

# EXCHANGE



EXCHANGE is a quarterly magazine published by the **Local Government Management Association (LGMA)** of British Columbia. It's about sharing information, exchanging ideas on best practices, enhancing professional development and building networks. Reach us at [www.lgma.ca](http://www.lgma.ca).

FALL 2019

**RECRUITMENT CASE STUDIES** P14

**NEW ZEALAND EXCHANGE** P20

**MEET THE NEW BOARD** P21



## Tomorrow's Talent: Attracting and Keeping the Best



# YOUNG ANDERSON

BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS



**Sharing information and expertise helps  
build strong, sustainable communities.  
Young Anderson is proud to support  
professional development opportunities for  
municipalities and regional districts.**

---

## **VANCOUVER OFFICE**

1616-808 Nelson Street  
Box 12147 – Nelson Square  
Vancouver, BC V6Z 2H2  
T: 604.689.7400  
F: 604.689.3444  
Toll Free: 1.800.665.3540

---

## **KELOWNA OFFICE**

201-1456 St. Paul Street  
Kelowna, BC V1Y 2E6  
T: 250.712.1130  
F: 250.712.1180

[www.younganderson.ca](http://www.younganderson.ca)



## Update

In this Issue	2
President's Report	3
Executive Director's Report	4
Case of Interest	5
Members Page	22
Our Town: Oliver	24

## Professional Development

Tips & Tactics: HR Resources for Local Governments	19
Programs & Events	23

# 6

## Tomorrow's Talent: Attracting and Keeping the Best

Learn from those with expertise and experience about how local governments need to change their approach to recruitment and retention to address the growing competition for talent.



## EXCHANGE

*Exchange* is the magazine for members of the Local Government Management Association of British Columbia. *Exchange* is distributed quarterly to over 900 members of the LGMA, as well as Mayors and Regional District Chairs.

*Exchange* is printed on Sappi Flo, an FSC® Certified 10% recycled fibre paper at Island Business Print Group.



LGMA Office:  
Suite 710A  
880 Douglas Street  
Victoria, BC V8W 2B7  
Telephone: 250.383.7032  
Email: office@lgma.ca  
Web: www.lgma.ca

Contact the Editor:  
Email: editor@lgma.ca

Cover Illustration:  
erhui1979/Getty Images



# 20

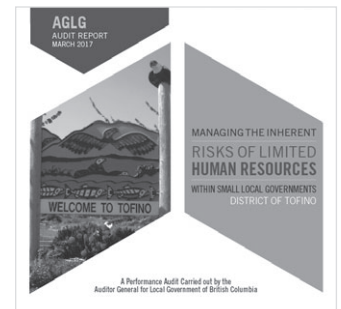
## New Zealand: Great Trails, Amazing People

Matt Vader from the District of Lake Country recounts his overseas exchange to New Zealand, where he learned about its world-class trail management.

# 14

## Case Studies: Recruitment and Retention

Find out how Peachland planned for the retirement of its CAO, what Tofino learned from its human resources audit, and some of the secrets to Vernon's award-winning approach.



# 23

## In Memorium: Tom MacDonald

The LGMA mourns the passing of former Executive Director Tom MacDonald – a friend, champion for the profession, and inspirational leader and mentor.



### Local government services are essential. Dropping them because of failed recruitment isn't an option.

This edition of *Exchange* is all about the competition for employees as baby boomers retire, and what employers need to do to successfully recruit and retain employees to fill critical positions.

While the timing was actually a coincidence, it seems almost kismet that we've made a few position changes of our own in this edition. You will note that the feature stories are written by Karin Mark – a former award-winning journalist who also does the design for the magazine. Stepping out of writer mode and staying on as the editor has been on my mind for a while, and it has been a seamless transition. I'm happy because I can stay involved even though I had to pull back a bit on the overall workload, and Karin has an in-depth understanding of what we are trying to achieve with *Exchange* because she's been part of our production team since 2013. Succession planning at its best!

Just as we made some changes to adapt to changing needs, local governments need to adapt to large numbers of outgoing employees and both recruit and retain valued employees in a highly competitive market. As someone in that “looking at retirement on the horizon” age bracket with a son who is 22 and will soon be entering the workforce, I definitely have some opinions about both demographic groups. Both ends of the spectrum have an impact on the workplace. As a result, I found the case studies that shared examples of how to support effective succession planning (Peachland) and proactive measures to support and retain employees (Tofino and Vernon) were a good snapshot of some of the emerging best practices that will benefit local governments.

It's also interesting to me that when you research this topic, you see things like “war for talent” and alarming statistics about the significant gap between number of people leaving the workplace, compared to the numbers of students graduating and available to fill those positions.

Regardless of the source, it's always a big gap! It's alarming to me because local government services are essential. Dropping them because of failed recruitment isn't an option. This makes it an imperative to review current recruitment and retention processes and check them against emerging best practices.

In *Tomorrow's Talent: Attracting and Keeping the Best*, a number of experts share tips on how local governments need to change the way they tackle recruitment, including looking at prospective employees through a different lens. It's also about making changes to the organizational culture to reflect the priorities expressed by younger generations. Part of this is easy – they want to serve and improve their communities, and that's at the heart of local government's mandate. But it also involves treating people well, supporting their career goals, and tailoring employee benefits and training programs to align with their interests.

Reading this edition, it also became evident that local governments cannot afford to have a bad reputation as employers. I found it notable that one of the recommendations is that local governments start working together to improve their employer brand. The advice is to start doing more as a group to promote the advantages of a career in local government and to work together to train and promote employees.

There are a number of resources available to help with recruitment and retention – listed in *Tips & Tactics* on page 19 – and continued opportunities for training and professional development through the LGMA. Now is clearly the time to get started.

*Therese Mickelson, ABC*  
Editor



Having a clear purpose is job one if you want to attract and retain top talent.

**W**hile working for six local governments, 12 councils and 10 administrators, I have seen leadership displayed as good, bad and all points in between. Experience tells me having a clear purpose is job one if you want to attract and retain top talent. I will explain this through a shining example.

Years ago, I had the pleasure of working for the honourable and inspiring Chief Sophie Pierre, decorated with the Order of British Columbia and named an Officer of the Order of Canada. Our paths crossed when working for the Ktunaxa Nation. As the backstory goes, it was on the steps of the disgraced and abandoned St. Eugene Residential School that a Ktunaxa elder declared the site as the birthplace of the Ktunaxa people returning to their pre-colonization glory. This statement was the seed that inspired the Nation's resolute pursuit of economic development. Against all odds, with limited financial means and in a remote location, they accomplished the impossible. After 10 years and \$40 million, the doors of St. Eugene Golf Resort and Casino opened.

What I learned is a vision is nothing without a clear pathway – purpose or mission – that guides actions. The following points provide a raw and blunt view of local government's effectiveness in establishing a clear purpose:

1. **Strategic Plan** – Clear vision, mission and values are the hallmarks of any effective organization yet are in short supply in municipal or regional governments. Strategic plans for these governments are often presented as nothing more than a list of important projects and a few tasks to be undertaken in the Council/Board's term. Few local governments have taken time to dive deeply into their organization's long-term vision, review their lived-values and define a clear mission. It is their mission that provides day-to-day guidance on where to go next. Without this sense of purpose, employees revert to political guesswork and professional experience, neither of which may reflect community desire.
2. **Financial Plan** – Like the aforementioned prioritized list disguised as a strategic plan, a budget that is not conceived from proper drivers – mission, vision and values – is simply another glorified to-do list. Failure to craft a budget from a clear purpose results in a garbage-in/garbage-out situation.

3. **Official Community Plan (OCP)** – Perhaps the most misunderstood document in local government, the OCP can be a source of conflict in communities. Administration correctly preaches this high-level document as the holy grail of community planning and citizen vision. Developers, businesses and influencers, however, have a different, more pragmatic opinion and are increasingly questioning the validity of the public engagement process, suggesting that OCPs are unduly influenced by the city's professionals and consultants, instead of reflecting true community vision.
4. **Master Planning** – Function or area-specific master plans ought to guide annual planning, and they can be effective if grounded in reality. Too often, however, master plans have little linkage to either the financial or strategic plans; therefore, they provide limited practical guidance on daily actions.
5. **Business Plans** – Driven by the four prior high-level guiding documents, each with their conflicting messages, an inconsistent purpose leads to the development of annual business plans that are a mere reflection of the prior year instead of being based on strategy.

If this article only accomplishes one insight, let that be to shine a light on the potential for purpose misalignment to cause confusion and mistrust between governance and administration. The ensuing power struggle from chronic mistrust will lead to job postings.

There is an alternative. Imagine an organization with a united and clear purpose. From Council/Board, to administration and on to employees. A culture with alignment and focus on the government's mission results in a positive workplace where people want to be.

Back to the Ktunaxa Nation example. Under Chief Sophie Pierre, the entire organization – representing the sum of the communities and extended to the entire First Nation – was united as one, working on a common purpose.

Imagine your purpose-united local government acting unified. What professional would not want to work there? Would they ever want to leave?

*Ron Bowles*  
President



Our employees are our greatest asset and retaining a competent workforce should be a high priority for every local government.

