involving a single local authority, often it is the board or council of that authority that forms the Policy Group. However as the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic affects us regionally, we have endeavoured to provide an EOC that serves all local governments.

A major challenge for our Regional EOC to respond to COVID-19, is that there is no 'one' Policy Group to provide direction, policy and decisions. Currently each Chief Administrative Officer consults with their respective board or council independently, and this can lead to lengthy delays in responses.

In the Regional EOC's COVID-19 After Action Report (dated August 19th, 2020), one of the key recommendations was to clarify the decision making process and look at implementing a Policy Group. It was proposed that this leadership group be comprised of the three Mayors, the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board Chair, the CVRD Electoral Areas Services Committee Chair, the School District No. 71 Chair, and K'ómoks First Nation Chief. This group would be supported by the Chief Administrative Officers for each jurisdiction. At this time, the local governments are being asked to approve the following resolution:

THAT the <Mayor/Chair> of <jurisdiction> be appointed to the Comox Valley's Regional Emergency Operations Centre Policy Group in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic;

AND FURTHER THAT the Policy Group be tasked with providing leadership and strategic direction/decision making on Emergency Operations Centre policy matters and act as the key communications liaison point between senior government and health officials and the local emergency operations centre and local jurisdictions.

Separate outreach to SD71 and the K'ómoks First Nation is ongoing to secure their involvement with the policy group.

This Policy Group would align with the roles and responsibilities identified in section 10 of the Comox Valley Regional Emergency Plan (attached).

Key benefits of implementing this group are:
- faster return on direction and decisions, allowing for more timely and effective actions within the EOC; and
- acting as a single point of communication between the EOC, the local government/jurisdictions boards and councils and senior government officials on information from Island Health's Public Health Officer (thereby being more efficient with all participants' time in particular that of the public health officer)
- being more responsive in addressing the needs of the event and/or community.

The Regional EOC Policy Group would receive regularly scheduled situation reports and other communications materials as needed. As previously determined, the CVRD Board Chair would continue as the Regional EOC spokesperson.

I kindly request a response as to the outcome of the above noted resolution being brought forward to your Mayors and Council in two weeks.

Sincerely,

H. Siemens

Howie Siemens
Emergency Program Coordinator
Acting Emergency Operations Centre Director

Enclosure

Section 10 – Policy Group

Composition could include:

- Mayors, chairperson, or mayor and council, or chair and board, or chief and council along with the chief executive officer, emergency program coordinator and appropriate senior management (defined by level and type of response)

- The policy group team leader will be the senior elected official from either the Regional District or the Municipality

Responsibilities:

➤ Provides overall emergency policy and direction to the emergency operations centre director.

➤ Sets expenditure limits.

➤ Formally requests outside support/resources (e.g. Provincial and Federal support).

➤ Authorizes declaration and termination of "state of local emergency."

➤ Provides direction for emergency public information activities.

➤ Act as a spokesperson(s) for the jurisdiction as requested.

Activation Phase:

	Time	Init.
Convene as the EOC policy group at a designated site as recommended by the EOC director.		
Obtain current situation status and a briefing on priority actions taken and outstanding, from the EOC director.		
Follow the generic EOC checklist.		
Date:	Time:	
Signature:	Position:	

Operational Phase:

	Time	Init.
Examine need for new or temporary policies, as required to support response operations.		
Consult with EOC director to determine appropriate expenditure limits.		
As requested prepare for and participate in any media briefings.		

	Time	Init.
Ensure adequate public information materials are being issued from the EOC.		
Consult with EOC director and/or legal advisors regarding any potential legal issues and recommended courses of action.		
Consult with EOC director to determine need for extra-ordinary resources and/or outside assistance.		
Consult with EOC director to determine need for declaration and termination of "state of local emergency."		
Keep appraised as to the status of the emergency event by reviewing EOC situation reports.		
Date:	Time:	
Signature:	Position:	

Demobilization Phase:

	Time	Init.
Proclaim termination of the emergency response and have EOC proceed with recovery efforts.		
Provide input to the after action report.		
Participate in formal post-operational debriefs.		
Recognize EOC staff members and response personnel for their efforts.		
Follow the generic EOC checklist (page 13).		
Date:	Time:	
Signature:	Position:	

Policy Group

Inputs	**Activities**	**Outputs**

EOC director

Briefings

SITREPs

Public information materials

Media releases & briefings

Policy/ direction

Legal advisors

EMBC

- Consult
- Assess
- Evaluate
- Prioritize
- Decide

Decision or approval required for declaration

Yes

Approved

No
not approved

Return to EOC director for future consideration

Declaration of state of local emergency issued

EOC director

Forwarded to EMBC/PREOC

Documented in decision/ approval log

Info disseminated to all EOC staff