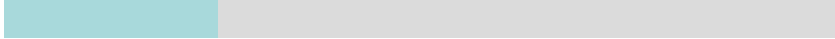
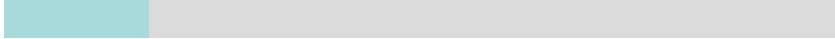
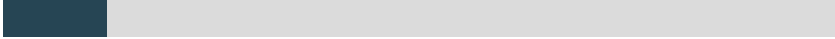
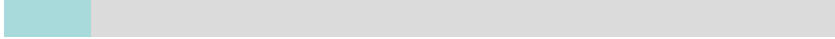
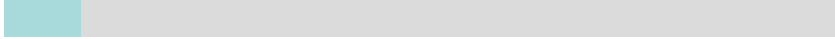
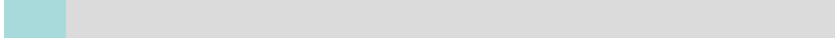


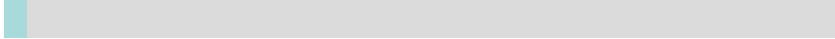
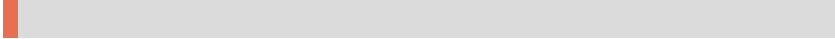

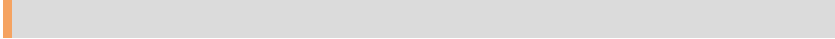
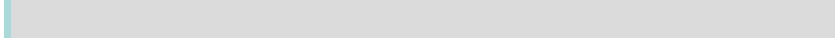



Transcript - 2026-04-01 Amalgamation Committee

Speaker Summary

CAO MacLeod		00:13:19 (25.7%)
Mayor Stan Jacklin		00:08:59 (17.4%)
Chair Derek Amalfa		00:06:24 (12.4%)
Speaker L		00:05:21 (10.4%)
Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen		00:04:46 (9.2%)
Sarah Mattatall, CAO		00:03:49 (7.4%)
Warden Penny Smith		00:02:53 (5.6%)
Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner		00:02:04 (4%)
Speaker K		00:01:22 (2.7%)
Speaker E		00:00:53 (1.7%)
Speaker M		00:00:51 (1.6%)
Speaker D		00:00:31 (1%)
Speaker J		00:00:24 (0.8%)
Speaker ?		00:00:02 (0.1%)

[00:00:00] Chair Derek Amalfa

All right, good evening, everybody. Welcome. Like to welcome everybody today is a Malgamation Steering Committee set for April 1st, 2026 here at 6 p.m. We'll call the meeting to order. Before we start, just as a reminder, this committee is here to explore amalgamation. It is not it is not our mandate, excuse me, to make decisions, but only to collect and provide information to our respective councils. We have been nominated from our individual units as representatives to collect information and provide updates. Any decision on amalgamation will be made by each individual unit and no decision will be made here. On behalf of the entire committee, I'd like to thank everybody for their patience, understanding, and empathy as we go through this process. Saying that, please call for an approval of the agenda. I believe we have just one small change we would like to move section 4.1 Flip it with 4.2. Are there any other additions or deletions to the agenda as circulated? And if not, may please have a motion to approve.

[00:01:05] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

I'll make that motion to approve the agenda as amended.

[00:01:07] Chair Derek Amalfa

Thank you. I'll second it. Great. Thank you. All those in favor?

[00:01:12] Warden Penny Smith

Aye.

[00:01:13] Chair Derek Amalfa

Aye. Opposed? I'll move on to the approval of the minutes. So have all members received and reviewed the minutes from our last meeting, March the 4th, 2026. And if so, may it please have a motion to approve.

[00:01:27] Speaker D

I move the, we approve the minutes from the March 4th, 2026, amalgamation, steering committee meeting. And I'll second.

[00:01:34] Chair Derek Amalfa

Thank you. No further discussion, all those in favor? Please say aye.

[00:01:39] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

Aye. Aye.

[00:01:40] Chair Derek Amalfa

Aye. Opposed? Motion carried. Okay. We'll now move on to item 4.1, discussion, infrastructure reports, and amalgamation, economic market.

[00:01:52] Speaker E

CAO Warren, would you please provide us a little bit more information on this? Thank you, Chairman.

