

Transcript - Amalgamation Committee - Province responds

Speaker Summary

Chris MacNeill	01:06:39 (57.8%)
Mayor Stan Jacklin	00:08:12 (7.1%)
Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)	00:07:26 (6.5%)
Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen	00:07:21 (6.4%)
Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa	00:07:07 (6.2%)
CAO MacLeod	00:05:18 (4.6%)
Speaker F	00:05:03 (4.4%)
Speaker L	00:02:34 (2.2%)
Speaker N	00:01:33 (1.4%)
Speaker I	00:01:12 (1.1%)
Speaker B	00:00:51 (0.7%)
Speaker J	00:00:46 (0.7%)
Speaker C	00:00:35 (0.5%)
Warden Penny Smith	00:00:30 (0.4%)
Speaker ?	00:00:00 (0%)

[00:00:00] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Okay, welcome everybody. We'll call tonight's meeting of the Amalgamation Steering Committee to order at 6 o'clock on Wednesday, June the 3rd. Please ask everybody's silence their electronic devices at this time and I'll call for approval of the agenda. There is one addition to the original agenda circulated and it is new business item 5.1, response from Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding funding. So, hoping everybody's had an opportunity to see and review the agenda, and if so, call for a motion to approve with the addition of item 5.1.

[00:00:42] Speaker B

I move that we approve the agenda as presented with the amendment to, or with the addition of item 5.1 response for Minister of Municipal Affairs regarding funding.

[00:00:52] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Okay. Thank you, Councillor Cruz. Do we have a second, please?

[00:00:55] Speaker ?

Second.

[00:00:56] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Thank you. Warden Smith. All those in favor, please say aye. Aye. Opposed? Motion carried. We'll now move on to the approval of the minutes. Have all members received and reviewed the minutes as circulated. And if so, can I please have a motion to approve? Make a motion to approve the minutes from April 1st, 2026. Thank you, Deputy Mayor. Thank you, Deputy Warden. Any discussion? All those in favor, please say aye. I opposed motion is carried. Okay, before we get, so I should have mentioned this under the agenda, we have on the line Ross McDonald from the Department of Municipal Affairs. So we're going to move item 5.1 up to the top of our agenda for today to allow him the opportunity to leave after. So I wanted to respond to the letter everybody. I hope has had an opportunity to receive to read and review the letter that was received on June the 2nd. And yeah, so the reports. So this letter is in response to the reports that were requested by the Malgamation Steering Committee so that each community could better determine whether a Malgamation is in the best interest of their residents. From the committee's perspective this is about ensuring any future discussion or decision was based on clear community specific information rather than assumptions. The letter received today is a bit concerning and unexpected particularly because the original response received from the department indicated that representatives would be connecting with us to better understand the scope of work and the needs of the municipalities involved. So open up to the committee if anybody has any comments, questions. And again, we've got Mr. McDonald on the line here who can answer specifically on behalf of the province.

[00:03:13] Speaker C

Gordon Smith.

[00:03:18] Warden Penny Smith

I just wonder where this leaves us. Where do we go from here?

[00:03:21] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

I'm sorry, I'm sorry I wasn't didn't realize that was being directed at me. So where do you go from here? Well, I guess That's up to your committee and you as individual municipalities, where do you want to go? I think that the letter was clear and that it stated that you have basically the option in front of you is to follow the guidance of the legislation that's set up through the NSRAB. if and when you feel at a point to make an application to that as individual municipal units or as a group, you can make application to them to request the preliminary hearing and that's at that time that through their analysis they would decide what the scope of studies needs to be done or if the application has merit.

[00:04:39] Speaker F

May I follow up with the question? Or comment, I guess. I think the committee was very clear that we really can't move forward unless we know that the province is going to be there to support us, especially with the funding for the various reports that are going to be required in order for us to make an informed decision. So I think as the mayor had stated, it's very concerning that we received this letter after the fact when we were very much looking forward to meeting with the province and trying to find a way forward. And I believe the discussion was even a phased and approach if I can call it that. So I guess I'll be interested to hear what the others say, but I'm very disappointed in receiving this letter for this evening.

[00:05:29] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

I'm not sure what you mean by a phased in approach, but the legislation kind of outlines the way that the phases that take place and it really focuses on that preliminary order and the RAB's initial analysis and consultation.

[00:05:53] Speaker F

Yeah, I think well with the face and approach, it was more about how we could work together knowing that we were probably going to be looking at about a million dollars or even more for these studies. And so doing that in a kind of a based approach of what is the most important or what is the priority right now in order for us to take the next step from that.

