



CAMARADERIE

EMBRACING CHANGE



2024 CAMA CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS A VISUAL JOURNEY THROUGH OUR TIME IN BANFF

June 3-5, 2024 | Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel, Alberta

A MESSAGE FROM THE CAMA PRESIDENT

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome to the 2024 CAMA Conference Highlights where over 360 Chief Administrative Officers and senior staff members from municipalities across Canada gathered for an unforgettable experience at the 50th Annual CAMA Conference at the breathtaking Fairmont Banff Springs Hotel from June 3-5, 2024! A big shoutout to our incredible host, CAO Kelly Gibson from the Town of Banff, and the CAMA National Office staff for making this Conference a smashing success!

As we reflect on our time together in Banff, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude. This year's Conference was a testament to the strength, resilience, and innovation within our community. From insightful keynote speeches to dynamic workshops, and from invaluable networking sessions to our vibrant tradeshow floor, every moment was enriched by your participation and enthusiasm.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to each of you for making this event truly memorable. Your dedication to advancing municipal administration and your engagement in this Conference have left a lasting impact.

Please enjoy this visual journey through our Conference highlights. I hope it brings back fond memories and inspires continued collaboration and growth.

Looking forward to seeing you next year in Mont Tremblant!

Warm regards,



Tony Kulbisky
CAMA President



CONFERENCE DAY ONE - MONDAY, JUNE 3

Golf Tournament, Pre-Conference Activities, Opening Reception and Tradeshow

The first day of the Conference was packed with excitement! We kicked off with the fan-favourite CAMA Golf Tournament at the stunning Silvertip Golf Resort with the winning team of Dean Kabbani, Mike Primeau, Don MacLeod and Steve Kruska. Thrill-seekers enjoyed Kananaskis Surf Rafting, and others took in the soaring gondola rides, and visits to the breathtaking Lake Minnewanka, Lake Louise and Moraine Lake. We wrapped up the day with a lively Opening Reception in the Tradeshow area, showcasing 56 awesome companies from across Canada.





CONFERENCE DAY 2 - TUESDAY, JUNE 4

Annual General Meeting, Opening Ceremonies, Speaker Sessions, Long Service Awards Luncheon & Casual Night Out

Tuesday morning kicked off bright and early with President Tony Kulbisky leading the Annual General Meeting, where we bid farewell to five retiring Board members, celebrated Bev Hendry's fantastic year as President, and welcomed six new Board members. After an official welcome to Banff by Mayor Di Manno, and greetings from ICMA President-Elect Tanya Ange, and representatives from the Alberta Administrator Associations, SLGM (Jesse Sopko), LGAA (Melanie Samson), and ARMAA (Jeff Holmes), we held a heartfelt Memorial Ceremony in honour of the late Rodney Cumby, our esteemed CAMA Board Member from Newfoundland & Labrador, by retiring his CAMA hockey jersey.

Tina Varughese's captivating Opening Keynote presentation on the "Human Side of Unconscious Bias" was a wonderful way to begin our leadership journey. We also heard from engaging speakers on topics crucial to our members, like navigating the first 100 days on the job, mastering key relationships in local government, fostering Municipal-Indigenous partnerships for sustainable communities, cultivating a positive culture, promoting psychological safety in the workplace, and conducting successful organizational reviews.

The day wrapped up with a laid-back evening at Mount View BBQ—a rustic paradise in the heart of the mountains. We enjoyed great food, fantastic music, and danced the night away. What a way to end a spectacular day!





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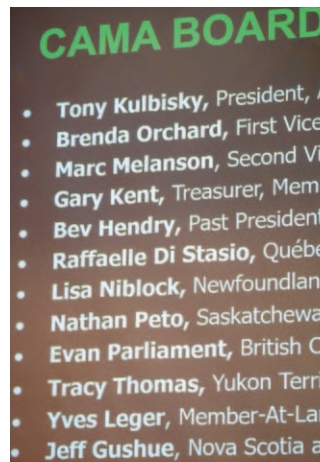
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2024-2025 CAMA Board

- Tony Kulbisky, President, Alberta
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- Jeff Gushue, Nova Scotia and PEI







CONFERENCE DAY 3 - WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5

Speaker Sessions, Closing Ceremonies, Study Tours and President's Dinner Mountain Garden Gala

The third day of the Conference was packed with excitement and inspiration with three engaging plenary sessions on having difficult conversations, charting the course of good governance and how to lead in the new world of work! As we closed out the Conference, we tenderly honoured the memory of our beloved colleague and friend, Rodney Cumby, once again, by gently lowering his jersey.