[00:02:03] CAO MacLeod

I was thinking about the reports that the NSRAB would require for an application and just going through the list of reports. The one that sort of stood out to me is one of the most important reports was the financial report. When I was going through the high level quotes that we had got from our auditors on that, they had identified that there are actually two sets of other reports that need to feed into that. that you need first. One of those is an HR report, so we did get a quote high level quote on an HR report. The other one was that you would need infrastructure reports. So essentially what that means is so, for example, the municipality did an infrastructure report on our sewer system. We had already understood coming into that, so they put cameras into the system and they do complete evaluation. And what you get at the end is essentially a schedule over time of the replacement requirements for your infrastructure and the estimated cost of doing that. So we would need that from all three units for our sewer systems, and then also one for the town of Shelburne Water System. Once you've got those reports, they They would feed data into the financial analysis that whoever we put an RFP out to do the financial report would use that data for a final financial report. So just reading the information that you would get from that. So you're probably expect to see consolidated projections based on expected changes in staffing, assume a result of the HR study and new estimated tax rates and future boring and transition costs. You'd see select combined FCI's for all three units. You'd see combined data affordability model. So they'd assume that this would be prepared by the Department of Municipal Affairs. and you see projected capital spending and funding options. So that report I think would go a long way to providing information to you and your councils in terms of what you feel you would need to come to a decision. If you didn't feel that that was providing enough, we could go a step further, but I'll warn you it would be it would be a difficult process and we built an economic model for our municipality that we use. We built it about three years ago and we've been adding on to it each year a little bit. We probably spent about 130,000 so far on it. I could ask our auditors if it's possible to build an economic model for an amalgamation so three units and look at it as a combined unit. My guess is it'll probably take up a year to do, probably cost a couple hundred thousand. These appear guesses I haven't talked to the auditors at all. And I don't even know if it's possible that they can do it because it would be so complicated. It would involve a lot of time and effort by our respective directors of finance for importing data into that model. But the benefit of a model like that is you'd be able to project your long term future sustainability. So what I mean by that is one of the on our on our dashboard that we provide in our model for our council. They get to essentially look at key data and the most important data we look at is our reserves and what our reserves look like over time. and whether or not our reserves are declining or increasing, what the status is, and are we sustainable? And are we within the thresholds of our reserve policy? And if you're looking into the future and you're seeing that your reserves are stable, and you're not reaching a reserve policy, then it's showing you that you've got a sustainable unit. So if we did do a model whereby we had three units combined to one in a model, you as counselors would be able to see whether or not the single unit would be sustainable in the future with all the data that goes into it. The most important data would be that infrastructure data because I think that's the one that would be the most capital intensive over time. So those are just some of my comments with regard to to to that and it actually leads into the next question of You know, as US counselors, what are the requirements that you would like to see? So I've talked about those reports there, but is there anything else that you as counselors feel that you would want to see to make a decision? Because that would basically go into your planning in terms of, you know, assuming we get funding from the province, you know, you'd have to give staff instructions to say, okay, these, you know, we want these reports, but Councillors also feel they need additional, whatever it is you were asking. So that's everything I have to say for now. Great.

[00:07:27] Chair Derek Amalfa

Yeah, so 4.1 and 4.2 are kind of the same together. It's really, I think, what information are our respective councils looking for to direct this group moving forward? So on a more high level, why don't we start with that question and we can look for comment and see where that leads.

[00:07:51] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yeah, right, Jacqueline?

[00:07:52] Chair Derek Amalfa

Thank you.

[00:07:54] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Thank you, Warren. If Mrs. Matt is all will probably be able to help me with this. We have an ongoing, obviously, water system to, you know, fair amount of customers in the town of Sheldon, as well as a wastewater system, which we're looking at that all the time, knowing that as you said about the costs of having consultants come in and have a look at it and it would be quite costly obviously. But we have up to date data probably from month to month and or quarter to quarter on those costs which would be actual cost and not projected. And also the town of Lockwood has a water system and I'm quite sure that they have you don't have water to Okay, so that particular information, I thought it will all pour down by the way, but nonetheless that information would be forthcoming as well. With the water system that's going goes in the back harbor, that's got one. And so that's where it comes across. Yeah, I know I put it there. I did actually myself in another group of men. But anyway, those types of things could be costs that we could already look at and see what we can cut a few corners here. So that's a good analogy because they cost more, they never cost less. You do have that information, obviously. Mrs. Matatol.

[00:09:30] Sarah Mattatall, CAO

Yeah, so we are upgrading component of our wastewater system. So of course, we have some relevant and up to date data with respect to our sewer system. We had a study done on our water utility, I want to say 10 plus years ago. So that one isn't as up to date. And we do have some aging infrastructure, more sort of lines that we have to take a look at. But to Warren's point and to your point, to mayor. I think from what I understand the conversation being and from discussions we've had from a staff level that these reports and studies are discussed to go forward. If in fact, the province is willing to pay for it. So from what I understand and from how I view it is that the price really wouldn't be the major concern considering we're hoping the province is going to fund this where they did fund what wins the West Hansel 100%. So having up off-to-date current data would only be to our benefit. All of our benefits.

[00:10:35] Speaker E

Boarding, you're coming?

[00:10:36] Warden Penny Smith

Yeah. For me, I believe the financial component is absolutely imperative. Moving forward. And I do feel that we need to get a guarantee in writing from the province that they are going to pay for the total cost. For all of the studies and analysis that are going to be required for us to make an informed decision. And so I guess to that point, I know we did send out or the chair. did send out letters. There was a letter sent on February 5th to our MLA and there was a letter sent on March 5th to Minister McDonald of municipal affairs asking well with our MLA of course was to advocate on our behalf and to invite him to a meeting and to our minister or to the minister was to ask for the province to fully fund the cost of these studies and analysis. And so I guess my question is have we heard back from either?

[00:11:41] Chair Derek Amalfa

I haven't heard back from either. I don't believe any of the CAOs have heard anything either. So no, we have not heard a response from anybody yet.

[00:11:49] Warden Penny Smith

Okay. I think perhaps maybe suggest that we reach back out to both and request a response because I honestly don't feel that we can move forward until we have that guarantee and writing that these costs are going to be paid for by the province.

[00:12:10] Speaker ?

Great.

[00:12:11] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Deputy Mayor Hilleth? No, I totally agree with what Warden that Smith is saying. This is a cost that should not be borne on the taxpayers. I don't think we're rolling agreement with that. So maybe push back a little bit.

[00:12:25] Speaker J

Mayor Jacqueline?

[00:12:26] Mayor Stan Jacklin

I guess. Thank you, Penny. That's a great argument because the president has already been set. to the \$2.1.5 or \$1.4 million that Windsor-Hance could hand it to them. Well, I mean, it's public money, so it's really using your own money, but they were allowed to use their own money in order to go for the process of amalgamation. And if it's done there, it should be done here. It's, we all see. Obviously, as I always say, we pay a lot of tax money out of Shalvan, ATM of the problems, by the way. And I say that, you know, in a way that's a little bit funny, but it's a very serious, a very serious statement because we are, I mean, we get looked at less favorably from the very top. So thank you very much.

