



Amalgamation Steering Committee Meeting
February 4, 2026 | 6:00 pm
Municipality of Shelburne | 414 Woodlawn Drive
AGENDA

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5.1. Discussion on further need for additional education sessions	
6. Adjournment	



Amalgamation Steering Committee Meeting
December 3, 2025 | 2:30 pm
Municipality of Shelburne | 414 Woodlawn Drive | Room 114

Those in Attendance:

Mayor Derek Amalfa, Chair TOL
Warden Penny Smith, Vice Chair MDS
Mayor Stan Jacklin, TOS
Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen, TOL
Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner, MDS
Councillor Terese Cruz, TOS
June Harding, Clerk TOL
Warren MacLeod, CAO MDS
Sarah Mattatall, CAO TOS
Erin Hartley, Deputy CAO MDS
Nicole Blades, Recording Secretary MDS
Members of the Public

1. Call to Order

Erin Hartley, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:31pm.

It was noted this was the first meeting for the Amalgamation Steering Committee and the purpose of the committee is to have a formal avenue for exploration and education of the amalgamation process.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Committee members and staff support introduced themselves around the table.

3. Approval of Agenda

3.1. December 3, 2025

*Being duly moved and seconded, the agenda for December 3, 2025 was approved.
Motion carried.*

4. Election of Officers

4.1. Chair

Erin Hartley, Acting Chair, called for nominations of Chair. Mayor Derek Amalfa, Town of Lockeport, was nominated and accepted the nomination of Chair for the Amalgamation Steering Committee. There being no further nominations, Mayor Amalfa was acclaimed as Chairperson.

4.2. Vice Chair

Mayor Derek Amalfa, Chair, called for nominations of Vice Chair. Warden Penny Smith, Municipality of Shelburne, was nominated and accepted the nomination of Vice Chair for the Amalgamation Steering Committee. There being no further nominations, Warden Smith was acclaimed as Vice Chairperson.

5. Approval of Terms of Reference

Being duly moved and seconded, the Terms of Reference were approved as presented. Motion carried.

6. Presentations

6.1 Lisa Wallace, Chief Clerk, Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board

Chair Amalfa welcomed Lisa Wallace, Chief Clerk, and Paul Allen, Executive Director, with the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board.

Ms. Wallace provided an overview of the key steps involved in the process of amalgamation or dissolution including filing of application, the preliminary hearing, preparing and filing studies, the hearing held on merits, and the board decision and order.

The importance of public consultation, financial implications to consider, potential changes to polling districts and number of councillors, and the timeline of the process were also outlined.

A discussion was held and clarification was given on costs associated with filing, financial assistance available from the province, conducting studies internally, the difference between amalgamation and dissolution, and opportunity to withdraw the application.

Chair Amalfa thanked Ms. Wallace and Mr. Allen for presenting.

7. New Business

7.1 Discussion with Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipality of Pictou County

Chair Amalfa welcomed Brian Cullen, CAO of Municipality of Pictou County.

Mr. Cullen shared the experience of Pictou County's amalgamation of four units in 2016 including the reasoning on their decision to move forward, outcomes of studies completed, separation of tax rates, financial modelling, and provincial funding negotiations and commitments.

During the process, external consultants were hired to conduct a staff review. Sixteen positions were eliminated with eight positions being eliminated when amalgamation was completed and eight positions dissolving after an employee vacated the position.

Fire services were examined. Rural and town fire departments would continue as they were with the cost area rated back to the residents being served. No changes were necessary with RCMP services.

Council members were reduced from thirty-one elected officials to eleven. A Mayor at large with ten council districts was decided upon with annual savings of \$220,000. Districts would be reviewed four years after.

A plebiscite was held in each unit in which the results were that three of the four units didn't support the amalgamation. Each council respected residents concerns and sent letters to the Board to consider the withdraw of the application.

A combination of financial concerns, economic decline in the area, decision making, political environment and really wanting to grow the county with a common vision is what drove the decision to initiate amalgamation.

A discussion was held regarding cost overruns, reasons for having a plebiscite, importance of community engagement early on and throughout the entire process, sharing financial projections and study findings with residents, educating the public on the need for amalgamation and report timeline.

Mr. Cullen provided an update on the current day morale of the units. It was noted there was a decline in cooperation amongst the units in the beginning, but relationships are improving. Items such as delays on capital infrastructure projects in certain units contributed to the situation.

Chair Amalfa thanked Mr. Cullen for presenting.

7.2 Discussion on high level costs

CAO Warren MacLeod, Municipality of Shelburne, reviewed estimated amalgamation costs gathered by staff for the committee. The document is included with the minutes.

Town Clerk June Harding, Town of Lockeport advised the committee of a meeting with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Honorable John A. MacDonald regarding the Municipal Innovation Program Funding (MIP). Ms. Harding reviewed the information received regarding MIP. The document is included with the minutes.

CAO Sarah Mattatall, Town of Shelburne advised the committee of a recent conversation with Kevin Latimer, Transition Coordinator for the Windsor/West Hants municipal consolidation project. Mr. Latimer suggested hosting a workshop with all three Councils before going any further in the amalgamation process.

