



THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

Backgrounder

Fall 2013

(Updated Spring 2015, Fall 2016)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The intent of this report is to provide a brief overview of the Local Government Leadership Academy (LGLA) – its origins, vision, mission, funding, current governance structure and ongoing activities. In other words, a picture of where the LGLA came from, where it is now, and where it's going.

2. WHERE WE CAME FROM

Origins

In 2005, in acknowledgement of the 100th anniversary of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), an analysis was conducted of the training and educational resources available to local elected officials and senior administrators in British Columbia. What had long been suspected was determined – that there was a lack of ongoing, coordinated and comprehensive support in this area. The LGLA was a response to this need and was envisioned as a leadership development initiative that would serve the needs of elected officials and senior administrators by improving the competencies needed to effectively manage and lead the corporations that provide services and local government to BC's communities.¹

Vision

In establishing the LGLA, the intent was to assume responsibility for the UBCM's Newly Elected Official Seminars – offered every four years after local government elections – and to expand these to include ongoing training for returning elected officials. As well, there was an acknowledged need for follow-up training throughout the three-year term of office – in leadership skills and competencies, organizational issues, and decision-making in the government/public context. While periodic conferences, training opportunities and courses on a variety of relevant topics were offered by UBCM, other BC local government associations, the Province and certain educational institutions, no coordinated effort to establish a dedicated, comprehensive and ongoing leadership training program for elected officials existed. Educational programs for local government staff members were more widely available, but even in these cases there was still a need to foster productive council/board-staff relations. The LGLA aimed to fill these gaps and, in doing so, to respond to the observed and stated needs of local government and First Nations elected officials and senior administrators throughout the province.²

¹ *LGLA Charter and Terms of Reference*, p. 1, s. 1: Purpose.

² *Core Competencies Report*, p. 1, s. Background.

Mission

The mission of the LGLA is to provide local government and First Nations elected officials and senior administrators with comprehensive, timely and dedicated leadership development opportunities throughout their terms of office/employment in the interest of improving governance at the local level. The result is envisioned as better service delivery and improved quality of life in BC's communities.

LGLA programming seeks to address individual and group needs, the needs of communities of varying sizes and is intended to include both a regional delivery element and an online presence. The Board of Directors is also committed to making training opportunities both affordable and accessible to all local governments and First Nations communities.

Funding

Endowment Fund

The LGLA endowment was founded with an initial \$1 million contribution from the Province of BC; along with \$75,000 in contributions from UBCM partner associations BC Assessment Authority (BCAA), Municipal Finance Authority (MFA), Local Government Management Association (LGMA) and Municipal Insurance Association (MIA) and over \$50,000 in contributions from 73 UBCM member local governments.

Endowment funds have been invested in MFA funds since the LGLA's inception. Interest on the endowment was intended to ensure that a program of training opportunities would be made available to local elected officials and senior administrators on an annual basis.³

Purpose for Core Funding

The fixed costs of the Academy, if apportioned to registration fees, would result in higher costs for participants in LGLA programs. To address this, a fund was created which provides a contribution to the fixed costs of the Academy.⁴ This core funding is intended to sustain the costs of LGLA administration and program planning, with the cost of training to be recovered from the course offerings themselves.

The Academy operates as a not-for-profit organization and any surpluses generated are re-invested in the account established for the purposes of the Academy.⁵

³ *Core Competencies Report*, p. 1, s. Establishing the LGLA.

⁴ *LGLA Charter and Terms of Reference*, p. 3, s. 4: Budget and Investment.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Course Fees

An objective of the Academy is to make training affordable and accessible to all local government officials. BC communities face at least three challenges:

- some are very small and have limited financial resources for this type of activity;
- some are very remote and for face-to-face programs incur significant travel costs;
- finally, public acceptance of the costs incurred for these types of programs is not universal.

The Academy strives to address these issues in financial and delivery planning. Course fees are intended to recover much of the direct costs and keep the registration fees affordable.⁶

Contributions

In May 2010 the MFA committed to providing an additional \$30,000 per year from 2010-12 to support LGLA activities. In February 2013 the MFA board approved continuation of this annual funding commitment for an additional three years (2013-15)⁷ and in spring 2016 another \$30,000 in funding was committed for the 2016/17 year.⁸

Also announced in 2013 was the contribution of \$50,000 by the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development to assist the LGLA in providing educational and training opportunities for local government elected officials and senior administrators in BC.⁹ This was followed by annual contributions of \$15,000 in both 2015 and 2016 by the Ministry for the same purpose.¹⁰

Administration

UBCM initially established the investment policy for the funds and annually advises the Board of core funding available from investments each year on or before July 31. The fiscal year begins on July 1 to allow new directors to participate in the approval of the annual activities program.

