



November 15, 2018

Ref: 242156

Board  
Strathcona Regional District  
301 - 990 Cedar Street  
Campbell River BC V9W 7Z8

Dear Board Members:

I am writing to congratulate you on your recent election. As you know, good local government depends on people willing to stand for office and serve their communities. Whether this is your first time as an elected official, or you are returning to office for another term, your contribution to public service is appreciated.

Our government is committed to working with local governments in making life more affordable, improving services people count on, and building a strong, sustainable economy that works better for everyone.

As a former municipal councillor, I recognize the opportunities, challenges and choices elected officials face every day. I fully appreciate that these roles are often difficult, with success determined both by the strength of your organizations and by the relationships elected colleagues build among themselves, with local government staff and with members of the public. Paramount to each local government's success is also the standard set by each elected official in conducting themselves with honesty and integrity.

As you are forming, I encourage you to review the attached document, Foundational Principles of Responsible Conduct, developed by a working group from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Local Government Management Association (LGMA). The four foundational principles - integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership and collaboration - can be used to guide the conduct of both individual elected officials and the collective council or board.

I also encourage you to explore the Working Group's Model Code of Conduct that sets out shared principles and standards of conduct to help local councils and boards start developing their own code of conduct. A Companion Guide is available to facilitate a local council or board's conversations as they go through the process. These materials are available on the UBCM website.

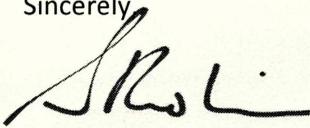
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If you have questions about responsible conduct or other topics of education, training and advice for elected officials and local government staff, I encourage you to contact partner organizations such as the Local Government Leadership Academy, the UBCM and the LGMA. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing can also advise and support local governments to better serve their communities. In this context, I would like to introduce or re-introduce you to Jacqueline Dawes, Deputy Minister, who can be contacted at: [Jacquie.Dawes@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Jacquie.Dawes@gov.bc.ca), and Tara Faganello, Assistant Deputy Minister, Local Government Division, who can be contacted at: [Tara.Faganello@gov.bc.ca](mailto:Tara.Faganello@gov.bc.ca).

Thank you again for your commitment to public service. I look forward to working with you to make life better for all the people of British Columbia.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Robinson', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Selina Robinson  
Minister

Enclosure

# Foundational Principles Of Responsible Conduct

FOR BC'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

## Key Foundational Principles

- ◇ INTEGRITY
- ◇ ACCOUNTABILITY
- ◇ RESPECT
- ◇ LEADERSHIP & COLLABORATION

PRODUCED BY THE WORKING GROUP ON RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT

January 2018

## What are foundational principles?

This document outlines four key foundational principles -- *integrity, accountability, respect, and leadership & collaboration* -- to guide the conduct of local government elected officials in B.C.

The foundational principles provide a basis for how local government elected officials fulfill their roles and responsibilities, including in their relationships with each other, with local government staff and with the public.

These principles are intended to guide both the conduct of individual elected officials and the collective behaviour of the local government council or board. The principles are also meant to guide local governments in fulfilling their corporate functions and responsibilities to their communities.

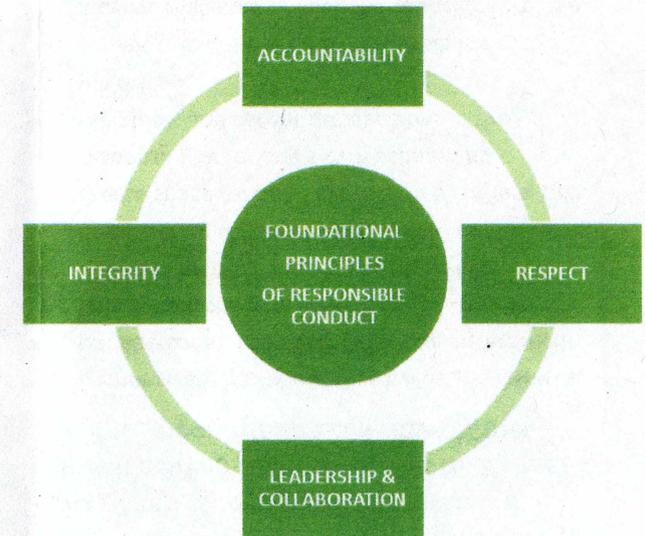
Responsible conduct at all of these levels is key to furthering a local government's ability to provide good governance to its community.

