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**Sent:** Tuesday, April 16, 2024 11:39:55 AM  
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**Subject:** FCM Update for RMA District 5

Hi Kevin and Gene,

I just wanted to pass along a written report for RMA District 5 on the last set of FCM Board meetings that took place in March in Prince George BC that I was able to attend the week of March 4 to 8. Feel free to share this as you would like. The board meeting itself was held on March 7, 2024, with a number of committee meetings, and virtual meetings taking place earlier in the week, as well as the prior week virtually via Zoom.

The FCM meetings that took place in March are a busy time of year as the federal government is preparing the federal budget. The meetings in March featured a number of committee meetings, a larger meeting of Committee of the Whole, presentations from FCM's executive, senior management and staff, outlining the current state of FCM's engagement with our strategic priorities, and finally the general board meeting.

If I was to distill the March meetings into one message, it would be the concerted push by board and committee members for better federal infrastructure support in the context of Canada's record growth, and the need to move towards the adoption of a Municipal Growth Framework. I should note that these meetings were held in advance of Premier Smith's Bill 18 that would give the Government of Alberta the power to vet all federal funds before they can reach municipalities like us.

During the Board of Directors meeting, a number of resolutions were adopted by the board:

1. These include resolutions on immediate federal government support for asylum claimants in municipalities.

Link to resolution: <https://fcmresolutions.powerappsportals.com/en-US/ResolutionDetails/?id=4c749494-34e5-ee11-a204-6045bd61cd59&return=%2Fen-US%2FResolutions%2F%3Fkeyword%3DAsylum%20Claimants%20>

1. A second resolution calling for support for Ukrainian refugees and populations fleeing conflicts.

Link to resolution: <https://fcmresolutions.powerappsportals.com/en-US/ResolutionDetails/?id=daa77127-35e5-ee11-a204-6045bd61cd59&return=%2Fen-US%2FResolutions%2F%3Fkeyword%3Dfleeing%20conflict>

1. A third resolution that was adopted is asking for improved reporting guidelines involving oil spills.

Link to resolution: <https://fcmresolutions.powerappsportals.com/en-US/ResolutionDetails/?id=2e15827b-35e5-ee11-a204-6045bd61cd59&return=%2Fen-US%2FResolutions%2F%3Fkeyword%3DPipeline%20Spill%20Reporting%20Regulations>

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## **Committee Meetings**

### **Rural Forum**

Good discussion was had at the rural forum meeting, with forum members recommending to the full FCM board to adopt a new policy through an addition to the Rural Economic Development policy statement: supporting transportation connectivity under the rural lens policy statement. This issue came about from the withdrawal of bus service by Greyhound that has negatively impacted the connectivity to rural communities.

A procedural change that took place was a change that will allow (following a discussion) for members to vote for chairs and vice-chairs for the committee immediately following the FCM AGM and not waiting until September to select a board chair. The issue came about this year as we didn't have a committee chair after the former chair was not re-appointed to the FCM board.

There was a discussion on the Canada Community-Building Fund changes and the importance of a dedicated "State of Rural and Northern Canada" paper that would complement FCM's Municipal Growth Framework paper.

Lastly, the Rural Development Network presented on rural homelessness and sustainable housing. This was essentially the same report RMA received through our housing report in 2023.

### **Social Economic Development**

The committee received updates from the chair on FCM's Budget 2024 advocacy regarding housing and homelessness, as well as updates on the 2023 Fall Economic Statement, immigration, and reconciliation. The committee then recommended the board incorporate into standing policy one expiring resolution on expanding the rural and remote stream of the Reaching Home program.

The Committee considered four new resolutions. Resolutions on immediate federal support for asylum claimants, support for Ukrainian refugees and other populations fleeing conflict as well as federal support for foodbanks were recommended to be adopted as FCM policy (They were later accepted at the full board meeting).

The last resolution on a federal Guaranteed Livable Basic Income program was recommended to not be adopted as FCM policy. This discussion was led by groups from both British Columbia and Quebec. After a lengthy discussion, with concerns raised (including by me) with individuals participating in the labor force being forced to

pay additional taxes to fund a Universal Basic Income for other people who aren't participating in the labor market, the motion was defeated by roughly 85% of the members being opposed (including the entire Alberta delegation) to advocating for a universal basic income to the federal government.

Next, the committee received a presentation from the Y-Foundation in Finland on a "Housing First Approach to Homelessness." Finally, the Committee heard an update from FCM staff on FCM's Municipal Growth Framework with a focus on its recommendations on ending chronic homelessness through a Housing First approach.

