Council Member Travel Expense Summary Report

Date(s) of Travel:
September 7-10, 2011

Place(s) of Travel:
Nelson, BC

Purpose of Travel:
As an elected board member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, chair of the BC Caucus, and member of the Executive Committee, I attended The National Board of Directors Meeting.

Please apply expenses for this travel to UBCM for reimbursement, as discussed earlier.

Additional Information:
Please see attached report.

Respectfully submitted:

Councillor Garth Frizzell

2011-09-12
Council Member Travel Summary Report

Travel: FCM National Board of Directors Meeting
September 7-10, 2011

“The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has been the national voice of municipal government since 1901. With more than 1,900 members, FCM represents the interests of municipalities on policy and program matters that fall within federal jurisdiction. Members include Canada’s largest cities, small urban and rural communities, and 21 provincial and territorial municipal associations.” – FCM website

Elected Board members are municipal leaders from all parts of Canada. The Board assembles regularly to establish FCM policy on key issues.

September 7:

Morning  Travel to Nelson - Councillor Barrie Lynch of Coquitlam was on the same flight from Vancouver, and gave me a ride from Castlegar to Nelson. Along the way, he noted that he had announced just the night before that he intends to run for Mayor of Coquitlam in the upcoming election.

Afternoon  Standing Committee on Conference Planning: FCM Sustainable Communities Conference will be held in Ottawa Feb 8-10, 2012.

FCM AGM dates will be:

- June 1 - 4, 2012 Saskatoon
- May 31 - June 3, 2013 Vancouver
- May 30 - June 2, 2014 Niagara Falls
- June 5 - 8, 2015 Edmonton
- June 3 - 6, 2016 Winnipeg
- June 2 - 5, 2017 Ottawa

FCM Board Meetings will be:

- November 29 - Dec 2, 2011 Ottawa, ON
- March 7 - 10, 2012 Kitchener, ON
- September 5 - 8, 2012 Laval, QC
- November 20 - 23, 2012 Ottawa, ON
- March 6-9, 2013 Prince George, BC

Orientation Meeting for New Board Members – Met a number of new members, and reviewed current orientation manual
Evening

Mayor’s Welcome Reception – Formally thanked Kootenay Power, Columbia, Trust, Credit Union, Regional District and others for sponsoring the event. Formally greeted by Kootenay Kilties Pipe Band, one of the oldest pipe bands in BC, and a remarkable musical choir of youth.

September 8, 2011

Executive Committee Meeting – planning the conference, and bringing up issues to pass to BC Caucus and through to topic committees, reviewing table officer reports

Committee of the Whole – Formal gathering of entire board, with staff and committee members incl. introduction of new members, overview of critical issues facing Canadian municipalities, updates on membership, etc. Announcement of impending releases of research, incl. Weds release of report on impact of Immigration on Canadian Municipalities. Review of draft of FCM’s pre-budget submission to the Federal Government, and plans for Fall Advocacy Strategy for Ottawa meetings.

BC Regional Caucus Meeting – My first time chairing the group of sixteen Mayors and Councillors from BC. Major focus on impact of Municipal Auditor General, and updates on RCMP Contract Negotiations. Request from host John Dooley to look into conference improvements for AGMs. Discussion of impact of railroads on municipalities, etc.

Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development - Heard a presentation from Harrison Hot Springs on how they became the first carbon-neutral municipality. Reviewed achievements from 2010, discussed hug impact of wastewater treatment regulations federal government has forced on municipalities. Discussed Climate Change and the FCM’s outlook on the Green Economy.

Rural Forum – There was discussion on a Food Strategy for Canada, and allocation of Broadband spectrum. I updated the committee on work done in partnership with Regional District on Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangement. I had to leave early to give my presentation to the Women’s Committee.

Standing Committee on Increasing Women’s Participation in Municipal Government – I was called on to give a review of the June workshop in Prince George, our bootcamp for women interested in running for election this fall. As a committee, we also reviewed results from the Andrée Boucher memorial scholarship, the Ann Maclean award, the FCMI Partnership, and the Protégé Program. Edmonton Councillor Karen Leibovici provided copies of their City’s
program “Opening the Potential: Mentoring for Women Interested in Municipal Politics”.

Dinner was a working dinner, where board members worked with the Strategic Planning Group on a concrete plan for moving the organization forward. We were each invited to host similar events in our own communities, and I would be delighted to welcome my council colleagues to a strategic planning session for FCM, here in Prince George. I will try to organize a time when our colleagues at the Regional District of Fraser-Fort George can take part.

September 10

Morning spent taking notes, and reviewing policy changes

(during this time, Minister Ed Fast met with a joint group from two Standing Committees to discuss the impacts and issues around the Canada-EU Trade Agreement (CETA-EU). The results of these discussions are attached.

Standing Committee on International Relations. I had reviewed the successes of our team on the group implementing Local Economic Development in Vietnam and Cambodia, which is sponsored by CIDA. I was called on to report to the board on the results we have achieved. I passed on a great deal of information on how well the program is delivering.