[00:13:19] Speaker E

Deputy Mayor or Deputy Warden.

[00:13:21] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

Sorry. Totally agree. And we need those reports to see the impact that it's going to have on each unit. It's got to be beneficial to all three parties that join in together. And without those, we're, we're guess working and our residents are guess working and they're, you know, some might think that it's going to be a huge impact on their tax rate. Eventually in a few years, maybe, but we need to know that and see that in writing. So we need that commitment from the province right now for those reports. Good or bad?

[00:13:50] Chair Derek Amalfa

Yeah, it's, it's too important a decision to guess on. So yeah, we're looking for, looking for facts. Councillor Cruz.

[00:13:56] Speaker D

Oh, it's just supporting what everyone has been saying. And of course, just kind of leading back to your first statement chair that we are in the exploratory process. So no, having all that data that we can have access to is better than to move forward with this. So yeah.

[00:14:16] Chair Derek Amalfa

Yeah, it sounds like we're all looking for the numbers, the business case for this, right? A lot of the questions that we've been hearing that we've all been hearing, I'm sure, is question specifically related to taxation and area rates and staffing, service delivery, which are all costs. So how do those all flush out and how can they be beneficial to everybody, all the units, that's where we're trying to achieve here.

[00:14:41] Warden Penny Smith

Yeah, just on that point, you know, when we're talking about this exploration, I mean, the reasons why we're doing this are, you know, can it improve services? Does it reduce costs and does it make our community more sustainable? Those to me are the three components of why we are exploring this in the first place. And again, we can't do any of that until we have the data.

[00:15:07] Chair Derek Amalfa

Yeah, and included like those infrastructure reports is that data to understand what it looks like now, but also in the future and what capital upgrades would be looking for as individual units and as a collective or as a collective. So yeah. The answers to the questions we're looking for at the end of the report. So I heard someone say recently, so yeah, I agree. This is really important and hopefully we get some clarity on that very soon.

[00:15:32] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

If I can just add to it's important for this committee, but like you said, it's important for the individuals, but it's also very important for the residents to understand a life expectancy of some of our infrastructure and that even if we were amalgamated and as one unit. Whether the benefits are advantages, but even if we didn't go through a malgommation and we were individual, this is something, as a community, you're going to have to look at, you're going to shoulder the whole responsibility on yourself. So, can you afford that as a community, moving forward with rising costs and all that? So, those reports are extremely important. But, yeah, we have to get approval and support from the provincial government first.

[00:16:17] Speaker J

Is there is there anything we can do in the interim in the interim?

[00:16:30] Mayor Stan Jacklin

I believe that you know as we speak and in the points that we brought up at this point at this time I should say that we're obviously we're aware. of all of the points that need be checked in order for us, and I'm not talking about the \$1.4 or \$5 million to do the amalgamation. But I think we should go through our file cabinet and see what we have for where we pay and how much we pay on it. quarterly or or yearly basis when it comes to infrastructure, because I know that Mr. Matatholous, we speak often about infrastructure and we have 11 lift stations just to point out one thing and we every year we do one lift station to upgrade it to the highest level and it's costly. already. So, and again, those costs will not go down plus the expansion of other infrastructure when, if and when we are automated to expand lines and those sorts of things, that's going to really, you know, obviously drive the cost of everything higher and higher because more equipment, more cost, and of course, more person power in order to maintain these systems. And so they last for a long time, but when they start to deteriorate, then they pretty much start to deteriorate all at once in all places and so on. So that's quite important that we know that. And of course, and you know, it's not tomorrow. If we got our \$1.5 million tomorrow, it wouldn't be as if we're amalgamated and everything's lovely. We have to obviously know that this is going to be down the road. And by the time we get down the road to an amalgamation, if said be that our infrastructure is going to be need more. And things that we cannot, and I mean we can't see them at this point in time. That's when mechanical things are in and when things hit fans, they usually hit them quite hard. So you have to really have a look at what we all have along the way and itemize these things. And I guess project from what we know. what it's going to cost. Not from somebody who's just going to go in and number pick because they're consultants. I don't really trust consultants too much because they usually don't do physical work and they don't understand stuff. It's just paper stuff. And you know, I may be wrong about that, but not far off. I can tell you that. You asked a guy who digs a hole, how much it cost and how much time it takes. It's a lot better than somebody sitting at a desk with a piece of paper. So that's the type of stuff we need to do with hardcore information that will really justify a more close and a more equitable factor when it comes to paying for these things. Because I don't like spending money person.

[00:19:29] Chair Derek Amalfa

Deputy Mary Hill and then Deputy Ward and Wagner.

[00:19:32] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Thank you. Actually, my question is from Mr. McLeod. Or maybe you could on these infrastructure reports, the town of Lawport and the town of Shelburn, are a little bit different than in this panel in the sense that we are also part of our infrastructure includes streets and roads that we are responsible for paying. Is that a report that has to be included in this package?

[00:19:56] CAO MacLeod

I would expect that that would be a report that would be expected because the The idea is you're trying to accumulate all of your anticipated infrastructure costs going forward. So for the towns, it would be your streets, your lights, your sidewalks, those types of things, any infrastructure, and also your buildings. So if you've got renovations, you have to do your buildings, whatever. Basically, any infrastructure costs you anticipate. You would need to compile those and put it to some form of schedule.

[00:20:27] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Okay, so it's everything under our roof. So that's what I'm trying to clarify, just not just sewer water, but everything.

[00:20:33] CAO MacLeod

Yeah, the sewer in the water is the big ones, but everything really that's infrastructure roads can be quite big for our communities as well, too.