[00:06:18] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

Yeah, well, I guess the next step, the priority is really making sure that the municipalities are committed to a process or committed to the two restructuring. So I think what the letter is communicating that it's that. The province isn't in a position to fund speculative studies. They need to know that the commitment is there, they need to know what direction the municipalities are willing to go in or are desiring to go in, and that they have the support from councils and their jurisdictions to move in the direction that they want to go in. And at that time, then, request it to the review board. We know from previous experiences the province has participated in supporting restructuring. It's a question of what direction do you do you want to move in? I mean, there's options that the review board really needs to look at your options as an independent body and make its initial assessments before the province would engage with any discussions, I guess, in terms of funding or what kind of supports would be needed.

[00:07:36] Warden Penny Smith

Thank you.

[00:07:39] Speaker C

You're welcome.

[00:07:41] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Yes. Deputy Mayor Helen. Yes. Thank you. Mr. Donald, one of the questions I guess in conjunction with what the warden was talking about was we were looking at cost saving measures because it is an expensive program. And part of this committee is, as you know, we're not making decisions here. We are taking them back to our council. So we're trying to see in throughout the process if we can reduce costs. And then also from what we've heard from previous presentations from communities that have gone through and had provincial support. If that support would be for us because that's a big question that's coming back to from all our councils and our committees like who's paying the bill on this because of the taxpayers or is it the problem's picking up or is it a combination of both. So that's sort of where we're at and I do totally understand what you're saying as far as basically you can't commit because of a speculative but just our existence in itself can sort of show that we're not speculative, we're actually working together towards a common goal and for our community. So, um, this is, you know, thank you for attending because there's a first time that we've actually had someone from the province really speak to us about this, but I think that's the kind of clarification we're looking for is how much support is out there from the Nova Scotia government for for this process for us in Eastern Sheltering County.

[00:09:06] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

I appreciate that, thank you. And yeah, and I guess, yeah, the question is back. So it's we're kind of having this little dance of finding out, you know, how much support is there? What is your to move forward? I think, you know, you can look back at other instances, the problem. And I like I said before, the the province has, you know, played a significant role in supporting the initiative as municipalities had to restructure, you know, whether through a dissolution, establishment of regional municipalities, amalgamations. Your committee is calling yourself an amalgamation committee, so it's kind of saying that you're kind of pre-supposed a direction to move in. We don't know if that's the most viable one. I don't know. It depends on what your councils decide and how you want to move forward as individual councils. It can't be sure that your municipal councils will be of one mind. There's probably a lot of discussions that will have to happen at the council table. And like I said, in the review that would take place with a preliminary application to the review board to the NSRAB for an assessment really. So I think what we're saying is that we need to follow the process that's in our regulations and within the legislation.

[00:10:49] CAO MacLeod

CAO MacLeod. Thank you very much, Chairman. Ross, I just want to go back to something that Warden Smith said earlier about the phased in approach. This goes back to a conversation that I had with Valerie Porter-Bonge, the Assistant Deputy Minister. After the last letter, we sent the minister. We had a conversation with Valerie in which we talked about this phased in approach. The phased in approach was to If we looked at the entire list of reports that the NSA RB were asking for, our preliminary estimate was that you're probably looking at a cost in excess of 550,000 or more, just the reports. And so when we talked about the value, we said, listen, from the committee's point of view, if we just did the financial analysis report that essentially looked at what a performance statement would look like with the three units together, along with some sort of tax strategy recommendations or options that had two reports feeding into a human resources and an infrastructure report that that would provide enough information that the committee members could probably go back to their councils with the recommendation as to whether or not to proceed or not. Those three reports would probably be a lot less in terms of cost than the full gamut of reports that the NSA or AB would use. Now that we've got the letter from the minister, he's essentially saying, no, we're not going to do that. You've got to go to the NSA or RAB. So the question I've got for you is if we go to the NSA or RAB, or even before we do, we send the letter to them and say, listen, we know that you want a bunch of reports. Could one of those reports be a financial analysis report with a tax strategy so that residents and counselors have got an idea as to what the future might look like? And if they came back and said yes, we would then go to you and say would you fund these reports? And it's a yes or no answer. And if you then said yes, we would fund those reports. The committee then could make a decision or a recommendation to the counselors as to whether or not they want to put an application in. So, do you understand where I'm going with this?

[00:13:06] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

Yeah, I don't know if that would work with the established process because, you know, my understanding of the application process that you do have to do that preliminary application. which signals that there is a willingness and a commitment from municipal units to move in that direction. So again, it still sounds like it might be speculative. I don't know if they would, I don't know if they'd be in a position to order those studies without having the applications in hand, right?

[00:13:44] CAO MacLeod

You can have the application in. If we put the application, and would you find all the studies?

[00:13:52] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

I can't speak for the, I can't speak for the, I can't make a commitment, obviously, and I can't speak for it. It would depend on what the, what the board, what their preliminary, they'd have to do their, their preliminary assessment to see if the application has merit.

