



AUDITOR GENERAL FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ACCESSIBILITY • INDEPENDENCE • TRANSPARENCY • PERFORMANCE

BACKGROUND

November 29, 2016

DISTRICT OF SQUAMISH PERFORMANCE AUDIT REPORT

WHAT WE AUDITED

- The performance audit was on the topic, *“Managing the Inherent Risks of Limited Human Resources within Small Local Governments.”*
- We reviewed the District of Squamish’s human resources practices, policies and systems, examined documents and interviewed management, staff and elected officials.
- We included Squamish and the City of Fernie, City of Nelson, District of Port Edward and District of Tofino in our audits on this topic. These local governments represented a cross-section of smaller local governments, in different locations and facing various pressures and challenges.
- The audit covered the period 2011 to 2015. All work on this audit was carried out during 2016.

WHY WE CHOSE THIS TOPIC

- This topic was frequently mentioned as important by the local government representatives we consulted during our audit planning work.
- Most local governments in British Columbia are small and may face challenges in effectively managing their human resources.
- Labour costs are a big part of local government expenditures and effective human resources management can have a big impact on both the effectiveness of program delivery and financial results.

WHAT WE FOUND

- Squamish faces human resources challenges in part due to rapid local growth, which has led to workload pressures for staff and recruitment challenges.

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- The District has a dedicated Human Resources (HR) Unit that provides a good starting point for human resources management in Squamish.
- There are opportunities for the District to improve the HR Unit's effectiveness by defining its oversight role and centralizing more human resources functions.
- Squamish lacks a comprehensive strategic human resources plan and could strengthen its practices in staff hiring, succession planning, training and performance management.
- Squamish is currently updating its Official Community Plan, which provides an opportunity to make sure human resources priorities are aligned with the community's overall long-term goals.

WHAT WE RECOMMEND

- We have made 13 recommendations aimed at assisting the District to build on its current human resources management strengths and address gaps.
- Our recommendations cover four main areas:
 - Establishing long range workforce planning
 - Managing recruitment needs and health and safety standards
 - Coordinating core human resources services
 - Addressing gaps in the administration of human resources

ABOUT THE AGLG

- This is the first performance audit report issued by the AGLG on this topic and the 19th overall audit report released by the office since its 2013 opening.
- The office will be releasing four additional reports on this topic over the next few months.
- The office is also working on two local government performance audits on the topic "*Local Government's Role in Ensuring Clean Drinking Water.*"

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