

Government! Government! Government!

Despite your initial reaction, government is not a four letter word. Too often, we criticize it and complain about it as if it were the enemy. Federal and provincial partisan governments get lumped in with local government often leaving a sour taste in people's mouth.

But your local government is different. It is designed to be representative of your greater community. It can and does respond to local needs. It is you. Your Mayor and Council is made up of your neighbors, your friends, your fellow citizens. They are not professional politicians. There are no party lines to follow. Despite the inherent criticism, they all run for office to make your community a better place. Ideas differ. Priorities are not always shared. This is a good thing. It means our communities get robust representation. We want to elect people who care.

However, caring in and of itself, is not enough. Knowing how to govern is slightly more complicated than just having an opinion. Policy governance takes both understanding and practiced skills. The most effective elected officials are the ones who understand the system, not the ones who blame the system. Change comes through knowledge and implementation, not through tearing down.

With local government elections this fall, we have an opportunity for the community to give serious consideration to who is going to be representing them over the next term. This matters because local government has the greatest impact on your day to day life. Local government owns and operates infrastructure that provides the foundation for the health, well-being, and economic prosperity of communities across the country. Dependable core services, such as water, sewer, transportation networks, fire halls, recreation amenities, and more, make up the built environment and exist to provide these basic necessities of life that residents rely on every day. As a result, leadership practices that promote long term sustainability for future generations are critical.

Excellence in local government demands both knowledgeable candidates and an engaged, proactive citizenry. Come join two seasoned politicians with 20 plus years of experience for a community engagement and candidate readiness workshop! Whether you are thinking of running for office or you

care about electing the best candidates that will be shaping the future of your community, this workshop is for you. Invest just a few hours to get educated and enjoy an interactive discussion as together we explore:

- What are the roles and responsibilities of local government and its elected officials?
- How do we attract and elect the best people for the job?
- What are some attributes that are vital in a local leader?
- What do I need to take into consideration before putting my name forward?

Challenge yourself to deepen your understanding about what it takes to sustain these services. Set your criticisms and past experience aside and bring a healthy dose of creative curiosity.

Brought to you by the Cities of Castlegar, Nelson and Rossland, Town of Creston and Villages of Salmo and Warfield, all this excitement takes place at Castlegar Community Forum at 445 – 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue in The City of Castlegar on Monday, August 27 from 4:30 to 8:30 pm. Light refreshments will be served. Mark it on your calendar now!