UBCM has received contributions towards the Academy and has created a separate fund of contributions made for the LGLA's approved purpose and activities.¹¹

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Extracted from January 5, 2013 letter to MFA from LGLA.

⁸ See MFA Funding Request and TY Letter 2016 from LGLA – LGLA Finances/Funding.

⁹ Extracted from 2013 provincial MOU re \$50,000 contribution to LGLA.

¹⁰ See Ministry Contribution Letters 2015, 2016 – LGLA Finances/Funding.

¹¹ *LGLA Charter and Terms of Reference*, p. 3, s. 4: Budget and Investment.

3. WHERE WE ARE NOW

Governance

The LGLA Board

The LGLA Board is made up of directors drawn from the founding partners of the Academy (UBCM, MFA, and LGMA have permanent board positions; the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development has two seats; and BCAA and MIA representatives can be appointed as Directors at Large), with representation from the First Nations sector and up to two directors at large appointed by the Board.¹²

The involvement of these key local government agencies in establishing and running the LGLA was deemed crucial to ensuring that Academy programming didn't overlap with educational initiatives already underway in the BC local government sector. Duplication and redundancy were to be avoided through coordinating training efforts among these agencies where appropriate and through effective communication among Board members around existing and planned elected official and staff training programs throughout the province.

Board terms are set at two years and are to be staggered by the appointing bodies to ensure overlap between new and experienced appointees.¹³

Society Governance

Under the Society's Bylaws, the board "shall have a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 9 Directors, who are appointed as follows:

- One Director appointed by the Local Government Management Association of B.C.
- One Director appointed by the Municipal Finance Authority of B.C.
- Two Directors appointed by the Ministry responsible for local government.
- Two Directors appointed by the Union of B.C. Municipalities.
- Up to three Directors, one of whom may serve as a representative for First Nations, appointed by the directors appointed in the sections above."

Further, "The president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer are elected by the Board from among the directors of the society."¹⁴

¹² *Terms of Reference: Roles and Responsibilities*, p. 4, s. The LGLA Board: General.

¹³ *Core Competencies Report*, p. 1-2, s. Establishing the LGLA.

¹⁴ *Bylaws of the Local Government Leadership Academy Society*, Part 5.25(1),(3).

The LGLA Society was required to have five individuals as “members” at the time of formation and to date these five continue to be the official members of the Society.¹⁵

In April of 2014, a bylaw amendment adding the following new subsection to Section 3, Part 2 – Membership, was approved:

3.1 A class of membership of Founding Organizational Members is established and consists of those corporate entities:

- Union of BC Municipalities.
- the Ministry responsible for local government in BC.
- Municipal Finance Authority of BC.
- Local Government Management Association of BC.
- BC Assessment Authority.
- Municipal Insurance Association of BC.

The existing Section 23, Part 4 – Proceedings at General Meetings, then comes into play for voting:

23. A Corporate member may vote by its authorized representative, who is entitled to speak and vote, and in all other respects exercise the rights of a member, and that representative shall be reckoned as a member for all purposes with respect to a meeting of the society.

Board Roles and Responsibilities

Board

Specific roles and responsibilities of the LGLA Board are to:

- approve a strategy and business plan;
- approve an annual program of activities and budget;
- establish advisory committees as required; and
- prepare an annual performance report.¹⁶

In addition to these roles and responsibilities, the LGLA Charter and Terms of Reference state that the Board is responsible for:

- approving the overall design of a multi-year curriculum;
- determining the competencies to be addressed;
- commissioning needs assessments;
- component programs;
- evaluating performance of the program; and

¹⁵ The original “members” were Richard Taylor, Gary Paget, Robin Stringer, Cathy Watson and Gary MacIsaac.

¹⁶ *LGLA Charter and Terms of Reference*, p. 2, s. 3: Governance.