### **Community Safety and Crime Prevention**

Committee members were briefed by staff regarding the progress of Public Safety Canada's assessment of the RCMP Contract Policing Program, along with updates on the recent enactment of two significant pieces of federal legislation concerning firearms and bail reform.

The primary issue that was brought to our attention was the problem the RCMP is having with recruiting as the recruitment numbers are well below replacement levels, and this problem will be felt at the local detachments as they are not getting enough recruits to replace the retirements. This issue may end up leading to the RCMP choosing to pull back from local policing if this problem is not turned around quickly.

The committee considered a new resolution on Strengthening RCMP Recruitment and Retention and recommended to the board that it be forwarded for consideration at FCM's 2024 Annual Conference in Calgary.

The committee approved recommendations for a new FCM policy position on Auto Theft in response to the recent alarming rise in vehicle thefts across the country linked to organized crime. This has been followed up with the local RCMP in Strathcona County. I was assured that it is being monitored in rural Alberta, but at least as of now, it is not an issue to the degree they've found in the big cities. It will continue to be monitored though as farm equipment and trucks could prove to be very lucrative to criminal elements if it becomes an epidemic like it is in the big cities. I recommend local RMA reps follow up on this with their local constabularies.

Lastly, the committee received a presentation from the Toronto Community Crisis Service, showcasing an example of an innovative service delivery model for responding to mental health crises as an alternative to police-led approaches.

### **Municipal Finance, Infrastructure and Transportation**

Committee members received staff updates on the Municipal Growth Framework discussion paper, the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) negotiations, and the Permanent Public Transit Fund (PPTF). Discussion on these issues focussed primarily on the need for predictable, sustainable funding that does not need onerous application

processes that have made applying for funds from some smaller municipalities more difficult than the funds are worth.

The committee recommended the board adopt a policy for action on the impacts of inflation on infrastructure projects and deferred another proposed policy on indoor air quality back to staff for further consideration.

The committee also recommended the board incorporate into standing policy one expiring resolution on federal support for inter-community passenger bus service.

The committee heard a presentation from Statistics Canada on municipal data projects. Statistics Canada is seeking municipal input on a new feasibility study on the performance of municipal drinking water assets.

### **Finance and Audit Committee**

The committee approved the budget for 2024-2025 for both the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Green Municipal Fund (GMF). The financial results, including detailed balance sheet variances year over year, for both FCM and GMF up to December 31, 2023, were received. The Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP) quarterly results were presented, as the program prepares to come to an end in October. The meeting culminated in a recommendation related to the GMF investment committee and the revised Credit Risk Policy.

### **Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development**

The committee received the chair's report which included updates on 2024 Budget Advocacy, Canada Community Building Fund Negotiations, Canada's Biodiversity Commitments, and staff engagement in events including COP28. The committee then recommended the board adopt policy on increasing pipeline spill reporting regulations and the creation of a biodiversity protection and restoration fund for municipalities.

Afterwards, the committee then received presentations from our RMA President Paul McLaughlin, on nature-based solutions and multi-solving, and Antoine Tardif, Mayor of Victoriaville on Victoriaville's similar protected lands initiative.

The committee then received a presentation from Chris Boivin, Chief Development Officer for the Green Municipal Fund (GMF), on two new GMF programs launching this year: Local Leadership in Climate Adaptation (LLCA) and Growing Canada's Community Canopies (GCCC). The committee then entered breakout groups, where they held discussions on natural infrastructure and nature-based solutions in their communities.

### **Réseau Francophone - Francophone Communities**

While I did sit in on this meeting, it has limited relevancy to us here with RMA. Members of the Réseau francophone received a presentation from the Montréal Newcomer Office (BINAM) on the Montréal Inclusive at Work strategy, which prioritizes the economic

integration of immigrants. The Réseau's members also had the opportunity to hear about Montréal's policy on access to city services without fear of consequences for persons without legal status.

Following the resignation of the Mayor of Gatineau, the members discussed the numerous resignations that have occurred in Quebec and questioned if this wave of resignations among municipal officials is Canada-wide, or whether the problem is unique to Quebec, and expressed a desire for FCM to gather statistics on this.

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### **Additional Committee Meetings**

There were additional committee meetings that occurred, that I did not directly participate in and these notes are just gathered from the briefings that I received from FCM administration.

