



AMM President Ralph Groening – Speaking Notes

Bill 2: *The Municipal Amendment Act* (*Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members*)

On behalf of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM), I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present municipal priorities related to Bill 2: *The Municipal Amendment Act* (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members).

I will begin my presentation today by providing a brief overview of the AMM, then discuss how Minister Wharton and Manitoba Municipal Relations staff have extensively consulted with our organization, Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association (MMAA), and municipalities across Manitoba prior to the introduction of this legislation, and share our perspective regarding Bill 2.

The AMM was formed in 1999 as a result of a merger between the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (UMM) and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities (MAUM).

Our organization is independent and non-partisan, and our mission is to identify and address the needs and concerns of our members in order to achieve strong and effective municipal government.



Our membership consists of all of Manitoba's 137 incorporated municipalities, including the City of Winnipeg.

Let me be as clear as possible – the AMM takes the issues that were brought forward by our members which prompted this proposed legislation very seriously and we are committed to promoting respectful workplace policies and practices for all of our members.

Harassment and bullying have no place in the workplace, including in and outside Council chambers and municipal offices.

We commend the local Councils who highlighted these issues by sponsoring various resolutions, which were debated and overwhelmingly supported by our members at previous Conventions.

These resolutions called on the provincial government to provide municipalities with a more comprehensive process for addressing continuous breaches of the Code of Conduct by a Council member as well as strengthen the powers of censuring when a Council member is clearly in contravention of the Code of Conduct.



Minister Wharton and Manitoba Municipal Relations took immediate steps to address these resolutions through extensive consultations with our organization, elected officials, and municipal administrators.

In particular, the provincial government committed to review *The Municipal Act* to identify opportunities to strengthen municipalities' ability to enforce violations of their Codes of Conduct.

In-person consultations with our members were conducted throughout the province at our June District meetings as well as through a questionnaire which resulted in hundreds of responses from our members.

This questionnaire focused on five topics: mandatory training for council members, defined standards and values, a process for dealing with complaints, sanctions and penalties, and an appeal process.

Based on the questionnaire responses, the vast majority of respondents indicated that maintaining Council autonomy is very important with respect to the process for dealing with complaints and imposing sanctions.



Moreover, approximately 90% of respondents supported the notion of mandatory training for Council members within a specified time frame.

We understand the Province of Manitoba has committed to developing and providing the mandatory training course and materials.

The delivery of this training via an online format or portal would certainly be advisable in order to prevent a cumbersome process and eliminate the possibility of any added financial costs due to travelling.

The standardization of Codes of Conduct by defining certain content and minimum standards and values is a positive step forward.

In addition, more than two-thirds of survey respondents indicated Council members should have access to an appeals process.

The AMM and MMAA look forward to additional consultations with Manitoba Municipal Relations on key regulations, including the process dealing with complaints, the appeals process as well as sanctions/remedial measures.



In closing, the AMM would like to express its appreciation to Minister Wharton and Manitoba Municipal Relations staff once again for listening to the concerns raised by our members and taking immediate steps to consult and propose a new framework going forward.

We also appreciate the efforts undertaken by Manitoba Municipal Relations staff to attend our annual Convention in November 2018 and explain these proposed changes directly to our members.

The AMM will continue to work with the MMAA and Manitoba Municipal Relations closely to ensure the needs and concerns of our members continue to be heard and addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

If you have any questions for me, I would be happy to answer them.