[00:14:09] CAO MacLeod

Thank you Ross.

[00:14:10] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

And it would be, you know, and it would be looked at on a, and I guess what we can say, you know, no, There's been a lot of similarities in some of the, you know, restructuring that have taken place, but each one has also been unique in itself, but have generally that you can see certain patterns that have been followed and. So I think with this one, the. There might be some variations in terms of how the board would approach this, but it would really begin with the preliminary assessment if the application has married. In terms of phasing in, there's different ways that you can go about making the application. You can do it as individual municipal units. You could phase it in town by town or as a collective. But there's some really important, I guess, discussions and commitments that have to come from councils in order to move any, I guess, any further discussions with the province about funding.

[00:15:20] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

C-A-O, not at all from the town of Shelber.

[00:15:25] Speaker I

Just a quick question. So if our three units apply to the NSA RB together and we are approved, Do are we forced to continue that process or if we aren't approved of funding after we are approved the application? Are we able to withdraw because we may or may not have the funds available to provide the supports?

[00:15:46] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

I mean, I would assume, but I'm not exactly sure what they're... I think, you know, they hold a preliminary hearing. So before anything moves forward, that preliminary hearing has to happen. So people have an opportunity to weigh in then. The public has an opportunity to speak to the application. Your councils have an opportunity to speak to the application. any interest in what happens or how this evolves, how the chance to speak. So I would assume that, yeah, you know, if you decide that this isn't going to work out that you have an opportunity to withdraw. I'm going to guess that it's a guess. I would have to clarify that with the review board.

[00:16:35] CAO MacLeod

Thank you Chairperson. If the memory showed me right when the NSRB were given their presentation, we asked them that question. And I think that was the answer that you do have the ability to withdraw.

[00:16:52] Speaker C

Any other comments, questions, concerns or compliments at this time?

[00:17:02] Speaker J

Thank you for joining us.

[00:17:03] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

It's an absolutely chicken on the egg.

[00:17:05] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

It really is. I mean, it's a bit of a soul searching and it's a bit of chicken and egg, which comes first. And I appreciate, you know, I appreciate the. I appreciate the, you know, I guess the situation that you're in and trying to think through this and trying to make decisions on how to move forward. And we're happy to have, like if you have other questions that come up, reach out and we'll do what we can to try to help you support and navigate this up to a point of, but not at a point where we're able to make any commitment on funding at this point. So if you do think of more questions, feel free to reach out to me, okay? And I think you have another presentation happening later on as well that might help you and assess how things might unfold or move forward for you.

[00:17:59] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Wonderful. Thank you for your time.

[00:18:01] Ross MacDonald (Municipal Affairs)

Any time at all.

[00:18:02] Speaker C

Take care folks. Appreciate it. Bye bye.

[00:18:07] Speaker J

Anybody else like to make any comment before we move on to our presentation for this evening?

[00:18:17] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Mayor Jacque, now we'll go.

[00:18:22] Mayor Stan Jacklin

By reading the document, the 5.1 document at the bottom, the application proposed boundaries as well. We already know where the city, the town's job is. Can I be the other one? Go back to the page please. Okay, at the bottom where the bullets are estimated population total assess value of taxable property. audit financial statements for most recent fiscal years, I'm sure that's each jurisdiction. And a rationale for the proposal, that's a silly question. And additional relevant supporting information which, to me that's, that is where we would get tripped up because it could be anywhere for how many rocks are on the beach to which way is east and which way is less for that matter. But all of this information is already readily available, and you know, you could have that in like two minutes, but to what degree does NSRAB want that? And I know how much detail are they asking for enough in my opinion, right? I don't trust bureaucracy period only due to the fact that it just drags on and drags on and it costs money. And if it will cost us money, And as well, other jurisdictions have already done this. I don't know if they've jumped to these hoops as well. And besides, it's not only our tax money, it's the citizens are living in this end of the, in the side of the, of the, of the county of Shalvan. It's their tax money. So it's not as if the money belongs to someone else. just want to make that clear that, you know, I don't like to stand by and have people tell me that you're going to vote this the wrong way or you've got to jump to all these hoops in order to get it. Yeah. And again, you know, the second last bullet rationale for the proposal is pretty evident, I'd say. We want to look at whether a malgumation is a good idea for the citizens of this end of the county or not. That's pretty much the rationale. anybody, I don't know, going just briefly, that's that's fine, but that's basically what it is.

[00:20:41] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah. And that's been the position of the committee to work towards that and to get the facts and information so that we can help justify exactly our residents. We want to get to a point consistent question being asked of our residents.

[00:20:55] Mayor Stan Jacklin

So yeah, we want the money to get to a point where we say, yes, it's good or no, it's not good. Right. We don't want to have to fight for the money to get there so we can answer the question.

[00:21:04] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah.

