



COUNCIL REPORT

June 25, 2009

The Council of the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association met on June 25, 2009. Here is a summary of their discussions.

FROM THE REGISTRAR

The Association is pleased to welcome **Trevor Benner** as an associate member. Mr. Benner is an ASSMT Council member and a graduate of SAIT.

Council approved **SW Geomatics Ltd.** as a surveyor's corporation. **Scott Westlund** will be the Alberta Land Surveyor responsible for the supervision, direction and control of the practice.

Council approved **Kevin Beatty** operating as a sole practitioner under the trade name of **Beatty Land Surveys.**

Council directed the Registrar to cancel the registration of all Alberta Land Surveyors and surveyor's corporations who have not provided proof of professional liability insurance by July 31, 2009, following the expiration of 30 days notice unless the practitioner, on whom the notice was served, complies with the notice.

CONTINGENCY PLAN

Council approved a contingency plan for the

Association's finances based on a 25% decrease in iron post and marker post sales from the 2009-2010 budget.

The contingency plan is attached to *Council Report*.

The plan was developed in response to the new business motion made at the 2009 AGM.

Council has already implemented some parts of the plan through changes to committee terms of reference and staffing.

Council has decided to not implement other parts of the plan at this time but to closely monitor iron post and marker post sales throughout the summer and the rest of the fiscal year.

As part of its financial restraint, Council decided to eliminate the scholarship it provides to the University of Lethbridge. Council also decided to not hold a second joint board meeting with the Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors; instead liaison between the public relations committees, the professional development

committees and the directors of practice review is expected to continue.

DUAL REGISTRATION OF SURVEY PLANS

Council met with the Director of Surveys on the question of whether a land surveyor is required under the *Surveys Act*, for public lands surveys, to register a plan at both Land Titles and Public Lands when a monument is placed.

The Director of Surveys is preparing a policy to clarify the intent of the *Surveys Act*. The policy is expected to be announced August 1.

A small group of Alberta Land Surveyors (Greg Boggs, Al Jamieson and Brian Ross) will be meeting with the Director of Surveys throughout July to discuss the logistics and ramifications of the proposed policy.

WELLSITE CERTIFICATION

Council approved, as a housekeeping matter, a revision to the wellsite certification back to what it had been prior to the 2009 AGM.

A change had inadvertently been incorporated into the plain language re-write of the Manual of Standard Practice.

The complete manual, with the correct wellsite certification is online at <http://www.alsa.ab.ca/pdf/MemberResources/ManualofStandardPractice.pdf>

DIRECTOR OF SURVEYS UPDATE

Council welcomed the Director of Surveys to the meeting.

The following matters were discussed:

1. The chart for disposition plan types has been updated.
2. A document on the georeferencing of CAD files is close to completion.
3. The Director of Surveys has been interviewing candidates for two positions within their office.
4. The Alberta Law Reform Institute will be meeting to review the Association's recommendation to amend Part 2 and Part 3 of the *Surveys Act*.
5. The Director of Surveys discussed the recent amendments to sections 91 and 92 of the *Land Titles Act* and whether the ALSA would take over the authority granted in those

sections instead of sharing them. Council agreed to consider the question at a future meeting.

6. The Director of Surveys reported on the status of the LIDAR pilot projects and expressed concern about getting final surveys from the Alberta Land Surveyors involved.
7. The Association reported that there are five Boundary Panel cases in the system at the present time.

DORMANT PLANS

Council established a committee of Council, consisting of Jim Maidment, Hugo Engler, John Haggerty and Brian Ross to solve the problem of dormant plans.

The issue has existed for many years and has not improved despite many committees and liaison groups looking into the matter.

Council's public member has clearly stated that dormant plans are unacceptable.

ALSA INVESTMENTS

Council welcomed Julie Brough of Morgan Meighen in Toronto to the meeting to update Council on the status of the Association's investments.

Ms. Brough provided Council with an overall perspective on the current economic situation and potential outcomes. She discussed the status of the Canadian bond markets and Canadian and global equity markets.

Ms. Brough then commented on the Association's portfolio and the rationale for specific investments and what type of investments she is looking for the account in the future.

DISTANCE LEARNING

The Association of Canada Lands Surveyors has written to the ALSA inviting it to participate in a collaborative effort to set up distance learning courses. The ACLS and AOLS already have a plan in place.

The plan is based in the April 2000 ACLS vision for providing mainstream and continuing education in cadastral studies to land surveyors. The ACLS has indicated that it would appreciate the promotion of courses with the ALSA membership and some limited financial backing to develop the online material.

Council has written back to the ACLS indicating its support of the concept of distance learning and requesting further information on what is meant

by “limited financial backing.”

PROFESSIONAL SURVEYORS CANADA

Council has appointed Bob Wallace to the CCLS Strategic Planning Task Force for the proposed new Professional Surveyors Canada organization.

The task force will, among other things, develop a mission statement for the body and further refine its governance structure and organization.

HANDBOOK FOR LABOUR MOBILITY CANDIDATES

Council approved a handbook specifically designed for candidates applying to become Alberta Land Surveyors under the terms of the labour mobility agreement.

The handbook is online at <http://www.alsa.ab.ca/pdf/MemberResources/HandbookAIT.pdf>

The handbook, similar to the one for articulated pupils,

includes a syllabus and reading list and jurisdictional exam information.

COMPUTER- GENERATED PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS

The Registration Committee has asked, and Council has agreed, to add “reviewing and updating exam questions and working towards the creation of computer-generated professional examinations” to its terms of reference.

