

Alberta Weekly Review

Thursday, October 12, 2017

Session Schedule & Activities

- Alberta municipal elections will be held on Monday, October 16.
- United Conservative Party (UCP) leadership vote on will be held on October 28.
- Fall legislative session is scheduled to begin October 30.

Government News and Announcements

New Alberta Health Deputy Minister Hired

A new Deputy Minister, with deep connections working with an NDP government, has been hired to replace Dr. Carl Amrhein as Deputy Minister of Health. Amrhein resigned last month to take a position with Aga Khan University.

Starting October 23, Milton Sussman, former CEO of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority will take on the role. Sussman departed from the role as CEO in June after 21 months in the position. The Winnipeg Regional Health Authority was created in 1999 and employees 28,000 Manitoban's with a \$2.6 billion budget. He served in various roles in the Manitoba Government between 1999-2015 including Deputy Minister of Health and Healthy Living, Clerk of Executive Council and Deputy Minister of Family Services and Housing. Prior to his career in government he was CEO of Ten Ten Sinclair Housing a non-profit organization that delivers transitional housing to people with physical disabilities. He holds a Bachelor's degree in English Language and Literature from the University of Winnipeg.

Government Grant to Support Women in Technology

Hon. Stephanie McLean, Minister of Service Alberta and Minister of Status of Women announced a new grant which will benefit Women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Chic Geek, a Calgary based non-profit is receiving a \$47,000 which will help them run the Geekly Summit, health in Calgary on November 8 which celebrates women advancing technology and entrepreneurship.

The Status of Women's first every grant program is providing grants to 34 innovative projects for the 2016-17 fiscal year for a total of \$1.5 million.

Political News

Discussion on Sale of Cannabis Continues

President of the Alberta Federation of Labour (AFL), Gil McGowan has weighed in on the province's policy framework for legal cannabis released last week. The province is still determining if the sale will be through private sector stores or government run stores. McGowan believes that government stores will have the best chance of creating good jobs and bring financial return to the province. Submissions on the framework are being accepted until October 27 and AFL will be presenting a submission.

Concerns Over UCP Voting Process

With the leadership vote for the UCP only 2 weeks away Brian Jean has raised concerns about the electronic voting system and the registration process. Members are required to register by 5:00 pm this Friday October 13 with the party in order to receive a voting pin which they can use between October 26-28 to vote for leader. The membership cut off was September 29, and members then had to register and provide proof of identity electronically or by mail.

Jean calls the process complicated and cumbersome and said many members face technical problems, particularly in rural Alberta. The Schweitzer campaign has echoed Jean's concerns about member awareness while the Kenney campaign has set up 30 kiosks across the province to help members register.

According to the party's Executive Director, Janice Harrington, 50,000 members have already registered, and registrations continue at a fast pace.

Inside sources indicate that it was Jean's team that pushed for an early cut off for memberships sales and a thorough vetting system. This could be either a sign of weakness or a play to utilize media to increase registrations of their members.

Municipal News

Calgary Mayor Race Heats Up

The race for the Mayor's seat in Calgary is becoming increasingly contentious following polling released last week that put Bill Smith ahead of incumbent mayor Neheed Nenshi. Conversely an online poll from a pro-Green Line LRT not-for-profit group placed Mayor Nenshi ahead of Smith on that issue. Smith has called the Green Line LRT a boondoggle and would delay the construction until it could be reviewed.

Early this week challenger Bill Smith faced scrutiny when documents released to the media named his company over an unpaid \$24,545.60 loan to RBC Small Business Loans. As a result bailiffs were going to seize Smith's property in January 2017, but Smith cleared the debt in full preventing the action. According to Smith, the situation was a

result of an oversight when his company moved offices and neglected to update the information with banking and had not received the notices.

Meanwhile, Mayor Nenshi released a Facebook video suggesting hate fueled political forces were attempting to undermine his campaign and support his challengers. The video has since been removed but Nenshi said his remarks stand and he has been attacked on his faith, skin color and sexuality, particularly through social media.

Iveson Releases Final Policy Announcement

Incumbent Mayor Don Iveson released his final policy announcement on Tuesday outlining numerous family friendly policies. It includes free transit for children 12 and under, lower speed limits in residential neighborhoods, a task force on racism and joint planning with Edmonton school boards. Late last week Iveson also announced policies to “strengthen city hall integrity” including the creation of an online lobbyist registry for the Mayor’s office, the implementation of a City Council code of conduct and the creation of an integrity commissioner to offer independent advice to council on violations of the code of conduct and promote transparency. The changes to the Municipal Government Act require all Alberta’s municipalities to develop codes of conduct.