

Subject: Only one resolution from the District

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A MESSAGE FROM ERNIE CRIST

When it comes to the UBCM or FCM, the District has gone from a leading position to virtual oblivion. This year the District of North Vancouver submitted only two resolutions to the UNION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA MUNICIPALITIES (UBCM) Convention and one of them is mine. I submitted it in response to a request from the BC Ambulance Service.

It simply asks that the Union of BC Municipalities request the provincial government to maintain a province wide integrated BC Ambulance Service that is adequately funded by the Province and that provides the best possible training for emergency paramedics. You could call it a motherhood resolution but there is no question in my mind that if this resolution had not been in the form of a request from the Ambulance Service, the motion would have either not been seconded for debate and/or it would have been defeated.

Some of the more notorious witch hunters on District Council - most of whom were endorsed by the same civic parties, albeit under two separate names in two consecutive elections, would surely find excuses to nix them. The second resolution was really a request from West Vancouver for endorsement for one of their resolution which was also endorsed by the City of North Vancouver. It requests that the provincial government provide local government with imposed bylaw fines collection powers through Insurance Corporation of BC for vehicle related violations, and the ability to add unpaid fines to the property tax roll, where appropriate, for property-related violations. In the rationale for the motion it states that the new system for managing bylaws violations would not be very useful to local government if it could not collect the revenue.

The total number of resolutions submitted by all municipalities to the UBCM this year is roughly 200. The debate around them provides an excellent platform to raise local government concerns and bring them to the attention of Senior levels of Government. At one time the District submitted far more resolutions in any given year - indeed we were in the forefront in the struggle for ongoing municipal reforms.

What is true of the UBCM is also true for the FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES (FCM). Resolutions to both the UBCM and FCM have to be sent by Council as a whole. It is up to an individual member of Council to write a resolution. If passed by Council, it will subsequently be submitted to the relevant convention.

To all intents and purposes I have stopped bothering since it has become obvious that, however timely and relevant, Council will prevent ANY OF MY RESOLUTIONS from going forward if only out of general principles. I stopped because it is not only an exercise in futility but it is also humiliating to listen to people whose level of understanding is based purely on political bias. Being independent is costly. Indeed the Mayor, following the previous election set the stage for lowering the general level when he proposed that henceforth no member of Council (read Crist) may introduce and/or explain a motion to the public unless it is seconded by another member of Council first. Members of District Council may not be aware of the significance of the resolutions they are voting against but at least they have the power to stop them. Voting against a resolution is obviously simpler than writing one.

It could be that it gives them a feeling of importance they could not achieve otherwise, or maybe it is jealousy, or it could simply be in line with the District's unofficial policy of reducing everything to the lowest possible denominator so as to be uniformly incompetent. Whatever the reason, it works - another triumph for mediocrity.

The function of the UBCM is precisely to deal with ideas submitted from its members. The District is a member as are most of BC's municipalities. It is up to the Convention to decide whether resolutions are relevant or not. As it happens the resolution on the Ambulance Service was endorsed by the resolutions committee which meets prior to the convention. There would be no other justification for the UBCM to exist. In practical terms the District only submitted a single resolution this year - a far cry from the leading role the District used to play when our municipality was known throughout BC for its NEW and progressive ideas around a wide spectrum of community issues.



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