

DATE OF MEETING JANUARY 22, 2024

AUTHORED BY NATALIE SPONAUGLE, COMMUNICATIONS ADVISOR

SUBJECT 2024 AVICC RESOLUTIONS

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To seek Council direction on the proposed resolutions for the 2024 Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities 2024 Annual General Meeting.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council:

- a. provide direction regarding the resolutions proposed by members of Council and,
- b. direct staff to submit the following resolution to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities for consideration at their 2024 Annual General Meeting:

WHEREAS many communities are experiencing a crisis-level influx of homeless individuals and the existence of emergency shelters is critical to addressing the safety of people experiencing homelessness;

AND WHEREAS, due to the urgent nature of the need and the lack of suitable building stock in many communities, emergency shelters are frequently operating from buildings that do not meet the major occupancy classification requirements of the BC Building Code, nor the requirements of the BC Fire Code, placing local governments at risk of incurring liability if they do not enforce the codes and risking shutting down emergency shelters if they do enforce the codes:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province work with the Building Safety Standards Branch to establish some reasonable variances to the BC Building Code and BC Fire Code to enable emergency shelters to remain open.

BACKGROUND

The Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) Annual General Meeting and Convention will be held April 12-14, 2024 in Victoria, BC. The deadline for resolution submission is February 7, 2024.

At the December 11, 2023 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting, Council members were asked to identify topics that they wished to have developed into resolutions for consideration at the 2024 AVICC Annual General Meeting and Convention. A number of

proposed resolutions have been brought forward and staff are seeking direction from Council on how they would like to proceed.

In addition, staff have brought forward a resolution for consideration regarding emergency shelters and compliance with the BC Building Code and BC Fire Code.

DISCUSSION

The proposed resolutions are as follows:

1. Investment in Complex Care Beds

WHEREAS in 2022, the BC Emergency Health Services reported a 75% total increase in annual overdose/poisoning events since the toxic drug crisis was declared a public health emergency in 2016 and the BC Provincial Overdose Cohort reports that brain injury is 15 times more likely among people who had experienced drug poisoning than those who had not;

AND WHEREAS the number of supports available for individuals requiring complex care due to health challenges related to substance use disorder has proven grossly inadequate for the ever-increasing demand in communities all across British Columbia;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the Province to increase investment in complex care beds to address the growing demand from those who have suffered serious health impacts from substance use disorder.

2. Mental Health Liaison Officers

WHEREAS RCMP members continue to respond to a significant number of calls for service for individuals dealing with mental health challenges and Mental Health Liaison Officers have proven to be an effective resource for assisting vulnerable citizens requiring support;

AND WHEREAS local governments are not provided funding to pay for healthcare and social services and there has been no increase in the Provincial funding model to support these officers responding to chronic/crisis mental health calls:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM advocate for the Province to fund RCMP Mental Health Liaison Officers within local detachments.

3. Provincial Housing Coordinator

WHEREAS the number of people experiencing homelessness or housing instability across the Province has been increasing at an unprecedented rate;

AND WHEREAS the Province has invested considerable funds in supportive housing, the majority of which operate as low barrier facilities making it challenging for individuals in recovery to secure housing options that support an addiction-free lifestyle:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM lobby the Province to establish a Provincial Housing Coordinator to work directly with those persons who are experiencing homelessness and who are not in need of supports, to find suitable housing.

4. Provincial Core Funding for Evolving Public Libraries

WHEREAS core funding for public libraries in British Columbia has remained unchanged since 2009, limiting their ability to expand and evolve their programming as demand for their services increases;

AND WHEREAS the operational requirements of public libraries increasingly require significant and diverse resources to provide front-line community services, including supporting patrons with mental health and addiction issues as well as barriers to housing, providing critical locations of refuge during extreme weather events, providing services to new Canadians, and supporting the process of reconciliation with Indigenous peoples;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that AVICC call on the provincial government to recognize the evolving and challenging situation for public libraries as well as their unique role as community spaces, and increase annual core funding for libraries to \$30 million in keeping with the request made by the BC Public Library Partners and the recommendation of the province's Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this increase in core funding be increased on a yearly basis in keeping with cost of living and inflationary pressures.

5. Emergency Shelters & Compliance with BC Building Code & BC Fire Code

Staff recommendation

WHEREAS many communities are experiencing a crisis-level influx of homeless individuals and the existence of emergency shelters is critical to addressing the safety of people experiencing homelessness;

AND WHEREAS, due to the urgent nature of the need and the lack of suitable building stock in many communities, emergency shelters are frequently operating from buildings that do not meet the major occupancy classification requirements of the BC Building Code, nor the requirements of the BC Fire Code, placing local governments at risk of incurring liability if they do not enforce the codes and risking shutting down emergency shelters if they do enforce the codes:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province work with the Building Safety Standards Branch to establish some reasonable variances to the BC Building Code and BC Fire Code to enable emergency shelters to remain open.]

Once Council provides direction on the resolutions they would like to bring forward to AVICC, the required supporting backgrounders will be prepared. The resolutions will be brought forward to the 2024-FEB-5 Regular Council meeting for endorsement.

Resolutions endorsed at the 2024 AVICC Annual General Meeting will be forwarded to the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) convention for consideration and debate unless they are regional in nature.

OPTIONS

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council:
 - a. provide direction regarding the resolutions proposed by members of Council and,
 - b. direct staff to submit the following resolution to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities for consideration at their 2020 Annual General Meeting:

WHEREAS many communities are experiencing a crisis-level influx of homeless individuals and the existence of emergency shelters is critical to addressing the safety of people experiencing homelessness;

AND WHEREAS, due to the urgent nature of the need and the lack of suitable building stock in many communities, emergency shelters are frequently operating from buildings that do not meet the major occupancy classification requirements of the BC Building Code, nor the requirements of the BC Fire Code, placing local governments at risk of incurring liability if they do not enforce the codes and risking shutting down emergency shelters if they do enforce the codes:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM request the Province work with the Building Safety Standards Branch to establish some reasonable variances to the BC Building Code and BC Fire Code to enable emergency shelters to remain open.

- The advantages of this option: The resolutions approved by Council will be forwarded to AVICC within the deadline and assist in Council's advocacy efforts.
 - The disadvantages of this option: None identified
 - Financial Implications: None identified
2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide alternate direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- The Association of Vancouver Island Coastal Communities is held from April 12-14, 2024 and provides an opportunity for local governments to advocate on important topics with other levels of government and agencies.
- The deadline to submit resolutions is February 7, 2024.
- Four resolutions have been proposed by Councillors and one resolution has been put forward by staff for consideration.

Submitted by:

Sheila Gurrie
Director of Legislative Services &
Communications

Concurrence by:

Dale Lindsay
Chief Administrative Officer