Falling leaves and heading back to school always signal the start of a new fall training schedule for the LGMA, and education and professional development is more critical than ever to winning the war for talent. Recruiting, retaining and developing our employees in local government is essential to being able to respond to citizen expectations for service delivery and community development. It is at the heart of the LGMA's mission to "Learn, Lead, Grow" and we continuously review our training plan and offerings to ensure we are providing a range of both leadership and technical training to help our members manage the economic, social and technological challenges of today's local government world.

I found it interesting reading a management article in *Forbes* not long ago, touting that training is changing and that top-down, seminar-style learning sessions should be abandoned because the passive, academic approach to adult learning was not effective. I chuckled, as the LGMA has known that forever – our peer learning model allows for shared, experiential training in a highly decentralized environment that matches how adults learn. We are continuously trying to improve and refine our programs to keep learners engaged in our programs and to better understand the range of skills we need to prepare employees for in this age of disruption.

Our employees are our greatest assets and retaining a competent workforce should be a high priority for every local government. With unemployment rates at historical lows in virtually every community in B.C., skilled talent for local government jobs is increasingly scarce, and there is no doubt the fight for talent will continue. Investment in continuous learning and training should be a given. That is not meant to sound self-serving – whether it is training provided by the LGMA or other organizations, it is going to be vital to ensure our employees can deliver essential services in an increasingly complex environment.

The LGMA is not immune from the same human resource challenges that each of you experience – we are celebrating two retirements. Elizabeth Brennan retired shortly after the Annual Conference, and Janet Hawkins will retire at the end of 2019. I would like to thank Elizabeth for her many contributions to the work of the LGMA and for her dedication to members – and the local government community at large – over her 12 years with the LGMA and 15 years with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. My thanks also go to Janet, who had a career in local government for more than two decades before joining the LGMA two years ago. Janet has had a significant impact with her excellent technical contributions and outstanding customer service to our members. In addition, we wish Ryan Hunt well in his new role as the Executive Director of the BC Museums Association. So, we too are recruiting!

As we begin the new strategic planning cycle in 2020, ensuring that we can continue to provide the highest quality, most relevant training for our members will be top-of-mind. Watch for your opportunity to weigh in and provide us with your input and ideas on what we can be doing better to support learning and professional development. We expect to have a survey out by early 2020 to assist the Board, our Chapters and the LGMA staff in developing our next five-year strategic plan.

Finally, the LGMA community was deeply saddened by the passing of Tom MacDonald, LGMA's Executive Director from 2003 to 2013. I was lucky to get to know Tom in his retirement, and he was always such a positive force, enthusiastic about the work of the Association, ever willing to lend a hand and generous in his praise of the team and our results. His passion and commitment to local government will guide our work, always.

*Nancy Taylor*  
Executive Director



By Devin Buchanan  
Associate, Fulton & Company LLP

## CASE of INTEREST



# Social Media Background Checks: Can you? Should You?

**S**ocial media background checks can reveal a lot about your job candidate, quickly and inexpensively. You are likely to get information that you would not get in a job interview, making social media a potentially important asset in your hiring process. But before looking up that next candidate online, beware of the privacy issues at play. Local governments in particular must use caution when accessing information about candidates from social media to avoid a complaint to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner or the British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal.

Information on social media remains personal information, and as public bodies, local governments must comply with the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* in collecting it.

For example, under *FIPPA* a local government may only collect personal information if that information “relates directly to and is necessary for an activity of the local government.” Whether the information you collect from social media relates directly to and is necessary for hiring may be unclear.

As well, a local government must collect personal information directly from an individual, unless that individual authorizes an indirect method. Social media is considered indirect. This means the local government needs the individual’s express consent to obtain information from social media.

Further, a local government must make “every reasonable effort” to ensure that the information it collects is accurate and complete. Consider that the social media account may belong to someone else with the same name, or it may have been created by an imposter. As well, the information you view may be out of date, and photographs may identify your candidate incorrectly.

Unfortunately, there are very few decided cases to assist in interpreting these provisions.

Local governments should also beware of the risks of a complaint under the *Human Rights Code* (the *Code*). For example, in accessing social media, you may unwittingly access information relating to one of the protected grounds under the *Code* (i.e. religion, gender identity, family status etc.).

Even where the decision not to hire was based on other criteria, having viewed information relating to a protected ground, you may face a greater risk of a human rights complaint.

Here are some best practices for the use of social media background checks in the hiring context:

1. **Adopt a policy and follow it.** If left to the individual doing the hiring, the use of social media background checks will vary widely. With a policy in place, the proper (i.e. lawful) use of social media can be established.
2. **Obtain the candidate’s consent.** Consent must be obtained even though the information is publicly available. As an extra precaution, advise the candidate of the purpose for which the information will be used and the legal authority to collect it.
3. **Obtain only the information that is necessary for the hiring process.** This can be a challenge, given the amount of information that may appear very quickly on social media. Be careful to evaluate the purpose of the information you may obtain.
4. **Confirm the accuracy of the information.** This will likely involve checking with the candidate directly. Consider obtaining the account names or ‘handles’ from the candidate directly to ensure you are looking at the candidate’s information.
5. **Have someone other than the decision-maker access the social media.** This will enable irrelevant information to be screened before being presented to the decision-maker.
6. **Document your use of social media in evaluating the candidate.** If you choose to access information from social media, do it openly and explain your use of it. If applicable, reference the specific information from social media that you relied upon. Keep screenshots of what you viewed for the file.

# Tomorrow's Talent



## Attracting & Keeping the Best

# People sometimes joke about “lifers” in local government.

There is some truth to the sentiment, however. In decades past, the archetypal local government career went something like this: Land a job in your 20s or 30s. Rise through the ranks. Stay until retirement.

So what happens when large numbers of “lifers” retire, taking with them valuable institutional knowledge and experience? With baby boomers now firmly in the “freedom 55” and older age bracket, local governments across B.C. are already finding out that it’s an even bigger challenge than anticipated.

## THE TALENT LEAK

Steven Hankin of McKinsey & Company first coined the term “the war for talent” more than 20 years ago to describe the competitive hiring environment he predicted when the largest living adult generation at the time – baby boomers – turned 65.

In local government, this anticipated flood of exits has so far manifested as more of a steady leak. As it turns out, not all baby boomers want to retire at the same time, notes City of Vernon Director of Human Resources Dr. Raeleen Manjak, named one of the country’s top 30 human resources (HR) professionals by *Human Resources Canada* magazine in 2017. She cites reasons such as the desire and ability to remain productive or financial necessity caused by the economic downturn.

“We are just on the beginning of the wave and are in for a decade-long bumpy road,” says Manjak.

Anecdotally, this retirement wave is starting to show itself in invitations to retirement parties, movement and promotions in the management ranks – and even in the pages of *Exchange*, where the average number of retirement listings has tripled in the past nine years.

Local government information hub CivicInfo BC has seen postings on its online job board almost double to about 6,250 per year since 2015, and email subscriptions from job-seekers double to about 6,300 since 2017. The BC Local Government Job Board has continued to evolve since being added to the organization’s first website in 2000, replacing a paper-based service previously operated by the LGMA and its predecessor, the Municipal Officers’ Association.

“It was the right idea for the right time,” says Todd Pugh, CivicInfo BC Executive Director. “We were among the first to do this in a local government context anywhere. We are certainly the largest service of this kind in any province or territory.”

“We are just on the beginning of the wave and are in for a decade-long bumpy road.”



Dr. Raeleen Manjak

Over the past year, CivicInfo BC’s job postings have been searched five million times and the job site homepage viewed 9.5 million times. At time of printing, about 350 jobs were posted there. (See *Tips & Tactics* on page 19 for more information about the job board.)

It’s a sign of things to come. According to the Public Policy Forum’s 2015 white paper *Ahead of the Talent Curve: Ensuring B.C.’s Competitive Edge*, there will be 1.1 million job openings in all sectors in B.C. in the coming decade while only about 650,000 people will emerge from the school system.

Local governments can no longer afford to be complacent about recruitment and retention, notes Matt Noble, a Team Leader at Ravenhill Group executive search firm following a career that included 15 years as a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or City Manager in Saskatchewan and B.C. along with two decades in the private utility and hospitality industries.

“Local government hasn’t been as quick to respond to the changes in the workforce as the private sector, but they are competing for the same people,” says Noble, whose work with Ravenhill focuses solely on local governments.

“There was a point in time where local governments basically adopted the attitude of: ‘We’ve got the jobs, take it or leave it.’ But we have different generations entering the workforce now, and up to 38 per cent of all local government employers are having difficulty attracting people.”

Adding to the challenge is the fact that senior local government jobs in B.C. tend to pay less than both private sector jobs and comparable government jobs in other provinces, notes Allison Rzen, a Partner at PFM Executive Search who has worked with a number of local governments. “You’re mainly drawing from your own backyard, so you’re robbing one community to fill a job in another.”

## CANDIDATE SELECTION

While certain jobs in local government are interchangeable with those in the private sector, some require a specific background. Tony Kirschner, a Partner at Leaders International, points to top leadership positions as an example. The job of a local government CAO or department head requires skills and experience not typically found in the private sector – particularly when it comes to managing the demands of both the community and politicians.

