

CRD Board Chair's Remarks

November 18, 2020 – check against delivery

Thank you for returning me to this position. I am appreciative of your support and pledge to continue working with every member of this board to be successful and have good relations.

In my remarks today I want to do three things:

1. Discuss our staff
2. Discuss the Board Priorities and where I believe we are at, and
3. Discuss committees.

As we all see the increase of COVID and have the natural inclination to be worried, I would offer that this board acknowledges that our staff have done an excellent job in keeping things running as close to 'normal' as possible. The commitment of our staff is evident and while we typically only see the executive leadership team on a regular basis, I want every member of this organization to know this board is appreciate of your work and commitment to doing the best you can.

As you are all undoubtedly aware we are halfway through our term.

The 4 themes we established as a Board and reconfirmed after a year remain our focus.

#1 Transportation and Housing continue to be a focus. On the Housing front we continue to work with partners to deliver projects under our Regional Housing First Program and the newly announced Rapid Housing Initiative. We are having success in this area although we all wish the housing could be delivered even faster.

Transportation has not been so successful. As your Chair I created a Transportation Committee two years ago with the aspiration to see our region work towards sub-regional interests and coordination. When the province announced its South Island Transportation Strategy we stepped down and decided to return the business of this topic area to the Planning, Transportation and Protective Services.

When we met with the province and consultants we asked that Governance be included in this strategy but were told it was out of scope. Perhaps that should have been a sign to us that things were not going to be addressed. However, we remained hopeful that the strategy might identify some significant investments in the short term that could help our region.

While we are appreciative of the interest of the province in our work, the South Island Transportation Strategy cannot be seen as an ambitious and a short-term document to regional transportation cooperation.

It is with this in mind that I asked the PTPS committee to recommend to the Board Chair that a special Committee of the Whole (COW) meeting be held. This will happen on the morning of our December 9th Board meeting.

At this meeting we will discuss the past and review what has transpired, but I truly hope that we can set a direction for Transportation Strategization for the CRD. As the regional voice we need to clarify what we want, and ask staff to help us develop a plan on how to achieve this. If a recommendation emerges from the COW to establish a Committee I will consider this, but at this time there is not enough work to warrant a separate committee.

On our second goal, Climate Stewarding the Environment, our biggest initiative that will be considered by this Board is that of our Solid Waste program. We are sending a Draft Plan out to the public and I would ask that we allow the process to proceed as the board voted. WHEN we get the second round feedback presented to us, we will THEN make some important decisions.

During this year we will also continue the discussion of what to do with our Compost and Residual Biosolids for the longer term.

Given our recent COW meeting on First Nations participation on CRD committees, I am confident that we are all aware of our work to see more inclusive decision-making. As you will recall, we directed Staff to reach out to the 9 FN identified in the CRD area with the proposed bylaw. Our CAO decided to take this initiative on and has been reaching out to Nations. He also invited me to participate in a demonstration of the importance of this work. By having the CAO and CRD Board Chair participate in these presentations, we are demonstrating to the Nations that this is of utmost importance to the organization. We hope to have a report for the December meeting on how these conversations have been received.

I would offer that our fourth strategic initiative of Advocacy, Governance and Accountability are ongoing and are successful. We can see an example of success with the provincial campaign commitment during the election to help with the regeneration of the water quality at Elk and Beaver Lakes. Our collective voice has power.

The third topic is that of committees.

As you recall the first year I largely kept the committees in tact with the same leadership. After two years I believe it is time for some change and to give some directors who were new in 2018 an opportunity to serve in a greater leadership role.

I want to thank every committee chair and vice-chair for their service these past two years.

While I know the forms have gone out to seek your input, I want to extend an invitation for any interested Director to communicate with me about your committee leadership interests. Given the truncated time between now and the next board meeting I would ask you to reach out sooner than later if you'd like to have that discussion.

I acknowledge that because I have indicated there will committee leadership changes, There will likely be, like casting a play, some disappointment with unmet expectations and hopes.

I commit to making these decisions in a way that I believe are in the best interests of the organization and will discuss my decisions with you should you choose to ask.

And so I will end as I opened. Thank you for your support. Let's get on with our business.