



CORPORATE REPORT

To: Fraser Valley Regional District Board of Directors

From: Suzanne Gresham, Director of Corporate Initiatives

Reviewed/Supported: Paul Gipps, Chief Administrative Officer

Date: September 25, 2018

Ref: *Next Steps – Draft FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct*

File No: *0360-20/Responsible Conduct*

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION

[2018 09 18 Internal Affairs Committee] **THAT** the Fraser Valley Regional District Board endorse and adopt the draft *FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct*;

AND THAT the *FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct* be included in the post-election FVRD Board Orientation and circulated to all in-coming FVRD Board Members, FVRD Alternate Directors, FVRD Committee Members and FVRD Board Appointees.

STRATEGIC AREA OF FOCUS

Provide Responsive and Effective Public Services

BACKGROUND

Further to Board direction at the July 24, 2018 Committee of the Whole Meeting, the purpose of this report is to report out on the outcome of discussions at the 2018 UBCM Convention with respect to the topic of responsible conduct of elected officials so as to inform the Board in taking next steps with respect to the Board's consideration of adopting the draft *FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct*.

DISCUSSION

There was a morning workshop and panel discussion on responsible conduct at the 2018 UBCM Convention. Our own Paul Gipps, CAO along with Mayor Lyn Hall of the City of Prince George and Ministry staff presented. The session was well attended and after discussing the pros/cons of the need for a Code of Responsible Conduct, it was clear that there was strong and resounding support. The discussion focused on the challenges that some jurisdictions have faced in the absence of a Code of

Responsible Conduct. The sentiment was also expressed that while it is important to have such a Code in place, there is the hope that the Code will never have to be enforced. There was general consensus that setting expectations around responsible conduct is important in order to ensure good governance. On the matter of enforcement, sanctions and penalties, this body of work is the next step for the Joint Working Group on Responsible Conduct. It was also recognized that a Code of Responsible Conduct is intended to be iterative given that it is a “living document”. It was generally agreed that setting expectations with respect to responsible conduct through a formalized Code of Responsible Conduct is an important [and necessary] first step in the process.

The FVRD Internal Affairs Committee [IAC] met on September 18, 2018 and discussed the outcome of the 2018 UBCM Convention in anticipation of bringing forward a recommendation to the Board. The IAC briefly discussed what enforcement might look like and also discussed how respective municipal Codes of Responsible Conduct could be aligned with the FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct [while also recognizing that every jurisdiction is unique]. The hope was also expressed that the Board would never have to invoke the Code against one of its own members.

The draft *FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct* is crafted after the *Model Code of Responsible Conduct* drafted by the Joint Working Group on Responsible Conduct [UBCM, LGMA and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing representatives] and focuses on expectations with respect to responsible conduct. It is intended to be a “foundational document”. It is intended that provisions with respect to enforcement, sanctions and penalties will come later.

The IAC fully endorses the draft *FVRD Code of Responsible Conduct* and recommends it to the Board for adoption and roll-out post-election.

CONCLUSION

Responsible and ethical conduct at all levels of government is perceived to be a corner stone of providing good governance to citizens and communities.

A meaningful Code of Responsible Conduct would demonstrate the Board’s commitment to act in a responsible and ethical manner at all times and in all their dealings as an elected official or representative of the Board.

Through the work of the Internal Affairs Committee, it is recommended that the FVRD Board clearly define and articulate the foundational principles it subscribes to with respect to expectations around responsible and ethical conduct and that clear and unambiguous language in this regard be set out in the Board’s *Code of Responsible Conduct*. It is furthermore recommended that in due course, provisions with respect to Enforcement strategies be added as an accountability measure.

COSTS

Costs to develop a Code of Responsible Conduct and for on-going Board education and training are minimal. However, in a worst case scenario, legal costs and damage to the FVRD’s reputation could be

significant for the failure of a Board Member or the collective governing body to act responsibly or ethically.