



118th Annual
SUMA Convention
April 16 – 19, 2023
TCU Place
Saskatoon

Resolutions Committee:
Councillor Bob Hawkins (Chair)
Councillor Dawn Luhning
Councillor Don Cody
Councillor Richard Beck
Mayor Pat Jackson
Mayor Michelle McKenzie

RESOLUTION PROCESS

Presentation of resolutions:

- The Resolutions Committee will determine the order in which resolutions are presented at the Convention.
- A Resolutions Committee member will read the action clause.
- The Resolutions Committee Chair will move each resolution and ask for speakers supporting, opposing, or seeking amendment to the resolution.
- All speakers will be given no more than two (2) minutes to speak.
- If an amendment is proposed:
 - The amender will be given the opportunity to speak on behalf of the amendment.
 - If a speaker is opposed to the amendment, regular debate then occurs.
 - Once debate has concluded, or if there is no speaker opposed, the question is called.
 - If the amendment is successful, the amendment will be recorded, and the Chair will ask for any speaker opposed to the amended resolution to speak.
- Should no members speak to the resolution, or at the close of debate, the Chair will call the question.
- Resolutions which are not debated at a resolutions session because of insufficient time or lack of a quorum will be presented to the next meeting of the SUMA Board of Directors.

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2023-01. Municipal Consent for Property Transfers

Whereas municipalities in Saskatchewan have a difficult and expensive time dealing with unwanted, vacant, abandoned, derelict properties; and

Whereas owners of unwanted, vacant, abandoned, derelict properties may transfer the title of these properties to the Municipality without consent; and

Whereas owning these unwanted, vacant, abandoned, derelict properties is often expensive and time-consuming for the municipality.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Government of Saskatchewan to amend existing legislation and regulations or pass new legislation and regulations requiring the consent of a Municipality before having property transferred into its name.

Acts affected: *The Land Titles Act; Land Titles Regulations, 2001;*
Regions/sectors: ALL

Background:

Recently the Town of Central Butte received a notice that a property was transferred into the name of the Municipality. We did not want this property as it holds little to no value. Although we were lucky that this is a vacant lot that is unlikely to cause a large amount of effort and expense to maintenance, there are several examples of property that if transferred to the Town would create a problem.

2023-02. Electric & Hybrid Vehicle Disabling Tool for Fire Departments

Whereas fire departments practice on old vehicles for training to receive hands on experience, but electric and hybrid vehicles are so new that few have been scrapped leading to less training; and

Whereas electric and hybrid vehicles have high-voltage cables that run through them along with a high-powered battery that could cause serious injury or even death to firefighters; and

Whereas firefighters are used to the sound of an internal combustion engine, as it is easy to tell when a vehicle is running, while electric vehicles do not produce that noise, and hybrid vehicles may produce that noise if running on an internal combustion engine at the time of the accident; and

Whereas fire departments must ensure vehicles are powered off prior to taking the vehicle apart for their safety and performing extraction.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Minister Responsible for major Crown Corporations, Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), and the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency to provide all Saskatchewan Fire Departments with an adapter for electric and hybrid vehicles to ensure fire departments can safely disable the power on these vehicles prior to tending to occupants in vehicles.

Acts affected: None
Regions/Sectors: ALL

2023-03. Grace Period for Mayor and/or Councillors after General Elections

Whereas *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* does not account for adequate Mayoral and Councillor training, including “job shadowing”, prior to a Mayor and/or Councillors being elected; and

Whereas prior to being elected, a Mayor and/or Councillors are unaware of the duties, requirements, meetings, and/or higher professional standard that is required of a position with such authority; and

Whereas Section 15 of *The Local Government Election Act, 2015* already exists to forgo a by-election in the same year as a general election; and

Whereas avoiding a by-election within the first year after the main election (every 4 years) would save communities time, money, and other resources;

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate to the Ministry of Government Relations to amend *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*, to allow for a one year “grace period” with the Mayor and/or Councillors, wherein if a Mayor and/or Councillor steps down or ceases to fill their position within one year following a general election, the candidate, if the original position was not acclaimed, with the next highest number of votes would acclaim the position.

Acts affected: *The Local Government Election Act, 2015*

Regions/Sectors: ALL

Background:

Our particular community had one individual resign one month after the main election and two more resign last year. We have had a by-election every year since the November 2020 general election. To date, three out of the original seven Mayor/ Councillors have left office in a two year time span. By-elections are time consuming and expensive for CAOs and Admin Assistants.

It was also brought to my attention that some of Council stated until you are in the role and elected, you do not truly know what the position entails, how to conduct yourself and what you should or shouldn't say to the public or to the media.