### **Governance Committee**

The committee received a staff update on the new board portal platform, which is expected to launch in spring 2024. The committee then discussed in some depth the issue of moving from the current 1-year board term, to a 2-year board term, and the various implications of different paths towards this end, including the need for bylaw changes. The 2-year term would not apply to Table Officers. The Committee recommended to the board to adopt, in principle, a move towards a 2-year term.

### **Human Resources Committee**

The committee received the report on Human Resources at FCM. This report included updates on the Senior Leadership Team, current staff data, staff salary increase for FY 2024/2025. A progress report on key projects was also included. The 2024/2024 objectives and key result areas for the human resources function were shared.

### **Anti-Racism, Equity and Inclusion**

The committee chair reflected on challenges encountered since its merger and emphasized the need for systemic change, proposing an educational shift towards intersectional anti-racism competencies. The outcomes of the Canadian Women in Local Leadership (CanWILL) program were then presented, focusing on the importance of campaign schools and partnerships in enhancing minority participation in elections. An assessment of FCM's AREI practices were also presented, identifying strengths and areas for improvement. An update was provided on the development of the UNDRIP Policy Guide. The meeting concluded with a rapid-fire discussion on local reconciliation and AREI initiatives, aiming to gather insights for future meetings.

### **Elections Committee**

The committee reviewed the newly developed Board Director Elections Policy, including some changes taking effect with this new policy. These include allowing for more opportunities for candidates to distribute campaign materials; reversing the previous practice of sharing only the names of winning candidates, sharing the vote results for

each candidate; and no longer accepting candidates from the floor of the AGM. The committee also recommended its new Terms of Reference for approval to the Executive Committee.

### **Elections Readiness Working Group**

The Working Group received staff updates on the current political context including an expected tight federal budget for 2024. The group also discussed how federal parties receive FCM's advocacy - both publicly and in behind-the-scenes conversations. FCM members discussed the importance of engaging their local MPs throughout the year as well as the toolkit for the new FCM campaign on infrastructure and the Municipal Growth Framework. The group also raised the lack of knowledge of how municipalities function as regards facilitating the housing supply and that local governments are inaccurately blamed for problems outside of their scope of responsibilities. FCM staff noted that there are infographics and data in the works to counter this narrative using concrete examples from our members. Members were encouraged to share local examples they might have to support this work, such as data on permits issued relative to builds completed.

### **Northern and Remote Forum**

Speakers from Gwich'in Council International and Parks Canada presented on emergency management in Canada's north. Forum members voted to defer a decision on provincial north representation to the fall meeting. Members voted to support a change to by-law 6.04 and their Forum Terms of Reference that states the Forum Chair and Vice-Chairs will rotate on an annual basis among the three Territorial Association Presidents following FCM's Annual General Meeting. Forum members recommended the board adopt a new policy through an addition to the Northern and Remote Social and Economic Development policy statement: to support a robust northern healthcare workforce. The forum supported a ministerial letter to be sent on this issue as well.

### **Final Thoughts**

Overall, Prince George was an excellent host for the meetings with some interesting study tours in the area, including meeting with the organizing committee of the 2024 Para-Biathlon World Championships which were being held at the same time. We saw delegations for several different countries around town and it certainly had the Prince George busy while we were there. The other study tour was a guided tour of the Two Rivers Gallery and an insightful Low-Carbon Leadership tour.

FCM's Board of Directors wrapped up this March meeting with strong direction given to FCM staff on what we will be advocating for in the federal budget.

While I remain dubious to municipalities seeing much progress for our priorities in this upcoming federal budget, continued advocacy is required.

FCM and the FCM Board of Directors are fully engaged with our priorities in the run-up to our Annual Conference and Trade Show in Calgary in June 2024.

There will once again be an Alberta room that will be organized by RMA that we should attend while we are in Calgary.

Thanks,

Robert Parks

Councillor - Strathcona County

RMA Member - District 5 / FCM Committee Rep

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RESOLUTION TITLE

## Immediate Federal Government Support Required for Asylum Claimants in Municipalities

MEETING YEAR

2024

MEETING

Board of Directors March 2024

SPONSOR(S)

- City of Hamilton

DATE OF EXPIRY

March 07, 2027

RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, municipalities have been at the forefront of supporting asylum claimants and refugees and providing essential settlement and housing services;

**WHEREAS**, the rapid and sharp increase of asylum claims in Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton and other municipalities, particularly in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), are putting municipal governments under significant pressure;

**WHEREAS**, without federal action, asylum claimants will not have permanent shelter and housing options once they leave temporary accommodations, and the current crisis will continue to grow;-