[00:21:04] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Right. And, and again, as I say, I mean, you know, to me, stall tactics, I see right through stall tactics for the most part. And I think that this is a stall tactic and what the problems in Nova Scotia is already, you know, they've already set up precedent by paying other jurisdictions to do the same thing. But of course, no one has said what's in the fine print. Thank you very much. Deputy Warden.

[00:21:30] Speaker L

I think that I'm in agreement a little bit with Mayor Taney. But we need that data to make that reasonable assessment. And it's, it's got to show that it's going to benefit each unit in every resident in those units. So I'm very disappointed that we received this letter.

[00:21:51] Mayor Stan Jacklin

That costs us half million dollars to find out whether or not we want to have million dollars.

[00:21:55] Speaker L

Yeah. And we've been told on the odd occasion that we were going to get some funding from somewhere and then all of a sudden we get this and that says basically we're on our own, find it and then come back. But even with the come back, we're not guaranteed nothing.

[00:22:09] Mayor Stan Jacklin

So can I ask a question that maybe we want to answer this? There is a part of money that's some \$550,000, I believe it is one that is available to the whole province.

[00:22:24] CAO MacLeod

No, was that Well, I think you're, you're thinking way back to the, um, to the fund that they had, uh, what's the name of the fund again?

[00:22:32] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

In the small innovation fund. Yeah.

[00:22:34] CAO MacLeod

Okay. So them up fund and they, they got rid of them up funding. So there is no funding available for us. Okay. Yeah. The met funding. Yeah. Okay. So that would have been monies that we could have tapped into it previously previously, but we probably would have only qualified for a hundred thousand or something like that because you're competing with 48 other municipalities.

[00:22:53] Mayor Stan Jacklin

It's basically baked. that you're not going to catch the fish back with \$100,000 for the bait. No, you need it all of it. So just be, you know, okay, thank you.

[00:23:01] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Thank you. Thank you.

[00:23:03] Mayor Stan Jacklin

What is that? I'll say it like this.

[00:23:06] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

I'm sorry. Okay. Deputy Mayor Hillett. Just to add, I do understand where Mr. McDonald's coming from regarding the speculative thing, but we are making steps as I said, and I don't want to rehash that. But talking about the elephant in the room, If any of our communities or our municipalities were in a situation where the councils had to opt for dissolution or dissolving, the province would have a responsibility to step in. So all those reports that they're asking for us now to pay up front, they would be have to pick up the cause of the community themselves, couldn't afford them. So I'm sort of looking forward to our next presentation because I would hope that that would be some of the information that we can glean from that. But that's where I'm kind of thinking, if we had some at least a verbal confirmation from someone in the provincial government say yeah we would support you as other places have received in the past not a firm commitment but yeah we're supportive of this process but I do understand what's coming from as far as process yeah yeah and that's the chicken chicken and egg who who goes first so yep yep work okay thank you chairman

[00:24:17] CAO MacLeod

One of the options that the committee consider is that we communicate with NSRB. We explain the cash 22 situation that we're in, and we say to them, can you please give us a list of the reports that you want? And we identify in there that we would like to see in that list a financial analysis report that has also tax strategy options going forward. with infrastructure and human resources feeding into that and they'll have a whole list of other reports like the boundary report, that type of thing. If they agree to that, we could then go back to the province and say to them, these are the list of reports NSR or B are going to request of us if we put an application in. If you are willing to fund those, we will put the application in. And knowing that at any time we can withdraw from that, You would get the report that you need that would tell you what a potential tax strategy going forward would be and all the rest of it. And if it doesn't look good, you withdraw. And if it looks good, then you make a decision as to whether you want to go forward. So staff, we can have those conversations with those people and see if that's a potential path forward for you. So it's something for you to think about.

[00:25:33] Speaker C

Yeah.

[00:25:39] Speaker L

So would they even consider the application if there's no documents with it?

[00:25:44] CAO MacLeod

Hello again.

[00:25:45] Speaker L

So would they even consider the application if it only has the basic documents, not the more in-depth ones that.

[00:25:51] CAO MacLeod

I doubt it. With the conversation we had with NSRB and the presentation they gave, they actually gave us a list of in-depth reports that they would be asking for. That letter, I think, is misleading. That list does not match up with what NSRB gave us.

[00:26:14] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah, that could fall under the any additional relevant supporting information, which is could be, yeah, the big unknown, big unknown. So.

[00:26:24] Speaker J

Just a loving person.

[00:26:30] Speaker C

Okay.

[00:26:33] Speaker J

Okay. So.

[00:26:35] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

that we'll move on. So thank you to Chris McNeill, CAO from the town of Kempville here who's going to give us a presentation on his expertise with governance restructuring specifically around dissolution at both the local and provincial level. So welcome, Chris.