FCM International also discussed ways that the organization can take advantage of lessons learned abroad to help coordinate for issues inside Canada.

Executive Committee – Reviewed resolutions that would come up at the board meeting the next day, reviewed strengths and weaknesses from committee work in the conference and prepared for the Board meeting the next day.

September 11

The National Board of Directors meeting met on a sombre note as we recognized the horrors of the 9/11 and the incredible welcome provided by the municipality of Gander when 1000s of people en route over the Atlantic could not enter US airspace.

Conference call with MP Olivia Chow and moment of silence to recognize passing of FCM Past-President Jack Layton. The event was dignified. It was also non-partisan, and touching at the same time. While I did not know him more than 2 minutes overall, there were people who had worked with him at FCM.

- Reports from each standing committee
- Reports from each regional caucus
- Reports from each vice-president
- Adjournment
Statement by FCM president Berry Vrbanovic following meetings on CETA with Minister of International Trade Edward Fast

OTTAWA – The following statement was released today by Berry Vrbanovic, president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM), following meetings with the Hon. Edward Fast, Minister of International Trade and Minister for the Asia-Pacific Gateway, on the Canada Europe Free-Trade Agreement (CETA):

"We support the Government of Canada's commitment to work with FCM and strengthen the growing economic partnership among federal, municipal, provincial and territorial governments.

Today Minister Fast told municipal leaders that the government supports FCM-approved principles for the Canada Europe Free-Trade Agreement (CETA). The Minister said the government would continue to consult FCM as negotiations lead to a final agreement.

FCM welcomes the federal government’s commitment to a CETA deal that creates new jobs and opportunities for Canadians while protecting the local decision-making that is the lifeblood of strong, healthy Canadian communities.

FCM endorses free and fair trade, and has developed seven principles for a CETA deal that strengthens Canada and its cities and communities. Fully-implemented, the principles will ensure that fair, affordable, and common sense rules govern municipal purchases and contracts. They will also protect the role of locally-elected councils in deciding how drinking water and other essential public services are managed and delivered.

FCM looks forward to continuing to work with the federal government to ensure these principles are incorporated into CETA. The municipal procurement market is worth 98 billion dollars each year. According to the federal government, a successful CETA deal will benefit all Canadians, boosting trade with Europe by 20 per cent and creating almost 80,000 new jobs."

Backgrounder

For more information, please contact:

Mouktar Abdillahi at (613) 907-6395

* The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) has been the national voice of municipal government since 1901. FCM represents close to 90 per cent of the Canadian population – close to 2000 municipal governments across the country.
Mr. Berry Vrbanovic  
President  
Federation of Canadian Municipalities  
24 Clarence Street  
Ottawa ON K1N 5P3  

Dear Mr. Vrbanovic:  

I am writing to voice my appreciation for our telephone conversation of August 4, 2011, during which we discussed the strong ongoing cooperation between the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada (DFAIT) through the Joint Working Group on International Trade. We also discussed the FCM’s views on the negotiations of a Canada–European Union (EU) Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). I was pleased to hear of FCM’s continuing support for Canada’s economic plan, which includes creating jobs and raising Canadians’ standard of living through trade.

Further to those discussions, I would like to take this opportunity to share further information with you on the CETA negotiations. With one in five Canadian jobs linked to trade, deepening and broadening Canada’s trading relationships is a key priority for Prime Minister Harper and our government. The Canada–EU relationship holds great potential for growing Canada’s collective prosperity. The successful negotiation of CETA would give Canadian-based businesses preferential access to the EU, which remains the wealthiest single market in the world despite the EU’s current financial difficulties. Removing barriers to trade in goods and services is expected to deliver by 2014 a 20-percent boost to our bilateral trade with the EU and a gain of more than $12 billion in Canada’s annual gross domestic product.

A Canada–EU CETA would deliver new jobs and economic benefits across a broad range of industries located within municipalities all across Canada. These industries include aerospace, chemicals, plastics, wood products, aluminum, fish and seafood, light vehicles and automotive parts, agricultural products (such as wheat, beef and pork), and service sectors (such as transportation and environmental, engineering and computer services).

We have now had eight successful and productive rounds of negotiations in which considerable progress has been made. We continue to work toward a conclusion of the negotiations by 2012.

Our government is committed to keeping Canadians informed of the negotiations and to consulting as extensively as possible with key stakeholders to ensure that an agreement delivers the greatest economic benefit possible to hardworking Canadians. I appreciate the FCM’s views and contributions to this effort. I can also assure you that our government will not finalize an agreement unless it is in the best long-term interests of Canadians.
During our discussion on August 4, 2011, you again raised the seven principles on government procurement developed by the FCM and sent to my predecessor the Honourable Peter Van Loan, on September 22, 2010. In identifying these principles, you have clearly articulated the key interests of Canada’s municipalities. As promised, I have included below more information on how I see each of those seven principles applying within the context of the CETA negotiations.

