



Report on UBCM Resolutions Process Review Convention Backgrounder

This resource provides background for a survey that voting delegates will be asked to undertake during the Resolutions session on the morning of Thursday, September 21, 2023 at the UBCM Convention.

Resolutions Process Review

The impetus for this review of the resolutions process was a resolution from the City of Campbell River that was submitted for consideration at the 2019 UBCM Convention. Due to a lack of time the resolution was not considered by the membership, and was referred to the UBCM Executive following the Convention, as per UBCM process. Following its deliberations, the Executive endorsed the resolution with amendments as follows:

B176 Review of Resolutions Procedures

Campbell River

Whereas the volume of resolutions admitted for debate from each area association, various local governments and the UBCM Executive, is excessive and does not provide time for wholesome debate on the UBCM convention floor;

And whereas the vetting of resolutions is inadequate and leads to a lack of rational, structured arguments to present a compelling case for government to act:

Therefore be it resolved that UBCM conduct a thorough audit and review of its resolutions procedures to ensure that ~~the resolutions on the floor of the UBCM convention are reduced in number, repetition and are focused on priority use.~~ **it responds to members' concerns that have been expressed about the quantity, repetition and lack of priority focus.**

Convention Decision: **Not Considered – Automatic Referral to UBCM Executive**

Executive Decision: **Endorse as Amended**

Following adoption of this amended resolution the UBCM Executive built a resolutions review into the work plan for the following year, held a workshop to receive UBCM Executive input and made plans to engage Area Associations in the Spring of 2020. However, this project was delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and was re-started in the 2021-22 UBCM work plan and continues in the 2022-2023 work plan.

A similar report to this one was presented at the 2022 UBCM Convention in Whistler. The plan was to survey the members during the Thursday morning Resolutions session with the five questions noted later in this report. Due to the failure of our electronic voting devices, we were unable to poll those present on the five questions contained in the Report. That same day, UBCM sent out an invitation to members to answer the five questions via on-line survey. The response rate was not high, and the UBCM Executive determined more feedback was needed in order to accurately gauge members' interest in updating the resolutions process.

Current Policy and Approach to Resolutions

UBCM’s resolutions process is driven by the membership. It provides all members with an equal opportunity to bring forward policy issues that are important to their communities to be considered and voted on by the broader membership. This grass roots process assists the Secretariat in formulating UBCM policy positions on a plethora of issues.

The consideration of resolutions is an integral part of the UBCM Convention as it assists in setting the policy direction for the association’s advocacy efforts. The Conference Rules and Procedures for Handling Resolutions are informed by UBCM’s governance documents such as UBCM’s Bylaws and Executive Policies. The current approach to resolutions can be summarized as follows:

- any member may bring an issue forward for consideration by full membership;
- no limit on the number of resolutions a member can submit;
- individual members trust full membership to set UBCM priorities;
- UBCM responds to member needs; and
- all members of UBCM are equal.

The above philosophy, in combination with a high level of member participation in the resolutions process, has resulted in a consistently high number of resolutions to be considered each year at Convention. UBCM staff did a comparison of annual resolutions considered by UBCM to other provincial/territorial local government associations across Canada:

Five-year average, annual number of resolutions (2015-2019)

| Association(s) | Annual Average |
|------------------------|----------------|
| UBCM | 205 |
| AMM* (next-highest) | 45 |
| 5 closest PTAs* + FCM* | 27 |
| All other PTAs + FCM | 17 |

*AMM: Association of Manitoba Municipalities

PTAs: provincial + territorial local government associations

FCM: Federation of Canadian Municipalities

Area Association Outreach in 2022

In 2022, workshops were developed and held at all of the Area Association Spring conferences. Each workshop was about an hour in length and involved a presentation followed by a comment and feedback segment. In four of the Area Association meetings, the attendance was good and in the fifth session it was not well attended due to where it was placed in the Area Association program. The following three questions were posed at each session to seed the discussion:

1. Should we be dedicating more time to resolutions at Convention or do we have too many resolutions going to Convention?
2. Should we apply more rigour or structure before we bring a resolution for debate at the UBCM Convention?
3. Is this an effective way to conduct advocacy with the Province?