[00:26:53] Speaker C

Thank you for joining us. I just like microphones.

[00:27:07] Chris MacNeill

don't use an interesting conversation. I would provide some advice but I'm on a microphone so I do not.

[00:27:16] Speaker C

I will keep my comments to myself so I don't get in trouble.

[00:27:21] Chris MacNeill

So thank you for inviting me. It's a pleasure to be here and whoever was involved with designing this building must have been amazing people with a beautiful building. So congratulations to the warden and staff for a great building. So I have had the pleasure of being involved both municipally and provincially with the number of amalgamations, dissolutions, and other things in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, I probably have the namesake as the person who's been involved with more of them than anybody else in the province at the present time. Not a something you hand your hat on, you're proud of, but it's one of those things that people used to see me come in and say, oh, or be next, they got worried. So with that, my experience is lived experience. It's not the theoretical textbook stuff. It's not the stuff that consultants are going to tell you or lawyers are going to tell you, or engineers or the province are going to tell you. This is what happens on the ground. This is the people that I've interacted with face-to-face in the public in each of these communities for year and a half at a time and what their feelings were about the process, whether they were appreciative, whether they were worried, the types of information they wanted, how they want to be communicated with and what their hopes and dreams were for their community and what they want to look like and so on and so forth. So, previously, I sent out a document which I soon was with the agenda. Just my quick, I think it was 12 things for each of those amalgamations or dissolutions, things that I thought were appropriate after my own self-reflection, but also talking to different elected officials and staff and those municipalities during the process but also as of today or as of this week as to what their thoughts were about how things proceeded or didn't proceed. So I gave you those. I'm not going to go through those. If anybody has any questions, I do put it at the end there if people have anything specific. You could have noted on that and so I can answer any questions you have. But what I brought with me tonight is another document which is essentially somewhat of a summary, but also the key parts. And you guys sent June and Nicole sent me a bunch of questions that you would have had. So I've tried to weave that into these comments as well as well as into the comments from the different structures that went forward. So I'll go through those with you tonight. If anybody has any questions about the other, the four that I sent previously, I can certainly do my best to answer those questions. But I'll go through where the pain and agony was, but also the great successes that took place. with these four, but also not just these four, but the other ones that I wasn't necessarily directly involved with, but I did reach out to them and have a chat with different people about what's going on. So it's, and this is a, with, I guess, tough love. There's no, I'm not here to try to sell you one way or the other. I'm not here to try to give you a nice story. I'm telling you the hard facts of how people felt and what actually took place on the ground in these places. So the first one is about don't promise people jobs. And I think in one of those discussions, I talked about one of the wardens promised people jobs. And at the end of it, they end up with five or six accountants who were tripping over each other. Didn't have work for them. So the CAOs or the other counselors had to try to find jobs for these people, work for these people. And by experience, it's been that people don't have a lot of work to do. They find other things to keep themselves occupied. That's not always positive. So most of my experience has been, no, there are job losses. In most cases it's been through attrition of retirements. Sometimes it's been through giving someone six months severance or whatever to get them to that retirement date. Other times people know that the amalgamation of disillusion is coming up in a year's time and they plan for their retirement right away and they transition out. Some have been contract employees who their contract just wasn't renewed. But in some instances there have been some job losses. I can say And I think in all of them within a year or two, there were job hiring. New people had to be hired because people left. People retired after they saw it was for them or wasn't for them. And so in all these cases, there was lots of job opportunities and lots of transitions for people as well. But one of the lessons from most of these and one in particular, I said they promised them jobs, which is unfortunate because then people They don't have to necessarily work hard anymore. They don't have to worry about their jobs. They don't have to be functioning on what's appropriate and how they can contribute to a new government. They know they're going to get a job and they're going to get placed somewhere. So that was the unfortunate part. So that's one of the lessons that was learned is do the best you can to protect the jobs and do the best you can. As I mentioned in mind, in the Queens one, that one, everybody, the CAO job was open to the public. But all the other staff was done internally first. ever since, then, all the other amalgamations, disillusion, the internal staff, including CAOs were always the ones that had the first opportunity for the jobs, and have their vacancies they went to the other side. So that's an insurance tier current staff that they would look after first if there's opportunities for them, and then you go external after that. So that's the first one that's on the list here. The second one's both establishing the new identity immediately, and that came from all the municipalities that I've talked to is They all tried to say it wasn't a priority. It wasn't important. They had more important stuff, financial infrastructure, other stuff, staffing they were dealing with. But what they community wanted wasn't those things. Those were internal. This is

