

November 4, 2021

File: 530-20/External Appointments

Chair and Directors
Regional District Board

Please find below updates on my Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board external appointments to the Vancouver Island Regional Library, the Island Corridor Foundation, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I am also including a brief report on my Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities appointment to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans committee on Indigenous and Multi-stakeholder Advisory Board and an emerging opportunity related to this work.

Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL) Board

In 2021/2022 I was elected as Vice-Chair of the VIRL Board. Earlier this year, our Executive Director Rosemary Bonnano announced her retirement after 14 years at the helm. Mrs. Bonnano's term included significant growth for VIRL, both in terms of membership and usage but also of renewing existing libraries and building new facilities.

In July of 2021, after an exhaustive search and selection process, we recruited Ben Hyman, formerly Chief Librarian at Vancouver Island University, to become our new Executive Director. Ben's vision is centered around open access to information, and particular emphasis on serving and supporting indigenous culture. The timing of Mr. Hyman's arrival is good as the Board is about to embark on our new 5 years strategic planning process, as well as our 10 years Facilities Master Plan renewal.

In terms of projects, the Courtenay library \$1 million refurbishment was delayed as part of COVID, but activities should start soon on this project. On advice from our departing ED, I also initiated an exploration of the potential to plan for a new building for the Union Bay library, which is the smallest in 39 branch system at 300 square feet. I have already sent an inquiry to School District No. 71 to see if their site could be contemplated for such an effort, and asked our CVRD planning department to be on the lookout for opportunities as well. With VIRL, if suitable land is identified and secured by local government, VIRL will pay for construction of new branches.

In terms of forward budgets, after a year of tightening the belt in light of COVID, and in part due to inflationary pressures and building costs the board has passed a roughly four per cent increase to the budget. As the contributions are based on assessment, once again the Comox Valley has gained marginally more value compared to other areas so this could translate to an increase of 4.5 per cent average in our region. Budget will be finalized and sent to the members later this fall.

Island Corridor Foundation

As the ICF Board just received the [BC Supreme Court Appeal decision](#) on the Snaw naw as case, this will have important impacts on the organization's future. In a nutshell, the decision maintained that no reversion was warranted at this time, but gave the Federal government 18 months to show that it will invest to support rail on Vancouver Island.

Following this, the board of ICF will have a strategic planning session on November 4, and I can provide a verbal report if desired at our CVRD meeting on Tuesday.

Another aspect that I am prepared to put forward relates to our former Chief Financial Officers analysis of CVRD's \$400,000 pledge to ICF, which has been sitting in the CVRD general administration service for many years. These funds had been allocated in anticipation of federal and provincial funding many years ago. At this time, with some support from CVRD staff I would be prepared to bring forward a motion that we decommit those funds in the foreseeable future unless the Province and Federal government show clear intent to invest back into the rail corridor.

Lastly, our former Chief Financial Officer also recommended that as a member of the ICF we should be open to the idea of the rail being perhaps being best situated as an asset of the Province rather than a Foundation controlled by local government and First Nations. I will bring this suggestion to the ICF strategic session on November 4, and welcome feedback from CVRD Directors on this notion.

Federation of Canadian Municipalities

In June of 2020 I was elected to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Board. I have started attending meetings, and will be going to Ottawa in late November as we build the advocacy strategy with the new Federal government and consider priorities for local government across Canada. In addition to the committees below, in October I was also appointed to sit as one of three judges for the Green Municipal Funds awards in 2022. This will allow me the opportunity to learn about best practice projects across Canada and the types of initiatives other local governments are pursuing. I am also excited to participate as a member of the following committees:

- Environment and Sustainability
- Community Safety
- International Committee
- Rural Issues
- Francophone Caucus

AVICC – Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) Indigenous Management Advisory Board and DFO Shellfish Advisory Committee

In 2019, then Mayor Josie Osborne and I were the two Union of BC Municipalities appointees to the Indigenous Management Advisory Board. As a member of the Area Based Management (ABM) working group, our committee put a recommendation to the Minister to pilot ABM in British Columbia. To our delight, last spring DFO allocated three million dollars to select a region to pilot ABM over the next two years. As we speak, our Baynes Sound Ecosystem Forum multi-stakeholder group is contemplating an application to be selected as the region. This month I am in touch with K'omoks First Nation to consider the role they may play in this initiative.

Meanwhile, the regular Shellfish Advisory Committee will have its meeting in November, and we will hear from industry and others on trends, concerns, and the evolution of the regulatory framework.

I have very much enjoyed representing the CVRD in all these roles, welcome feedback and questions, and would intend to finish off the term with all these appointments.

Sincerely,

D. Arbour

Daniel Arbour
Director