

# **Municipality of North Cowichan Inaugural Council Meeting MINUTES**

**November 2, 2022, 1:30 p.m.  
Municipal Hall - Council Chambers**

Members Present    Mayor Rob Douglas  
                             Councillor Mike Caljouw  
                             Councillor Bruce Findlay  
                             Councillor Chris Istace  
                             Councillor Christopher Justice  
                             Councillor Tek Manhas  
                             Councillor Debra Toporowski

Staff Present        Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)  
                             George Farkas, General Manager, Planning, Development & Community Services  
                             Talitha Soldera, General Manager, Corporate Services  
                             Barb Floden, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement  
                             Martin Drakeley, Fire Chief, Senior Manager of Bylaw Services  
                             Michelle Martineau, Corporate Officer  
                             Tricia Mayea, Deputy Corporate Officer

## **1. CEREMONIAL PROCESSION**

Cowichan Tribes Elder John George welcomed Council-Elect with a traditional song as they entered the Council Chambers.

## **2. FIRST NATIONS PRAYER**

Cowichan Tribes Elder John George opened the ceremony with a prayer.

## **3. HONoured GUESTS ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Chief Administrative Officer, Ted Swabey, welcomed the honoured guests and invited them to address Council-Elect. Chief Pahalicktun, Richard Thomas from Lyackson First Nation shared his thoughts on the importance of working together towards reconciliation and for future generations. Councillor Stephanie Atleo from Cowichan Tribes thanked Council-Elect for inviting them to participate in the ceremony and encouraged Council members to reach out to build a relationship, and then proceeded to wish them well.

## **4. OATH OF OFFICE**

The Municipal Solicitor, Sukhbir Manhas, administered the Oaths of Office to Mayor-Elect Rob Douglas and Councillors-Elect, Mike Caljouw, Bruce Findlay, Chris Istace, Christopher Justice, Tek Manhas, and Debra Toporowski.

## 5. INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY MAYOR

Mayor Douglas delivered his inaugural address to Council and the citizens of North Cowichan. The Mayor's address is noted below.

*Good afternoon. I would first like to welcome everyone to this inaugural ceremony of North Cowichan Council, and acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional territory of the Coast Salish peoples.*

*I would also like to thank the members of the previous Council who did not return – former Mayor Al Siebring, Councillor Kate Marsh and Councillor Rosalie Sawrie. Each brought their own individual strengths to this table and worked very hard on behalf of the community.*

*I also offer congratulations to our three returning Councillors – Councillor Manhas, Councillor Toporowski and Councillor Justice. Your experience at this table will be a significant asset, and I will be looking to you to help provide leadership at the Council table over these next four years.*

*We have three new Councillors joining us – Councillor Caljouw, Councillor Findlay, and Councillor Istace. Welcome. Each of you will bring new ideas, unique skills and fresh thinking to this table that will shape how the Municipality addresses the immediate issues facing our community and plans for the long-term. I look forward to working together.*

*On the surface this Council may appear, in many ways, to be less diverse than the previous Council. However, the seven folks elected to sit at this table bring a very balanced and diverse set of skills, backgrounds, expertise, and geographic distribution from across this large municipality, with representation from Chemainus, Crofton, along Quamichan Lake, the Maple Bay Corridor, and Berkey's Corner.*

*As you all know, we face real challenges here in North Cowichan and the broader region, like so many other places across B.C. and Canada. These include a lack of affordable housing, growing levels of homelessness, budgetary pressures, massive infrastructure replacement costs, environmental degradation, more frequent extreme weather events, the loss of high-paying resource jobs, and a rising cost of living, to name a few.*

*A local government like North Cowichan does not have the powers or the resources to solve all these problems on its own. However, we can implement tools, within our jurisdiction as a municipality, that will, over time, make a difference – whether that's adopting an affordable housing strategy, updating our land use zoning bylaw, or taking steps to adapt to climate change.*

*Our success in tackling the major issues in our community will depend in large part on our ability to work together as a Council, and also with the talented and hard-working staff here at the Municipality. That's what our residents expect from us and why we were elected to sit at this table. When I was first sworn-in here as a Councillor eight years ago, Glen Ridgway, a Freeman of the Municipality, gave us wise advice. "In line with your principles, attempt to work together," he said, "because it is together you achieve results for our Municipality." I couldn't agree more.*

*Equally important to our success will be our ability to work co-operatively with neighbouring jurisdictions, including the City of Duncan, the Town of Lake Cowichan, the Town of Ladysmith and the Cowichan Valley Regional District. It will only be by working together that we will be able to effectively advocate to the senior levels of government to provide the supports and the resources to address the big challenges facing our region – from reducing homelessness and building more*

*affordable housing, to replacing our aging and costly infrastructure and adapting to more frequent and extreme weather events.*

*It will be vital for us to build on the foundation laid by previous Councils to strengthen co-operation, understanding and mutual support with local First Nations – including Cowichan Tribes, the Halalt First Nation, the Lyackson First Nation, the Stz'uminus First Nation, and the Penelakut Tribe. This will require a dedicated effort from all members of Council to continue our collective journey towards meaningful and lasting reconciliation.*

*I am truly excited to work with Council, municipal staff, local residents, and our neighboring jurisdictions to get to work in tackling the major issues in our community. I am confident that we will make a difference over these next four years, to not only improve the quality of life of current residents, but to create a healthier and more sustainable community for future generations. Thank you.*

**6. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Rob Douglas called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.m.