[00:20:39] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Yeah, absolutely. Everything under the roof, including the roof. Including the roof. Yes, absolutely.

[00:20:46] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Warren, do you know, just ask the question. Yeah, go ahead. If the one we were to amalgamate, would that mean that the town of Sharpen no longer is responsible for the roads? Would be the highway or would I mean the province? No, you would still be the, the unit would still be that jurisdiction would look after its own streets as we are today. Yeah, exactly the same. Okay. Thank you, sir.

[00:21:11] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

Just one other comment that I wanted to make is these reports will show different data. And it could show that amalgamation is in what these three units need. It might be a shared services, joint services sort of thing that all the services each unit offers that we can share and a savings to each unit. So the data is crucial for before any of us can sit here and make a decision on behalf of our residents.

[00:21:40] Chair Derek Amalfa

Okay, any other discussion on this like I hear I'm hearing that our next step is to follow up on our letters to see if there's an update on that and continue to gather information about our individual infrastructures, at least from town walker's perspective, and I will start thinking about that and compiling lists even before we have something. a professional do it, but to Mayor Jacqueline's point, we can initiate that process. So we'll initiate that process through our budgeting review, which we're already doing, to identify those areas of priority, I guess, to so to speak. Let me go from there. Okay. On to the next item on the agenda, 4.3 discussion, and a Ganesh consolidation, public engagement presentation. I would like to

[00:22:32] Sarah Mattatall, CAO

So we've engaged with Crystal Fuller and in discussion with Crystal and Brian Smith. They had suggested a fee of about \$3,500 if in fact this committee wanted them to come down and have a presentation or discuss the aniganish consolidation process. So it's just another avenue for the committee to explore. Of course, it's optional. To keep in mind, we don't have a budget as of yet for the inauguration. Education component with respect to Kevin lot of me. I know we all went to our respective councils to ask for that money to go for a committee to be the same situation with respect to this.

[00:23:14] Speaker J

Ward Smith.

[00:23:16] Warden Penny Smith

I think we were also going to ask region of Queens. The previous meeting.

[00:23:27] Speaker K

Yes, Ward Smith. That was mine. I did contact Willa Thor, who is the CAO for the Muse Polly the Region of Queens. And she didn't have anything to say on the subject. She had no experience with it. So she gave me a few names. One of them was Chris McNeil. I think Chris used to be the CAO here at one time, didn't he? Yes, I was. And I've emailed him, but I've never gotten an email. I got an answer back yet asking him if he would consider sharing his experience with us. The other two contacts she gave me were a former mayor, two former mayors actually, but I didn't have any contact information for them except Facebook. And I went on and neither one of them will accept messages. So I couldn't leave a message for either of those. So this amalgamation took place or consolidation took place some years ago. So I don't know really how much health it would be because she said that there are no staff there now that were there when it happened.

[00:24:41] Warden Penny Smith

And I believe it was 1996 as well.

[00:24:45] Speaker K

I think, yes, 19 or a few years ago.

[00:24:49] Warden Penny Smith

But we thought because it was a neighboring municipality, I think that's the only difference from Chris.

[00:24:55] Speaker K

And he may consider sharing his experience, whatever that was. I think he went there long after that. After that.

[00:25:06] Warden Penny Smith

Thank you.

[00:25:08] Speaker E

Would anybody like to, any thoughts from around the table?

[00:25:14] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

I think it would be good. I know it's dated, but it was one of the successful consolidations. And one of the things, and I'm sure it's going to, it's one of the questions that's being raised in all of our units, especially with the rural and urban type areas, is the difference in tax rates. And they tackled that right from the beginning, and it sort of gave an explanation why queens does have a higher tax rate or maintained higher tax rate based on the services provided in a urban structure compared to those in the rural parts of Queens. I think Shelburn would be very similar for people living in rural parts that don't have sewer or sidewalks or streetlights or stuff like that. So it might be helpful in that aspect and see How they sort of navigate it through if there's anyone's around. I don't know if it's this individual Christmas, nearly or even if he can put some eyes or hands-on to some documents of their process might be useful for this committee. That's what I'm suggesting. You don't necessarily need a presentation, but it could share that with us.

[00:26:23] Speaker K

I will share with anyone.

[00:26:32] Chair Derek Amalfa

Sorry, on the fee that they've, what does that include? They just, they come down and talk to us about what they, what, what is that? Sorry, can you give a little bit more information? Yeah, thanks. Sorry, it's just been a minute.

[00:26:45] Sarah Mattatall, CAO

Yeah, no, it's okay. Um, so from my understanding, they would be discussing the process that they went through with the anti-ganish process. Um, the pros and the cons and I, And what they've gone through when I chuckle because obviously they didn't end in the result that they had anticipated in, but they'd be a wealth of information with respect to it going the other way. So we're learning from Kevin Latimer and potentially from Queens about the positive side of the automation process, but what about the other components to it? So that would be a decision on the committee if you want to spend the \$3,500 split between the three units on inviting them down for the day to have those discussions. and we could provide them with a handful of questions and advance if that was the case from the committee so that way they can be prepared to answer and to have those discussions.

[00:27:38] Chair Derek Amalfa

Sorry, just for reference, what is Crystal and Ms. Fuller and Mr. Smith's role within Anticanish?

[00:27:46] Sarah Mattatall, CAO

Can you answer?

