



Issue #3 Summer 2010

# Women in Municipal Government Newsletter



WIMG Committee Members (standing l to r): Julia King, Gail Parks, Jacqueline Biollo, Anita Gillard. (sitting): Elizabeth Bell, Linda Osinchuk, Elaine Sorochan.

## Municipal Election 2010

As we are all aware, this October is municipal election time in Alberta. The Women in Municipal Government Committee has within its mandate to support and encourage women to enter municipal politics. The goal is to increase women's active participation in municipal government.

This issue of the Women in Municipal Government newsletter highlights a number of initiatives that are working to promote a greater representation of women in the upcoming election. There are also resources for women considering entering the municipal political arena.

We encourage you to share this newsletter with your colleagues and community members. Together we are working towards achieving the goal of 30% of government officials being women that was established by the UN and supported by FCM and the AUMA.

Please feel free to contact any of the following people with questions or comments about the newsletter or the Women in Municipal Government Committee:

### Committee Members

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## Message from the Chair

AUMA's Women in Municipal Government Committee has continued to build on the connections that we have established with FCM's Standing Committee on Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government. The work of FCM's Standing Committee directly corresponds to our mandate to enhance, support and mentor women to enter the world of municipal politics. A balanced number of women and men on municipal councils contributes to a more sound and informed decision making process. Currently, women represent only 22% of municipally elected officials in Canada. Considering that 52% of our overall population is women, it is evident that there is a gap that needs to

*The United Nations has stated that women need to comprise 30% of government officials in order for women's views to be properly represented.*

### SOME FACTS....

Female population of Canada: 52% <sup>1</sup>

Members of Canadian House of Commons that are women: 22%<sup>1</sup>

Canadian Municipal , provincial and federal elected representatives that are women: 21% <sup>1</sup>

Elected Municipal officials in Alberta that are women: 25% <sup>2</sup>

Sources:

<sup>1</sup> Equal Voice Website  
[www.equalvoice.ca](http://www.equalvoice.ca)

<sup>2</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities. January, 2009.

addressed. The United Nations has stated that women need to comprise 30% of government officials in order for women's views to be properly represented.

Our current AUMA president, Darren Aldous, and our Board of Directors have continued to support this committee's initiatives to mentor, provide education and encourage women who want to enter this field of community work. There are several issues and barriers that need to be understood and overcome.

Our vision as a committee is to continue to build on the work of FCM, educate the AUMA membership on the importance of mentoring women to run for municipal office and connect with AAMD&C to share this common thread of democracy and governance.

Finally, I would like to share some exciting news about the upcoming AUMA Annual Convention. Our session, entitled "*She Shoots, She Scores*" will look at the work of the committee and discuss the challenges and benefits of increasing the active participation of women in municipal politics. We are pleased to announce that we have a confirmed Mayor Hazel McCallion from the City of Mississauga as our guest speaker. At 89, Mayor McCallion is one of Canada's best-known and longest-serving mayors. We look forward to seeing you there.

Have a safe and restful summer!

Linda Osinchuk  
Councillor, Strathcona County  
Chair, Women in Municipal Government Committee

## My Mentor

We all have mentors in our life...role models....people who we look up to. One of my mentors was Sandra Weidner who passed away on New Year's Eve 2009 due to complications of a heart transplant.

Sandra survived many adversities in her life. She was one of the strongest women I know and I wouldn't be where I am today in both my political and personal life if it hadn't been for her guidance. She encouraged me to take on positions that I never thought I could manage, gave me advice when I needed it, and praise when I deserved it. She was a strong woman who always spoke her mind and although she "said it like it is" she was able to do so in such a way that people respected her. When she spoke to a room of hundreds, you could hear a pin drop. She commanded attention.

In 1998 Sandra was awarded the Alberta Achievement Service Award and in 2005 the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta presented her with the Alberta Centennial Medal in recognition of her significant contributions to the community and society through leadership, volunteerism and community involvement. She spent many years on the Lacombe County School Board, the Wolf Creek School Division, was President of the ASBA and sat on numerous provincial boards and committees. Sandra loved her political life but her family was always the most important thing to her.

Sandra had eight commandments which I would like to share with you.