**WHEREAS**, refugees and asylum claimants make up over 40% of Hamilton's population in shelters, and is creating massive pressure on Hamilton's already overwhelmed shelter system that is under resourced to meet the unique and complex needs of asylum claimants;

**WHEREAS**, the supports provided to municipalities to receive asylum claimants are often short-term and focused on emergency response and shelter, but do not ensure permanent settlement and housing options for asylum claimants, including a focus on homeless prevention and long-term stability;

**WHEREAS**, the crisis of asylum claimants has inextricable links to the housing, homelessness and mental health crises in Canada and the immense pressure on municipal shelter, transitional and supportive housing systems;

**WHEREAS**, equity-deserving communities are disproportionately represented in asylum claimant populations seeking immediate necessary support which can also lead to further stigmatization and experiences of racism, discrimination, and harassment;

**WHEREAS**, action on behalf of the federal government and investing in supports to combat racism, specifically anti-Black racism, is imperative as asylum seekers commonly face racism and other forms of discrimination and hate;

**WHEREAS**, municipalities across Canada are committed to fostering diverse, inclusive and welcoming communities for all individuals seeking asylum and tackling anti-Black racism and other forms of racism;

**WHEREAS**, Hamilton, Toronto and other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) have been advocating for



additional federal supports for asylum claimants over the past year;

**RESOLVED**, That the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) be requested to strongly urge the federal government to take immediate action to support asylum claimants in Canadian municipalities by taking the following actions:

- (a) Immediately provide financial support and reimbursements directly to municipalities to address the immediate short-term needs of asylum claimants and refugees through top-ups to the Canada Housing Benefit and the Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP);
- (b) An ongoing commitment of Interim Housing Assistance Program (IHAP) funding to address estimated annual costs for refugees in 2024, and commit to future funding until the demand for shelter returns to sustainable levels;
- (c) Collaborate with municipal governments to develop a long-term strategy to enhance capacity of local governments to effectively support asylum claimants and refugees, including through the development of tripartite agreements between municipalities, provinces and territories and the federal government to enhance cross-government coordination in providing immediate supports to asylum claimants;
- (d) Recognizing that the rise in asylum seeking populations pursuing refuge in Canada is occurring in the midst of a housing crisis, provide additional funding through National Housing Strategy programs and the Canada Housing Benefit to support asylum claimants in the medium- and long-term;
- (e) That the federal government broaden the eligibility for federally-funded settlement services to include asylum claimants who currently can only access provincially-funded services and also that settlement services be funded to support newcomers with housing searches as at present they mostly limited to orientation, language instruction, and employment; and
- (f) Extend and make permanent the Rapid Housing Initiative with another intake in 2024/25 to enable municipalities to invest in supportive housing on an urgent basis and relieve pressure on the shelter system, and work with the provinces and territories to ensure that supportive units have wrap-around health and social supports and long-term operating funding.

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RESOLUTION TITLE

## Support for Ukrainian Refugees and Populations Fleeing Conflict

MEETING YEAR

2024

MEETING

Board of Directors March 2024

SPONSOR(S)

- Regional Municipality of Halton

DATE OF EXPIRY

March 07, 2027

RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the ongoing war in Ukraine, millions of Ukrainians have been required to flee and seek safety in countries around the world. Ukrainians began arriving in Canada in February 2022, many with plans to stay with friends or family on a temporary basis. Since then, Ukrainians are arriving in Canada on an ongoing basis without these informal supports requiring higher levels of coordinated federal, provincial and municipal support for housing, emergency financial assistance and other social services; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Government has classed Ukrainian arrivals as “visitors” under its Canada-Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel (CUAET) immigration stream; and

**WHEREAS**, classifying Ukrainian arrivals as “visitors” instead of “refugees” means that Ukrainians do not qualify for the same financial, housing and settlement supports that refugees would normally receive upon arrival in Canada, including 12 months of income and housing support typically provided to refugees by the Federal Government to assist with resettlement; and

**WHEREAS**, classifying Ukrainian arrivals as “visitors” also means that they are not eligible to apply for or receive longer-term federally and provincially funded housing supports including social housing, rent supplement programs and portable housing allowances. Ukrainian arrivals are only currently eligible to receive short-term supports made available by municipalities such as temporary emergency shelter and one-time financial assistance programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Federal Government has activated a 14-day temporary hotel accommodation program for Ukrainian arrivals, the AMEX Program, which is insufficient to meet the current needs. Ukrainian arrivals are ending up in municipal shelter programs often without notice to municipalities and/or are transitioning into municipal hotel environments once their stay in the federal hotel program ends; and