“If you bring someone in from the private sector, they may not understand the intricacies. There are limitations because of jurisdiction and governance frameworks; it takes time to learn that at the level required for a CAO,” says Kirschner, who has held senior HR management positions in both the public and private sector, and has helped hundreds of local governments with their executive searches.

“The ideal candidate is maybe someone who worked in the private sector earlier in their career and then moved to the public sector. You get that mix of nimbleness and best practice along with the knowledge of local government.”

However, employers can sometimes be so focused on finding these specialized skills that they will make do with mediocre candidates.

“In my opinion there tends to be a lot of recycling of talent. People are focusing on experience rather than capability,” Kirschner notes. “The challenge is recruiting people who are actually leaders and not just functional experts.”



Tony Kirschner

Rzen is seeing similar trends, where sometimes local governments rule out some interesting thinkers because they get into a “box-ticking exercise” of requiring a long list of traditional skills and experience.

“Take a look at that tick box and say, ‘Do we actually need all those 20 things?’” Rzen suggests. “Ask yourself, ‘What is the end game?’ What I see is a lot of very traditional postings looking for very traditional people.”

That bias against people without specific local government experience has no place in today’s job market, says Kristen Dixon, CAO for the City of Port Coquitlam.

Continued on page 9



STEWART McDANNOLD STUART  
Barristers & Solicitors

## Advice and Advocacy for Local Government

For regular updates about the latest developments in local government law

Visit our website: [www.sms.bc.ca](http://www.sms.bc.ca)

2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 837 Burdett Ave, Victoria, British Columbia, V8W 1B3

“We are being forced to be less traditional in our hiring processes,” Dixon says. “Some of our best hires have been people we’ve brought in through the private sector. You can train people on how we do things in a local government, but you can’t teach them how to think.”

The upside is more opportunity for non-traditional candidates in terms of professional experience as well as gender, culture and even age. Dixon herself is an example of the increasing diversity in senior management: she’s a woman, a millennial and a young mom, and she comes from the male-dominated world of engineering.

“Ten years ago would a city have hired a woman in her mid-30s as its CAO?” Dixon laughs good-naturedly. “No. I wouldn’t be in this position if that change wasn’t happening.”

When it comes to diversity, Rzen gives a nod to the public sector for being more proactive than the private sector. “Some are further ahead than others in thinking about their language, expectations and biases,” she says. “I think what’s important is they’re having the conversations about it and looking at themselves.”

As the field becomes more competitive, Kirschner advises local governments to review and refine their human resources approach and implement best practices that address the realities of today’s job market – not the one that existed 20 or even 10 years ago.

“We see a lot of corners cut in the recruitment process,” he said. “We often see corners cut at the assessment stage. That’s where you’re going to make the mistakes. You’ll find someone who looks good, but ultimately doesn’t fit.”

Saira Walker, the District of North Vancouver’s Human Resources Manager and also Chair of Metro Vancouver’s Human Resources Advisory Committee, suggests enlisting the help of managers when hiring to ensure a good fit, as well as using proven recruiting models and onboarding techniques.

“Ask the right questions up front to help ensure a long-term fit, like ‘What are you looking for in an organization?’” Walker suggests.

Organizations should also consider if their hiring process is inadvertently limiting their pool of candidates.

Rzen uses the example of organizations that have large search committees and a gruelling interview process, but don’t involve the right people at the beginning to develop the job description.

Others force candidates to retype all of their information into an online form rather than simply uploading their resume and cover letter. This deters people who are casually looking for work.

“Consider who really needs to be involved and what that candidate experience is going to be,” Rzen recommends. “These jobs are not easy to fill. Your process might deter candidates who want to participate.”

“Ten years ago would a city have hired a woman in her 30s as its CAO? No. I wouldn’t be in this position if that change wasn’t happening.”



Kristen Dixon

## BUILDING DEPTH

The structure of an organization can play a role in promoting the development of future leaders. In her 20 years with PFM Executive Search, Rzen has observed a reduction in middle management “laddering positions” in an attempt to cut budgets. Those positions are an important training ground, she says. “As an example, you may have people in engineering who are bright and always coming up with great ideas, but they’re never taught how to run a budget, or lead or manage people.”

Reducing laddering positions is a short-sighted approach that leads to high turnover and forces organizations to constantly look outside for requisite skills, notes Ravenhill’s Noble.

“The reality is you need to have a succession plan and it has to be backed up with strategies and actions. It has to be well-planned and funded and merit-driven,” says Noble. “You need to be recognizing the strengths of the people you have now and providing them with opportunities to keep them interested in staying with you.”

But promoting from within can backfire without the appropriate skill development. “You take a really good technical person and move them into a managerial role but you don’t give them the toolkit to be a manager. You assume because they were good technically they’re a good manager,” says Walker, who sees a variety of HR practices through her work on the Metro Vancouver committee. “You end up with attrition, because maybe you’ve lost your best technical person, but you’ve also lost people that person is managing because they didn’t have the skills to retain a team. The higher up the food chain you go, technical skills become less important than the ability to manage people.”

Continued on page 10

The Shoop Group  
● *inviting discovery*

- Strategic Planning
- Team Development
- Conflict Management
- Strategic Human Resources

[www.theShoopGroup.ca](http://www.theShoopGroup.ca)

Local governments have started to respond to this gap with professional development programs, including Port Coquitlam's partnership with the British Columbia Institute of Technology, in which staff to work towards an Associate Certificate in Leadership at classes held in the Council chambers. Another example is the City of Surrey's Emerging Leaders Program, recipient of a 2016 Professional Development Award from the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA).

Mentorship programs – even informal ones – can also be useful in setting promising employees on the path to a long-term local government career.

Dixon pointed to the importance of mentors in her own career trajectory. It was the advice of Penticton's Director of Engineering and Public Works, for example, that prompted her to round out her education with an MBA when she was the Assistant City Engineer there. In her next job as Kamloops' Streets and Capital Projects Manager, she was exposed to senior managers who supported her development.

She hadn't seriously considered a CAO position for herself until she was hired as Port Coquitlam's Director of Engineering & Operations in 2014 and became inspired by then-CAO John Leeburn's inclusive style and collaborative cross-departmental approach. "I had very good mentors all the way through my career. I've been very fortunate," Dixon says.

Increasingly, staff development is becoming a necessity to keep up with rising technical requirements. Walker points to the new qualifications in the *Building Act* for building and plumbing officials as an example.

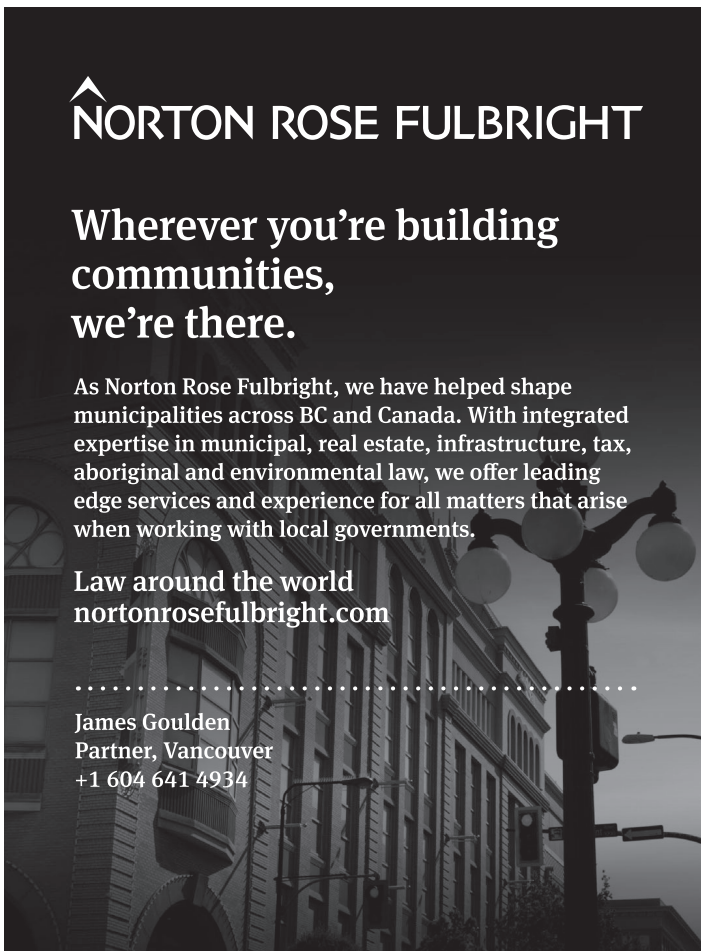
By 2021, local government building and plumbing officials will have to pass the requisite exams and be entered in a register of qualified building officials.

"Jobs are becoming more technical and specific. If people aren't retraining, they're going to be left behind," Walker says. "It's a different environment now. You have to have the training. You have to have programs where you skill people up. You have to really build your pool from within."

In the same vein, Dixon believes ongoing professional development through training and conferences is critical to meet the ever-changing demands of local government work. "It's important to expose your people to new ideas and the latest innovations," she says. "Many local governments don't invest enough in their employees because they don't see them as assets. They see them as a cog in the wheel doing the work of today without thinking about their contributions to the organization tomorrow."

A focus on professional development is also a draw for prospective employees at all levels, Kirschner says.