With respect to procurement thresholds, the dollar-value thresholds for municipalities under CETA are likely to be consistent with those that exist for sub-central government entities in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Government Procurement. These thresholds are approximately C$340,600 for both goods and services and approximately C$8.5 million for construction. Any contract that fell below these dollar-value thresholds would not be subject to the CETA procurement obligations.

Streamlined administration could indeed facilitate any adjustments required as a result of CETA. While some government entities may be taking on international trade commitments for the first time under CETA, procurement systems within Canada’s provinces, territories and municipalities are generally open and transparent. This should mean that changes required to implement CETA are not likely to be substantial.

The letter of September 22, 2010, from the FCM also addresses requirements for Canadian content. As you may know, non-discrimination and the prohibition of offsets are basic obligations for procurement in international trade agreements. However, I recognize the importance of maintaining flexibility in government procurement to address local needs and priorities. Under CETA, municipalities would retain the ability to use various instruments to promote local economic development, such as non-contractual agreements, which are not subject to CETA (e.g., grants, loans or fiscal incentives), or the procurement of goods and services that are not subject to the CETA procurement obligations (e.g., below threshold or for excluded goods or services). Furthermore, CETA will not affect the ability of municipalities to use selection criteria such as quality, price, technical requirements or relevant experience, or to consider social and environmental factors in the procurement process, so long as these are applied in a non-discriminatory manner.

It is also important to remember that CETA will not affect the ability of municipalities to regulate. To be clear, nothing in any of Canada’s international trade agreements can force countries to privatize or to deregulate services. All of Canada’s international trade agreements preserve the right of countries to regulate, and to introduce and amend regulations to meet policy objectives. These agreements do, however, require governments at all levels to act in accordance with certain principles, such as non-discrimination. Governments are still free to pursue their regulatory objectives and have a wide array of choices for implementing such objectives.

Another key component of international procurement obligations is the availability of recourse, both through a bid-challenge process (suppliers and procuring entities) and dispute settlement (party-to-party). Canada and the EU will be required to provide administrative or judicial review
procedures through which a supplier may challenge the award of a covered procurement contract. There will also be a dispute settlement process under CETA (party-to-party), where each party to the agreement may challenge the consistency of any measure of the other party regarding covered procurement with the provisions of the agreement.

The provisions of the procurement chapter will not be in force immediately upon completion of the CETA negotiations. After completion of the negotiations, several steps will need to be taken before the agreement can be brought into force in Canada. These steps include: preparation of the legal text; signing of the agreement; submission of the agreement to the House of Commons under the government’s Policy on Tabling of Treaties in Parliament; and debate and passage of the implementing legislation. The process provides municipalities with sufficient time to become familiar and ready to operate in accordance with the rules of the procurement chapter. Any party-to-party dispute under CETA would be between the Government of Canada and the EU. In other words, the EU would not be able to bring a case directly against a municipality. In the case of a dispute between the parties under CETA, the dispute settlement process will be progressive (gradual). There would likely first be discussions between officials in an attempt to resolve the issue. At a later stage, ministerial involvement might occur. A dispute would formally begin with a request for consultations, which provides the parties with another opportunity to discuss the matter. There will likely also be a non-binding mediation before the matter is referred to a dispute settlement panel.

Once concluded, CETA will provide Canadian suppliers with improved access to one of the largest procurement markets in the world. According to the European Commission, the EU procurement market is estimated at C$2.4 trillion, or 16 percent of gross domestic product. Ensuring an overall balance of commitments, or reciprocity, is one of Canada’s priorities in these negotiations. On this point, please note that all EU regional and local authorities (municipalities) are already included in the EU’s WTO Agreement on Government Procurement commitments, and we expect this to be the case under CETA as well.

I appreciate your continued interest in further consultation and communication. Our government is committed to keeping key Canadian stakeholders informed of the negotiations and to consulting as extensively as possible to hear the views of Canadians. The joint working group between the FCM and DFAIT has been an excellent resource and forum for consultations, and we will continue to keep the FCM Working Group members informed as trade negotiations progress. We will also continue to work in partnership with the provinces and territories to address questions and concerns affecting areas under their jurisdiction, including those of municipalities.

The benefits of concluding an ambitious agreement with government procurement commitments extend beyond simply the access that Canadian-based firms would gain to EU procurement markets. The implementation of international government procurement commitments provides a set of common principles and rules upon which Canadian governments, at all levels, base their procurement practices. Consistency of rules and procedures between Canadian jurisdictions
facilitates access for Canadian-based suppliers and their ability to prepare responsive bids in a timely manner. Government procurement commitments under Canada’s international trade agreements ultimately increase competition, thereby allowing governments to ensure better value for taxpayers for the goods and services that are procured.

Thank you again for taking the time to share the views of the FCM. I look forward to our future discussions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

The Honourable Ed Fast, P.C., M.P.