

STAFF REPORT

TO: Warden and Members of Shelburne Municipal Council

FROM: Warren MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer

APPROVED BY: Warren MacLeod, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: November 13th, 2024

SUBJECT: **Exploration of Consolidation / Amalgamation / Unification etc.**

PURPOSE

To consider authorizing the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to collaborate with the CAO of the Town of Shelburne and the Clerk of the Town of Lockeport in arranging an educational session for the three Councils of Eastern Shelburne County. This session would explore the topic of consolidation and its related concepts.

BACKGROUND

Over the past three years, Shelburne County's five municipalities have participated in several educational sessions focused on the idea of consolidation and its variations. Following these sessions, the Municipalities of Clarks Harbour and Barrington decided not to continue with further discussions, while the Municipality of Shelburne, along with the Towns of Lockeport and Shelburne, expressed interest in continuing to explore the concept.

At that time, the consolidation of the Municipality and Town of Antigonish experienced unexpected challenges, leading to uncertainty about provincial support. This uncertainty caused delays, prompting the Town of Shelburne to issue a letter on March 18, 2024, indicating their interest in discussing the benefits and challenges of consolidation. However, they suggested that any decision be deferred until the new council is elected in October 2024. The Municipality of Shelburne thereafter publicly aligned with this approach, favoring a similar delay.

With the 2024 elections now concluded, communication between our CAO, the CAO of the Town of Shelburne, and the Clerk of the Town of Lockeport has resulted in mutual agreement to bring forward a motion for our councils to continue discussions and educational sessions on consolidation's potential benefits and challenges. The proposed motion is presented below for Council's consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

Be it resolved that the Municipality of the District of Shelburne agrees to participate in further educational workshops and discussions regarding the potential benefits and challenges of consolidation and related concepts. Additionally, be it resolved that the Council authorizes the CAO to collaborate with the CAO of the Town of Shelburne and the Clerk of the Town of Lockeport to organize these workshops and discussions.

BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

There will likely be costs associated with arranging for speakers experienced in the processes of consolidation to present to the three councils.

ATTACHMENTS

Town of Shelburne letter, 2024-03-18



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March 18, 2024

Town of Lockeport
Municipality of the District of Shelburne

Dear Mayor Nickerson & Warden Smith,

On behalf of the Town of Shelburne Council, I am writing to propose a postponement of the discussions regarding consolidation between our respective units: the Town of Lockeport and the Municipality of the District of Shelburne.

While Council is indeed interested in engaging in discussions regarding the potential benefits and challenges of consolidation, we have reviewed and deliberated upon our current circumstances. Given the impending elections and the urgent nature of our high-priority projects, we believe it is prudent not to rush into the process of consolidation.

Consolidating our three units is a significant undertaking that requires careful consideration and ample time investment, particularly in navigating the initial stages of the process. Therefore, we are of the opinion that it would be more sensible to defer our discussions until after the conclusion of the election and the new councils are in place.

We want to emphasize that this decision to propose postponing the initial consolidation discussions was not made lightly by Council. However, it seems more reasonable to commence discussions with the new councils in place. Given that the new councils may comprise a majority of new members, there may be a necessity for an educational and training component to acquaint them with the intricacies of consolidation deliberations before delving into the benefits and challenges.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation in this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or require further clarification regarding our proposal.

Sincerely,

Harold Locke
Mayor, Town of Shelburne