"When younger talent sees you have a full leadership development program and they see people in the program promoted to senior positions, you recruit them better and you retain them better," says Kirschner. "For the more experienced people, it signals the maturity of your organization."



**NORTON ROSE FULBRIGHT**

Wherever you're building communities, we're there.

As Norton Rose Fulbright, we have helped shape municipalities across BC and Canada. With integrated expertise in municipal, real estate, infrastructure, tax, aboriginal and environmental law, we offer leading edge services and experience for all matters that arise when working with local governments.

Law around the world  
[nortonrosefulbright.com](http://nortonrosefulbright.com)

James Goulden  
Partner, Vancouver  
+1 604 641 4934

## THE GENERATION GAP

If local governments aren't already thinking about how to appeal to millennials, they're already falling behind, notes Noble. He points out that almost half of the local government workforce are millennials, rising to 75 per cent by 2025.



Matt Noble

"Work-life balance is important to them, and they have different values. They also believe there are other ways to do things, and that's not a bad thing," he says, giving the example of the role millennials can play in helping organizations modernize and leverage technology better.

Millennials are hungry for opportunities and are willing to leave to get them, Noble adds. "Don't hold people back. If they want to grow, try something new or even leave, let them. Others will see you as being a supportive employer."

Walker notes that the stability and compensation of a local government career may be attractive to millennials in their 30s who are thinking about starting a family and buying a home. But what about Generation Z, who are now in their early 20s? She describes them as digital natives who are passionate about making the world a better place – potentially a good fit for local government.

Continued on page 11

In general, Walker notes, younger workers tend to value flexibility, growth opportunities, work-life balance and the integration of technology. Older people seeking management positions may be more attracted by pension, benefits and vacation time. “We really do have to find a way to appeal to everybody,” she says.



Saira Walker

For Vernon’s Manjak, who has been working to prepare her organization for the future, there is a common denominator among all generations in the workplace. (See Vernon’s case study on page 17.)

“Everybody wants to do a good job – so how do we help them be the best they can be, regardless of what generation they belong to?” she says. “It’s not about the generation. It’s about building an environment where people feel they can make a difference.”

Using this approach, Manjak says, “you create loyal employees. They may not stay for 30 years but that is OK too. It’s that constant renewal.”

## CULTURE

The right corporate culture is also critical for attracting and retaining good people.

“You need to have a robust culture – and you need to not look like you’re penny pinching,” says Kirschner. “It’s particularly important in the bigger local governments, or in an area where people have options for employment. The bigger local governments are always competing for talent – and they should.”

In Port Coquitlam, the organization has been trying to build a culture of job satisfaction where people feel they’re making a difference and doing work that means something to them.

“If we have to stretch outside their specific role, we try to do that with city-wide teamwork,” Dixon notes. “We make sure they see the impact, that what they do is important. It’s about building a strong team where people are encouraged to grow, develop and take some risks, while knowing they have the support of the organization behind them.”

Continued on page 12

# WE VALUE OUR PARTNERS

By sharing information and working together, BC Assessment and Local Governments can ensure fair and equitable property assessments, optimize property tax revenue collected, and increase citizen awareness of assessment and taxation. Get involved by using our many services and join the Community Corner Forum.

## BC ASSESSMENT

### Contact BC Assessment Local Government & First Nations Department:

#### Local Government

1-866-valueBC or 1-866-825-8322 x 00498  
localgovernment@bcassessment.ca

#### First Nations

1-866-valueBC or 1-866-825-8322 x 09455  
firstnations@bcassessment.ca

#### bcassessment.ca

Browse our services and products  
for government



---

“People are only going to want to stay if they’re happy. They have options.”

---

With its small size, Port Coquitlam has the flexibility to promote a more nimble and responsive culture, she says. “If you have an idea, you can come into my office and in five minutes we can decide if we can do it or not.”

Recognition is also an integral part of the corporate culture. “We try to make sure we recognize service and find opportunities to thank our employees,” says Dixon. “Working in local government they don’t get a lot of love outside the organization, so it’s really important that they get it from within.”

Recognizing that culture is a key tool for retention, the District of North Vancouver embarked on a two-year corporate value-setting exercise in 2017 to change its corporate culture.

It was an invaluable process, Walker says, resulting in a set of simple, widely-accepted values that are used every day to make decisions, hire the right people and recognize success. It also led to the District being named one of the top 55 employers in BC in 2018 and 2019 in an annual competition by the *Canada’s Top 100 Employers* publication.

If people buy into the culture, Walker says, they’re more likely to stay. That’s why it’s important that new employees feel connected to the corporate culture right from the start.

“We can lose people in that first year if they don’t feel there’s a good fit for them because we didn’t do the onboarding,” adds Walker. “People are only going to want to stay if they’re happy. They have options.”

According to Rzen, it’s also important to recognize that newcomers to local government will probably need more support and training to work in an environment where priorities often shift based on the cyclical nature of council and community opposition.

The transition to government can be a shock, Rzen says. “Decision making is not so linear, especially for someone coming from the private sector.”

## BUILDING THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BRAND

One of the recommended strategies in the Public Policy Forum’s *Ahead of the Talent Curve* white paper was: “Rebranding cities as attractive career destinations by showcasing unique advantages and challenging common misconceptions.”

That’s the focus of Making Life Happen, a campaign launched in 2018 by the LGMA in partnership with CAMA and other Canadian local government organizations to promote rewarding careers in local government (see *Tips & Tactics* on page 19 for more information). As its website notes: “Imagine getting up every day with a sense of purpose and pride knowing what you do will make a difference in people’s lives, including family and friends, neighbours and fellow citizens.”

It’s this community connection that first attracted Dixon to local government, when she was a university student working toward a degree in civil engineering. She was hooked after being placed with the City of Edmonton through her co-op program.

“As soon as I got out of university, I realized local government was where I wanted to be,” Dixon recalls. “For me, it was about being able to have an influence on your community and the life you are building for your family, friends and the people around you.”

But Dixon also saw her peers decide against a local government career because of the perception that local governments are rigid and bureaucratic and that promotion opportunities would be limited and require sacrifice.

“I personally put off all of my personal goals – family, etcetera – to put my career first,” she says. “Other women I knew who went into engineering chose not to make that sacrifice. They chose less demanding roles that offered more flexibility.”

To attract the job-seekers of today, Noble suggests that local governments find ways to overcome the perception of thankless work and sacrifice.

“Most young people don’t understand how rewarding a career path in local government can be,” says Noble. “We basically look after people cradle to grave and all facets of life. If you are a service-oriented person, there’s nothing like local government.”

He’d like to see more local governments portraying employees in a positive light and revealing what happens behind the scenes. “Administration and elected officials need to respect the people who work for them – that they are professionals and are good at what they do – and then communicate that to the public.”

To Walker, local governments should capitalize on what makes them different – like the community connection Dixon speaks of, as well as good pay and benefits, meaningful work and opportunities.

Continued on page 13

Experienced, Insightful & Practical  
Advice for BC Local Governments

LS

Lorena Staples, Q.C.  
Barrister & Solicitor

250.882.2080 • l Staples@lorenastaples.ca  
www.lorenastaples.ca

Showcasing local government as an equal opportunity employer is also important.

“Look at all the jobs we offer in local government,” says Walker. “We need to do a better job of branding ourselves as an employer of choice, as a place that employs people of all ages, backgrounds and cultures, people with disabilities, all of that.”

Several of the recommendations in the *Ahead of the Talent Curve* white paper suggest greater collaboration, including employer coalitions that would champion diversity and ensure broad commitment to action.

Metro Vancouver has taken a step in that direction with its Regional Employers Services (see *Tips & Tactics* on page 19) and the Human Resources Advisory Committee that Walker chairs. Made up of senior HR leaders from throughout the region, it meets monthly to share information and collaborate on issues of common concern.

“What we’re realizing is we need to brand not just our cities individually but the work that we do as a sector. It benefits all of us if the sector looks good,” says Walker. “There used to be a sense of the bigger places poaching from the smaller ones. But when we turned our minds to it, we realized that it’s okay to be a grooming ground.”

Ultimately, she points out, “It’s better to keep people within the sector than to lose them to private industry. That’s the competition for us.”

Noble has a similar perspective. He envisions a region-wide approach to recruitment that would see larger and smaller centres cooperating to develop talent.

“It needs to be easier for people experienced in smaller centres to migrate to larger centres. Through a cooperative networking process, local governments could find qualified people and help create the opportunities that the new generations have a right to expect,” Noble says. “This could be a way to share talent between local governments rather than losing people to the private sector.”

From a professional recruiter’s standpoint, Rzen believes local governments have a lot to brag about – and should be doing more of it.

“I think local government jobs are just awesome jobs,” she says. “You should be proud of what you’re doing and how you’re shaping people’s lives – and then find a way to share that excitement.”



Allison Rzen



## Our Objective is Simple: Exceed your Expectations.



Tyson McNeil-Hay



Sam Dabner



Rick Heney



Denise McCabe



Devin Buchanan



Kaitlyn Cumming



Shaun Campbell

From our offices in Kamloops and Vancouver, we act for local governments throughout BC, and pride ourselves on the accessibility, practicality and value of our legal services.