After the Closing Ceremonies with our Tradeshow Exhibitors, we had a fantastic workshop led by Suzanne Gibson on leading through change. Attendees also enjoyed three fascinating study tours, exploring Banff's cutting-edge infrastructure, touring the Roam Transit Operations and Training Centre, and participating in the Wapakwa Plant Walk with Matricia Brown.

The Conference wrapped up with a bang at the President's Dinner Mountain Garden Gala, featuring an Indigenous drumming ceremony, a fun photo booth and ending with the Two Bit Bandits Band. What an unforgettable way to end the event along with the theme song of our members "[I Will Survive](#)"!



SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS AND KEY INSIGHTS

A Recap of Notable Quotes and Takeaways

Following is a summary of the speakers, including key takeaways and notable quotes from each session. This wrap-up captures the insights and valuable contributions of each presenter, highlighting the main points and memorable moments that made the conference a success.

“The Human Side of Unconscious Bias” (Tina Varughese)

- **Understanding Unconscious Bias:** Everyone has unconscious biases. These biases do not necessarily indicate racism or discrimination but acknowledging them is crucial for personal growth and better human interactions. Unconscious biases are learned behaviors and beliefs that reside in our subconscious.
 - **Gender Bias in Performance Reviews:** Women often receive more negative feedback in performance reviews, even from other women. Women can be as critical, if not more so, towards other women.
 - **Assigning Responsibility Equitably:** Avoid assuming responsibilities based on gender. "Invisible housework" refers to tasks like organizing events, which women are more inclined to take on regardless of their position. Assign responsibilities consciously to prevent this bias.
 - **Interruption and Feminism in the Workplace:** Women are twice as likely to be interrupted during meetings, even by other women. Feminism isn't about being feminine; it's about advocating for equal treatment and opportunities.
 - **Affinity Bias:** Affinity bias occurs when we favor individuals who remind us of ourselves. This bias can impact recruitment, retention, and employee engagement. Being aware of this tendency is essential to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace.
- **Diverse Mentorship:** While it is natural to mentor someone like oneself, greater learning occurs when mentoring someone diverse. Embrace diversity in mentorship to gain broader perspectives and insights.
 - **Collaborative Decision-Making:** "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." When facing decisions, especially those where bias might play a role, seek input from others to ensure fairness and inclusivity.

“The Unconscious Mind Determines Reactions - The Conscious Mind Determines Actions”



“City Management Unveiled: Navigating the First 100 Days and Mastering Key Relationships in Local Government” (Patrick Moyle, Bill Given, Sheila Bassi-Kellett)

- **Initial Engagement:** Spend the first 100 days listening and understanding how things work. Find the backdoor to City Hall, leave the office and engage with frontline staff at various city departments to build relationships and gain insights. This groundwork is key to future success.
- **Embracing VUCA:** Municipal administration is characterized by Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA). Embrace these challenges, manage uncertainty, and reduce ambiguity. This approach is more of an art than a science, with varied results.
- **Problem-Solving Approach:** Council often seeks simple solutions to complex problems. Always clarify the real problem that needs solving to ensure effective solutions.
- **Managing Change:** Be mindful of organizational fatigue and the capacity for change. Teams and organizations can only handle a limited amount of change at a time. Balance your vision with the organization’s ability to keep pace.
- **Political Collaboration:** Regularly ask politicians how you can support their success and spend time listening to their needs. Also, create informal opportunities for discussion, such as quarterly one-on-one touch bases with Councillors.
- **Leadership and Presence:** Establish your presence and leadership style by setting the tone for navigating complex relationships. As CAOs, you must manage upwards, downwards, and outward, consistently prioritizing the community's best interests.



Fostering Collaboration: Municipal-Indigenous Partnerships for Sustainable Communities (Janine Windolph)

- **Understanding and Connecting with the Community:** Deeply understand the unique narratives and cultural significance of your area. Recognize what matters most to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members to forge meaningful connections. This understanding forms the foundation of respectful and productive partnerships.
- **Building Relationships:** Start by building relationships with one individual at a time, allowing trust and mutual respect to organically grow. These relationships should be nurtured and expanded over time to encompass a broader network of Indigenous community members and leaders.
- **Transparent Communication:** Maintain open and transparent communication channels. Always keep Indigenous communities informed about your actions, decisions, and projects to ensure they feel valued and included in the process.
- **Sharing Histories and Knowledge:** Sharing histories and cultural backgrounds is essential, regardless of one's heritage or the time of arrival in the community. This practice fosters mutual respect and understanding, laying the groundwork for a more cohesive community.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Leverage Indigenous knowledge and practices to inform sustainable community development. Indigenous perspectives on land stewardship, resource management, and environmental sustainability offer valuable insights that can enhance municipal planning and policymaking.