what the community is asking for. We need to see a new identity. We need to see what this looks like. We know what it is today and you're asking us to change. So we want to know what this change looks like. We want to know what this new, what's our new name going to be? Don't wait until day one when you're having new and then you tell us what the name's going to be, because they don't like it, then they're not going to like the product. So you want to get them to buy in early as they understand what that product is going to be, what they're buying into, what the new government is going to be. And sometimes you're not going to just go out and change all the trucklet, decals, all the business cars, all this up immediately. But people know when they're going to do it, here's what the new logo is going to be, here's if there's a new coat of arms, a new model, whatever it's going to be, people understand that's what it's going to be. And as you're changing, there's no surprise. It's like, why are they doing that now? Or why didn't do it all at once? You're not going to be able to afford to do all at once. I keep thinking the province like TIR, public works, motor vehicle, not motor vehicles, but Department of Transportation and all those things. They still have trucks from 20 years ago. They still have the old names on them. They didn't change over the names. But as they changed them, they're slowly changing them over. So from the community's perspective, They want to know what that's going to look like, what doesn't, and he's going to look like upfront. And it doesn't mean you're going to do it during immediately, but during this process, if you go through a malgamation dissolution, whatever it is, over 12, 15-month period, it needs to be in the first six months, you need to have that consultation with the public, have discussion with both of this looks like, and get them to understand here's what it's going to be, and we're going to transition into it, to do that. And so some of them, I use an example there right now, Hansport, Windsor, and West Hansa Malgo made a few years ago. And I know they're still struggling with the sign because in order to keep Windsor residents at peace, it puts signs up, say, township of Windsor. Well, there's no such thing as a township of Windsor. The town dissolved. But they put the signs up and now they're saying, how do we get rid of them? The people are going to be angry. Five, seven, ten years later, I forget what the date was for that one. But they recognize now we should never have done that. We should just put Windsor signs up. just when you go to Liverpool, it's Liverpool signs. You go to the bridge town, there's Bridge Town signs, they cover that township name for the town names or whatever. So that's what the community is asking for. Okay. The big one we hear all the time from the public, and even from elected officials, but the lots of community identity. And we saw that in Bridge Town, I wasn't involved with the Council of Resign, but it was involved with the rebuilding of Bridge Town. And the public always said, well, the town's imploded. We've, everything's fallen apart. But in reality, the public quickly realized the town was still there, the Townsville volunteers to let all the infrastructure facilities, Town Hall made the mistakes. Town Hall was the one that imploded. Not the community. The community was still there. And they quickly realized the town of Briggs town at the time wasn't about one building or Town Hall was with people. And so if you go to bridge town now, there's been some gains as losses. But you'll see there's lots of positive improvements taking place there. They've got a. Now it's be \$5 million track, but it was two or three billion dollars at the time and the next is one of the Valley. To do that. And so that's the same. We've seen other communities as well, and that was the argument when I worked in Liverpool went through the. Deamalgamation there was well Liverpool's going to lose his identity. Liverpool's still Liverpool. A lot of the communities are still there because it's not about a sign. It's not about a building or a couple buildings. It's about the community. And so there's still lots of groups that volunteer. There's still the people are still pride. There's still a couple of festivals and events. It's still going to be there. Like a couple of years ago as a candidate in Lockport. Like Lockport's still going to be the candidate capital of Nova Scotia. Like nobody does candidate like Lockport. That's not going to change. The fact that it might not be the tail lockboard anymore, it's still going to be lockboard, it's still going to be the same. So that's a big thing for the community. We heard that from the community. They want some assurance, they want to understand what this is going to look like, what are they going to gain and what are they going to lose? And I'll talk a little bit about that here in a minute, about being honest with people about that, because that's what they want. They want to know the truth up front. And I know you're talking about studies earlier. and the public want to see some of that, but the elected officials, you want to understand the financial impacts, the impact and all that stuff. The public is always interested in tax rates, but they're not so obsessed with the financial stuff, other than their tax rates. They're more interested in the community and the loss of community, the community and the identity and stuff, so that's that one. The number four is about deciding to change or have it done to you. We know when I went through the amalgamation in Liverpool, you'll see in my notes that I sent to you previously. It was leadership, but it was also fear. So at the time that was when Halifax was being enforced, Cape Breton was being forced. And the discussion was at the time the report was the six municipalities in Pico County were going to be forced. The Social was going to be forced. The Valley was going to be forced. The New Minus, Cannell, Kings County, and so on and so forth. So at that time it was, you know, it was