[00:27:47] CAO MacLeod

Yeah, they were consultants that were hired by Anticanish to do a public engagement program. I believe they had something like 30 community meetings, something like that. And as CIO Matt at all pointed out, the interesting thing is that despite the amount of engagement they had, they still had the province pull out. My understanding is that there was quite a vocal minority group there. And it would be interesting to find out how influential that small group was in swaying the government. That, that wouldn't apply to a malgamation, because a malgamation is not a political process or you're going through the NSRAB. So there are lessons to be learned from how they weren't able to sway everybody and how you do it. My own personal feelings is that we do need to come up with a public engagement strategy right away. And the reason I say that is because I do follow social media quite closely with regard to this. There's been a lot of talk about amalgamation over the last few days here. A lot of people putting surveys out saying we want town halls and I've actually engaged with them saying actually you can come and ask questions here. I thought that there were going to be dozens and dozens of people here tonight. and we've only got one member of the public here tonight and four counselors. So something's wrong. We need a better strategy for public engagement because I am also noticing that there is already this information on social media that is distorting what your committee is talking about, which is frustrating to see that. So my recommendation is to go back to your councils and see if you can get a little bit of money to have this presentation, because I think there are probably gems of information in that presentation that we could probably learn from.

[00:30:07] Speaker J

And he'd have something to say.

[00:30:08] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Oh, Jacqueline. Well, those Warren, thank you very much for that information. And that being said, of course, those men and women who live their lives on Facebook and those sorts of things. I don't believe most of those people would come to a forum where they could be seen physically seen and or heard for what information they would have forthcoming. Nonetheless, we need, as you say, we need to have a public forum. Obviously advertise it to a good degree and get people who I would expect to have some pertinent questions to ask us. Some of that, of course, that we haven't spoken about or had a thought to speak about at this point in time. Yeah, we need to do that. And we'll have to obviously advertise the fact that if people don't come, right? And I don't be heard about this, but if you don't come and have an opinion, your opinion is not worth anything later on. because I play hard ball with people when it comes to getting information out of them. So you can't stand outside defense. and not be part of the game. You have to be here to be part of the game. And that is obviously allowing people to, you know, practice their rights to demonstrate, speak to, be heard, and have some sort of a response to what they speak to. But if you're going to be on the internet and just shooting things off at us, that's not going to work. And I would, you know, I would encourage everyone here not to jump into that game. because that's not one that is windable no matter what goes on. So we need to have a strategy, we need to build a strategy in order to invite the public to their future, if you will. So thank you.

[00:32:03] Warden Penny Smith

Gordon? I'm wondering where we're going to be sending out Another letter to the minister and to our MLA should we wait on this to find out whether or not we're going to receive the funding to move forward. Before we spend money that we don't have.

[00:32:27] Sarah Mattatall, CAO

I actually was going to make that same recommendation and to kind of tailor off Mary Jacqueline. This is a public form. I mean, you guys, the steering committee is that you guys have on your agenda. On number five, residential comments and questions and it's been there from beginning. This is the platform, just as a reminder to the committee that you have invited the public to speak. You encourage them to write into the website or the email address that we provided. We have website links. We promoted on social media. I mean, I don't know how much more in this current and beginning stage, you can engage the public. To your point, Warren, you said that you've been paying attention to the social media. Well, this was promote. This meeting's been promoted. They have the platform to come here and stand in this room or be online. and ask those questions. So it's not even necessarily that they have to be in the physically in their room to ask the questions. They can be on the team's environment. So I just want to provide that reminder to you is elected officials and at the steering committee meeting that you're very much in a public form and residents do have ample opportunity. you guys meet on a regular basis now and they have an opportunity through social media and through other means to get ahold of you. So with respect to the financial component, I think it's important to gather the information and the facts for you guys to make those informed decisions whether you go for or not by having that provincial financial support I think is paramount. So that would be my recommendation would be to go forward and reach out to the province again and see if they can financially support this process.

[00:34:05] Chair Derek Amalfa

One thing I'll say has been consistent right from day one when we sat together before this was even a formalized committee. We recognize the importance of the community engagement. But I think we want to be certain with what we are communicating with our community and at this point I don't know if we have the information that everybody's looking for. I think we are all looking for that information as well and. And we're happy to your point to be here and to answer questions, but our knowledge base is limited in what we know as it relates to anything in the future. Deputy Warden.

[00:34:40] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

I agree with everything that's being said, but I would like to see no money spent until we get a commitment from the province, because if each unit's paying out money and this isn't going any further, We don't want to waste that money, that our residents, that's, yeah, no. And we're all sitting around this table learning together, along with our residents, because there's questions that's coming in that we don't have the answers to, but our staff are going to define them. And we're learning as well. So I would like to see that commitment come from the province first. And then we engage crystal in the Mr. Smith. And I agree with Sarah. From day one, we've opened the floor for our residents to come here and ask questions. And we document them and put them on the website. So for false information to be out there, that's just wrong when they have every opportunity to come forth.

[00:35:39] Speaker E

Thank you. Anything else? Yep.

[00:35:45] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Just echo everyone's sentiments. I do agree. I think We're always going, everybody's entitled to their opinions and we've been very forthcoming with inviting people here. Unfortunately, some of the people who talk the loudest on social media are just validation seeking on social media. And if they really have a concern and not trying to just defend their position, come here and learn the facts. If you don't understand it. Let's have an adult discussion and we will answer your questions so that you can take that back and you can make your own decision whether you support this or you don't support this or what have you but at least you have that information and that not something you're just trying to create a division and a divide among residents in our communities when we're just trying to do the best thing for our communities because like I said, nobody here is pro or gains were just trying to get the information and present it to you and give you the facts what we could be looking at as communities moving ahead and what we have to do to be sustainable in order to survive as communities so

[00:36:51] Chair Derek Amalfa

And there was one comment on Wharton you made earlier that when we started this process, it was one as one and we wanted to continue that information came forth as one. So that the town of Lockport wasn't providing different information to the town of Shelburner, etc. So this is the reason why we're going about it in this way is to be slow and methodical and true with information that we're getting, so that we're passing along truths to people, and that we're operating from levels of truth, I guess. So, okay.