# Fulton.

[fultonco.com](http://fultonco.com)

KAMLOOPS | 300-350 Lansdowne St | 250.372.5542  
VANCOUVER | 960-1055 W. Georgia St | 604.900.3104

## CASE STUDIES

# Recruitment and Retention

By Karin Mark

As recruiting and retaining employees becomes increasingly difficult and competitive, local governments across B.C. are coming up with their own solutions.

Read on to find out how Peachland planned for the retirement of its Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), what Tofino learned when the Auditor General for Local Government audited its human resources efforts, and some of the secrets to Vernon's award-winning approach.

## PEACHLAND PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Years ago, a wise friend told Elsie Lemke that longtime local government CAOs and senior managers should consider retiring at age 60, given the stress and demands of their jobs. It stayed with her, and when the District of Peachland CAO approached her 58th birthday, she started planning her exit strategy.

"I'd been in the CAO role for over 30 years so it seemed like good timing," recalls Lemke.

Those who follow local government news in B.C. may already be aware that Lemke – the District's CAO since 2006 – will turn over the reins to Peachland Director of Operations Joe Mitchell on Dec. 1 of this year. The handover will mark two years of on-the-job training through a succession plan Lemke developed in 2017 with Council approval.

"The plan was that my replacement would be well-positioned to step in when I leave, so that the Council, staff and community did not have to deal with too many unknowns, and the new CAO had completed his learning curve before he actually began his new role," explains Lemke.

"We were thrilled to have someone internally who had the ability to become the CAO in Peachland – and the time to invest in the transition."



Elsie Lemke

Her first step in searching for her replacement was to look within her organization of 35 permanent, full-time staff. After all, she had worked to build a strong and stable senior management team over the years and was aware of their hopes, aspirations and abilities through her annual performance reviews.

Mitchell, a high-achieving senior manager who had been with Peachland six years, emerged as the top candidate. Just as important as his interest and capacity, Lemke notes, was the respect he already had from Council and other senior managers, and the promise of continuity for the organization. Mitchell ticked all the boxes.

"I've always been a real advocate for developing growth from within," Lemke says. "We were thrilled to have someone internally who had the ability to become the CAO in Peachland – and the time to invest in the transition."

Lemke knew from experience how difficult it could be to not only attract the right people to senior positions, but to keep them – particularly when several other local government and regional districts were just a short drive away.

"There can be a lot of instability in an organization when you have a change in the CAO," says Lemke. "We've been able to settle all of those nerves."

Early on, a contract was developed to ensure Mitchell received the appropriate training while still being able to perform his existing duties.

"One of the issues was to arrange that they weren't paying for two CAOs, which is a concern for a small local government," Lemke notes.

Continued on page 15

**Practical advice, creative options,  
value for local government**

Planning, Development & Environmental Law



### CARVELLO LAW

Lui Carvello, MCIP, RPP  
Lawyer & Registered Professional Planner  
203-1005 Broad St. Victoria, BC V8W 2A1  
250-686-9918 | lui@carvellolaw.ca  
carvellolaw.ca

Congratulations to our new associate Benjamin P. Ramsden  
on his call to the Bar September 2019

Training activities included:

- Monthly half-day meetings to review CAO duties and responsibilities;
- Attendance at external and internal meetings, training, workshops and annual conferences that typically only the CAO would attend;
- Participation in interviews for new staff and development of a staffing needs assessment;
- Serving as Acting CAO in her absence; and
- Being copied on all emails between the CAO and Council.

“With two years to plan, we had the luxury of being quite methodical and taking our time to consider all the things we needed to think about,” Lemke says. “One of the surprises was how much there was to learn. You don’t think there is much to it until you start writing it down and people start asking questions.”

The lengthy transition enabled Lemke to schedule her vacations to give Mitchell an opportunity to take the lead at Council meetings, in the Emergency Operations Centre and at other critical times. The City also brought in an external consultant to conduct workshops to prepare the management team for Mitchell’s transition from colleague to boss.

Ensuring her successor had a support network was also a priority for Lemke, who has served as LGMA President and chaired MATI The Successful CAO program. She encouraged Mitchell to attend The Successful CAO, the LGMA CAO Forum and Annual Conference, and the Thompson Okanagan LGMA Chapter Conference.

“I know he found those incredibly valuable,” she says. “I wanted him to be able to connect with the people that I know and to have that big network of professionals he can call on.”

For Lemke, a successful handoff in December will be the ideal end to more than three decades in local government.

“It was important for me to make sure it was a seamless transition,” she says. “I’ve had an absolutely amazing career in local government. I wouldn’t change a thing, and it’s nice to be able to tie it up with a neat little bow.”

Her advice for other local governments? “Always be on the lookout for your bright stars. Make it part of your policies to support continuous improvement and learning so that you build your talent pool.”

## TOFINO

### A CULTURE OF FAIRNESS AND GROWTH

It’s fair to say District of Tofino staff had mixed feelings when approached by the Auditor General for Local Government in 2016 about participating in a performance audit on human resources (HR) risks in small governments.

Initially there was some concern because the request came with a long list of deliverables at a time when the small staff was busy preparing for a financial audit.

But there was also excitement because, well, how often does an offer of free consulting come along?

Tofino proved it was up for the challenge. It immersed itself in the opportunity, emerging in March 2017 with a report that both acknowledged its successes and provided a useful blueprint for improvement.

Continued on page 16



## LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS


**Interested in improving your knowledge, gaining new skills and advancing your career?**

Join the hundreds of local government employees in BC who have done just that and taken our courses to earn their:

- ▶ **Local Government Administration** – Certificate, Advanced Certificate and Diploma
- ▶ **Local Government Leadership Development** – Certificate

### Spring 2020 Courses

**Starting in January:**

- ▶ **PADM 200 Local Government Administration in BC** – Cowichan Bay
- ▶ **PADM 201 Local Government Services in BC** – Kelowna
- ▶ **PADM 202 Local Government Finance in BC** – North Van
- ▶ **PADM 203 Municipal Law in BC** – North Vancouver
- ▶ **PADM 209 Fundamentals of Local Government Corporate Administration** – Parksville
- ▶ **PADM 210 Management Fundamentals for Local Government Professionals** – Langley 



<b>2020 PADM MATI Courses</b>	Advanced Communication Skills (April); Managing People (May); Leadership (June); Community Planning (November)
-------------------------------	--

### FOR COURSE REGISTRATION AND INFORMATION:

[www.capilanou.ca/local-govt](http://www.capilanou.ca/local-govt)  
or email Anna Delaney at [adelaney@capilanou.ca](mailto:adelaney@capilanou.ca)

---

“We were trying to get away from grabbing at numbers when there’s a manager vacancy. We wanted equal pay for work of equal value. And we wanted to look – notionally at least – at external equity.”

---



Bob MacPherson

“By and large it was a positive experience for us, with some good outcomes,” Tofino CAO Bob MacPherson says of the performance audit, posted at [www.aglg.ca/audit-reports](http://www.aglg.ca/audit-reports). “We knew there are some very positive things about how we handle human resource issues in Tofino. At the same time, we knew we were pretty far from perfection in some areas. It was nice to have both the good and the gaps identified.”

As CAO of a staff of about 35 full-time equivalent employees (FTEs), MacPherson is Tofino’s defacto human resources department – although various aspects of the work are shared with other managers. HR is given as much attention as possible among the District’s many pressing priorities.

MacPherson and his staff ranked the report’s 12 recommendations and then set about tackling them as time and resources permitted.

One of the first actions was to reinvigorate Tofino’s “leaders’ dialogue” – a scheduled sit-down between the CAO and top managers to identify their personal and professional goals and link them to their work at the District.

New compensation policies were another early focus. Not long after the report’s release, Tofino introduced a compensation plan for senior managers that slotted salaries, holidays and other benefits into a grid while taking into account factors such as experience, accreditation and comparable positions.

The intent was to ensure consistency and fairness in how Tofino compensated its top staff, removing any potential subjectivity – for example, based on a person’s gender, culture, age or even negotiating skills. A third party reviewed the plan to remove the risk of personal bias.

“We were trying to get away from grabbing at numbers when there’s a manager vacancy,” MacPherson explains. “We wanted equal pay for work of equal value. And we wanted to look – notionally at least – at external equity. If we have to recruit for a manager job, we’re looking at people who presumably could be working at dozens of other local governments.”

Other outcomes included standardizing the District’s employment agreements and then subjecting them to a legal review; improving recordkeeping during the recruitment process; and launching a new employee conduct policy.

MacPherson notes the low staff turnover at all levels of the organization and gave at least some of the credit to efforts to improve the corporate culture and the District’s reputation as an employer. In his view, staff retention is critical for small remote communities given their challenges attracting new employees, including housing, jobs for the employee’s partner and competition from other local governments and the private sector.

“It’s a lot easier to retain employees than try to attract them, and it’s doubly important for small communities,” he emphasizes.

One of Tofino’s retention strategies is a fair wage policy, which ensures everyone working at the District is paid at least a living wage – at the moment, \$19.63 an hour, based on the 2019 living wage calculation by the Clayoquot Biosphere Trust. Ongoing staff retention problems at the District’s daycare brought the issue to the forefront a few years ago.

