RECOMMENDATION

That the Board submit a response to the questionnaire on Feedback on the Role and Function of Alternate Electoral Area Directors to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as attached to the staff report.

SUMMARY

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has notified Regional Districts that feedback is being sought on experiences with the alternate electoral area director role. The Ministry has launched a feedback form to gather information about practical concerns and opportunities respecting the role of alternate electoral area directors.

BACKGROUND

In 2018, a UBCM Ad-Hoc Committee wrote the discussion paper “Role and Implications of Alternate Unelected Electoral Area Directors” (copy attached) which examined the role of alternate electoral area directors and focused on situations where electoral area directors are absent for an extended period, rather than occasional absences.

The Ad-Hoc Committee explored the following options, outlined in the discussion paper:

- Remove the legislative requirement to appoint an alternate.
- If an alternate is appointed, the alternate must be an elected official.
- In the absence of an electoral area director or an elected alternate, the board would be responsible for making decisions.
- Amend the legislation to trigger a by-election within a reasonable period of time in the case of illness or injury of the sitting electoral area director.

Based on a detailed examination of the role of the unelected alternate electoral area director, the Committee took the view that the principle of elected representation is paramount and proposed two policy directions for member consideration:
1. That the legislative requirement for appointing alternates remain in place, but that amendments be made to require alternate electoral area directors to be elected officials.

2. That a time limit be placed on how long an alternate can serve in the absence of an electoral area director before triggering a by-election.

The substantial effort that UBCM and the Ad-Hoc Committee undertook to explore the issue and develop the discussion paper provided an important starting point for further dialogue on this topic.

Given the many perspectives on this issue, the Ministry is undertaking further work to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the operational nature of the alternate electoral area director role and function within regional districts.

The survey was sent to the Board via email, as individual responses from elected officials are also welcomed.

In addition, staff have completed a questionnaire on behalf of the Board, and a copy of that proposed submission is attached for the review and approval of the Board.

**ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Board submit a response to the questionnaire on Feedback on the Role and Function of Alternate Electoral Area Directors to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as attached to the Staff Report.

2. That the Board amend the draft response to the questionnaire on Feedback on the Role and Function of Alternate Electoral Area Directors to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as attached to the Staff Report, and submit a response.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications for this report.

**STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

People and Partnerships - Improve the governance and awareness of RDN activities for citizens throughout the Region.

Delcy Wells

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December 19, 2019

Reviewed by:

- J. Hill, Manager, Legislative Services
- E. Hughes, Intergovernmental Relations Manager
- P. Carlyle, Chief Administrative Officer
Attachments:

1. Role and Implications of Alternate Unelected Electoral Area Directors
2. Questionnaire with Proposed Responses