- financial management.¹⁷

In accordance with this mandate, the LGLA Board articulated these more detailed roles and responsibilities:

- Develop the overall vision for the LGLA consistent with the LGLA Charter.
- Review and recommend updates to the LGLA Charter as required.
- Establish annual and multi-year program objectives for the LGLA.
- Approve the LGLA annual program plan and budget.
- Approve the LGLA annual report and financial statements.
- Build relationships and partnerships with partner agencies, educational institutions, the private and public sector to promote funding for LGLA leadership programs.
- Recruit Board members as required.
- Establish sub-committees as required.
- Recruit, select, oversee and determine compensation for the Program Manager.
- Review and evaluate performance of the Program Manager.
- Approve policies for the proper discharge of the LGLA mandate.
- Approve strategic plans and annual plans and budgets and financial statements.
- Oversee the operations of the LGLA.
- Report to stakeholders.
- Set the strategic direction that empowers the Program Manager.
- Hold an annual meeting and provide copies of its annual report and financial statements for the preceding year and copies of its three-year plan and schedule for the coming year. This meeting may be held in conjunction with the UBCM annual Convention.
- Establish meeting procedures and other procedural requirements.¹⁸

Directors are expected to attend Board, standing and sub-committee meetings – either in person or electronically; they have roles at Board events; and they are expected to take an active role in matters such as raising the profile of the LGLA. They must act in the best interests of the LGLA and have an implied duty of loyalty, care, and discretion. They must avoid conflicts of interest and serve without remuneration (but may be paid expenses incurred by them in accordance with their duties under Board-approved policies.)¹⁹

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Terms of Reference: Roles and Responsibilities*, p. 4-5, s. The LGLA Board: The Role of the Board.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 7-8, s. The LGLA Board: The Role of Directors.

The Board may establish standing and other committees and delegate responsibilities to those committees. As well, the Board may appoint Directors to be responsible for areas such as finance and budget.²⁰

Chair

According to the LGLA Charter, “the Chair shall have the duties of a Chair under the Societies Act.”²¹ He or she must “preside at all meetings of the society and of the directors” and “as the chief executive officer of the society...must supervise the other officers in the execution of their duties.”²² As set out in the LGLA Terms of Reference for Roles & Responsibilities, [t]he Chair, as the presiding officer, provides leadership in guiding the Board and coordinates its activities and fosters relationships in the best interests of the Board.

In working with the Program Manager, it is the Chair’s duty to

- (a) Provide guidance and direction to assist the Program Manager to implement the approved strategic directions to achieve the Board’s goals and plans.
- (b) Foster a constructive and harmonious relationship between the Board and the Program Manager.
- (c) Act as a sounding board for and provide counsel to the Program Manager, including helping to identify problems, reviewing strategy, maintaining accountability, building relationships and ensuring the Program Manager is aware of concerns of the Board.
- (d) Lead the Board in monitoring and evaluating the performance of the Program Manager.

The Chair holds responsibility for overall management of Board activities and governance. Duties include reviewing and monitoring the strategy, policy and directions of the Board and the achievement of its objectives; ensur[ing] there is cohesion of direction and purpose at a policy and strategic level; build[ing] consensus and develop[ing] teamwork; communicat[ing] with the Board to keep it up to date on all major developments; and act[ing] as the official spokesperson for the Board.

It is also the Chair’s duty to ensure fair and courteous conduct at meetings; to conduct meetings in an efficient, effective and focused manner; to ensure quorum; attend committee meetings where appropriate; chair the Annual General Meeting and present the annual report; and ensure the Board is appropriately represented at official functions and meetings.²³

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8, s. The LGLA Board: Committees of the Board.

²¹ *LGLA Charter and Terms of Reference*, p. 2, s. 3: Governance.

²² *Society Act* [RSBC 1996], Schedule B, Part 7, Duties of Officers.

²³ *Terms of Reference: Roles and Responsibilities*, p. 6, s. The LGLA Board: The Role of the Chair.

Human Resourcing

Program management, event coordination, and administrative duties have been divided into the following three dedicated staff positions, which are filled on a contract basis.

Program Manager

Charged with managing the LGLA curriculum and related events (including annual leadership forums, Elected Official Seminars following local government elections, and online course offerings), as well as liaising with LGLA partners and other organizations and associations with related interests and mandates, reporting to the board and membership of the LGLA, updating the website, and other duties as may be required (part-time contracted for a base number of hours plus events).

Conference Coordinator

Responsible for event logistics and coordination and liaising with event venue staff, audio-visual contractors, and speakers/presenters as necessary (part-time contracted by event).

Board and Seminar Coordinator

Responsible for organizing meetings of the LGLA Board, recording and distributing minutes, coordinating event registration, and organizing the annual CEO Forum (part-time as needed).