[00:37:26] Speaker E

Anything else on this today? Okay. Resident comments, questions, would you like to, anybody here like to say anything first? Karen. Come on up, we've got a microphone. Welcome, Karen Mattel.

[00:37:51] Speaker L

Thanks. Thank you. I've found this meeting very interesting, actually. And I think you guys are doing a great job. I think it's, I've never been to one before. So I saw the same thing on social media. Oh, nobody's allowed blah, blah, blah. And obviously that's not the case. I'm here and you're letting me have an opinion. But just a couple of things I think, and I don't know 100%, but I believe one of the issues that things went so with an antigen-ish was the timing of getting out in front of the residents. And I don't know how you figure out when that is. But when if it goes too far without giving them information, then the social media is going to really start to blow up. And I don't know that for sure, but I think that was definitely part of it in Antikinish. So I think it's important as the town, CAO has said, everybody else. Probably the information from them is important, but I also agree with the deputy mayor, are you with Liverpool or Queens? Because that one, I've always believed that that one, we're so, we're very, very similar in population in, you know, in everything to Queens County. So I think there could be a lot of very valuable information. And if you want, I can get you the person that you need to talk to there. If you want to do that. Well, it was 30 years, but it was good. And we had at the time, brought John Leif, who was the mayor at the, or I'm sorry, he was the MLA at the time. And he was the one that had come out in front at the time. The province was forcing them, elevations, they forced HRM and they forced the CBRM. And he said, Hey, guys, let's do this on our terms. Don't wait until we get forced to do it. And I'm not suggesting you're going to get forced because I think the province has stepped away from that. However, you don't ever want to get in a position where you do get forced either. You want to be able to always do it on your own terms, but just one question that I'm wondering about. I think that it is important, obviously, that you have an accumulation or a record of all the infrastructure in each of the units, for sure. Some of that I think you probably already have. So I'm wondering when I keep hearing we want the province to pay 1.5 million. How are you sure it's 1.5 million? I mean, what exactly are you asking them for to just say we want the same thing that that was done in what was the other one? Hands, hands or whatever. Maybe it isn't exactly the same. Maybe you have some information and you don't need. I'm just saying make sure what you're asking is what you need. Not just say well because you gave them 1.5 million we want that to because it may not cost that much. I don't know I mean it may it may I don't know but it seems to me not to dump work on staff but I know that or I believe in the town a lot of that infrastructure. uh, reporting you probably have a pretty good record of a lot of it, and maybe the town of Lockport, I'm not sure. But I do remember back and I don't know if this is any value because I'm almost as old as that, that previous malgamation, uh, but I've been through three discussions of malgamation, but we had an asset management. staff person who did and I think that I would still be relevant wouldn't it? The information that they had on I think it was sure that we did at the time. Maybe more I'm not sure but at least that so I'm just wondering before you say well we just want what they gave them yeah just I would say just make sure that's you're asking for what you need not just what you want.

[00:41:49] Speaker E

That is accurate right yeah yeah yeah yeah.

[00:41:52] Speaker L

And whatever it could be, it could have who knows, but just make sure that the questions that you're asking or the things you're asking them to fund are the things that really need to get the information. And then like I said, at what point you get out in front of the public with it, I don't know who knows what that point is, but there probably is a time where if you wait too long, You won't convince them. But having said that, even if you can't convince the public, I'm not sure why it went south in Antican-ish because if it was the right thing, it was still the right thing because sometimes the public, they're so dug in and we all do that. I mean, we do that, can do that as counselors too, but we're so committed to our opinion that we don't want to hear anything else. It's just, you know, get the best information you can get and make sure that the public knows that. And as long as you know, you're giving them the very best information. And a group of people start saying we don't want it, but you know it's the right thing or vice versa, then that's what you should do. That's just my two cents.

[00:43:02] Chair Derek Amalfa

Thank you. Thank you for your comments.

[00:43:04] Speaker L

Not that it's worth much. Well, it is.

[00:43:06] Chair Derek Amalfa

It is worth a lot. Thank you. Thank you. Gordon?

[00:43:10] Warden Penny Smith

Yeah, just to Ms. Matatol's comments, I think the way you, excuse me, had worded the letter was, that was an example that was included in the letter, the Windsor West Hance, that it was approximately 1.5 million, that they had received in funding, but I think your letter articulated that we really didn't know exactly what the amount was going to be. Yes.

[00:43:41] Chair Derek Amalfa

And it sounds like today a little bit, we spoke a little bit about the priorities and that financial report, the infrastructure report and HRB and the most important of all the things. So yeah, that's very helpful though, as we have those conversations to understand exactly what we're looking for and what is a priority.

