

REPORT

Legislative Services

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: February 24, 2025

From: Hanieh Berg
Corporate Officer
File: 05.1035.10
Item #: 2025-60

Subject: **Response to Notice of Motion: Lower Mainland Local Government Association Tracking and Reporting of Votes on Motions and Resolutions**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the proposed resolution titled “Tracking and Reporting of Votes on Motions and Resolutions” included as Attachment 1 to the staff report titled “Response to Notice of Motion: Lower Mainland Local Government Association Tracking and Reporting of Votes on Motions and Resolutions” from the Corporate Officer, dated February 24, 2025, be endorsed for submission to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association.

PURPOSE

To report back on the proposed resolution regarding tracking and reporting of votes on motions and resolutions to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association in accordance with the Notice of Motion policy.

BACKGROUND

At the Regular Council meeting on September 9, 2024, Council adopted the following resolution:

WHEREAS Local Government Associations, the Union of BC Municipalities, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities advocate for issues that impact their member municipalities; and

WHEREAS municipal Mayors and Councillors are financially supported to attend these conferences in order to advocate on behalf of their local constituents, yet there is no way for constituents to know how their elected representatives vote on motions and resolutions;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of New Westminster submit the following resolution to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Lower Mainland Local Government Association begins tracking and reporting how attendees vote on motions and resolutions and that they submit a motion to UBCM and FCM advocating for those organizations to do the same.

DISCUSSION

The Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) is a non-profit organization that represents local governments and regional districts in the Lower Mainland. Each year, the LMLGA Executive calls for resolutions to be considered at its annual Conference and Annual General Meeting (AGM). This year its Conference is scheduled for April 29th to May 1st in Whistler and deadline for resolutions is March 5th.

Process for Voting on Resolutions

Prior to the convention, LMLGA releases its Annual Report and Resolutions Book to its member municipalities. The Resolutions Book lists all resolutions submitted by member jurisdictions by its deadline. Proposed resolutions are considered first by the LMLGA Resolutions Committee, who then either recommends endorsement or provides no recommendation on endorsement.

The LMLGA has generally held a resolutions session immediately following the conclusion of its AGM at the Conference. On average, approximately 50 to 65 resolutions are considered at the resolutions session. At the resolutions session, all elected officials of member jurisdictions (approximately 150 individuals) may vote on resolutions submitted by all other LMLGA members. Votes are not weighted (i.e., each elected official is permitted one vote, despite the population of the municipality it represents) and proxy votes are not permitted. When the question on a motion is called, the vote is determined by the Chair of the Resolutions Committee as well as a Professional Registered Parliamentarian by a show of voting cards raised by those in favour; votes are then announced as either “Endorsed” or “Not Endorsed” depending on whether a majority was achieved. In the event a vote is unclear, the LMLGA President and the Professional Registered Parliamentarian conduct a hand count.

Public Accountability & Transparency

The LMLGA’s AGM and Conference is a yearly event for elected officials from Lower Mainland local governments; it provides a venue to debate regional issues and advance advocacy efforts to the Union of BC Municipalities. Costs associated with a Council member’s attendance at the AGM and Conference are paid for by the City of New Westminster in accordance with the City’s Council Travel and Expense Policy.

There are a number of legislative service best practices that are standard throughout local governments in BC; they advance the democratic process and serve to build public trust and confidence in government as they support the principles of open, transparent and accessible decision making processes. However, these processes are not common practice

at annual local government conferences, namely the LMLGA, the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). For instance, minutes are not recorded at the resolutions session at the LMLGA Conference, meaning that there is no record of the number of elected officials or which elected officials were in attendance; quorum is not defined and there is no record of how individual elected officials voted – in favour or against. Moreover, there are no procedural rules surrounding voting, i.e., how a vote is recorded if a member abstains. As noted previously, votes are simply captured as “Endorsed” or “Not Endorsed” depending on whether a majority was achieved; as there are no quorum requirements, the number to reach majority can fluctuate greatly. The ambiguity of procedural rules at the resolutions session does not lend itself to the principles of transparency and accountability, which member jurisdictions’ constituents should be afforded.

In 2011, the UBCM Executive submitted a resolution titled “[Electronic Voting at UBCM Convention](#)” for consideration by its members at its annual convention, which was endorsed. The UBCM has the capabilities of electronic voting, however it is not regularly utilized.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None.

NEXT STEPS

Subject to Council-approval, the proposed resolution, included as Attachment 1, will be submitted to the LMLGA in accordance with their resolution submission deadline and criteria. Should the proposed resolution be endorsed, LMLGA will submit it to the Union of BC Municipalities for consideration at its annual convention scheduled for September 22nd to 26th.

CONCLUSION

This report responds to Council’s referral to submit a resolution to the LMLGA regarding the need for tracking and reporting of how elected officials vote on resolutions at annual local government conferences to increase openness, transparency and accountability for constituents.

ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1 – Proposed Resolution to LMLGA: Tracking and Reporting of Votes on Motions and Resolutions

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
Hanieh Berg, Corporate Officer

This report was approved by:
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer