

President Ralph Groening AMM Speaking Notes

Welcome Remarks/Virtual JDM & COVID19

- Hello Everyone, it is great to be here today.
- The June District Meetings are always a special time for the AMM, and I am personally very thankful for the opportunity to serve our great organization.
- As you are aware, the spread of COVID-19 caused the AMM to cancel our major events this spring, namely the Mayors, Reeves and CAO's meetings and the Municipal Officials Seminar and Trade Show.
- With public health restrictions in place, we believed it was critical to ensure that the June District Meetings continue, especially since this pandemic has resulted in new challenges for all municipalities across Manitoba.
- As we continue to adapt to this environment, I want to express my gratitude to all municipalities and municipal officials.
- I am proud of each one of you for your dedication and commitment to your communities, particularly in the face of new challenges.
- You have made difficult decisions to find efficiencies whether it be by waiving late fees for utility and property tax bills or redeploying staff to other jobs to mitigate the need for layoffs or tax increases.
- However, we recognize the urgency of ensuring municipalities are equipped to continue delivering essential services as you manage on the frontlines.
- That is why the AMM appealed to both orders of government requesting greater financial and economic assistance to support all municipalities across the province affected by COVID-19.

- Our advocacy efforts have resulted in the Province of Manitoba flowing 75 per cent of operating grants to municipalities upfront, with the remaining 25 per cent to follow in the fall.
- Additionally, the Province is increasing infrastructure investments by an additional \$500 million to help restart Manitoba's economy in the wake of the pandemic.
- We will continue to work hard to help find solutions that ensure municipalities receive the necessary supports to continue delivering critical services during and after this pandemic.
- We know that once this pandemic ends, local governments will be at the forefront to lead the economic recovery across the country.
- We will continue to share the latest COVID-19 information with all of you as it becomes available.
- I want to first remind everyone that this year's meetings are a little different in the sense that no resolutions will be debated during the meeting.
- The traditional June 1 deadline was extended to August 1st – so please ensure your resolutions are sent to the AMM office by this date.

2020 Provincial Budget

- Now, I would like to provide a brief update on the 2020 provincial budget.
- After significant delays, the Province tabled 2020 Budget on March 19th, which again maintained municipal operating basket funding at **2016 levels**.
- We know that this four-year freeze does not recognize inflationary increases and continues to increase financial and administrative pressures on all of you.

- We are committed to advocating for a “fair share” for municipalities.
- In fact, the AMM consistently raises this point at every meeting with individual ministers and will continue to raise this point moving forward.
- With that said, Budget 2020 does positively impact municipalities in several areas.
- For instance, the provincial commitment to increase the Payroll Tax thresholds effective January 1, 2021 will provide tax relief to some municipalities.
- A new \$5.7 million fund to help municipalities respond to smaller scale floods and emergency events was announced as well, plus \$6 million in funding for provincial police services agreements, which includes funding for an additional 27 police officers.
- Regrettably, however, Budget 2020 contained no commitment to share cannabis taxation revenues with municipalities despite anticipated provincial budget revenues starting this year.
- Therefore, the AMM will continue to urge the province to include municipalities as participants in revenue-sharing conversations.
- We encourage all municipalities to monitor and track municipal policing and administration costs at the local level to help us more forcefully advocate on this matter moving forward.

AMM-Province Strategic Collaboration Group & Municipal Service Delivery Improvement Program

- Next, I would like to provide a brief update regarding the AMM-Province of Manitoba Strategic Collaboration Working Group.
- In response to our ‘Partners in Growth’ campaign, the AMM and provincial government agreed to establish a joint working group on strategic collaboration to provide recommendations to the Minister of Municipal Relations and the AMM Board of Directors.
- Initial areas of focus include provincial-municipal funding models, sharing efficiency opportunities, continued red tape review of provincial regulations that impact municipalities and shared governance practices.
- In particular, the Working Group has discussed the Municipal Service Delivery Improvement Program, which should hopefully be launched soon.
- The provincial government committed up to \$5 million over the next four years, which includes \$1.25 million in Budget 2020 to provide third party reviews and voluntary audits for municipalities and planning districts wanting to improve services without raising taxes.
- This program will allow municipalities to work with pre-qualified firms to conduct value-for-money reviews and audits to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of funding spent on six key service delivery areas, which include: transportation protection, water and sewer, recreation and culture, planning and general government administration.
- I want to be as clear as possible and provide reassurance to you all – this program is completely voluntary.