**7. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be approved, as circulated.

CARRIED

**8. BUSINESS**

**8.1 2022 General Local Election Results**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council accept the report from the Chief Election Officer on the 2022 general local election results, dated November 2, 2022.

CARRIED

Mayor Douglas advised Council that they will be revisiting the following appointments in a year's time to decide if any changes were necessary.

**8.2 Appointment of Acting Mayor**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council designate Councillor Toporowski as Acting Mayor, to serve in the Mayor's absence, or when the Mayor is otherwise unable to act.

CARRIED

**8.3 Appointment of Municipal Directors and Alternates to the CVRD Board**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council appoint:

- (1) Mayor Douglas, Councillor Justice, Councillor Manhas and Councillor Toporowski as Municipal Directors to the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board;
- (2) Councillor Istace as Alternate Director #1, Councillor Caljouw as Alternate Director #2, and Councillor Findlay as Alternate Director #3 to the Cowichan Valley Regional District Board;

AND THAT Council establish the system for determining which Alternate Director is to act in place of any Municipal Director as follows:

- (1) Alternate Director #1 will act in place of any absent Municipal Director;
  - (2) Alternate Director #2 will act if Alternate Director #1 is unable to act for the absent Municipal Director;
  - (3) Alternate Director #3 will act if Alternate Director #2 is unable to act for the absent Municipal Director.
- CARRIED

#### **8.4 Appointments by the Mayor to Standing Committees**

Mayor Douglas identified that he intended to establish an Economic Development Committee and would be appointing himself, Councillor Findlay and Councillor Istace to the standing committee once established.

#### **8.5 Appointments by Council to Select Committees**

Mayor Douglas indicated that he would be asking Council to consider establishing an "Agricultural Advisory Committee" following their review of their committee structures. Mayor Douglas also stated that he would be recommending that Council appoint Councillor Justice as their representative on the select committee once established.

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council appoint Councillor Caljouw to the Environmental Advisory Committee, and Mayor Douglas to the Forestry Advisory Committee.

CARRIED

#### **8.6 Appointments to the Joint Utilities Board**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council appoint Councillor Findlay and Councillor Justice to the Joint Utilities Board.

CARRIED

#### **8.7 Appointment of Representatives to other Legislated and Jurisdictional Boards, Commissions, and Committees**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council appoint for the 2022-2026 Council term:

- (1) Councillor Findlay to the City of Duncan's Advisory Committee on Disability Issues, and Councillor Justice as the Alternate;
  - (2) Councillor Istace, Councillor Findlay, and Councillor Caljouw to the Cowichan Valley Regional District's Cowichan Centre Commission;
  - (3) Councillor Caljouw to the City of Duncan's Tourism Advisory Committee, and Councillor Toporowski as the Alternate; and,
  - (4) Councillor Manhas to the Vancouver Island Regional Library Board and Councillor Justice as the Alternate Member to serve on the library board if Councillor Manhas is absent or unable to act.
- CARRIED

#### **8.8 Appointments to Other External Bodies**

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council appoint for the 2022-2026 Council term as non-voting members:

- (1) Councillor Manhas to the BC Forest Discovery Centre Board;
- (2) Councillor Istace to the Chemainus and District Chamber of Commerce;

November 2, 2022 - Inaugural Council Meeting Minutes

- (3) Councillor Istace to the Chemainus Festival of Murals Society;
- (4) Councillor Justice to the Cowichan Communities Health Network;
- (5) Councillor Findlay to the Cowichan Community Policing Advisory Society;
- (6) Councillor Justice to the Crofton Community Centre Society;
- (7) Councillor Manhas to the Duncan Cowichan Chamber of Commerce;
- (8) Councillor Toporowski to the Maple Bay Community Association;
- (9) Councillor Caljouw to the Social Planning Cowichan Board;
- (10) Councillor Caljouw to the Somenos Management Committee; and,
- (11) Councillor Toporowski to the Quamichan Watershed Stewardship Society. CARRIED

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Douglas declared the meeting adjourned at 2:11 p.m.

---

Certified by Corporate Officer

---

Signed by Mayor