2023-04. Funding for Municipal Landfill Decommissioning and Reclamation

Whereas the Government of Saskatchewan has directed municipalities that operate landfills to prepare preliminary closure plans for all landfills which are to be fully or partially closed; and

Whereas the most recent Investing in Canada (ICIP) Landfill Decommissioning intake closed on September 15, 2022 and the selection of successful applicants has now concluded; and

Whereas municipalities that operate active landfill services and that were not successful in accessing funding under the ICIP program continue to exist through Saskatchewan; and

Whereas many of these municipal or regional landfill services are burdened with the prospect of incurring extraordinary expenditures in order to carry out the required decommissioning and reclamation of their respective landfill's historic cells as a path to ensuring compliance with the provincial regulations.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate that the Government of Saskatchewan and its Ministry of Environment work together with the Federal Government to re-introduce significant shared-cost Landfill Decommissioning and Reclamation funding for the appropriate closure of historical landfill cells in all municipal or regional landfill operations.

Acts affected: None

Regions/Sectors affected: ALL

Background:

The Town of Maple Creek has, for many years, provided landfill services under an agreement with the RMs of Maple Creek and Piapot and other neighbouring entities. The existing landfill property includes several historic cells that were discontinued at various points in the landfill history.

An application was submitted under the ICIP program for closure of the historic cells only. This application was deemed ineligible in part because the intent was to continue providing landfill services in close proximity to the vicinity of the historic cells. When contacted, the Province confirmed the scope of this ICIP intake has changed from the previous intake to now only consider applications that resulted in full decommissioning of a complete landfill. It was stated in the Provincial response that this change in the program scope aligns with the Province's Solid Waste Management Strategy.

This leaves Maple Creek and other active municipal landfill operations at risk of incurring debilitating future landfill closure costs.

2023-05. Contacting Emergency Services Through 911

Whereas in a state of emergency, a municipality may no longer reach the Emergency Service Operator ("ESO") by calling 911, but rather must call their respective ESO; and

Whereas time is of the essence in an emergency situation, 911 is a familiar and accessible number, and municipalities may not be aware of the number to call to reach their ESO.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Saskatchewan Public Safety Agency to return to the former policy where, in an emergency, an ESO can be dispatched by calling 911 and declaring a state of emergency

Acts affected: None

Regions/Sectors: ALL

2023-06. Golf Carts as Neighbourhood Small Vehicles

Whereas Section 113.1 of *The Traffic Safety Act* permits the operation of golf carts on a highway or any part of a highway with a municipal bylaw in place; and

Whereas regulations in Saskatchewan legislation require additional bylaw approval from SGI as administrator, based on a restrictive set of best practices limiting golf cart use to the following: transportation on municipal roadways, to/from the golf course, using the shortest most direct route between the golf course and where the golf cart is stored; travel is allowed during daylight hours only; the bylaw must specify where the operation of a golf cart is permitted/prohibited; and

Whereas other jurisdictions in Canada have successfully adopted safe golf cart use in accordance with the rise of a micro-mobility revolution to deliver low-carbon, cost-effective, ability-inclusive means for alternative transportation; and

Whereas a similar approach to micro-mobility transportation was adopted through an Order in Council on September 15, 2022: OC423-2022 creating The Limited Speed Motor Vehicle Regulations adding to *The Traffic Safety Act*, Section 287, permitting safe and responsible electric kick scooter use on Saskatchewan highways and roadways; and

Whereas many SUMA members, primarily from smaller communities and resort villages, have expressed support for ability-inclusive, cost-effective, safe, environmentally-aware transportation alternatives that enhance community connectivity and reduce parking congestion in public gathering spaces.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA lobby the Minister of Highways, the Minister of Government Relations, and the Minister Responsible for all major Crown Corporations, for change to SGI's "best practices" and for any associated legislative and regulatory changes, as required, to give municipalities the choice to allow golf carts to be operated on municipal roadways.

Acts affected: *The Traffic Safety Act* and Regulations;

Regions/Sectors: ALL, but most support coming from smaller communities

Background:

- 1) Two previously successful member SUMA resolutions:
 - a) In 2014, SUMA lobbied the Highway Traffic Board to treat golf carts and golf cart use within municipal boundaries similar to ATVs and snowmobiles by allowing municipalities to regulate the use of golf carts within municipal boundaries; and
 - b) In 2015, SUMA lobbied SGI to re-examine its best practices to approve municipal bylaws which allow for broader use of golf carts within municipal boundaries.
- 2) In 2022, British Columbia amended its Motor Vehicle Act Regulations to provide a robust governance structure over the use of golf carts on public roadways after a successful pilot project began in 2016.
- 3) In 2021, Ontario passed new regulations within its Highway Traffic Act allowing golf cart use on public roadways, as a pilot project, with a municipal bylaw in place.