- The AMM will continue to monitor the implementation of this program with Manitoba Municipal Relations through the Strategic Collaboration Working Group and will provide updates as they become available.

ICIP2

- Next, I would like to discuss the roll out of *Phase 2 of the Investing in Canada* infrastructure plan.
- As you are aware, Phase 2 of ICIP will see \$1.17 billion in federal funding over the next decade to support Manitoba’s infrastructure needs in four streams: public transit, green infrastructure, community, culture and recreation and northern infrastructure.
- Minister Wharton officially launched the intake for the start of Phase 2 funding over a year ago, on June 3, 2019.
- The AMM is pleased to participate as a member of the Manitoba Local Consultative Committee (MBLCC) which reviews ICIP project submissions and recommends local priorities to the Province of Manitoba for funding under the program.
- On February 21st, the MBLCC met and the AMM provided its feedback to support municipal ICIP applications and stress the importance of municipalities receiving their fair-share of these cost-shared infrastructure dollars.
- To be clear, after this step, the Province then reviews our feedback and makes the ultimate decision regarding which projects get advanced to the federal government.

- Regrettably, the Province has **NOT** yet provided the full list of prioritized projects to the federal government for their approval.
- We have repeatedly urged both the provincial and federal government to immediately expedite approvals so that municipalities can take advantage of our short construction season and grow their communities.
- Naturally, the pace of approvals is very disappointing since your municipalities are on the front lines of the pandemic – all while continuing to deliver essential services to protect Manitobans and local communities!
- Overall, federal dollars must be maximized, and they must be matched by provincial dollars so that we all can take full advantage of growth opportunities.
- Infrastructure projects and other development projects will be critical in the coming months to help fuel economic recovery in our province.
- The AMM will keep you all updated on the outcomes of our discussions and implementation of ICIP2 as it progresses.

DFA Formula Changes

- Lastly, I would like to provide a brief update regarding the recently announced Disaster Financial Assistance (DFA) cost-sharing formula changes.
- The proposed changes will result in municipalities covering the first \$3.25 per capita, up from \$1 per capita, before the new DFA formula applies.
- Under these changes, the Province also announced an optional program for municipalities to redirect funds destined for payments under the provincial-

municipal DFA cost-sharing formula to disaster mitigation and preparedness measures.

- The DFA program would need to first qualify for the federal cost-sharing under the DFAA, in which the Province would then reimburse municipalities for 100% of eligible DFA costs.
- As many Manitoba communities are situated in flood prone areas, the changes to the formula could negatively affect municipalities.
- The AMM believes these changes must be reversed immediately and continues to call on the Province to restore the previous disaster assistance cost-sharing formula.
- Thank you for your attention.

Vice-President Kam Blight AMM Speaking Notes

Bill 48 (The Planning Amendment and City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act)

- Hi everyone, though this meeting looks different this year I have really been looking forward to today.
- I would like to first touch on issues pertaining to Bill 48: *The Planning Amendment and City of Winnipeg Charter Amendment Act*.
- Following the first March 19th reading of Bill 48, the AMM immediately requested a technical briefing.
- As you are aware, on April 9th, all AMM members were invited to participate in a virtual technical briefing with the minister and departmental staff.
- Upon review of this proposed legislation, the AMM identified several negative implications for municipalities, which is why we voiced these concerns to Minister Squires and encouraged you all to do the same.
- Let me be clear, the AMM understands that private sector development plays a significant role in job creation and building sustainable local communities here in Manitoba.
- We continue to support and welcome an approach that fosters economic development and streamlines approvals for growth projects through efficient and transparent processes.
- Everyone here knows that municipalities fuel economic development in Manitoba and we all continue to explore ways to streamline approvals for growth projects.