Developing a Positive Culture: After a Decade's Worth of Work - Are We There Yet? Is the Work Ever Done on Improving Culture? (Zoran Postic)

- **Caring Leadership and Community Focus:** Effective leadership begins with demonstrating care for others. "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care. It is our job to take care of our people so they can take care of our community." Celebrating successes and recognizing staff across all levels are crucial for fostering a collaborative and supportive workplace culture.
- **Continuous Improvement and Reflection:** While progress has been made in enhancing organizational culture, the journey towards improvement is ongoing. "Is our work on improving organizational culture complete? We've made significant progress, but there's still much to be done. Our journey continues."
- **Leadership and Empowerment:** Senior leaders must prioritize leadership development and support. "As a leader, especially a senior leader of leaders, your primary focus should be on leadership. It's about being of service to our busy Directors and helping our managers effectively delegate tasks to avoid long hours." Empowering individuals throughout the organization in a systematic manner, seeking continuous feedback, and reflecting on personal performance are vital aspects of effective leadership.



By emphasizing care, celebration of achievements, ongoing improvement, and empowering leadership, organizations can cultivate a positive and supportive culture where teams thrive and contribute effectively to their community.

Navigating Uncharted Skies: Municipal Leaders as Pilots of Progress (Sara Wegwitz)

- **Quality of Presence:** "It never comes down to how much time you spend with somebody or even what you do with them - it always comes down to the quality of your presence." Leaders are encouraged to be fully present in interactions to cultivate meaningful connections.
- **Creating an Optimal Work Environment:** Central to effective leadership is creating environments where teams can naturally excel and flourish. "How do we create an environment in which our team can work at their natural best and flourish?" This involves fostering conditions that support employee well-being and productivity.
- **Embracing Course Correction:**
 - o Have a mindset that values progress over perfection with the importance of continuous improvement and incremental adjustments. "It's all about course correction. As a leader, it's crucial to value progress over perfection—to honor the process rather than fixating solely on results or outcomes." This approach leads to higher employee engagement, reduced turnover, and positive organizational change.
- **Emotional Impact of Leadership:** Reflecting Maya Angelou's wisdom, "I have learned that people will forget what you said, they will forget what you did, but people will never forget the way that you made them feel." Leaders are urged to consider four critical questions in every interaction to ensure they convey respect, care, and value to their team members.
 - o Do you physically see me?
 - o Do you care that I'm here?
 - o Am I enough for you or do I need to be different or better in some way?
 - o Can I tell by the way you look at me that I matter or that I'm special?

The transformative power of authentic leadership, focuses on presence, creating supportive environments, embracing continuous improvement, and nurturing emotional connections within teams. These principles are essential for municipal leaders navigating challenges and steering their organizations towards sustained growth and success.



Empowering Municipal Leaders: DIY Organizational Reviews for Achieving Peak Performance (Maxime Boissonneault, Claudy St-Onge, Kim Parent)

This session advocated for a paradigm shift in municipal leadership towards achieving peak performance through rigorous self-assessment and transformation. It was emphasized that true organizational change begins with personal transformation, underscoring the critical role of leaders as catalysts for broader systemic improvements. Key principles highlighted include:

- **Individual Transformation Driving Organizational Change:** The sustainable organizational change hinges upon leaders' willingness to undergo personal transformation.
- **Understanding Stakeholders' Needs:** The importance of gaining deep insights into the needs of stakeholders as a foundational step towards effective change implementation.
- **Daily Interventions and Actions:** Emphasizing the significance of consistent and purposeful actions in fostering a culture of change within municipal organizations.

- **Progressive Journey of Change:** Change is depicted as an ongoing and evolutionary process rather than a one-time event, requiring commitment and perseverance from all stakeholders.
- **Collaborative Teamwork:** Highlighting the indispensable role of collaborative teamwork in creating an environment conducive to sustained organizational change.



"Crack the Code: 3D Communication Strategies for Difficult Conversations" (Pamela Barnum)

"Non-verbal communication constitutes the majority of our communication. While words are important, it is the manner in which they are communicated that provides us with deeper insights."