leadership in the sense that they saw the writing on the wall, but it was also a fear why they do it, because they were scared they were going to get lumped in the Bloomberg County, the big monster next door. And so they took the action to do it, and they knew that they had 19 counselors, I think at the time, 19 counselors. And they knew they were going to lose some of the counselors, were going to lose their technical jobs as a council member, but they still made the top decision to do it, and it was the right decision now. But they recognized they had the opportunity to do it themselves or somebody's going to do it to them. And I do see in my experience now that the ones that have dissolved have dissolved because they're broke. If you look at Spring Hill, it's a sad case, but they were in a case where they had payroll coming up in a week or two. And they were told they weren't going to be able to make the payroll and they were already maxed under the line of credit at the bank. The counselors didn't know that. I told them that. That's a shame but staff are scared to tell. If you look at bridge town was the same way they got into some financial problems with some mismanagement. And they were essentially had no money left. Same thing so they were forced into it because they dissolved or that's the dissolution part of it. The ones that do it up front before they have those financial woes is a maldomation that's more fair and more equal. And when you're in a situation where you can amalgamate, that's the best model. Because then you're going into it in a position of strength. If you're going into it with disillusion, you're being absorbed into somebody else. You are going to lose things. But if you go into it with amalgamation, then you have, in this case, three municipalities, you've got a chance to be an equal partner for the most part, to help write what that looks like, what the new community is going to look like, and how it's going to function. But if you're broke, you don't have any choice. So I know I have some discussions now with some other municipalities who are in financial, they have some financial issues. And some of them don't want to make the decision. That was a case in Paris, bro. The example is they were in Paris, bro. They were slowly going down the road of financial woes. They were in hard shape, but they were okay. But they had to make some top decisions. They didn't want to make the top decisions, so they just decided to dissolve. If they had made the top decisions, then there would have been a much better position. They could have amalgamated, and it would have been a better position for the community. And there in my notes, you'll see they're still upset there because they still think they've lost something because they didn't go into it with a position of strength. They would into it week, which is unfortunate there. And so the other issue is I show the example here on the bottom here, both funding formulas. And when you go into it with a position of strength, which, depending on your financial situation, now you may or may not be, when you go to the province with that unfortunate discussion you have with Mr. McDonald there, you are able to negotiate and say, if you want us to do this, you want us to be a leader, you want us to ship it. Because leadership then allows the province to say, here's the models for other places, the province that may not be taking a leadership that you're taking now and having these meetings. You want them to get the buy-in. to do that. And in situations of strength, you have that power to be able to negotiate with the province. And so, I better not say anything else. But I use an example here. And when you do that, when you, and the other recommendation here is when you do it in an amalgamation, you can do it as a regional government, which is what they did in West Hans. And your funding formula that you get through equalization and everything else is much more beneficial to you. If you go through it as a dissolution, then you stay as a rural municipality and you're going to lose money. And you'll see here the example I gave in Cumberland, they went through two dissolutions with Spring Hill and Parsbrole. There's still a rural municipality after this whole funding review took place and the amount and the equalization formula. They lost \$700,000. Nothing changed. They still had essentially two urban areas, plus the rural area. Still the same road, same street, same infrastructure, but because the funding formula way it is, it's against rural municipalities in that sense. They lost the money. And surprisingly, West Hans got about almost exactly \$700,000 becoming a regional municipality. So it didn't change anything. Hansport was still Hansport. Windsor was still Windsor. West Hans was still West Hans, same infrastructure, same road, same staffing and everything, but they gained the \$700,000 by the name. because they're called racial municipality. And the funding formula and equalization is very different for regionals than it is for worlds or towns. Okay, so you go into a different sector, a different pot of money. Okay, so it's the unfairness. So there is unfairness here, and that's one of the unfairness, but you know what upfront? I'm telling you upfront. If you do this, you don't want to be dissolutions. If you can, you want to be a regional municipality. That's an amalgamation. You'll go into it much stronger, you'll get a lot more money. For the province and so on and so forth based on the funding forms that exist today. Otherwise they penalize it.

[00:43:35] Mayor Stan Jacklin

What sort of a percentage and more money. Would you suggest. You said more money is, you know, would. would be an amalgamated, get you 10% more money or 20% more money than all three, or whatever amount of jurisdictions. I would want to guess because I don't know your financials right now.

[00:43:57] Chris MacNeill

I don't know what each of you are getting for equalization. But as you say, it will be normally more money. I can almost assure you it's going to be more under regional business. The formula is different. Yes. Under rural, you'll get less, which is what happens here. OK. OK. I got it. So, but I can't comment on the number because I don't know what you're receiving now and what the formulas would look like. Yes. But when it gets to other things as well, the benefits do accrue to the regional governments. They do get more access because you are a regional when it comes to grant funding and so on and so forth. You're already amalgamated. You're doing it shared to access more money. Because right now, if you apply for funding, they'll often say if you apply by yourself, you go to the bottom of the pot versus if there's two or three municipalities cooperating, you go higher up the pot, because they give you higher ranking as it's a regional project or cooperative project versus a solo project. So that would not be connected to population amount. The province probably has some the way they, yeah, they probably. If they used to allocate, when I work for them, they used to allocate a certain amount per county or a certain amount per region. Because the population and then based on pocket and 80 demographic if it's for kids or as opposed to adults or whatever would be based on that. No, we based on typically based on population uniform assessment use of the way it works. Okay. Yeah. Thank you. So that's for that number four.