- However, as these amendments are currently proposed, we remain extremely concerned since the changes will result in increased red tape, significant financial administrative costs and loss of municipal autonomy.
- In its current form, Bill 48 proposes amendments that will establish a new Capital Planning Region which includes the City of Winnipeg and surrounding capital region municipalities as well as the creation of new regional planning boards.
- What remains unclear though is how the regional planning boards will be compromised as well as the potential authority these boards will hold.
- Overall, the AMM believes that creating an additional level of approval for growth projects will not only increase financial pressures but also add red tape for municipalities, which is why we have asked the Province to clearly define the mandate of these potential boards in greater depth.
- Bill 48 also proposes shifting decision-making powers regarding local land use planning away from all elected Councils to the provincially appointed Municipal Board, whose decision would then be final.
- Allowing planning appeals on every Council decision undermines municipal authority and will likely result in a backlog of cases before the Municipal Board.
- Another significant amendment I would like to discuss regarding Bill 48 is the new prescriptive timelines for approvals of development in the City of Winnipeg and all other municipalities and planning districts.
- These new processes will likely result in a significant amount of administrative time and legal costs, especially since there Councils will be required to provide “written explanations” for each land-use decision made.

- Overall, we believe this proposed legislation is another example of a provincially-imposed change that will erode municipal authority.
- Therefore, we continue to relay our position that local Councils know their communities best and therefore should maintain autonomy and authority over local development decisions within their communities.
- The AMM will continue to monitor Bill 48 on behalf of all municipalities to ensure this proposed legislation is responsive to the needs of local Councils and allows for continued economic growth across our province.

Provincial Drainage Regulations & Water Management

- Next, I would like to discuss some of the progress made regarding the new provincial drainage regulations and water management initiatives implemented this year.
- We all know that municipal frustrations run high with the provincial drainage licensing process.
- That is why the AMM appreciated the opportunity to participate on the Drainage Regulation Steering Committee to help provide input on establishing an efficient drainage registration and licensing process with minimal red tape.
- On October 2nd, the Manitoba government launched a new approach to drainage under *The Water Rights Act* to help streamline the approval process for producers and landowners while reducing red tape for low-risk, low-impact drainage projects – which we all know is long overdue.
- The province also launched a new Water Licensing Portal that enables applicants to submit and track applications.

- We were of course hopeful that these changes would help reduce the significant backlog of drainage project applications in a timely manner and help expedite routine projects under the new portal system.
- However, we were disappointed to hear concerns regarding increased costs, administrative time and red tape from our members that have recently used this new portal system.
- We will certainly continue to urge the government to work with our organization to ensure this portal system is reflective of municipal needs.
- In regards to other water management issues, on December 30th, the Province of Manitoba proclaimed *The Watershed District Act* and unveiled two new regulations that will formalize a watershed-based approach to watershed management in the province.
- *The Watershed Districts Act* modernizes the Conservation District program by shifting districts to watershed-based boundaries and adding flexibility for local watershed districts in the areas.
- All 104 municipalities previously in the CD program “signed off” with the provincial proposal to transition to Watershed Districts and the corresponding proposed provincial regulations.
- As you all are aware, the AMM has long advocated for increased provincial funding for Watershed Districts (WDs) to support the implementation of water management plans and we will continue advocate for this going forward.
- Additionally, the AMM welcomed the Province’s \$52 million investment under the GROW Trust to support the protection of wetlands and watershed

management as well as the \$102 million Conservation Trust to fund activities that enhance natural infrastructure.

- Thank you very much.