[00:44:01] CAO MacLeod

Yeah, just to bring you up to speed a little bit, Karen, we did have a previous presentation by the Nova Scotia regulatory and appeals board and we engaged in correspondence with them. So they identified all of the reports that would be required for their process. We went and got high level quotations from various organizations for all the reports. That amount comes into All parks somewhere around about 550,000. So we do have pretty specific information. The Department of Municipal Affairs already knows that. So we've been in communication with Valerie, a part of BUNGE. On that, the uncertainty comes in the transition period. When you look at the consolidation report by Windsor West Hans, the coordinator, his report, they spent a round about little over 500,000 on what they called RFPs, which I think are reports similar to the ones we would require for the NSRAB. And then they had about a million dollars that looked to me like transition costs. So they had set up a transition committee, and they almost had a parallel administration team that were basically putting into practice the actual transition. And I think that that million dollars went into that. I'm not 100% sure. I've put out inquiries to the coordinator, have not got responses back on that. So that's the part that's uncertain. We do have a lot of certainty without going out to RFP yet on the initial reports we would need. Those reports, I think are the first phase you would go to and say to the government, we need money for these reports. We've got a rough idea what the cost is going to be. And that'll put the committee in a position where they think they'll have the information, hopefully, that they can make a decision to move forward or not to go to the NSA RAB. You then probably have to go to the province and say, OK, the transition cost is something we don't know about because really what it is, it's staff time to actually implement the transition. And that's the answer part. And the letter that we sent to the minister is worded in such a way that Can you pay all the costs? of the transition. And then we asked for an in-person meeting so we could talk about the idea that that would potentially be in phases, which is what happened in Windsor West Hance. So there has been quite a bit of work there, and I appreciate you asking the question because it gives me the opportunity to give you an answer so it's recorded so other people can hear it. But you're absolutely right in what you're saying. The key is now to get an answer from the minister for that sit down meeting. And then to get the answers on whether or not they're willing to pay for it. And that's a big question mark right now.

[00:47:03] Chair Derek Amalfa

Just so everybody online. Yeah, just so everybody online can hear you.

[00:47:07] Speaker L

I'm not used to this high end technology. Yes, I understand you absolutely no matter what people think you do need to have that information before you can decide if we want to be one unit. But I'm wondering but the transition I mean. I'm just wondering, because I'm like Mayor Jacqueline, I'm not a fan spending money either, unless you have to. But I mean, do all those things have to be redone because it's a different unit. There are no commonalities there, like with the transition, is there no information that you can get directly from the units, or do you have, I guess I'm wondering why do you have to have a consultant or pay people all that money for that next step. And I know that's been the way it's been in the past. I'm just saying it's been done a number of times. Does it still have to be like that?

[00:48:00] CAO MacLeod

No, it doesn't have to be like that. The LSR at B, I've stated that some of the data can't come from the organizations themselves. Like C.A. Obama told us saying that they've already got data on their sewer system and stuff like that. pulling data together from internal sources, the more you can do the better because it is going to cost you less at the end of the day. But things like boundary reports, HR reports, they have to be third party independent reports. So there are some bits of information we can do ourselves. Other pieces have to be third party.

[00:48:40] Speaker J

Thank you.

[00:48:43] Mayor Stan Jacklin

They're just there. Yeah, that being said, uh, Karen, yeah, uh, CAO matter of thought she runs a tight ship. So I know that, uh, the information that would be forthcoming from all the infrastructure we have is up to date. And that's a very good point that you, uh, have made, uh, so that the general population can hear this as it's not any different than, uh, the white tail deer situation. Uh, they're the same deer here as Aaron Troll. So We just take the name drawer off and put children on hand them their three year reports with a require and get it done. It's quite a bit of bureaucracy so that somebody gets paid down the line, if you will. And again, I'm not a fan of that sort of thing because it takes up time. and it takes up money that we should not have to spend in order to move forward. But that's nonetheless that's some sort of succession that's been happening for decades. And of course, other jurisdictions have their pertinent information required as they move forward with all the infrastructure that they have. And the cost that it does to say move not only sewage waste and water but also our shared service agreements with garbage trash, whatever you like to call that sort of thing and how that works. And of course, our fire departments and all of those things that we're already involved in, we have the numbers. And we just don't and in my personal opinion and I'm quite sure it's the rest of our committees opinion. We just don't want to take our numbers and hand them to somebody. They write them down on something and hand it back to us. You know, that's not going to that won't set well with me for sure. So I just want to make that that point that again, we have quite a bit of information and I'm quite sure the other jurisdictions did as well.

[00:50:37] Speaker J

Thank you.

[00:50:42] Speaker E

Okay, anybody else on this or any other questions from anybody in attendance? Is anybody else online who has any questions for the committee at this time?

[00:50:57] Chair Derek Amalfa

As we're waiting, we did receive one email late on Monday, and we have not had an opportunity to circulate it amongst the committee members. So we'll do that. We will circulate that email. It's very good, very comprehensive. So we want to give everybody the opportunity to look at it, analyze it, work with staff, but craft the response back. That will be shared in writing and shared with everybody as well once that has taken place. So just want to want to State that and thank thank the supplier for their patients in allowing us the opportunity to get back with the true information.

[00:51:33] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

The only correspondence we've had since our last meeting.

[00:51:35] Speaker J

The only correspondence that I've received yet.

[00:51:43] CAO MacLeod

Thank you Chairman. I did want to ask for some direction from the committee in terms of public feedback that we received. So myself Sarah and June, we meet with the chairperson every Monday at 10 a.m. to review correspondence that comes in there. There's really sort of two routes we can go on this one. We haven't published any of the emails that have come in and the answers that have gone out. I think there's only been two. Is that correct? There's two ways we can do this. One way is if a question comes in and it's already covered in the FAQs, then let the FAQ stand. If a question comes in and it isn't covered in the FAQs, we can update the FAQ with a new question and a new answer in there. The other way we can do it is we can actually have a section on the webpage where we actually show the email that comes in, actually show the email answer that goes out. So it's your choice. Maybe that's something you could quickly discuss right now. Gordon, you want to go first?

[00:52:48] Warden Penny Smith

I would prefer the latter. I think we should have all of the questions and all of the responses in one place. And we can always link that to our FAQ as well for further information. That would be my suggestion.