Although people choose a profession for a variety of reasons, MacPherson notes that compensation is an important part of the matrix in retaining and attracting people to a position. “We made a commitment to paying a living wage to our daycare workers and to all District employees.”

Continued on page 17

An advertisement for Island Print Group. The background is yellow. Text includes: "OWN YOUR BRAND with PAPER BAGS Kraft or White LARGE Imprint Area 6 sizes available ISLANDPRINTGROUP.COM 3286 OAK ST. VICTORIA, BC • PH: 250-386-2522". There are social media icons for Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter. A paper bag with the "ISLAND" logo is shown on the right.

Tofino also prides itself on being a “learning organization” that supports managers – for example, through the leaders’ dialogue – and employees at all levels who want to grow in their position or try out other jobs in the District. MacPherson himself started his career in local government as a planning technician at the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District before moving to the Resort Municipality of Whistler as a senior planner, rising to General Manager positions and interim CAO before joining Tofino in 2013 as its CAO.

“When I started my career, I would never have expected to end up in a role like this. It’s the neat thing about local government. If you’re keen to take on challenges, there are lots of opportunities,” he says. “At Tofino, if people want to take on something outside their comfort zone, we’re supportive of it. We’re willing to take risks and make the occasional mistake for learning and growth.”

In terms of attracting new hires, Tofino’s advantages include the District-owned temporary housing available to new employees and – of course – the beauty and lifestyle of Vancouver Island’s west coast.

But MacPherson cautions communities about relying too much on their location as a draw.

“I know some places can have an attitude that they don’t need to be as competitive because it’s so great to live there. It’s a nice sentiment, but I don’t think it’s reality for the type of work we do or the kind of worker we’re looking for,” he says. “People have bills and family responsibilities and so on, and the location can only go so far. It’s important that we position ourselves to be competitive.”

## VERNON CREATING PURPOSE AND MEANING

One word repeatedly comes up in a conversation about the City of Vernon’s human resources approach: purpose.

As Director of Human Resources Dr. Raeleen Manjak puts it, local governments that are serious about achieving their strategic priorities and providing the best customer service must begin by defining the purpose of their core work – and ensuring their employees do the same.

“It’s all about purpose,” says Manjak, who was the recipient of the LGMA’s 2019 Professional Service Award for Leadership.

“It is only when you articulate your purpose that you can really put an agenda in place to transform the organization. All local governments should think about what it would mean to do so and how this purpose, the ‘why’ of work, sets the foundation for evolution.”

And when it comes to employees, helping people identify their purpose and their passion is the first step in fully developing their potential, she says. “We want each employee to be engaged, to have pride in their chosen profession as a public servant, and to understand that we want them to succeed.”

This concept is key to the new city-centric coaching and mentoring programs Vernon is developing, based on employee feedback and the City’s need for specific competencies.

To Manjak, there is an unquestionable relationship between an organization’s effectiveness and capacity and its employees’ happiness and fulfillment. It’s the concept at the heart of both Vernon’s corporate culture and her own credo.

“My philosophy – and I say it all the time – is: ‘Together, we are better.’ One person can’t do this work alone. We are an organization moving forward as a unit,” she says.

Manjak’s approach is built on more than 25 years of working in administration and HR in local government and other sectors, along with formal education including a doctorate in management and organizational leadership.

Continued on page 18



On-Site Health & Safety Training

200+ Online Safety Awareness Courses



Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program

Reduced Cost for Online SDS Management

COR Organization Self-Assessment  
*free online tool available to all organizations*

BCMSA/PWABC Joint Annual Conference  
*September 20-23, 2020 in Richmond*

**BCMSA** Share the knowledge!  
BC MUNICIPAL SAFETY ASSOCIATION

bcmsa.ca    

## Case Studies: Recruitment and Retention

Continued from page 17

She brought her focus on value-setting and purpose to Vernon in 2014. Within a year, she and her team had developed a Human Resource Strategic Plan to ensure the City has the continuing capacity to deliver Council's strategic priorities amid challenges such as significant staff turnover due to retirement.

Learning and development emerged as a key priority, linked to Vernon's goal to be an "employer of choice." A Learning and Development Framework sets the overall course and communicates the organization's commitment to investing in its employees.

Employees at all levels are encouraged to discuss their personal and professional development with their superiors and to take initiative and risks. Opportunities and guidance are provided to those who want to ACTIVATE their careers (ACTIVATE is a corporate tagline). And throughout the organization, consistent and predictable practices and a common language help people understand what's expected of them and feel like they are on the same team.

"We spend a lot of time at work – we spend more time here than we do with our own families. We want people's experience here to be extraordinarily meaningful," she says. "It comes down to purpose, mastery and autonomy. Give people purpose, help them achieve mastery of their skills, and give them the autonomy to do what they do."

Organizational development is also part of the framework, including a focus on building an understanding of cultural competency, as well as diversity and inclusion in the workplace. This has included workshops by Indigenous elders about the impact of colonization – similar to one at the 2017 Thompson-Okanagan LGMA Chapter conference – and on transgender inclusion.

"When you provide people with an opportunity to look through the eyes of someone else, it changes how they think," says Manjak, who wrote an article on the elder workshop entitled "I Didn't Know" for *Municipal World*.

Top notch CAO's and high performing governing bodies excel with Strategic Leadership Solutions

- EXECUTIVE COACHING
- OPTIMAL GOVERNANCE TRAINING
- STRATEGIC PROCESS EVALUATION

**CB**  
CHRISTINA BENTY  
STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP SOLUTIONS  
CALEB MOSS  
**CM**



[www.christinabenty.com](http://www.christinabenty.com) 250-344-0921 [christinabenty@christinabenty.com](mailto:christinabenty@christinabenty.com)

---

"We spend a lot of time at work – we spend more time here than we do with our own families. We want people's experience here to be extraordinarily meaningful."

---

Vernon has also been testing out performance planning with exempt staff, replacing the traditional performance reviews. At a minimum of three meetings each year, employees set objectives, revisit them mid-year, and then learn and plan for the next year. The approach has been so successful, it is being proposed to roll out and include all employee groups.

"It's forward-looking – we are not looking back," Manjak says. "You should have touchpoints with the people you work with every single day. If you see something creative, or something that needs a tweak, you should tell them on the spot."

That kind of ongoing communication is as much about individual performance as it is about building a strong, resilient organization.

"Human resources isn't about numbers. It's about people. Everyone gets caught up in metrics. We feel we have to measure everything," says Manjak. "Instead, let's talk. Tell me how you feel. What is your journey made up of? Is it made up of resentment because you have to come to work? Or do you actually want to be here?"

Establishing a people-centric culture starts at the top. Manjak credits Vernon CAO Will Pearce with creating the necessary environment for change. The journey requires an organization-wide and unflagging commitment.

"Culture is everything, and there are going to be struggles when you are transitioning a culture. It is a long-term commitment, and you're going to have folks who like it exactly how it is," Manjak says.

"As for Vernon, this is an organization that has decided it is not going to be stuck. We're looking outside the status quo. We're looking at how we can build the very best people to provide the very best service to the community."



# tips & tactics

## HR Resources for Local Governments

### BC Local Government Job Board on CivicInfo BC

In partnership with LGMA, CivicInfo BC provides a non-profit full-service job board to support local governments in their recruitment efforts.

Value-adds include:

- Free posting formatting and advice;
- An audience of local government professionals unmatched by other job sites;
- Competitive prices and discounts for smaller local governments;
- Access to a searchable archive of more than 50,000 postings;
- Job market statistics and research; and
- Increased reach via user-friendly functions (e.g. free personalized email notifications) and XML feeds that share postings with other third-party job sites.

Profits from the service are driven back into services to local governments.

The organization is constantly looking for new ways to leverage data and improve its service. Input from members is welcomed.

Go to [www.civicinfo.bc.ca/careers-post](http://www.civicinfo.bc.ca/careers-post) to post and learn about rates and discount packages. For information, contact [info@civicinfo.bc.ca](mailto:info@civicinfo.bc.ca) or 250-940-2025.

### Making Life Happen Campaign Tools

LGMA is partnering with the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators and other local government organizations across Canada on the Making Life Happen campaign. Promoting rewarding careers in local government, the campaign appeals to young people who want to make a difference and to grow and learn on the job.

The website [www.makinglifehappen.ca](http://www.makinglifehappen.ca) explains the benefits and opportunities, offers job-search tips and provides links to hiring websites and other resources.

Local governments can download a free Making Life Happen toolkit – including PowerPoint templates, logos, promotional postcards and more – from [www.lgma.ca/making-life-happen](http://www.lgma.ca/making-life-happen).

### Metro Vancouver Services

Metro Vancouver's Regional Employers Services (RES) provides human resources and labour relations services to the 21 local governments and one Treaty First Nation in the regional district. Formerly known as Labour Relations Services, RES provides a forum for local governments to connect, share and leverage information.

All Metro Vancouver members have access to its free information and advisory services. Collective bargaining and compensation-related services are available on a fee-for-service basis.

The website [www.res360.ca](http://www.res360.ca) also provides free public access to RES reports and publications and an archive of collective agreements.