Below are some facts and communication advice from Pamela Barnum:

- Difficult conversations often arise from factual disputes.
- The set up of the meeting or interview space significantly influences the outcome.
- Remote work does not enhance empathy. In-person interactions foster engagement, build rapport, and enhance empathy and trust at the intersection of confidence.
- We want to shift conversations to the future to give people hope.
- We should aim to shift conversations toward the future to instill hope.
- Use similar language and engage with people in the first minutes of the conversation.

- Mirroring the initial email salutation and sign-off builds trust.
- People are more likely to tell high-stake lies over the phone.
- Maintaining an open posture when standing conveys positivity.
- Women tend to view negotiations as collaborative efforts, while men often perceive them as competitive encounters.
- People who have not yet experienced certain challenges often show more compassion. Once we have those experiences behind us, our level of compassion tends to diminish.
- Genuine smiles and maintaining eye contact are crucial.
- When feeling nervous, cultivate a calming presence by reminding yourself of your successes rather than your shortcomings, which will help you project more confidence.
- Intentions are noticeable.
- Perspective is everything; it is the most powerful tool in your "Difficult Communications Toolbox". Stepping into someone else's shoes to understand their viewpoint is essential for decoding messages and comprehending the reasons behind them.
- Respect is paramount in all forms of communication.



Mastering Effective Leadership: Charting the Course of Good Governance & Thriving Versus Surviving (Tracey Lorenson)

- **Plan Regular Governance Sessions:** Schedule governance sessions well in advance. Having these sessions planned and ready ensures you are prepared when the need arises.
- **Maintain Neutrality:** Be cautious of becoming overly political. While some discussions are challenging, avoid diluting important issues in an attempt to make them easier.
- **Frame Council Sessions Effectively:** Avoid labeling a Council session as a "teambuilding" event. Instead, describe it as a session focused on dynamics and decision-making to better align with the council's objectives.
- **Focus on Positive Development:** Invest time and resources in helping the council perform excellently rather than punishing them for shortcomings. Positive reinforcement fosters a more productive environment.
- **Use Strategic External Assistance:** Even if you are courageous, it's often more strategic to hire an external "bad cop" (consultant) to handle tough issues. This approach demonstrates strategic thinking and preserves internal relationships.
- **Schedule Your Performance Evaluation:** Proactively schedule your own performance evaluation in the council's calendar. Don't wait for the Council to initiate it. Having an external party handle this task ensures objectivity and thoroughness.



Blueprint to the Future: Leading in a New World of Work (Eric Turmuende)

Building Incredible Teams for the Future of Work

Core Principles

- **Deep Trust:** Building a deep sense of trust within teams is crucial. Leaders should express vulnerability to set the stage for their teams to do the same. Trust cultivated off the field translates to better performance on the field.
- **Personal Connections:** Understanding team members personally fosters trust and bonding. Teams with strong interpersonal connections are significantly more engaged.

Engagement through Recognition & Feeling Valued.

- Engagement follows when team members feel seen, heard, understood, valued, appreciated, and respected. It's essential for leaders to slow down to build these connections and recognize individual contributions.

Reducing Friction

- **Identify and Address Issues:** Leaders should regularly assess where friction exists and involve the team in identifying solutions. Asking targeted questions helps in pinpointing and addressing issues:
 - Where is there friction?
 - What should I be doing about it?
 - Where is it going wrong?
 - Where is it really going wrong?
 - What is the one-degree shift I can make for marginal gains?
- **Incremental Improvements:** Instead of focusing solely on long-term goals, small, consistent adjustments (one-degree shifts) can progressively bring the team closer to success.

Team Involvement and Continuous Improvement

- **Regular Feedback:** Hold regular meetings and ask the team critical questions to foster a culture of continuous improvement and psychological safety:
 - What should we start doing?
 - What should we stop doing?
 - What should we continue doing?
 - What could we do more of?
 - What are we doing too much of?
 - What/who have you been inspired by lately?
- **Inclusive Solutions:** Involve all team members, regardless of tenure, in problem-solving to ensure everyone feels seen and understood.

Navigating the Future of Work

"By fostering deep trust, prioritizing personal connections, regularly assessing and reducing friction, and involving the entire team in continuous improvement, leaders can build resilient and high-performing teams ready to face future challenges."

"I learned so much and realize I have so much more to learn. Thanks to CAMA 2024 I have additional tools and resources than previous and connected with people that I can reach out to in the future!"