**WHEREAS**, on May 23, 2022 the Federal Government announced one-time financial support of \$3,000 per adult and \$1,500 per child for Ukrainians with a valid work permit, study permit, temporary resident permit or visitor record under the CUAET immigration stream; and

**WHEREAS**, despite the significant costs incurred by municipalities to create emergency shelter and financial housing assistance

programs to meet the needs of Ukrainian arrivals, no dedicated federal support has been made available to assist municipalities with providing essential supports and to help sustain this response into the future. Without urgent funding support from the Federal Government, Ukrainian arrivals with limited financial resources and barriers to employment are often at imminent risk of homelessness; and

**WHEREAS**, costs incurred by municipalities establishing similar emergency settlement programs for other populations in the past have not always been reimbursed by the Federal Government; and

**WHEREAS**, municipalities have been required to establish emergency support programs to help respond to the increasing influx of various populations fleeing international conflicts. A long-term national strategy with a strong federal-municipal partnership is needed to support municipalities with this ever-increasing work; and

**WHEREAS**, as the Federal Government looks to initiate a review of immigration policy and programs, it is critical to meaningfully engage municipalities to ensure they are equipped to provide the supports needed for newcomers to successfully integrate into communities and to ensure that local housing supply and infrastructure including social infrastructure (i.e. re-settlement supports) are coordinated to match the number of refugees and Ukrainian arrivals that are entering Canada as well as to support immigration across the country.; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that Halton Region calls on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to urgently request the Federal Government to:

- Provide dedicated funding to municipalities to continue to provide housing services and support to Ukrainian arrivals and other populations fleeing conflict including full reimbursement of costs incurred to date.
- Initiate a policy change to re-classify Ukrainian arrivals as refugees and/or request the Federal and Provincial Governments work together to allow Ukrainian arrivals to access the same programs, services and supports as refugees, including eligibility for longer-term federal-provincial housing programs (i.e. application for social housing, rent supplement instruments and portable housing allowances).
- Improve coordination, communication and transparency with municipalities working to resettle Ukrainian arrivals and other populations to ensure they are equipped and financially resourced to provide the supports needed for newcomers to successfully integrate into communities.
- Develop a long-term national strategy to support municipalities in responding to and providing supports to populations fleeing areas of conflict that recognizes the true costs of supporting these populations and does not leave municipalities to unfairly shoulder these costs alone.
- Ensure that local housing supply and infrastructure including social infrastructure are coordinated to match the number of refugees and Ukrainian arrivals that are entering Canada as well as to support immigration across the country.

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RESOLUTION TITLE

## Pipeline Spill Reporting Regulations

MEETING YEAR

2024

MEETING

Board of Directors March 2024

SPONSOR(S)

- Ville de Vaudreuil-Dorion

DATE OF EXPIRY

March 07, 2027

RESOLUTION

**WHEREAS**, Health Canada defines a "large crude oil spill" as a spill of more than 208 litres; and

**WHEREAS**, the *Canadian Energy Regulator Onshore Pipeline Regulations* defines an "incident" which must be reported to the Canadian Energy Regulator as a pipeline leak of more than 1,500 litres (1.5 m<sup>3</sup>); and

**WHEREAS**, these documents [from Health Canada] recommend evacuation over a 300-metre radius after a large spill due to the risk of fire, but there is no obligation to disclose leaks of between 208 and 1,500 litres; and

**WHEREAS**, the Government of Quebec relies on the federal statute that requires pipeline operators to only disclose leaks of more than 1,500 litres; and

**WHEREAS**, municipalities in Quebec are not informed, and are unaware of the scope of most pipeline leaks that occur on their territory or the exact quantities of spilled hydrocarbons; and

**WHEREAS**, upon a spill, there is also a risk of intoxication since crude oil contains hydrogen sulphide and between 0.5% and 3% of toxic volatile hydrocarbons such as BTEX (benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene and xylene); and

**WHEREAS**, a spill may cause many health problems among the population; and

**WHEREAS**, dozens of millions of litres of oil are transported on a daily basis through pipelines in Quebec; and

**WHEREAS**, there are five major pipelines across the territory of Vaudreuil-Soulanges; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, the Government of Canada be asked to amend the *Canadian Energy Regulator Onshore Pipeline Regulations* to change the definition of a pipeline incident by lowering the current threshold of 1,500 litres to 208 litres, as recommended in Health Canada Guidelines for the management of crude oil incidents.

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