PAGE NUMBERS WITHIN THE MSP

Council accepted a recommendation from the Standards Committee to retain the references to page numbers within the Manual of Standard Practice.

The membership had asked, under new business at the 2009 AGM, to consider removing the references to page numbers.

WHEN LIDAR IS UNACCEPTABLE

Council has asked the Standards Committee to develop criteria where

LIDAR surveys would be considered unacceptable.

The ERCB had requested that the ALSA look into this question.

SHORT CUTS

Council confirmed the Association’s bylaw that the late payment of dues is subject to a \$200 penalty.

The Association was successful in its application to the Government of Alberta for \$25,000 in funding to research its approach to foreign-trained professionals and ensure the process is fair and transparent.

Council formally appointed several additional members to the Standards Committee and Public Relations Committee.

DATE TO REMEMBER

August 14 – Golf Tournament

August 26 – Administrative Law Seminar

August 27 - Council



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Memo

To: The Membership
From: Council
Date: June 25, 2009
Re: Contingency Plan

It was MOVED by Mr. Pals, seconded by Mr. Holmlund, that the membership direct Council to consider preparing a contingency plan for 2009-2010. This should, at a minimum, consider a 25% decrease in iron post and marker post sales from the current budget. The plan should also outline steps to be taken to control costs in order to maintain a balanced budget. This plan to be circulated to the membership by June 30, 2009.

Motion Carried

Council approved the 2009-2010 budget on March 4, 2009. The 2009-2010 budget covers the period May 1, 2009 to April 30, 2010.

Council budgeted the sale of 130,000 iron posts and 30,000 marker posts for 2009-2010. In 2008-2009, the Association sold 195,570 iron posts and 41,570 marker posts. The worst year for iron post and marker post sales in the last twenty years was 1995-1996 when the Association sold 108,140 iron posts and 32,125.

A 25% decrease in iron post and marker post sales from the current budget would mean sales of 97,500 iron posts and 22,500 marker posts.

	Iron Posts	Marker Posts
Revised 2009-2010 estimate	97,500	22,500
Original 2009-2010 estimate	130,000	30,000
2008-2009 Actual	195,570	41,570
2007-2008 Actual	239,350	48,105
1995-1996 Actual	108,140	32,125

The original 2009-2010 projects a deficit of \$24,528. In order to bring the projected deficit down to this level, Council raised fees, cut committee expenses, removed committee terms of reference, and reduced overall salaries and benefits.

When Council debated the 2009-2010 budget, it decided that membership dues should pay for core Association services such as Registration Committee, registrar duties, Practice Review Board, public inquiries and portions of Professional Development Committee, Public Relations and Standards Committee budgets and the infrastructure (salaries and office space) that supports those activities.

Council also decided that the sale of iron posts and marker posts should pay for those activities outlined in the Association's agreement with the government. These responsibilities include Systematic Practice Review, public awareness, enhancing professional practice and Section 47 monitoring. The 2009-2010 budget projects a deficit of \$80,441 in ministerial order activities.

A flat amount of \$2.50 from the sale of iron posts and marker posts funds the Boundary Panel.

If the Association sells 25% fewer iron posts and marker posts, it is worse off by \$257,800 for a total projected deficit of \$282,328.

The Association would immediately cut \$100,000 from the Boundary Panel because fewer posts are sold.

There are a number of steps that Council has already taken in anticipation of lower post sales. The Association has made adjustments to its staffing and Council eliminated several public awareness activities from the Public Relations Committee terms of reference for 2009-2010, including eliminating the first-year University of Calgary barbecue and attendance at municipal trade shows. The January/February regional meetings have been cancelled. These savings should amount to just under \$20,000.

Council has identified other cuts that could be implemented for 2009-2010. Some of these cuts would be small. They include reducing the education & training budget and membership in some related organizations. Other cuts would be larger and would affect Association staffing levels. These changes would result in approximately \$88,000 in savings.

Council has decided not to implement these cuts at this time but instead will monitor the progress of iron post and marker post sales at all future meetings and decide what cuts, if any, need to be implemented and how much needs to be cut.

Council has also indentified a number of potential cuts for 2010-2011. Changes to the systematic practice review process and changes to the Association's scholarship plan could result in savings totaling more than \$100,000. These cuts cannot be implemented for 2009-2010 because the Association has already committed these funds for this budget year.

If post sales were to fall by 25% more than what was budgeted for 2009-2010, the Alberta Land Surveyors' Association has a contingency plan to bring the Association back to a surplus position for 2010-2011.

If the Association does have a deficit, then the funds come from the Financial Stabilization Fund. The Financial Stabilization Fund was created in 2002 when economic times were good to offset poor economic times as we are experiencing now. Since 2002, the Association was able to add to the fund in four separate years totaling approximately \$750,000 and withdrew from the fund in three separate years totaling approximately \$225,000.

The Association revised its investment policy in May 2008 to keep a certain portion of its funds in shorter-term liquid investments in case the Association needs cash because of a significant decline in post sales.

The Alberta Land Surveyors' Association is well positioned to deal with a deficit in 2009-2010 even with a significant decline in post sales.

Council has been, and will be, reviewing post sales on a month-by-month basis and will enact all or part of the contingency plan depending on whether post sales are below budget and by how much.

The membership is welcome to comment on the Association's contingency plan by contacting any Council member or the ALSA office.