

Alberta Municipalities (AB Munis) Update – November 2023 (Verbal)

Recommendation

That the Intergovernmental Affairs (IGA) Committee recommend that Council receive this verbal report and distribution for the Corporate Record.

Recent meetings, events and announcements:

November 2023 Executive Committee Meeting

- At last week's Executive Committee meeting, Minister of Environment and Protected Areas Rebecca Schulz met with the Executive Committee to discuss water and wastewater infrastructure, the Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC), and the Clean Energy Improvement Program (CEIP).
- As Minister Schulz also serves on the Treasury Board Cabinet Committee, AB Munis also repeated its call for the Province to increase the Local Government Fiscal Framework (LGFF).

Highlights of current advocacy work

Municipal Affairs engagement

- AB Munis is an active participant in several ongoing engagement processes:
 - *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* on Councillor accountabilities;
 - *Local Authorities Election Act (LAEA)* to gather feedback on whether political parties ought to have a presence in municipal elections, and specifying processes surrounding advance voting, vouching, voter lists, among other topics; and
- City Administration is also participating in these processes and looking for areas where our positions align with AB Munis, the City of Edmonton and other interested parties.

Budget consultation letter

- The budget consultation letter sent by Alberta Municipalities to Minister Nate Horner pressed three main issues:
 1. Increased investment in community infrastructure in the Local Government Fiscal Framework \$1.75 billion starting in 2024.
 2. Partner in economic growth by reinstating permanent funding for public transit thereby allowing communities to maximize investments available from other orders of government.
 3. Avoid transferring costs and responsibilities to municipalities and reverse previous decisions that led to a downloading of costs to municipalities in areas such as:
 - Loans to Local Authorities – Allow municipalities to borrow at the same rate as the province for community infrastructure projects.

- Affordable housing – Provincial investment in affordable housing falls short to meet the critical need across the province.
- Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) - Though funding was increased by \$5 million in 2023 to \$105 million, the FCSS Association of Alberta estimates that they require an additional \$130 million to meet its obligations to municipalities under an 80/20 cost share structure.
- Harm reduction sites – AB Munis is calling on the province to reconsider recent decisions to eliminate harm reduction sites to mitigate the high demand for emergency response services, and act as a point of referral to recovery service.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)

- Community registration for EPR is open from 2023 October 2-December 31. AB Munis is working with Alberta Environment & Protected Areas and the Alberta Recycling Management Authority to encourage municipalities to sign up for the EPR.

Upcoming meetings and events

December 2023 Executive Committee Meeting

- The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for 2023 December 7.

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General Manager Chris Arthurs concurs with the information in this verbal update.