*"The foundational principles provide a basis for how local government elected officials fulfill their roles and responsibilities, including in their relationships with each other, with local government staff and with the public."*

## How do the principles "fit" with legal obligations?

It is the duty of elected officials to understand and abide by all legal requirements that apply to elected officials and local governments<sup>1</sup>, and nothing in this document should be interpreted as taking precedence over such legal obligations.

Local government elected officials should interpret the principles described below in accordance with the responsibilities and obligations set out in B.C.'s local government legislation, other applicable legislation, the common law and the policies and bylaws of the local government.



<sup>1</sup> Many legal obligations apply to elected officials and local governments, including but not limited to rules about: ethical standards such as conflict of interest; open meetings; protecting confidential information; workplace safety such as harassment; and expenditure of local government funds.

**Integrity:** being honest and demonstrating strong ethical principles.

- Be truthful, honest and open in all dealings.
- Behave in a manner that promotes public confidence in local government, including actively avoiding any perceptions of conflicts of interest, improper use of office, or unethical conduct.
- Uphold the public interest, serving citizens diligently to make decisions in the best interests of the community.
- Ensure alignment between stated values and actions, including following through on commitments, engaging in positive communication with the community, and correcting errors in a timely, transparent manner.

**Accountability:** an obligation and willingness to accept responsibility or to account for one's actions.

- Be transparent in how an elected official individually, and a council/board collectively, conducts business and carries out their duties.
- Ensure information is accessible, and citizens can view the process and rationale behind each decision and action, while protecting confidentiality where appropriate or necessary.
- Accept and uphold that the council/board is collectively accountable for local government decisions, and that individual elected officials are responsible and accountable for the decisions they make in fulfilling their roles as council/board members.
- Listen to and consider the opinions and needs of the community in all decision making, and allow for discourse and feedback.

**Respect:** having due regard for others' perspectives, wishes, and rights; displaying deference<sup>2</sup> to the offices<sup>3</sup> of local government, and the role of local government in community decision making.

- Treat every person, including other members of council/board, staff and the public, with dignity, understanding and respect.
- Show consideration at all times for colleagues and staff, including by honouring people's values, beliefs, ideas, roles, contributions and needs.
- Create an environment of trust, including displaying awareness and sensitivity around comments and language that may be perceived as offensive or derogatory.
- Value the role of diverse perspectives and debate in decision making.
- Act in a way that is respectful of the roles and responsibilities of the offices of Mayor/Chair and Councillor/Director.
- Value the distinct roles and responsibilities of local government staff and the community in local government considerations and operations, and commit to foster a positive working relationship between staff, the public and elected officials.
- Call for and expect respect from the community towards elected officials and staff, and their roles and responsibilities within the local government system.

<sup>2</sup> Displaying deference is acting in a way that is respectful of both the tradition and legacy enshrined in the various local government positions, as well as their intended functions.

<sup>3</sup> 'Offices' of local government refers to the roles/responsibilities of the various roles and positions within the local government system, such as Mayor, Chair, Councillor or Director.

**Leadership and Collaboration:** an ability to lead, listen to, and positively influence others; coming together to create or meet a common goal through collective efforts.

- Demonstrate behaviour that builds and inspires public trust and confidence in local government.
- Calmly face challenges and provide considered direction on the issues of the day, while empowering colleagues and staff to do the same.
- Create space for open expression by others, take responsibility for one's own actions and reactions, and accept the decisions of the majority.
- Accept that it is the equal responsibility of the individual elected official, the council/board as a collective, the community and stakeholders to work together to achieve common goals.
- Be an active participant in ensuring the foundational principles are followed in all local government dealings (e.g., including among elected officials, between council/board members and staff, with community members, with other orders of government, in the decisions of a council/board, and in services and other activities of the local government).



*The Working Group on Responsible Conduct is a joint initiative between the UBCM, LGMA and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing. The Group was formed to undertake collaborative research and policy work around issues of responsible conduct of local government elected officials.*