### **Eight Commandments of How to get Along with People**

1. Always say less than you think. Cultivate a low voice. How you say it often counts more than what you say.
2. Make promises sparingly, and keep them faithfully no matter what it costs.
3. Never let an opportunity pass to say a kind and encouraging word to or about somebody. Praise good work, no matter who did it and criticize helpfully, never spitefully.
4. Be interested in others, their pursuits, their work, their homes and their families. Make merry with those who rejoice; with those who weep, mourn. Let everyone you meet, however humble, feel that you regard them as a person of importance.
5. Be cheerful.. Don't burden or depress others by dwelling on your minor aches and pains and small disappointments. Remember, everyone is carrying some kind of load.
6. Keep an open mind when issues appear—discuss, but don't argue.
7. Let your virtues speak for themselves.
8. Be careful of another's feelings.

These are wise words from an incredible woman that we can all learn from. Remember – we are all a “mentor” to someone.

Anita Gillard  
Mayor, Village of Clive

### **COMMITTEE OVERVIEW**

The Women in Municipal Government Committee is a Committee of the AUMA Board of Directors.

The Committee works to raise awareness of the importance of women in governance and to strengthen the participation of women in the democratic process. Priorities for this Committee in 2009 have included increasing communication of issues and initiatives related to women in municipal politics to the broader AUMA membership and identifying and providing input to the Board of Directors on any emerging issues.

In 2010, the Committee will focus on increasing the number of women involved in municipal politics through education and mentorship opportunities, implement a peer support network for female municipal leaders and communicate relevant issues to the broader AUMA membership.

If you have any issues that you would like to see the Committee address please do not hesitate to contact Marc Colbourne at [mcolbourne@auma.ca](mailto:mcolbourne@auma.ca)



## Peanut Butter, Pearls & Politics Women in Leadership

***Peanut Butter, Pearls & Politics Part 2 (Campaigns and Elections)*** was held the evening of Thursday, May 19, 2010, at the Black Knight Inn in Red Deer.

In attendance were approximately 45 women, and 1 gentleman, whom everyone thought was very courageous to be in a room of all women. The evening began with a humorous musical view of what political life can be like for a woman when she is running for election and after she is elected. This was played and sang by Penhold Town Councillor Danielle Klooster. The performance was much enjoyed and gave some insight into how interesting running in an election and being elected can be.

Our one gentleman in attendance was none other than Mr. Cal Dallas, MLA Red Deer South. MLA Dallas brought greetings from Premier Stelmach and his colleagues in Edmonton. MLA Dallas gave encouragement to all the women in attendance. He spoke about how his family was very thankful for having women play a vital role in leadership, not only in his family upbringing, but in their community as well. MLA Dallas also spoke of his devout respect and love for his wife Jackie who plays a huge leadership role in supporting him and their family. MLA Dallas received a warm applause for his insight and encouragement.

Our MC for the evening was Mrs. Janice Wing, Chair for Red Deer College Board of Governors.

Mrs. Wing gave some background of her involvement in the communities she works and lives in.

The evening proceeded with a panel of three women: Honorable Minister Maryanne Jablonski, MLA Red Deer North, Red Deer City Councillor Gail Parks and Penhold Mayor Julia King. Each lady spoke on their view of leadership roles, what it is like being an elected official and other insights on why they became involved in their communities.

There were two presentations. Ms. Elaine Vincent from the City of Red Deer spoke about the election process and what to look for if running in the upcoming 2010 municipal elections. Also presenting was Ms. Shaune Fandry from Career Assistance Network (CAN) in Red Deer who spoke about networking, setting up a portfolio, your resume- do's & don'ts and getting your name out in your community through various media outlets: Facebook, Twitter, Radio, print, etc.

All of the women present were encouraged and gave positive feedback about the evening.

This event could not have taken place without the support and interest from many people. Our many thanks to the AUMA Board of Directors and President Darren Aldous for their encouragement and support for women in leadership roles and support in advertising our event, the Black Knight Inn in Red Deer for hosting this event, as well as our leaders in our Alberta Government- Honourable Maryanne Jablonski MLA Red Deer North and MLA Cal Dallas for taking their time to be with us.