### Other Links

- [www.lgma.ca/publications](http://www.lgma.ca/publications) – Paper: *Preparing and Supporting CAOs and Senior Managers into the Next Decade*.
- [www.ppforum.ca](http://www.ppforum.ca) – Search “Ahead of the Talent Curve” to download the white paper. Search “Building a Dynamic Future” for an article on millennial perspectives on public service.
- [www.fcm.ca/en/resources/wilg/diverse-voices-toolkit](http://www.fcm.ca/en/resources/wilg/diverse-voices-toolkit) – Resources to support women as leaders in local government.
- [www.greatplacetowork.ca](http://www.greatplacetowork.ca) – See Resources page for reports, articles and other offerings.
- [www.canadastop100.com/bc](http://www.canadastop100.com/bc) – Read about the promising practices of B.C.'s top employers.
- [www.hrreporter.com](http://www.hrreporter.com) – Articles about Canadian human relations news, trends, practices and resources.



# Great Trails, Amazing People

**By Matt Vader, Strategic and Support Services Manager,  
District of Lake Country**

I was fortunate enough to be selected to participate in the Overseas Manager Exchange for 2018, a program made possible through the Local Government Management Association (LGMA) and the New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM). As the Chair of the Okanagan Rail Trail Committee, I was looking to learn more about best practices and the innovations from New Zealand, which has a globally-recognized reputation for its Great Trails.

I travelled to New Zealand in September 2018 to meet with my exchange partner, Glenn Young, a Utility Manager from Manawatu District Council. One of our first activities was to participate in the SOLGM Summit, which was held in the adventure capital of the world, Queenstown – what a spectacular site for the conference! The theme of the summit was *Know your Community, Serve your Community*, and sessions focused on understanding our diverse communities and how best to respond to them. There was an intriguing lineup of speakers with a focus on representatives from diverse communities who have harnessed their capabilities and encouraged engagement.

After the conference in Queenstown, Glenn graciously arranged meetings with a number of people who are responsible for different aspects of governing, maintaining and building some of the iconic Great Trails of New Zealand. They kindly shared their time to meet with me and provided abundant information on the choices made and paths taken to develop their respective trails – even the thoughtful messages shared on their trail signage. One example:

*“Breathing new life into old tracks, roads and railways, ‘Nga Haerenga’ means ‘the journeys’ in a physical and spiritual sense, which is exactly what you will experience.”* - New Zealand Cycle Trail Signage

What is the definition of a Great Trail? When asked this question, Mark Nelson (an associate of Hamish Seaton, the Alps2Ocean project manager I had the pleasure of meeting in Kurow, New Zealand) responded saying: “There is no written definition. It’s a definition in the mind of New Zealanders, and that’s probably the most powerful definition you can have. It’s about showcasing the best New Zealand has to offer in its best light and putting people in a natural environment where they go, ‘Wow.’”

This statement really resonated with me. We have presented a vision of the Okanagan Rail Trail as the essential link to experience the Okanagan. But what does that mean to people? The overarching principle that I derived from all the discussions I was fortunate to have in New Zealand is that we need to match people’s experiences with their expectations. This is something that I wholeheartedly support and encompass fully in our own decision-making process. This is the driving factor in how our committee has and will continue to look at all aspects of the Okanagan Rail Trail. If we are promoting and creating a vision of a world-class amenity, then we need to deliver the product as advertised.

Being selected to participate in the 2018 LGMA Overseas Exchange Program will undoubtedly be a career highlight. New Zealand was, as advertised, spectacular. I felt at home with the beautiful scenery, similarly friendly people and a somewhat common heritage. My exchange partner Glenn and his family, and the new friends and colleagues I connected with at Manawatu District Council, were gracious and generous with their time for questions and discussion. For this I am grateful and thank each of them for their role in forming my experience on this journey. I enjoyed hosting Glenn and his wife Marg in June 2019, and showing them the beauty of British Columbia and the workings of our local government system.

*Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa* – “Greetings to all.”

# Meet the 2019-2020 LGMA Board

The new Board of Directors was elected at the 2019 Annual General Meeting held in conjunction with the LGMA Annual Conference June 11-13 in Vancouver. Please welcome:



**President**  
Ron Bowles



**Vice President**  
Bill Flitton



**Treasurer**  
Heather  
Nelson-Smith



**Director at Large**  
Madeline  
McDonald



**Director at Large**  
Corie Griffiths



**Director at Large**  
Keri-Ann Austin

## Chapter Directors



**Vancouver Island**  
Darren Kiedyk



**Thompson Okanagan**  
Jennifer Sham



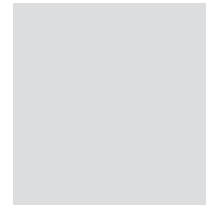
**Lower Mainland**  
Wallace Mah



**West Kootenay Boundary**  
Bryan Teasdale



**North Central**  
Karla Jensen



**Rocky Mountain**  
Pending election

## Celebrating Excellence: 2019 LGMA Awards

We congratulate this year's deserving award winners, announced at the LGMA Annual Conference:

### PRESIDENT'S AWARD

- Brian Reardon

### LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

- Mark Koch

### DISTINGUISHED PARTNER AWARD

- Colin Stewart

### DISTINGUISHED MEMBER AWARD

- Elsie Lemke

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD: LEADERSHIP

- Laurie Hurst
- Dr. Raeleen Manjak

### PROFESSIONAL SERVICE AWARD: VOLUNTEER SERVICE

- Robert Lapham
- Bryan Teasdale

### EXECUTIVE SERVICE AWARD

- Theresa Lenardon
- Don Schaffer



## MEMBER MOVEMENT

**Andrew Allen**, Director of Planning and Development, District of Sechelt (Formerly Manager, Planning and Development, Sunshine Coast Regional District)

**Caitlyn Anderson**, Deputy Corporate Officer, City of Penticton (Formerly Clerk, Town of Oliver)

**Christine Baird**, Deputy City Clerk, City of North Vancouver (Formerly Manager, Corporate Services, Village of Anmore)

**Parissa Bhullar**, Manager, Collections, City of New Westminster (Formerly Finance Director, Sun Peaks Mountain Resort Municipality)

**Kristi Bilodeau**, Director of Finance, District of Sparwood (Formerly Senior Accountant, Hryciuk Gallinger)

**Allan Chabot**, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Osoyoos, (Formerly Chief Administrative Officer, City of Revelstoke)

**Angie Collison**, Corporate Officer, City of Penticton (Formerly Deputy Corporate Officer, City of Penticton)

**Shawn Dahlen**, Chief Administrative Officer, Peace River Regional District (Formerly Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Peace River Regional District)

**David Douglas**, Director of Financial Services, District of Sechelt (Formerly Director of Financial Services, Town of Gibsons)

**Ian Dunlop**, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Kaslo (Formerly Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Faro, Yukon)

**Karen Elrick**, Manager of Corporate Services, Village of Anmore (Former Deputy Clerk, City of Pitt Meadows)

**Farnaz Farrokhi**, Manager of Communications, City of Nanaimo (Formerly Manager, Communications and Government Relations, City of White Rock)

**Jennifer Ficocelli**, City Clerk, City of Surrey (Formerly Deputy City Clerk, City of North Vancouver)

**Donna Forseille**, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Wells, (Formerly Corporate Officer, District of Wells)

**Lina Gasser**, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Hazelton (Formerly Corporate Officer, District of Fort St. James)

**Paul Gipps**, Chief Administrative Officer, City of West Kelowna (Formerly Chief Administrative Officer, Fraser Valley Regional District)

**Anthony Haddad**, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Summerland (Formerly Director of Development Services, City of Penticton)

**Melany Helmer**, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Fort St. James (Formerly Chief Administrative Officer, Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako)

**Scott Hildebrand**, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Merritt (Formerly Executive Director, Sage Health)

**Keeva Kehler**, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Parksville (Formerly Corporate Officer, City of Parksville)

**Doug Leahy**, Chief Financial Officer, Town of Oliver (Formerly Manager of Collections, City of New Westminster)

**Angie Legault**, Corporate Officer, Cowichan Valley Regional District (Formerly Corporate Officer, Sunshine Coast Regional District)

**Jeanette McDougall**, Corporate Officer, District of Hudson's Hope (Formerly Deputy Corporate Officer, Village of Gold River)

**Norm McInnis**, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Sooke (Formerly Chief Administrative Officer, District of Fernie)

**Janice Mikuska**, Human Resources/Occupational Safety Manager, District of Kent (Formerly Manager of Human Resources, Fraser Valley Regional District)

**Danielle Myles Wilson**, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Port Edward (Formerly Economic Development Manager, City of Terrace)

**Tim Perepolkin**, Capital Works Supervisor, City of Salmon Arm (Formerly Manager of Public Works, Village of Chase)

**Craig Perry**, Superintendent of Public Works, Town of Comox (Formerly Manager of Engineering Projects, City of Courtenay)

**Barclay Pitkethly**, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, District of Mission (Formerly Director of Regional Programs, Fraser Valley Regional District)

**Jennifer Russell**, Corporate Officer, District of Mission (Formerly Manager of Corporate Administration, District of Mission)

**Michele Schalekamp**, Chief Administrative Officer, District of Sparwood (Formerly Director of Finance, District of Sparwood)