2023-07. Increased Funding/Support for Engineering Cost-overruns

Whereas Government grant programs such as the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP) requires a municipality to submit engineering plans prior to finding out if the municipality has been approved for the funding; and

Whereas this is a mandatory component of applications and costly to municipalities; and

Whereas councils are made up of people without engineering backgrounds, are unfamiliar with the intricacies of the required designs, and have difficulty effectively collaborating with professional engineers to produce a design that is in the best interest of the municipality but also cost-effective and reasonable; and

Whereas there are situations where municipalities have been unsatisfied with some of the designs produced by engineers and which have resulted in additional costs to municipalities.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Minister of Highways to set up a contingency fund to cover cost overruns due to errors arising during the mandatory creation of engineering reports, and to allow municipalities to apply for, and receive payment of, grants before having to undertake the creation of detailed engineering reports.

Acts affected: None
Regions/Sectors: ALL

Background:

Recently the Town of Whitewood spent over \$11,000 for engineered drawings to apply for a grant. Unfortunately, the Town does not know if its application for the grant will be approved, meaning the construction of the project may never happen and the engineered drawings will not be used.

In favour in supporting this resolution: Town of Wapella, Town of Saltcoats, Town of Broadview, Town of Watson, Town of Redvers, Town of Churchbridge, and Town of Eston.

2023-08. Financial Relief from Effects of Carbon Tax

Whereas the Carbon Tax is now showing its effects on municipalities in Saskatchewan; and

Whereas there is a significant negative impact on municipal budgets and the ability for municipalities to continue to provide services to residents; and

Whereas municipalities will require significant tax increases to maintain the status quo provision of services to residents and municipal operations.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Provincial Government to provide additional relief to municipalities to protect them from the effects of the Carbon Tax, either through municipal revenue sharing or some other measure, to ensure the sustainability of our hometowns.

Acts affected: None
Regions/Sectors: ALL

2023-09. RCMP Additional Administrative Staff

Whereas RCMP detachments must provide law enforcement services to wide and far-reaching areas, which requires the support of administrative staff; and

Whereas the amount of administrative staff has been insufficient for various areas.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Provincial Government and Federal Government for additional financial support to have more administrative staff hired to support RCMP members and so the RCMP may have an increased presence throughout areas under their jurisdiction.

Acts affected: None
Regions/Sectors: ALL

Background:

The RCMP detachments housed between Langenburg and Esterhazy have a large area to cover on a regular basis. To better assist in the duties of members to be more visible in all areas, the Area Meeting Group who meet with all area municipalities and RMs want to advocate and be the voice to ask for additional administrative staff to assist the members.

The Area Meeting Group meets to discuss issues affecting an eastern region in Saskatchewan, and the Town of Esterhazy has gathered the support of the following communities within the Area Meeting group:

- Towns of Churchbridge, Langenburg, Saltcoats, Bredenbury, Esterhazy;
- Villages of Calder, Atwater, Bangor, Dubuc, Grayson, MacNutt , Stockholm; and
- R.M.'s of Langenburg, Spy Hill, Fertile Belt, Saltcoats, Calder.

2023-10. PST on Municipal Construction

Whereas prior to the 2017 provincial budget, construction projects were exempt from Provincial Sales Tax (PST); and

Whereas the removal of that exemption left numerous municipalities and their ratepayers solely responsible for funding the additional costs of PST on projects that had already been approved for federal and provincial funding; and

Whereas the annual costs for larger municipalities averages out to more than a third of their total revenue sharing; and

Whereas in smaller municipalities, PST on a large project may exceed their entire annual revenues sharing grant; and

Whereas the amount of PST paid that is returned to municipalities through revenue sharing is minor (\$750 to the revenue sharing pool per \$100,000 spent on PST).

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Ministry of Finance to immediately reinstate a PST exemption on municipal construction projects.

Acts affected: *The Provincial Sales Tax Act*
Regions/Sectors: ALL

Background:

- SUMA has significant concerns about the continued application of the PST on municipal construction projects.
- Prior to 2017, construction projects were PST exempt, but the province removed that exemption without any thought for how it would affect the ability of Saskatchewan municipalities to pay for the services and infrastructure our residents need.
- While we value and appreciate the Municipal Revenue Sharing agreement we have with the province, many SUMA members are paying between 24-39 per cent of their annual Municipal Revenue Sharing Grant back to the province in the form of PST on construction projects in an average year—and that doesn't include what they pay in PST on operating expenditures.
- As an example, the City of Yorkton received about \$3.27 million in revenue sharing and paid back \$997,000 in PST on construction in 2021—leaving \$2.27 million in revenue sharing. That's almost the same as what the city received in 2010.
- Had 2014 revenue sharing simply been adjusted for inflation, and PST not imposed on construction, Yorkton would have been receiving \$3.75 million in 2021.
- PST on construction is also a major issue for our smaller members. The Town of Broadview is currently grappling with enormous inflationary pressures on their new joint administration building, which also has a library and community centre in it. The Town expects to pay \$110,000 in PST for that project alone, despite only receiving about \$117,000 in revenue sharing.
- While we continue to appreciate the Municipal Revenue Sharing agreement we have with the Government of Saskatchewan, regular downloading of responsibilities and costs, including a PST on municipal construction, are clawing back a substantial amount of what municipalities receive.