In addition, various administrative duties such as accounting and event support continue to be provided by UBCM.

Programming

Core Competencies

LGLA curriculum development draws inspiration from the following set of core competencies and related characteristics of successful elected officials.²⁴

- *Leadership*
Accepts challenges willingly and gains the confidence of others by acting in a knowledgeable, consistent and ethical manner.
- *Understanding*

²⁴ These core competencies were determined through a February 2006 brainstorming session attended by provincial government, partner agency, UBCM Executive and staff, and local government education sector representatives and later confirmed through a Civic Leadership Questionnaire administered at UBCM's Chief Elected Official Forum in May 2006 and sent to the full UBCM membership in June 2006. (*Core Competencies Report*, p. 2-3, s. Initial LGLA Workshop and p. 5, s. Validation of Core Competencies.)

Possesses a good understanding of local government systems, the public service context, the community's historical context and the multiple interests of citizens.

- *Accountability*
Accepts personal responsibility, assumes a “team player” role and ensures appropriate corporate oversight of organizational operations and program delivery.
- *Facilitation*
Ensures an accurate definition of the key issues, uses an effective decision-making process and seeks common ground among stakeholders.
- *Prioritization*
Acknowledges opportunities and limitations, assesses available resources and considers community needs and values before making difficult decisions.
- *Big Picture Vision*
Is open minded and objective, assesses implications and consequences, and values intergovernmental and interagency relationships.
- *Stewardship*
Recognizes the need for sustainability in organizational activities, processes, systems and programs and seeks to establish a corporate legacy that respects community interests.
- *Public Engagement*
Respects the principles of good governance by listening to the ideas and concerns of citizens and engaging the public through established channels of consultation.

These eight core leadership competencies are understood to be essential elements of leadership excellence and are a guiding force in LGLA program development. The intent has been to set the competencies in the context of strategic issues of the day, thereby ensuring the pertinence and real-time applicability of the curriculum. LGLA Board Members, through their work with local governments, their longstanding experience in the sector, and their day-to-day familiarity with the needs and concerns of local communities and their representatives, are tasked with ensuring that the organization stays on top of current and emerging issues.

4 Year Program Plan

In August 2007, a Board Planning Workshop was held, and the LGLA's first *3 Year Program Plan* was developed. This document was updated in October 2014 in response to the establishment of the four-year local government electoral term, and is now known as the *4 Year Program Plan*. The intent was to create a working document that would focus

the Board's attention on key program areas and priorities, and which would be reviewed and revised on an annual basis moving forward. Activities and program goals were divided into the following focus areas:

- Learning Events
- Communication
- Certification
- Online Learning
- First Nations Development
- Partnership Building
- Board Meetings

In the original *Plan*, each year in the three-year election cycle was given a particular focus for the purpose of curriculum development:

- 1) Year one, immediately following local government elections, focuses on **foundation learning** for newly elected officials and **refresher** courses for returning elected officials.
- 2) Year two concentrates on **skill building**; and
- 3) Year three on **leadership and reflection**.²⁵

With the introduction of the four-year cycle, an additional "honing skills" year was added between "skill building" and "leadership and reflection" so that the progression is now:

- 1) Foundation Learning
- 2) Skill Building
- 3) Honing Skills
- 4) Leadership and Reflection

Elected Officials Seminar Series

In the first year of the LGLA's four-year programming cycle, "Foundation Learning" takes place at the signature Elected Officials Seminar Series – offered at regional locations throughout the province and designed to welcome returning elected officials back and introduce a new cohort to elected office. Events take place over three days and topics covered include local government law, finance, meeting procedures, decision making, priority setting, citizen engagement, etc.

Province-Wide Leadership Forum

In between election years, the LGLA organizes an annual province-wide Leadership Forum to provide elected officials and senior administrators with an opportunity for further skills development and peer-to-peer networking as they progress through their terms. The annual forum takes a particular theme as its focus (e.g., Respectful Leadership) and develops a program based on current issues and topics related to that theme.

²⁵ *3 Year Program Plan* (Revised December 4, 2008).

Chief Elected Officials Forum

Another regular LGLA offering is the Chief Elected Officials Forum, which provides an opportunity for mayors, chairs and First Nations leaders to come together to discuss topical issues and to learn from one another and from experts in governance and leadership. The CEO Forum has been held annually since 2011, although there was no event held in 2014.