Feedback From Area Associations

The feedback was thoughtful and varied. In some cases, there were themes that were supported in the session, and in other instances there were not. Here are some examples of the themes that we heard at the 2022 Area Association conferences:

- There is broad support for retaining the grass roots approach to resolutions. Some members reflected on the importance of individual local governments being able to bring a resolution to the floor. As one delegate commented “local priorities are important, so tread lightly on proposed changes”.
- A number of delegates spoke of enjoying the resolution debates at the UBCM convention, and some spoke about the value of learning about issues and challenges in other parts of the province. Some of these delegates supported more time being devoted to resolutions.
- There was a comment that some members do not find the process effective and prefer to spend their time at Convention in Minister meetings. There was also considerable feedback about the logistical challenges of attending resolutions sessions while meetings with provincial officials are being scheduled concurrently.
- There is frustration that a resolution from their local government has been enacted, but there appears to be limited follow-up from UBCM or an unfavourable response from the Province.
- There was an opinion voiced that there are too many resolutions and as a result the Province dismisses the resolutions process. This is not an effective way to conduct our advocacy. This was countered in some measure by statements that all of the resolutions

reflect topic matters that are important to local governments, and these should not be limited in any manner.

- At one Area Association (AVICC), the idea of a funnel was suggested where there would be no limitations on the number of resolutions submitted to the UBCM Convention, but that the delegates would funnel or set priorities on which resolutions are advanced to the Province. There was a level of support for some sort of funneling process within the feedback from this Area Association.
- In a follow-up response after the session, one chair of an Area Association resolutions committee suggested that Area Associations could also do more to add rigour to the resolutions process, through combining resolutions where appropriate, focussing on provincial rather than local resolutions, and consider limiting the number of resolutions to advance to UBCM.
- There was another Area Association (AKBLG) that debates resolutions and at the end of their conference votes and establishes priorities among the adopted resolutions. It was suggested this could be a useful model to follow elsewhere.

Questions for the 2023 UBCM Convention

In order to provide guidance to its deliberations and forthcoming recommendations, the UBCM Resolutions Committee is seeking input from delegates to the 2023 Convention with regard to the following questions:

1. The current resolutions process is effective and responds to the needs of UBCM members?
2. In order to ensure that all resolutions are debated each year, criteria should be developed to limit the number of resolutions considered at the UBCM Convention?
3. Area Associations should prioritize the resolutions that they submit to UBCM?
4. A system should be put in place whereby the UBCM Executive chooses resolutions to be debated, up to a set limit, and in accordance with criteria to be developed?
5. A system should be put in place whereby an endorsed or defeated resolution cannot be sent in again for a certain number of years?

Response options:

- a) Strongly Agree b) Agree c) Neutral d) Disagree e) Strongly Disagree

About the Questions

Question One is intended to measure the memberships satisfaction with the current process. On the one hand there seems to be broad support for the current grassroots approach, while on the other hand our convention evaluations consistently return comments expressing frustration with the current process for a variety of reasons as noted above.

Question Two is intended to gauge membership support for limiting the number of resolutions that are submitted for debate each year from the membership. No criteria has been developed to date but examples of criteria could be a cap on the number of resolutions submitted from an individual local government or an area association.

Question Three is intended to determine whether there is membership support for an increased role to be played by Area Associations. Currently one Area Association prioritizes the resolutions adopted at their Spring conference, but this prioritization is not reflected in the UBCM resolutions process that is followed at the UBCM Convention.

Question Four is intended to gauge membership support for an increased role for the UBCM Executive, through the Resolutions Committee, to set limits on the number of resolutions and select which resolutions received from the membership would be advanced for debate at the UBCM Convention. Criteria has not been developed at this time, but could include within the scope of local government jurisdiction, relevance to advocacy files being worked on by UBCM or identification of emerging issues for local governments.

Question Five seeks to gauge membership support for establishing rules around repeat resolutions. Currently there are no limitations on re-submitting resolutions that are: already endorsed by the membership and thereby established UBCM policy or those resolutions that have been defeated at past conventions.

Timing at Convention

These questions will be posed to members during the resolutions session at the 2023 UBCM Convention on Thursday morning, September 21.