

## Chair report up to & including September 21,2024

Firstly, I would like to congratulate Director Al Richmond on receiving his long term service award at the recent UBCM banquet. After last years hiccup, it was great to see the Board members who attended UBCM, at the banquet to share in the celebration. Thank you, Director Richmond, for your many years of service and the work that you continue to do on behalf of your community.

Despite the writ being dropped the day following UBCM, we were able to have several staff meetings, which are longer than 15 minutes, and as staff often don't change even if there is a change in government, these meetings this year were especially valuable. Most of them I feel were successful, with our concerns either being addressed at the meeting, or conversations were promised at a later date on the issue. I also attended a few other meetings with other RD Chairs that came with short notice and were more in the form of support. Emergency Management conversations in the hallways were certainly front and center with the majority of the elected officials from the center and northern parts of the Province.

On September 7<sup>th</sup> along with Director LeBourdais, Mayor Rathor & Councillor Moses, I attended the WLFN Pow Wow Grand entry, and watched several of the competitor dances. As always, the regalia was outstanding along with the dancing and how welcoming everyone was to see us there. These events are such an integral part of our Indigenous neighbors and friends, and it is essential that we learn these traditions, and accept the invitations when they are given.

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, Mayor Shane Brien of the District of Houston, coordinated a call with representatives from other Municipalities and

RD's to discuss the forestry issues in their community and others, affected by mill closures and the lumber leaving their respective communities to be processed in a different area. Some of the issues raised were –

- The current stumpage system is not working
- Expansion of Community forests, especially when licensees mills in the area close down but their wood tenure is still in the area
- No money coming to the community the wood is harvested from, when their local mill has shut down
- Tenure control by region not licensee
- Focus on carbon captive, forestry is a renewable resource.

A media blitz on this subject was held at UBCM on September 18<sup>th</sup>, which unfortunately I was unable to attend due to conflicting appointments, but I understand it was well attended.

On September 13<sup>th</sup>, CAO Daly and I had a Teams call with representatives from EMCR and WLRS regarding the Chilcotin river landslide, and the subsequent letter we sent to both ministries. They certainly heard and I think understood our frustration with the process, and I had several more conversations with Provincial representatives at UBCM including Minister Cullen and RD Chairs. I continue to request an after event debrief with EMCR and WLRS after the election as it did not happen before the writ was dropped.

The mental health wellness of elected officials has come to the forefront, both at a session at UBCM and a webinar I attended prior to UBCM with mental health experts. From the UBCM session a peer group will be formed to assist those elected officials that are experiencing some mental stress, in the form of being able to talk with others that understand the stress of public office, not only put

on by ourselves and our desire to succeed, but also by our constituents when issues do not go their way, or they vent their frustration with us on issues that we maybe have no control over.

Respectfully submitted,

Margo A. Wagner (Chair)