**Lyle Thomas**, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Princeton (Formerly Director of Recreation and Cultural Services, Town of Princeton)

**Nigel Whitehead**, Senior Planner, Cariboo Regional District (Formerly Director of Development Services, City of Revelstoke)

**Nelson Wight**, Planning Manager, Central Kootenay Regional District (Formerly Director of Planning, District of Sparwood)

**Anne Yanciw**, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Ashcroft (Formerly Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Smithers)

**Troy Ziegler**, Manager of Finance, District of Central Saanich (Formerly Manager of Accounting, District of Saanich)

## RETIREMENTS

**Joe Barry**, Corporate Secretary, Cowichan Valley Regional District

**Tracy Corbett**, Director of Planning and Development, District of Sechelt

**Michelle Allen**, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Ashcroft

**Steve Christiansen**, Treasurer, District of Kitimat

**Monica Dalziel**, Chief Financial Officer, City of Salmon Arm

**Paul Gill**, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Maple Ridge

**Diane Heinrich**, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Grand Forks

**Warren Jones**, Director of Corporate Services, District of Oak Bay

**Anja Nurvo**, Director of Corporate Services, Township of Esquimalt

**Barry Romanko**, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Osoyoos

**Patricia Tracy**, Human Resources Manager, City of West Kelowna

Continued on next page

### 2019 LGMA PROGRAMS & EVENTS

November 3-5  
MATI Successful CAO  
The Cove Lakeside Resort,  
West Kelowna

November 7-8  
VILGMA Chapter Meeting  
Hotel Grand Pacific, Victoria

November 13  
Webinar: Public Hearings 101  
online

November 17-19  
Labour Negotiations Workshop with  
Mohamed Doma  
Coast Capri Hotel, Kelowna

### 2020 LGMA PROGRAMS & EVENTS

February 25-27  
CAO Forum  
Marriott Victoria Inner Harbour,  
Victoria

## SPECIAL RECOGNITION

### Board of Examiners

Four local government employees have been recognized for their education and work experience while working in the local government field in B.C. and are being awarded a Certificate by the Board of Examiners. The following two recipients have consented to their name being released.

#### *Certificate in Local Government Service Delivery*

- **Heather Nelson-Smith**, Director of Corporate and Development Services, District of Port Hardy

#### *Certificate in Local Government Administration*

- **Garrett Schipper**, Manager of Building and Regulatory Enforcement, City of Chilliwack

### STAFFING CHANGES AT THE BOARD

The recent retirements of Gary Paget and Beth Hancox have resulted in a couple of staffing changes at the Board of Examiners.

Nicola Marotz, Strategic Advisor in the Local Government Division, was appointed as the Board Chair effective June 17, 2019, and Nicole Gibbings, Project Coordinator in Operations and Client Relations, Local Government Division, assumed the Assistant Administrator duties.



## IN MEMORIAM

### LGMA Mourns the Loss of Tom MacDonald

The LGMA was greatly saddened to learn that its former Executive Director Tom MacDonald lost his courageous battle with cancer on Sept. 12, 2019. The LGMA has lost a friend, a champion for the profession, and an inspirational leader and mentor.

The LGMA was privileged to have Tom as its Executive Director from May 2003 to January 2013, growing the Association as a professional body and a financially successful organization while also creating a legacy of strong educational programming. An entrepreneur at heart, Tom was a humble, visionary leader who devoted his efforts to the LGMA's members, recognizing that at its core, the strength of the Association is its people. He encouraged so many in the profession, supported all who needed it, and motivated hundreds to get involved and engaged in the LGMA.

Tom understood the importance of creating a knowledge-sharing culture (or, in his words, "collective volunteerism") – so much so that his reach went beyond British Columbia. He built relationships and shared knowledge and ideas with local government associations across Canada and the U.S., and spearheaded the LGMA's partnership with the Association of Local Authorities of Tanzania through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Tom's philosophy was one of bringing people together, and his gift was empowering others to believe in themselves.

Tom never wanted to be in the spotlight. He was always shining light on those around him, whether it was the staff team, the Board or the many volunteers who signed up to help with the work of the LGMA.

For those who would like to make a donation in Tom's memory, please consider the LGMA Distinguished Members Legacy Fund or the BC Cancer Foundation Deeley Research Centre. Tom would also have strongly encouraged donating blood through Canadian Blood Services.

### OUR TOWN: TOWN OF OLIVER

Like the LGMA, the Town of Oliver is celebrating its centennial anniversary this year – dating its beginnings from the time the digging started on “The Ditch” that led to a community.

While the official town began with digging a ditch, things really got started in 1918, when the provincial government purchased 22,000 acres of land in the south Okanagan and proceeded to develop an irrigation system designed to convert some 8,000 acres of desert land on each side of the Okanagan River into viable agriculture land. This land was made available, at a reasonable cost, to the returning soldiers from World War I. This project was brought to life by B.C. Premier “Honest John Oliver” – hence the origin of the name of the Town of Oliver.

In 1919, the Village of Oliver was being established with a few homes and business buildings being constructed from salvaged lumber from the fast disappearing Town of Fairview. Oliver was officially incorporated in 1945.

Oliver is located mid-way between Penticton and Osoyoos and borders the Osoyoos Indian Band reserve lands. Thanks to the rich and abundant lands, fed with that all-important water from The Ditch, Oliver and its neighbouring communities have evolved into an area where people visit and want to live. The early spring brings the bloom of flowers throughout the valley, letting locals know that cherries will be ready in late June. Apricots and peaches are next in mid-July to early August, followed by apples and plums from August to September. Then there's the grape harvest from September to mid-October. With the largest concentration of both vineyards and commercial wineries in B.C., it's not surprising that Oliver was first trademarked as the Wine Capital of Canada, which has now been updated to Canada's Wine Capital.

Despite being small, Oliver provides residents and visitors with access to high quality health care and protective services, along with multiple recreational venues and a range of annual events and activities.

The South Okanagan General Hospital will soon have a renovated emergency department, and the Oliver & District Fire Department protects Oliver as well as rural Area C and Osoyoos Indian Band lands. (Check out YouTube: *2018 Volunteer Firefighter Spring Training Seminar* and *OFD Spring Training Seminar 2018 Promo Video*).

Oliver boasts a state-of-the art performing arts centre. The theatre is owned by School District #53 and operated by the non-profit Oliver Community Theatre Society. The theatre rose literally out of the ashes of the much-loved art deco style auditorium, which burnt to the ground in 2011. The 400-seat facility is fully equipped and features both local and global entertainment.

The Oliver & District Arena turned 50 in February, and to celebrate, a charity hockey game between the Montreal Canadiens Alumni and the Oliver Big Horns entertained the crowds. All proceeds went towards much-needed capital improvements that are tentatively scheduled for 2020.



Main Street in Oliver is home to a life-size bronze statue of former B.C. Premier “Honest John Oliver,” who irrigated the area to create farmland a century ago and is the town’s namesake.

Oliver, rural Area C and Osoyoos Indian Band all contribute towards Parks & Recreation Services, which are managed by a society and include five multi-use fields for slo-pitch, softball, baseball or soccer. During the summer the popular Big League Baseball camp is in full operation. Oliver hosts multiple sporting events, including a half triathlon, junior triathlon and a 3K and 10K cycling Road Race Series along its famous Kettle Valley Railway trail.

Oliver is also enjoying national attention thanks to winning the Canadian Event of the Year at the 2017 Canadian Tourism Awards for its Half Corked Marathon. This event has become one of the most highly anticipated events in Canada. That same year, Rick Mercer came to see what the Festival of the Grape was all about in 2017 – tasting samples from over 50 wineries and food selections and enjoying an art show all at one venue. There's also the Pig Out at Covert Farms, which brings together chefs showcasing their roasting skills.

Closing in on a population of 5,000, agriculture remains its main industry, and The Ditch continues to supply irrigation water to the farms, orchards and vineyards in the valley. One hundred years after The Ditch was dug, Oliver is a community with a lot to celebrate.

– Diane Vaykovich, Corporate Officer



**Legal advisors providing solicitor and litigation services to local governments and public bodies**

Local Government Law

Planning and Land Development

Procurement

Construction

Infrastructure

Litigation and Dispute Resolution

Sustainable Growth

*Small Firm.  
Big Thinking.*

[www.civiclegal.ca](http://www.civiclegal.ca)

Main 604 639 3639 | Email [info@civiclegal.ca](mailto:info@civiclegal.ca)

710 - 900 West Hastings St. Vancouver, BC, V6C 1E5



Follow us @CivicLegal

WHAT DO 352 YEARS OF EXPERTISE BRING?

CLEAR *advice*

PROMPT *service*

VALUE *for taxpayers*

21 local government lawyers totalling 352 years of expertise. Governance. Litigation. Bylaw Enforcement. Labour. Employment. Finance. Taxation. Assessment. Planning. Development. Environment. Climate Change & Adaptation. Works & Services. Bylaws. Indigenous. Economic Development. Partnering. Intergovernmental. FOIPOP.

LIDSTONE & COMPANY

[www.lidstone.ca](http://www.lidstone.ca)

MAIL  POSTE

Canada Post Corporation/Société canadienne des postes

Postage paid

Port payé

Publications

Poste-

Mail

publications

PM40020357