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To: GVRDall <gvrall@metrovanancouver.org>

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Subject: Metro Vancouver - December 23rd 2020

Dear Staff:

I wanted to write a short note to you all as we mark the holiday season, but I think you all know by now that short notes just aren't possible for me. Nevertheless, please know that I wish you all a restful, peaceful, and rejuvenating holiday season. I hope you are able to celebrate with your loved ones, (even if it has to be virtual) and that you all take some time to reflect on what has been quite a tumultuous year, as we head into 2021.

I certainly have been doing quite a bit of reflecting as we close out 2020. It's hard to believe that this is the year that started with [bushfires](#) in Australia. It morphed into a global pandemic, and then a collective awakening around racial and social injustice.

I will note, it has been quite the time to step into a new role. Leading our regional government, which is one of the most critical, integral organizations of our region and province, getting to work with all of you, and taking Metro Vancouver into the next chapter is an honour that I don't take lightly. After starting as CAO/Commissioner last November, I welcomed 2020 with fairly typical aspirations – to work hard and try and lead our organization in the most effective way possible, and with the values that we hold dear – excellent service, respect, kindness, and a bit of fun along the way. I had the goal of our organization continuing to focus and build on our core operations and core utilities, project delivery, affordable housing, parks and climate change, and then to support all the areas that support these key functions.

And then, in the form of a microscopic bug, life threw us a huge curveball. Our organization joined the world in facing an unprecedented challenge. As the health crisis became a pandemic, you continued to deliver. We are an essential service. And you rose to the occasion. We didn't close, when much of the world did. Instead, we adjusted and found new ways to adapt and ensure our services continued, while keeping our staff and our region safe. So much of what we accomplished during this time had never been done before.

We have had some tough times along the way, and also our hardest, most tragic experience yet, in the events that took place on October 1st. We have navigated these extremely difficult times and incredible challenges, together, and will continue to do so.

It's been an exceptionally challenging year, for so much of the world, and also very difficult for our organization. However, through it all, I have continued to be awestruck and inspired by all the things our staff team and organization does for our region, in order to try and make a tough situation just a little bit better.

It's been a difficult year, and at the same time, it's also been a year filled with wonder. Several of you had children. Some of you became grandparents. We found peace in our nature. We celebrated what

was important and what we had to be grateful for. And we committed to a new way of working, doing and being- one that focuses on resiliency and inclusion for all.

There have been so many incredible moments that have moved me. Your commitment, your resilience, your innovation. You also found time to give back – raising over \$15,000 for Movember and \$42,000 for United Way (which I understand is \$5,000 more than last year!) – with fully virtual campaigns.

What is clear, is that the future is forever changed, and we are forever transformed. While I don't know what 2021 holds, (although I have high hopes), one thing I do know is that we will always be here, delivering, come what may. You can count on that.

There is much to be done. But also so much to reflect on and still be thankful for, this holiday season.

Thank you for all your hard work and service. I'm wishing you a meaningful, restorative, holiday; please rest up, and enjoy your loved ones. I'll be with my immediate family, (Dr. Henry's orders!).

Please note, External Relations helped pull together a video to mark this year, and while we weren't able to play it at a Christmas party, [it is available for viewing here](#). Please take a few minutes to watch it.

I wish you all a merry, restful holiday. And here's to a new dawn breaking on 2021.

Together we make our region strong.

Be well.

Jerry

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Commissioner/Chief Administrative Officer

