

MOTION

10. Supporting Local Journalism and Its Impact on Civic Democracy (Member's Motion B.5)

At the Council meeting on January 25, 2022, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on January 26, 2022, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision.

MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

WHEREAS

1. A healthy, professional news media is essential for the proper functioning of civil society and democracy at the local, regional, federal and international levels;
2. The Public Policy Forum declares — on its website for the 2017 report *The Shattered Mirror: News, Democracy and Trust in the Digital Age* (commissioned by the federal government) — that “real news is in crisis” in this country;
3. The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) cited eight “critical information needs” the media help to provide including emergencies; other public risks to health; education; the environment; economic opportunities; civic and political knowledge of policy initiatives; and the conduct of public officials, and candidates for office (*The Shattered Mirror* p.4);
4. Canadians have lost the essential services provided by roughly 3,000 media workers across Canada due to temporary and permanent layoffs from the time the COVID-19 pandemic began — a time it became clearer to the public how important it is for Canadians to receive accurate information — and advertising revenues have plunged;
5. Residents of 190 Canadian communities lost 250 established news outlets due to closings or mergers between 2008 and 2018;
6. Two thirds of Canadians agree or somewhat agree that because of the Coronavirus/COVID-19 outbreak the federal government should treat widespread media bankruptcies and layoffs as an emergency, according to a Nanos Research poll of April 2020;
7. The federal government allocated nearly \$600 million in aid for Canadian media over five years in its 2019 budget;
8. Canada’s federal government acknowledged in its 2019 budget (p. 173) that “A strong and independent news media is crucial to a well-functioning democracy.”;
9. At least 26 municipal councils in eight provinces — home to more than 11 million residents — have already passed journalism-support resolutions proposed or shaped by ink-stainedwretches.org;
10. The news media in the Vancouver area have been instrumental during the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring local citizens have accurate local information.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Vancouver City Council affirms that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in our city and in municipalities across the country, and request the Mayor write on behalf of Council to the Federal Minister of Canadian Heritage and the Federal Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Infrastructure & Communities conveying Council's support for legislation that would aid in ensuring an ecosystem for a healthy news media that serves all Canadians.

- B. THAT a copy of this motion be shared with the UBCM Board, and the following enactment be submitted for endorsement and consideration at the 2022 UBCM Convention:
 - THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that UBCM affirms that a healthy, professional news media is essential to the proper functioning of democracy in municipalities across BC; and urges the Federal Government to enact legislation that would aid in ensuring an ecosystem for a healthy news media that serves all Canadians.

- C. THAT Council request the Mayor write to the FCM Board to share this motion and resolution for their information.

* * * * *