

January 25<sup>th</sup> 2021

To: Mayor Leonard Krog and Members of Council

From: George B Cuff, FCMC

**Re: Council Covenant**

The following is a brief and condensed outline of the Covenant (principle-based commitments) that I believe should guide the behaviour, key roles and expectations of this Council.

I recommend that this series of statements be adopted “in principle” by Council at its next regular meeting.

## **Commitments**

### **1. Service to Community**

- a. As citizens of the City of Nanaimo, we ran for elected office because we felt we could make a positive difference.
- b. It is our fervent desire that our decisions are recognized as our best effort to serve all citizens to the best of our collective abilities.
- c. While there is a certain degree of prestige and acclaim involved in elected official service, these are not top of mind for any of us. We simply want to serve.
- d. Our service is based on our collective love of this community with all of its advantages and yes, even its flaws. We are keen to see this community not only survive but thrive.

### **2. Understanding of Role Distinctions**

- a. As elected officials we understand that we are expected to lead, set the vision, goals and priorities, provide direction, review reports, make decisions, adopt and/or revise policies, assess progress on issues, liaise with the CAO and management, listen to the public and represent its will on issues.
- b. We understand that management undertakes very different roles. They assess issues, direct subordinate officials, supervise, coordinate, discipline, prepare reports, draft policies, respond to the direction of Council, undertake approved action stemming from adopted resolutions/bylaws, report on progress towards completion of strategic plan.
- c. We accept that the Mayor has a somewhat different role from the rest of Council. He is expected to chair Council meetings, ensure all Council members receive equal treatment, share confidential information with Council colleagues, speak as requested at public events, represent the City, support Council resolutions, attempt to reconcile differences within Council, recommend new initiatives, appoint Council members to external committees and boards, act as a member of the Regional District.

### 3. Respect for Roles

- a. We will individually and collectively show respect for one another in our public and private comments. We will not encourage others to be disrespectful to our colleagues on Council or to our administration.
- b. We understand that our public expects us to live up to the standards expected of an elected official and to abide by both the legislation as well as our own bylaws and policies.

### 4. Support for the Decision-Making Model

- a. We understand that each Council inherits the decision-making (governance) model of its predecessor. We also understand that at any time in our term of office, we are at liberty to change this model to one which better suits our requirements and style.
- b. As a Council we have adopted a Governance & Priorities Committee and have continued various advisory committees (referred to as ABCs---Agencies, Boards and Committees). It is our intent to carry forward this model and to enhance it wherever possible.
- c. We will utilize whatever mechanisms we have to gain access to legitimate/balanced public opinion which we will listen to when determining how to proceed on a related matter.
- d. While our CAO and management will advise all or some of these bodies, their role is advisory and not that of controlling either the agenda or the outcomes.

### 5. Understanding of What Divides and Its Results

- a. We recognize that poorly worded comments and inappropriate wording can be used in heated debates and that disagreements can surface relative to what the best course of action is for the City. We accept our own personal responsibility for the comments that we make and if they cause offence to any one or all of our colleagues (which we will try to avoid) we will immediately apologize.
- b. We are not concerned if members disagree on the best course of action for the City or that Council decisions reflect a split in voting from time to time. What we will seek to avoid is any pre-determination of such votes. As a result, we will not canvass each other for support prior to a vote being held so as to respect the independence of all decisions and the options open to each Council member.
- c. We will ensure that the City develops and approves a robust "social media" policy to guide our responses to social media commentary and our participation in any such discourse. Where our personal comments reflect disagreement with the decisions of our Council, we will caveat any such

comments with our respect for Council's right to make such decisions regardless of whether or not we support the decision(s).

- d. We will not speak ill of any of our colleagues on Council or members of our administration through our participation on any public platform. We will ensure that we show respect for those who serve with us.

#### **6. Accepting Decisions**

- a. We will accept decisions made by Council as a body at duly called meetings. Regardless of our arguments against a resolution, we understand that Council may decide to adopt a position contrary to our position on the matter(s).
- b. We will not undermine the decisions made by Council. We do not have to justify these nor speak in support of decisions which we may have opposed (this statement does not apply to the Mayor who must stand in support of all decisions made by the Council). At the same time, we will not do anything to undercut the adopted resolution of Council.

#### **7. Personal Conduct**

- a. As members of this Council, we will do all in our power to uphold the highest personal standards expected of a member of Council. We will adhere to our adopted code of conduct and will not purposely vary from the standards imposed by the Code.
- b. We accept and recognize that our personal conduct will carry over to that expected of us in our public lives and therefore we will always be cognizant of doing the right thing and being held to account.

#### **8. Desire to Move the Needle**

- a. We as a Council are keen to finish our term of office as a collegial group who have as our common focus service to our City, both residents and local businesses. Regardless of any disagreement on positions taken in support or non-support of this issue or that, we will not demean or ridicule our colleagues but rather show respect for their right to differ from our own views.
- b. We will continuously take steps to move forward as a Council which is known for robust discussions which are cloaked in respectful language, offered sincerely and not in jest or facetiously.
- c. We are committed as a body to earning the respect of our community through representing their views fairly and through acting as dedicated, respectful members of this Council.
- d. We are honoured to serve, and we will reflect that in our decision-making and in our behaviour.

Respectfully submitted,



George B Cuff, FCMC  
President