



Advocacy Committee of the Campbell River Chamber of Commerce

Terms of Reference – 11 February 2010

Purpose

To advocate for changes to attitudes, policies, positions, practices or programs in society regarding matters that impact the Campbell River business community.

Operations

The Advocacy Committee is a committee of the Board of Directors of the Campbell River Chamber of Commerce.

- Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month;
- Minutes will be prepared after each meeting;
- The committee will submit a report to the Board following each meeting;
- Members must be members of the Campbell River Chamber of Commerce;
- The Board Chair, Executive Director and Chair of the Policy Committee are ex-officio members of the committee;
- Members are nominated by the committee;
- The chair is a director of the Board;
- Proxy votes are not permitted; and
- Quorum is equal to 50% plus one of the committee members (not counting ex-officio members).

Process

The advocacy process is designed to identify issues of concern to the business community and allow for informed review and decision-making by the Board of Directors. Once the Board has decided to adopt a particular policy or position the chamber staff and committee will advocate for appropriate changes.

The process of advocacy follows these steps:

1. Community Scan
2. Initial Assessment
3. Initial Research
4. Secondary Assessment
5. Issue Research and Document Drafting
6. Policy or Position Review
7. Advocacy
8. Evaluation and Adjustment

1. Community Scan

A constant process that involves, but is not limited to, member input, board input, member and community surveys and input from partner organizations.

2. Initial Assessment

The issue is assessed by staff for its relevance to the business interest as per the minimum criteria for issues. If a clear connection cannot be made to the business community, the issue is not addressed further. The issue may be monitored or referred to other organizations but the Chamber will not pursue advocacy. The minimum criteria are:

- Of significance to some of the Chamber membership;
- Timely;
- Specific and actionable; i.e., can be impacted by the actions and initiatives of the Chamber or its partners;
- Consistent with the Chamber's mission statement, vision and values; and
- Clear and understandable.

3. Initial Research

If an issue does affect business, initial research is conducted by staff. This initial research normally involves contacting the party who drew attention to the issue and determining the scope of business affected. The complexity of the issue is estimated and a review of existing policy in the Chamber and partner organizations is conducted.

4. Secondary Assessment

The information gathered during initial research is discussed by the committee and staff and the following criteria are used to determine if further advocacy work should be conducted and resources committed to further research. The criteria include considerations such as:

- Fits with Chamber priorities and policies – is a suitable issue for the Board to pursue;
- Fits with business principles;
- Of significance to Chamber partners;
- Affects a wide scope of businesses;
- The Chamber is the best organization to take the lead;
- The Chamber has the resources required for further research; and
- The complexity of the issue does not limit the likelihood of success.

After this is assessment the issue is assessed by the Board; the Board determines whether or not it is an issue to be pursued by the Chamber.

5. Issue Research and Document Drafting

If an issue has passed the second assessment and the nature of the issue warrants it, a position paper or policy document is created. Policy development will be coordinated or may be handled exclusively by the policy committee. The purpose of the policy or position paper is to clearly define the issue and to itemize possible solutions. This may require considerable research and consultation with involved members and stakeholders; the work may be done by the Chamber (committee members or staff) or partners who are impacted by the issue.

6. Policy or Position Review

The policy or position paper is reviewed by the committee and the Board and is amended until it is approved or rejected by the Board. The document is assessed for collateral effects of the proposed solutions. The chamber policy will be focused on the best solution for the business community. The approval will be listed as a motion in the Board minutes. The policy or position remains in effect until rescinded by the Board or the issue is resolved. .

7. Advocacy

Once a policy or position is approved, chamber staff and/or the committee advocates on behalf of the membership. The process of advocacy will depend on the specifics of the issue and the following factors considered:

- Who the decision making authority is;
- Who the affected stakeholders are;
- The publicity value of the policy or position; and
- The partners in support of the Chamber's position.

The policy or position is included in all chamber communication activities. These activities include but are not limited to:

- Meetings with stakeholders and decision makers;
- Media releases;
- News articles;

- Letter writing;
- Public and member information sessions;
- Political candidate forums; and
- Media appearances.

8. Evaluation and Adjustment

Once the policy or position paper is created and the initial communication process is conducted the situation is evaluated. In particular the response from the decision-making authority is considered as compared to the scope of businesses affected. The circumstances regarding the issue are monitored and if circumstances change or new information becomes available, active advocacy may be reinitiated or the policy or position may be re-written.

The greater danger for most of us lies not in setting our aim too high and falling short; but in setting our aim too low, and achieving our mark.

Michelangelo