Vice-President Brad Saluk AMM Speaking Notes

Bill 2 (Code of Conduct)

- Hello Everyone, it is great to see you all here today.
- To begin, I would like to discuss two key policy files that are progressing well thanks to our joint advocacy efforts.
- First, I would like to provide an update regarding *Bill 2: The Municipal Amendment Act (Strengthening Codes of Conduct for Council Members)*.
- As we have repeatedly conveyed, the AMM takes the issues that were brought forward by our members that prompted this legislation very seriously.
- We are committed to promoting respectful workplace policies and practices for all members, as harassment and disrespectful behavior have no place inside or outside the Council chambers.
- Throughout the year, both AMM staff and members have been actively involved in extensive consultations to help establish a mandatory training course that is reflective of municipal needs and allows a better understanding on the importance of your municipal Code of Conduct.
- In March, Manitoba Municipal Relations held a focus group with key stakeholders including AMM, MMAA, AMBM and various municipal officials.
- This session presented an opportunity for all stakeholders to provide feedback regarding the layout and content of the online training course.
- On May 11th, the Province also opened a 45-day online public consultation regarding the regulatory changes which outlines the minimum Codes of

Conduct, complaints process, sanctions, and remedial measures to address Code of Conduct violations including appeals.

- Additionally, on May 15th municipal stakeholders attended a follow-up virtual meeting to ensure the training course was reflective of the feedback received during the first consultation.
- I would like to assure you that the content of this training aims to align with the same set of ethical standards and procedures expected of members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly and Manitoba government employees.
- Holding provincial and municipal representatives to the same standard ensures consistency in expectations across the municipal and provincial sectors.
- Please note that all elected officials will be required to complete the mandatory training within six months of when the legislative amendments come into force on **November 1, 2020**, as well as within six months of being elected or re-elected.
- For more information regarding this regulation, Manitoba Municipal Relations staff will be holding an interactive session on this important topic late in the proceedings today.
- I encourage you all to ask any questions and share your ideas on this issue, as the go-live date for the Code of Conduct training is just around the corner!

PSCS Update

- Next, I would like to provide some comments regarding the Public Safety Communications Service (PSCS), which will replace the decades-old FleetNet emergency communications system.
- As many of you are aware, at our 2019 Annual Convention, Premier Brian Pallister announced the provincial commitment to fully fund the PSCS annual operating costs on behalf of municipalities.
- As municipalities will not be charged monthly subscriber fees once the PSCS becomes fully operational, these investments will result in considerable savings and reduced administrative burdens for municipalities across Manitoba.
- Implementation of the PSCS infrastructure is underway, and transition of public safety and public service users to the new service remains on track.
- On April 1st, Bell MTS informed municipalities about new PSCS radio provisioning rates which outlines municipalities will be responsible for additional radio activation and programming fees and charges.
- The timing of this communique was extremely disappointing, since municipal fire departments had to make initial radio orders by March 1st.
- Given that you all are under tight fiscal constraints, the AMM strongly urged Bell to further reduce these financial burdens by bundling or eliminating these unexpected charges related to radio activation and programming.
- In response, Bell committed to deferring the \$125 per radio activation fee for a period of up to three months following the completion of the transition phase which will then be paid by the provincial government on behalf of municipalities.

- We are committed to ensuring the needs and concerns of our members continue to be heard and addressed.
- To provide greater clarity regarding these provisioning rates, we encourage everyone to review the PSCS-related FAQs available on the AMM and VEMA websites.
- If you have any questions, please contact AMM Director of Policy and Communications Nick Krawetz, who is our lead on this file.
- Lastly, all municipalities will be required to review and sign a PSCS Participation Agreement before fully transitioning.
- The template agreement is currently under review by AMM’s legal counsel and negotiations are currently transpiring with the Province to ensure this agreement protects municipalities for the full length of the PSCS contract (which is 15 years) – so we are doing our due diligence to ensure we don’t miss anything.
- Once the template Participation Agreement is finalized, we will distribute it to your offices.
- Thank you very much for your attention.