AN ENTHUSIASTIC PARTICIPANT



CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AWARD RECIPIENTS

At our Conference luncheons, we celebrated our colleagues' dedication to municipal administration with the Long Service Awards for those members that were able to attend (the list of all recipients can be found [here](#)). We also honoured eight outstanding municipalities for the CAMA Awards of Excellence. Check out our [website](#) and the [Local Gov Cafés](#) interview for all the details on the winners.

Long Service Awards

20 Years Recipients

- Peter Tarnawsky, Chief Administrative Officer, Lamont County, AB
- Jeff Renaud, Chief Administrative Officer, Municipal District of St. Stephen, NB
- Caroline LeBlanc, Directrice de finances, Village de Memramcook, NB
- Gary Kent, Chief Administrative Officer, Region of Peel, ON



25 Year Recipients

- Daryl Hrehirchuk, Chief Administrative Officer, Rural Municipality of Macdonald, MB
- Mark Phillips, Chief Administrative Officer, West Hants Regional Municipality, NS



30 Year Recipients

- Tony Kulbisky, Chief Administrative Officer, Westlock County, AB
- Don MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer, Township of Zorra, ON
- Cynthia Geldart, Chief Administrative Officer/Clerk, Village of New Maryland, NB
- Robert Buchan, City Manager, City of Prince Rupert, BC



35 Year Recipient

- Larry Driedger, Chief Administrative Officer, Rural Municipality of Morris, MB (Retired)
- Rick Binnendyk, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Penhold, AB



Congratulations to Jack Ramsden (CAO for the Town of Eckville, AB) who was presented with his 45 year pin at the President's Dinner



"An incredible Conference. Great pace, great topics, great venue and incredible organization. Congratulations to the organizers and planners and all the team who were on the group to pull a seamless event off!"

A SATISFIED CONFERENCE GOER

"The CAMA-raderie and welcoming atmosphere were amazing. As a new member and first time Conference delegate it was a terrific experience."

AN ENLIGHTENED ATTENDEE

Awards of Excellence Recipients

From Left to Right:

- Zoran Postic, Deputy City Manager of Public Works, City of Vaughan, ON
- Michael Kirkopoulos, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Lincoln, ON
- Ron Tripp, Chief Administrative Officer, Niagara Region, ON
- Bryan Teasdale, Chief Administrative Officer/Corporate Officer, City of Rossland, BC
- Sharry Sowiak, Director of Human Resources, Strathcona County, AB
- Andrea Nwobosi, Communications Specialist, Strathcona County, AB
- Darrell Reid, Chief Administrative Officer, Strathcona County, AB
- Erin Wildeboer, Supervisor, Waste Diversion Outreach Programs, Strathcona County, AB
- Leah Seabrook, Manager, Waste Management & Community Energy Utilities, Strathcona County, AB
- Terry Burton, Director of Planning & Engineering, City of Lloydminster, AB
- Don Stang, Executive Manager, Operations, City of Lloydminster, AB

***Please note that the Town of Innisfil, award recipient, were unable to be in attendance.**



CELEBRATING CAMA'S ALL-STAR TEAM

Uniting Municipalities Coast to Coast for CAMA-RADERIE 2024

A huge shoutout to this year's incredible CAMA rockstar team for their exceptional skills, shining personalities, and unbeatable teamwork. This pan-Canadian team, hailing from municipalities coast to coast, came together in the middle to deliver another epic CAMA-RADERIE event.



Victoria Bowering (Nanaimo), Carolina Correa (Fredericton), Julia McDevitt (Fredericton), Alycia Bartlett (Fredericton), Jennifer Goodine (Fredericton), Alisha Bainbridge-Trites (Fredericton), Denise Habibovic (Mississauga), Beth Readman (Napanee), Doreen Nakhle (Fredericton)

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 CONFERENCE PARTNERS

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all our sponsors and partners for their incredible support of the 2024 CAMA Conference. Your contributions and commitment were pivotal in making this event a resounding success. Thank you for helping us advance municipal administration and fostering a vibrant community of professionals. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and achieving even greater heights together.

Platinum Partners



Silver Partners



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SAVE THE DATE

CAMA 2025 in Mont Tremblant - A Can't-Miss Event!

Can't wait to see everyone at the 51st Annual Conference at the stunning Fairmont Mont Tremblant from May 26-28, 2025 beginning with the Pre-Conference activities on Monday, May 26 and ending with the President's Dinner on Wednesday evening May 28, 2025. Keep an eye out for the hotel room block opening in September 2024!

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