A discussion was held and the Committee agreed to make the recommendation for Ms. Mattatall to contact Mr. Latimer to schedule the workshop for January 2026.

Being duly moved and seconded, that the Amalgamation Steering Committee recommend to Councils to hire Kevin Latimer to meet with the full Councils to conduct a workshop to decide upon potential next steps. Motion carried.

8. Date/Time of Next Meeting

A discussion was held and the committee agreed future meetings will be held the first Wednesday of each month at 6:00pm at the Municipality of Shelburne administration building. Due to the holidays, the next meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 4th, 2026.

Being duly moved and seconded, that the Amalgamation Steering Committee meet the first Wednesday of the month at 6:00pm. Motion carried.

9. Adjournment

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:01pm.

Nicole Blades, Executive Assistant MDS
Recording Secretary

Mayor Derek Amalfa, Chair

Warden Penny Smith, Vice Chair

Date

Amalgamation Cost Estimates:

Facilitation & Engagement:

Estimate provided by Chrystal Fuller:

- **\$5,000** - Planning out Next Steps presentation by Chrystal Fuller, Brian Smith & Kevin Latimer
- **\$20,000** - Coming up with an engagement plan
- **\$40,000 - \$50,000** - Conducting the public engagement & generating a “What we Heard Report”
- Note Antigonish spent \$180,000 on public engagement with 26 events

Financial Report:

Estimate provided by Grant Thornton:

- **\$200,000 - \$250,000**

Human Resources Report:

Estimate provided by Davis Pier:

- **\$72,000 – \$85,000**

Boundary Review Report:

Estimate provided by C&D Community Design:

- **\$37,500**

Total Estimated Costs:

- **\$374,000 - \$447,000**
- **Note: Does not include cost of:**
 - Legal adviser to guide an application through the Nova Scotia Regulatory & Appeals Board process.
 - Individual Municipal reports to determine replacement schedule for major utility items (sewer, water, roads etc.)
 - Policing status report
 - Fire services report
 - Shared services report

Policing Contract Discussion:

- PPSA (70/30) vs MPSA (90/10) costing

- If the amalgamating units end up with a population over 15,000 then they would be forced to switch from a PPSA agreement to the more expensive MPSA agreement.
 - There is one exception to this forced conversion whereby the resulting entity remained either a “County of” or “District of”. In the situation of MODS, TOS & TOL the only way to avoid the forced conversion to an MPSA would be to have the two towns dissolve into the District. This would have to be verified by a lawyer.
 - Example: the Antigonish plan was to dissolve the town into the County and therefore maintain the PPSA contract.
 - Example: the Windsor West Hants example was different, the resulting entity was a brand new entity and therefore did not qualify for the exclusion and then were forced to surrender their PPSA contracts in favour of the more expensive MPSA contract.

Amalgamation Steering Committee Meeting – December 3, 2025

The Minister of Municipal Affairs, the Honourable John A. MacDonald identified the following program as our only source of funding for this initiative.

Municipal Innovation Program Funding (MIP)

I spoke to Ahmed Yaiesh from the Province of Nova Scotia regarding how MIP funding may relate to the proposed Amalgamation Process between our three Units.

I explained to him that the Municipality of the District of Shelburne, the Town of Shelburne and the Town of Lockeport are entering into discussions regarding the costs associated with a potential amalgamation of the three units. This would include, but is not limited to HR Reports, Boundary Reviews, Financial Reports, and other related studies.

I asked him if this process would be eligible for funding through the MIP Program, should the three Units decide to proceed with this plan. We are guesstimating that this process may cost in the range of \$500,000.00 or more.

Ahmed responded with the following information:

MIP has a budget of \$578K and can cover up to 75% of eligible costs. For a projected cost of \$500K, MIP could potentially

contribute up to \$375K, assuming all costs meet eligibility criteria. Here are some general guidelines:

- Needs at least 2 municipal units to be considered eligible.
- One municipal unit needs to be the lead applicant, who officially submits the application and with whom the Terms and Conditions (T&Cs) will be with.
- Each partner unit should have financial contribution toward the initiative (managed by the lead).
- MIP applicants are encouraged to submit additional information along with the application form.
- MIP projects should be focused on action, or plans of actions as opposed to feasibility studies.
- To close out MIP projects, individual Councils ideally accept the product produced from the funding.

The Funding will open for applications again in February 2026 and they are happy to discuss and review proposals in advance of official submission. The application window is typically open for 8 weeks.

He also clarified that though the program may cover up to 75% of eligible costs, funding at that percentage (if successful) is not guaranteed as it is subject to budget availability. This program has been competitive and oversubscribed in past years.

Cost Sharing

The assessments numbers for residential, commercial and resources are:

TOS \$128,873,500
TOL \$46,814,425
MODS \$563,589,700

Total: \$739,277,625

The respective percentages work out at:

TOS: 17.43%
TOL: 6.33%
MODS: 76.24%