2023-11. Homelessness and Liveable Social Support

Whereas SUMA members of all sizes are experiencing substantial issues with homelessness in their communities; and

Whereas the Government of Saskatchewan's replacement of the Saskatchewan Assistance Program and the Saskatchewan Transitional Employment Allowance with the Saskatchewan Income Support (SIS) Program substantially decreased funding for those on social assistance, while all costs of living continue to rise; and

Whereas the average SIS client is short at least \$300 monthly for the basic necessities of life, resulting in rent and utilities going unpaid, more evictions, and a higher demand for food banks; and

Whereas many landlords are now unwilling to rent to SIS recipients, and vacancy rates and trending downward, contributing to a direct increase in homelessness; and

Whereas thousands of social housing units sit vacant, many due to a lack of maintenance by the Saskatchewan Housing Authority; and

Whereas many of the homeless, including former SIS recipients, have other mental health and addictions issues that make them difficult to house without supportive housing options; and

Whereas the cost to the province and municipalities is exponentially higher to house the homeless in shelters, hospitals, and jails.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the Province to immediately increase SIS rates to meet the basic cost of living, restore direct rent and utilities payments for all that need them, and develop more supportive housing options for those deemed “hard to house” due to mental health and addictions issues.

Acts affected: *The Saskatchewan Assistance Act*
Regions/Sectors: ALL

Background:

- SIS provides funding for basic needs to clients that are unable to support themselves, or secure funding from other governmental programs.
- SIS was created in 2019 to replace the Saskatchewan Income Assistance Program and the Saskatchewan Transitional Employment Allowance.
- The program’s objective is supporting people to overcome their challenges and move to employment or participation in their communities. With this in mind, the program does not pay landlords or utilities directly by default, as was done under the former programs. As a result, it provides an averaged amount for shelter, with an additional payment for other living costs.
- Following the mandatory program transition in the fall of 2021, evictions due to arrears among program clients increased substantially, particularly in Regina and Saskatoon.
- The government saw substantial cost savings under the new program, due to a net reduction in benefits for recipients.
- The program has been successful by the government metric of people leaving the program mid-year, but the overall number of beneficiaries has increased substantially under SIS, suggesting that it is not successfully transitioning people into employment over the long-term. Instead, it acts as a barrier to people trying to get back on their feet and into the workforce.
- Affordable housing is very scarce, particularly in larger cities, and recent data reports that over 3,000 social housing units sit empty, while Saskatchewan experiences a homelessness crisis. Many of these units have fallen into such disrepair as to be uninhabitable.
- Many of those experiencing homelessness also suffer from mental health and addictions, for which Saskatchewan sorely lacks sufficient support. As a result, many of the homeless may not qualify for social housing, even if it is available.

- Supportive housing options provide another way to house those suffering from mental health and addictions, giving them a safe space that is monitored by caregivers.
- Supportive housing is more expensive than standard social housing, but far less expensive than repeated interactions with the justice system or the health care system.
- a 2007 study by Shapcott found that, the average monthly cost of housing one homeless person (adjusted to 2022 dollars) was approximately:
 - \$260 (in appropriately-funded social housing)
 - \$910 (support funding through a program such as SIS or its predecessors)
 - \$2,600 (bed at a shelter, provided one is available)
 - \$5,590 (provincial jail)

2023-12. PST on Event Tickets

Whereas prior to 2022, event tickets were exempt from the Provincial Sales Tax (PST); and

Whereas the addition of PST to event tickets either increases the cost for consumers, potentially reducing attendance, or reduces the slim profit margin for promoters, which leads to promoters choosing to skip over Saskatchewan entirely; and

Whereas concerts and other major events have substantial economic spinoff for municipalities, increasing revenues for numerous classes of business—all of whom pay taxes on those additional earnings; and

Whereas Saskatchewan has missed out on several major acts and the economic benefits they would have brought with them since the PST on event tickets was introduced.

Therefore be it resolved that SUMA advocate the provincial Minister of Finance to remove the Provincial Sales Tax on event tickets.

Acts affected: *The Provincial Sales Tax Act*

Regions/Sectors: ALL