## *Be Her or Support Her*

[Equal Voice Alberta North](#), a multi-partisan, non-profit organization made up of women and men, recently held an event in Edmonton to boost women's participation in municipal politics. Entitled [Be Her or Support Her](#), the evening workshop covered campaign fundamentals for women considering running for municipal council or school board trustee and was also for anyone interested in volunteering on a woman's campaign. Approximately 25 attendees filled a room at Enterprise Square in Edmonton.



The event had lots of opportunities for networking and mentorship and included a panel of four experts.

**Sue Huff**, panellist and Edmonton Public School Board Trustee, talked about the importance of being a good listener when running and getting elected. This is a skill set most women identify with already. Here's a [link](#) to Huff's blog entry on the event.

**Janice Melynychuk**, former Edmonton City Councillor, shared her insights that included: always be yourself, research your electorate and attend as many events in your community as possible prior to an election.

**Sarah Crummy**, former Edmonton Ward 4 Campaign Manager, added her wisdom to the panel. She spoke of the need to involve volunteers and to ask people specifically to volunteer for your campaign.

**Alayne Sinclair**, Office of the City Clerk, rounded out the panel. Her expertise is in ensuring Edmonton's city elections run smoothly. She offered the advice that the City Clerk's office is there to offer help to navigate the candidate nomination and election process. Candidates are encouraged to ask for clarification. She also spoke of the strict campaign donation guidelines in place. Risk misunderstanding them and you can be fined resulting in headaches and stress.

The panel was moderated by Dr. Jane Arscott, the co-author of *Still Counting: Women in Politics Across Canada*, a useful examination of the 25 percent participation rate of women in Canadian political office. You can find out more about the book [here](#).

After a short break, attendees watched a video featuring Jacqueline Biollo, AUMA Board Director, AUMA Women in Municipal Government Committee member and Equal Voice Experiences Mentor. You can also watch the video by clicking [here](#).

The event provided some basic and useful knowledge for women from all over the city and outlying areas and allowed them to connect, laugh and realize or be reminded that despite family and work commitments, running for municipal elected office is possible. After all, as all of the panellists remarked, the multitasking that most women do on a daily basis gives them an unspoken advantage.

Zohreh Saher  
Research Analyst, Advocacy  
AUMA

## RESOURCES

### **Election Toolkit for Women: The Candidate's Guide to Municipal Elections**

This election toolkit produced by FCM is designed to give women considering running for municipal office an understanding of the job, as well as to provide tips and strategies for running a campaign. The toolkit was developed based on the experiences of municipal politicians across the country and includes a comprehensive listing of additional resources that you should consult as you consider running for office. [To access please click here.](#)

### **Equal Voice**

Equal Voice is a multi-partisan, non-profit organization devoted to increasing the participation of women in all levels of government. There are two chapters of Equal Voice in Alberta: North and South.

[Visit their website.](#)

## Ballot Box Barriers: An action plan for engaging more women in the municipal democratic process

The Association of Manitoba Municipalities' Task Force on Women in Municipal Government recently released this report and action plan. It is an attempt to lay the groundwork and offer options for councils to identify barriers and possible solutions to bring more women into municipal government.

The report highlights 12 major barriers to women's participation in municipal politics. It also discusses several concrete solutions that municipalities can utilize to promote increased active involvement of women.

This comprehensive report can be accessed by [clicking here.](#)

### Thinking of Running for Municipal Office?

With a municipal election around the corner, many people are thinking about getting involved in local government. Running for municipal office can be a rewarding experience, yet it may be difficult for people less familiar with the process to take that first step and get involved.

AUMA has developed a set of resources intended to help anyone who is interested in being involved in municipal government. You can learn about municipal governments, the process for running, women and municipal government, and more by going to AUMA's homepage and clicking on the [Everything you wanted to know about Municipal Office but were too afraid to Ask](#) link.

### Are You Tuned In?

#### EVENTS CALENDAR

The AUMA and other organizations host a number of conferences and events throughout the year that are of interest to municipal politicians and administrators. To find out about events that are key to your community, click here to visit the AUMA web site calendar.

#### WEEKLY DIGEST

Each week the AUMA and AMSC release a Digest that covers information on advocacy efforts, AMSC services and other topics of interest to municipal politicians and administrators. Make sure that you are in the know by subscribing via the AUMA web site. [Click here to subscribe.](#)