[00:53:04] Deputy Warden Heidi Wagner

And I agree with that, too. I think that we need to process and show that all those emails and questions have been received and answered, even if they are the same questions as above, at least that residence being seen that their email come through and it was answered.

[00:53:23] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Depe Mac. Yeah, I agree that with the latter point. I don't know, we wouldn't be identifying the people by name because I don't want to discourage anyone from sending emails whatsoever. So, yeah, yeah, anybody?

[00:53:41] Speaker D

Yeah, I just would agree to just for transparency's sake as well. What was I agree?

[00:53:50] CAO MacLeod

I do have one more question for the committee. One of the letters that we received was a resident who set up their own online survey. They had come up with a list of questions and then residents would go on and type a like next to a question if they liked it. And so that person's almost trying to act as an agent really for other unknown people. I don't know how you want to handle this situation. Maybe it's something for discussion right now.

[00:54:29] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Thank you for that, Lauren. My opinion is that we make it known on our platform that this particular person who started their own survey is important, but nonetheless pertinent when it comes to how we're approaching the information that we're gathering and know because that particular person is not in the know. or have not brought themselves forward to want to be in no other than hearsay type of information perhaps. So I'm not saying that we have to discredit this particular person, but we have to point the general public to our platform as the platform to go to and not the general public's platform, which would be hearsay in my opinion.

[00:55:17] Speaker J

Thank you. Anybody else like to make a comment?

[00:55:27] Chair Derek Amalfa

I'm of the belief that we should answer all the questions. So we should just answer all the questions regardless of where it came from and that we should, to Councillor Cruz's point, in a way of transparency, just answer the questions if the old school mentality of mine, if one person is thinking that, maybe multiple, three, four, five. So let's just get out of it and answer the questions to the best of our abilities, regardless of where it came from.

[00:55:51] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

I agree with that, except I think by correct me if I'm wrong and you're talking about the actual survey and that survey on that particular social media platform, you're right, that person's not, again, as an agent for any three of the municipalities.

[00:56:07] CAO MacLeod

Correct? No, it's not acting as an agent for us. He's essentially almost acting as an agent for the people that are participating on the survey of his but persons. Yeah.

[00:56:19] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

So that's not really asking a question of us as a steering committee or as as a individual municipal unit. They're asking a question for their own personal interests, but they're not representing. any one of us or this committee or the whole entire process. So whether it's a survey or whether there's another social media platform that's regularly asking questions and hard jurisdiction saying they want to get a gauge on it. Well, that's not, they're not getting gauge where we'll ever use those metrics because they're using them for whatever their own agenda is. Right. So I think we need to be cognizant of that. and hopefully the public will be cognizant of that. They do not represent the town or any municipality that's involved in these discussions. They act solely independent, and they are asking those questions for their own personal agendas.

[00:57:17] Warden Penny Smith

Yeah, I think everything should be going through our chair.

[00:57:23] Speaker J

That's the long short of it.

[00:57:25] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

That's how it's trying to get out.

[00:57:29] Chair Derek Amalfa

Councillor Rickian said welcome.

[00:57:31] Speaker M

No, thank you. In relation to the transition costs, it had been outlined. I'm just wondering if possibly our CAO could outline the actual, some of the costs that are associated with that because if my memory serves me right, that's when that happens. We'll say in you're moving forward, Somebody has to be hired, appointed, and actually you're running four different councils at that time. Something to similar to that?

[00:58:07] CAO MacLeod

It's an uncertainty right now because when you read the report for the coordinator for Windsor-Restans, they literally just have two line items for that million dollars. I think one was administration. I can't remember what the other one was. You couldn't tell what it was, but what I do know that happened there is that they had a transition committee. I guess it would be similar to a committee like this. And in their situation, their two CAOs retired, and they actually hired a new CAO who was actually working for the transition committee and the two units were still operating independently in parallel to that. So that new CAO was actually Preparing for the final merger, my guess is they had a lot of financial work to do, trying to merge financial systems together, that type of thing, trying to figure out the HR, all of that. So that period of time that they were trying to figure all that out, they had cost associated with that. And I think that that's what the transition costs are, but I'm not certain. I do know the individual that was involved in that, so I will be reaching out to him to find out more information.

[00:59:18] Speaker M

And I just wanted to point out, I think that was my understanding that you're actually running your individual units. In the meantime, you have to set up and run as one unit. So that would involve a great deal of cost and so on. So it wasn't just a simple move. That's all I wanted to point out.

[00:59:40] Chair Derek Amalfa

Yeah. Laying the foundation for that brand new one. And yeah, almost operating at running up. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. I'm just finishing my sentence now. Great.

[00:59:52] Speaker E

Any other comments from anybody in the room or online or anything else? Our next meeting, let's go to our calendars here.

[01:00:05] Chair Derek Amalfa

It was the first Wednesday of every month, so it would be May the 6th at 6 p.m.

[01:00:13] Speaker E

Here at the Municipality of Shelburne, 414 Woodland Drive. And if there's nothing further, ask for a motion to adjourn. Oh, what?

[01:00:22] CAO MacLeod

Sorry, wait, one more, one more. Sorry. Did you want me to reach out or did you want us to reach out to our MLA to find out if you'd be available for that meeting? We did ask him to come. I know he's in legislature right now. A little comic relief. Any moment. Um, but yeah, I think it would be good to have them come if you would like me to reach out. Yeah.

[01:00:54] Speaker E

Lots of nodding of the heads around the room.

[01:00:57] Chair Derek Amalfa

So yes, please. That would be, that would be wonderful.

[01:01:01] Speaker ?

Okay.

[01:01:05] Chair Derek Amalfa

Hearing nothing else. Um, I'll call for a motion to adjourn. Thank you very much.