Certificate Program

In 2010, the LGLA launched a certificate program to further support and promote education and training for local government and First Nations elected officials throughout BC. The program was restricted to elected officials and was intended to enhance and recognize the development of leadership skills and knowledge.

Originally, two levels of certification were offered: Level 1 – Certificate in Local Government Leadership; and Level 2 – Advanced Certificate in Local Government Leadership. The program was a success and in response to repeated requests, a third level of certification was introduced in 2016: Level 3 – Certificate of Excellence in Local Government Leadership.²⁶

Cathy Watson Memorial Award

Cathy Watson was a long-serving employee of the Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development and was one of the original, founding members of the Local Government Leadership Academy. She was a dedicated proponent of local government and First Nations relations, education and leadership training and made many lasting contributions in this area. Sadly, Cathy passed away in May of 2015.

In summer 2016, the Cathy Watson Memorial Award was established in her honour to enable participation in the annual LGLA Leadership Forum and Elected Officials Seminar Series by local government or First Nations elected officials who might otherwise be unable to attend.

The award is available to one applicant per Leadership Forum or Elected Officials Seminar who demonstrates financial need and an interest in developing their leadership capacity. The award consists of complimentary event registration, accommodation and up to a maximum of \$1,000 in travel and related expenses.²⁷

²⁶ See *LGLA Certificate Information Circular, 2010* and *July 2016 Board Meeting Minutes*.

²⁷ See *July 2016 Board Meeting Minutes*.

4. WHERE WE'RE GOING...

With the completion of the 2015 Elected Officials Seminars, the LGLA welcomed the first of our local elected officials to serve the four-year term. Before the 2014 elections, the Board took some time to review its activities and accomplishments to date and to re-focus on the future. The Board will regularly review its mandate and activities, refresh its sense of the key issues and priorities affecting the local government sector, and renew its commitment to provide relevant and ongoing training and support to local government and First Nations elected officials and senior staff throughout British Columbia. The revised *4 Year Program Plan* will be reviewed and the goals and activities updated as necessary. Areas that have been neglected (communication, online learning, First Nations development) will receive renewed attention; and the LGLA Board and staff look forward to working through this current election cycle and meeting all of the leadership challenges that come with it.

5. CONCLUSION

It is hoped that this overview of the LGLA will be useful to incoming Board members, staff and all those with an interest in the Academy's origins, interests and activities. A list of events held to date is included in Appendix A and a fuller, consolidated history of the Academy is available in a separate document.²⁸ Further information on the LGLA is available online at lgla.ca.

²⁸ *Blue Sky Report: The Evolution of the Local Government Leadership Academy*, Fall 2013.

APPENDIX A

Events List

(A list of events and accompanying materials is available on the LGLA website at lgl.ca/events.)

2007	June	BC Local Government Leadership Forum	Richmond
2008	February	BC Local Government Leadership Forum (Leading and Learning)	Richmond
2009	January/February	Elected Officials Training Seminars (6 sessions)	Richmond (3) Parksville Kelowna Nelson
2010	June	BC Local Government Leadership Forum (Leadership in Challenging Times)	Richmond
2011	February	BC Local Government Leadership Forum (Reflections on Leadership)	Richmond
	March	Chief Elected Officials Forum	Granville Island
	June	Social Media 101	Webinar
2012	January/February	Elected Officials Training Seminars (8 sessions)	Richmond (3) Parksville (2) Kelowna Nelson Prince George
	April	Chief Elected Officials Forum	Granville Island

2013	February	BC Local Government Leadership Forum (Leading through Relationships)	Richmond
	June	Chief Elected Officials Forum	Granville Island
2014	February	BC Local Government Leadership Forum (Through the Looking Glass: Reflecting on Leadership)	Richmond
2015	January/February	BC Elected Officials Seminars (8 sessions)	Richmond (3) Kelowna Parksville (2) Prince George Kimberley
	February/March	Understanding Municipal Financial Statements	Webinar
	June	Chief Elected Officials Forum	Granville Island
	November	Freedom of Information & Protection of Privacy Training for Elected Officials	Webinar
2016	February	BC Local Government Leadership Forum (Respectful Leadership)	Richmond
	March	Beyond the Usual Suspects: How to Reach Diverse Audiences in Public Engagement	Webinar
	May	From Controversy to Collaboration: Working Through Conflict in Public Engagement	Webinar
	December	Chief Elected Officials Forum	Richmond