

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

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April 9, 2018

Sent via email only: dallen@courtenay.ca

David Allen
City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay, BC V9N 2J7

Dear David:

Re: Utilities Governance – Consultants Introduction Letter

I am pleased to introduce to you Sherry Hurst and Allan Neilson who will be working with us over the next few months to develop information and options associated with utilities governance. Your availability, and the availability of your senior engineers and senior finance officers and also your elected officials, will be important to enable Sherry and Allan to conduct their research and prepare a fulsome report on issues and opportunities. This letter provides some background information and describes how we need your participation to ensure this project is successful.

Background

The Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) operates the Comox Valley Water Supply System and Sewerage Service (functions 300 and 335 respectively). Generally, these services operate with standard parameters as put forward in the *Local Government Act* (RSBC, 2015, c.1) where topics are discussed at committee and commission meetings as established by bylaw. Final decisions regarding the strategic priorities and policies are made during the committee meetings or at CVRD Board meetings, if required.

During a strategic planning session in June 2017, the CVRD elected officials considered the manner in which decisions related to the water and sewer utilities are made. Discussions were specific to the Comox Valley Water Supply System (function 300) and the Sewerage Service (function 335). Interest was expressed for a model that included independent professionals setting the administrative and operational priorities for the services. A 'utilities commission' concept was discussed in June 2017 and staff committed to presenting a pathway for further exploration.

More recently, consideration is being given to the role of K'ómoks First Nation in governance and decision making in relation to water supply, sewage treatment and infrastructure development in the Comox Valley.

Goals and Purpose

In March 2018, the CVRD advanced this project and has retained Sherry and Allan to

- a) conduct research into governance models,
- b) interview key stakeholders to ascertain interests and concerns with both the status quo and possible future scenarios and
- c) describe a path forward for addressing the various interests.

It is expected that an issues paper will be developed for late June that describes governance options and also reports on stakeholder comments.

Consulting Team

Sherry Hurst of Leftside Partners Inc. and Allan Neilson of Neilson-Welch Consulting Inc. form the consulting team. Allan and Sherry have worked together for more than 15 years advising local governments on governance, service delivery, and development finance. Together the two consultants have extensive experience in governance, service reviews and regional district services.

Next Steps

The consulting team will be undertaking background research into governance models and the CVRD's services over the next six weeks. On June 5 and 6, 2018, Sherry and Allan expect to be in the Comox Valley and present some information to the committee and commission members at a special meeting. In addition to the formal presentations at official meetings, Sherry and Allan are interested in meeting face-to-face with you, your staff and some of your elected officials. Sherry and Allan will reach out to your offices directly to schedule specific meetings. Sherry will look to connect directly with you or your executive assistant to assist with coordinating schedules. To help ensure this project is successful, please engage with Sherry and Allan.

This letter introducing the consulting team and requesting participation has been sent to the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, K'ómoks First Nation and Major Fugulin, Department of National Defense as he is a member of the Sewage Commission.

Please be in touch with me or James Warren, General Manager of Corporate Services, if you would like to discuss this project.

Regards,

R. Dyson

Russell Dyson

Chief Administrative Officer