[00:45:27] Speaker F

Yeah. Yeah, I was going to say we've had a number of conversations around this table and presentations. And this is the very first time that I recall being told this information about regional municipalities. So thank you for that. That's absolutely something, you know, that should be a consideration moving forward. It's like when Kevin Latimer had mentioned I believe it was about the policing and the 1910 or the 7030. I mean, those are all things that are important for us as a steering committee to be aware of when we're looking to make the right decisions for our residents. So I appreciate that.

[00:46:08] Chris MacNeill

Sure. Yeah. And that's from lived experience like cummerland now says. We made a mistake. If we hadn't known that, we would have been a regional. We would have been a regional. There's a lot of money, especially if you're sprinkling for a cummerland. It's not that big of a lot of money, but for spring home fires, bro, that's substantial amount of money. A lot of asphalt that doesn't get paved every year.

[00:46:29] CAO MacLeod

Question for you, Chris. Do you become a regional municipality if you encompass the entire county? But if we if the three amalgamated, we're not the entire county would we not qualify for original municipality?

[00:46:41] Chris MacNeill

Yes, it used to be and it may still be in the legislation somewhere. But it may have been taken out of much sure that you had to have all the municipalities in within a county to be regional. But that's not the case because West Hans is because Hans County includes East Hans with his apartment. So they've broken the mold already that they allow. So the legislation says two or more. You say two or more. encompassing the whole county, but it has to be now at least two or more become a regional yet. But that's the lived experience that you get from this type of stuff that you're not going to get from the province may not even say that I'm not sure, but you're not going to get that from reading the legislation or other places as well. The RCMP and stuff is the same way and I'll talk about that here as we go through. Service delivery reality. People come to the expectation that If they, there's going to be efficiencies. And so we're going to have the exact same level of service or better level of service because there's going to be efficiencies. And in some cases, that's true. In other cases, it's not. So we can't, when we, we, I always in caution people and I have here as well, that if you, if, um, when I worked here in Shelburne County, the tax rate was 126 and it was still 126 or not. But if it's 126 today and you can't afford 126, you got financial problems. and you'll automate, you can't expect what we want our tax rate to get out because that's the public usually wants first as they want their rates to get down. So if you couldn't afford that 126, you can't put the rate down to 120 or 116 and expect the same level of service and more services. And that's where the ones that have failed, or I shouldn't say failed, the ones that have struggled have gone into it and they've reduced the rates, always of the urban areas, the towns because the towns are always in higher rates. So they've reduced it, And then they found out, okay, now they want new sidewalks, now they want a new community center, now they want a new park and they want something else. How are we going to pay for it when we just reduce their rates? Because we're trying to give them more money in their pockets, but they want more facilities, more infrastructure. And so that mistake has been made several times so far. And what they're realizing now going forward. And Queens, we didn't do that. And Queens, we kept the rates the same for the first year or two. After we got a balance, then we reduced Liverpool's rate. Liverpool's rate went down 42 cents, I think, which was substantial. It's probably back up to where it was back 30 years ago now. But it kept it's easy for the bid. In Spring Hill, they reduced it by, I forget what the number is, immediately, 35, 32 or 35 cents, something like that. because they expect that we want our rate to get down. That was the justification for getting Spring Hill to dissolve was part of the argument that the financial analysis was we can reduce their rate by 30 or 35 cents, whatever it was. But then immediately they said, but we want new pavement. We want new sidewalks. We want a new fire hall. We want a new library and they say, well, there's no money left. We gave it all way back to you. But they want the savings, but then they also want the infrastructure. So so the best way what I recommended going forward for people is don't promise people We're going to reduce their rates, but tell them you're going to look at it. You're going to keep them static for the first year, but then look at what you're going to do with it because then you have the discussion with the public and that's what the public one is. What are you going to do? Do the way rather keep the same rate and take that money and put it in the new park or playground, put it in this sidewalks, put it in streetlights, build a new fire hall, new library, whatever it's going to be, and then I see the value for my money. Because right now, you take the savings and you invest it back in the community. What's happened in the past with the ones that have had difficulty is they've taken the savings, given it back to the residents, but the residents said, that's nice, but I want this and I want that. So they really, and that was the few local people. The majority didn't necessarily need that. They wanted the more infrastructure. They want the more investments in the community for their families to live there. So, of course. Mr. McNeill,

[00:50:51] Mayor Stan Jacklin

How much responsibility of work does the province not do? If we were malcomated, there are some areas. Do they stop doing the plowing? Do they stop salting the roads? Do they stop fixing the bridges and the culverts and all these sorts of things that

[00:51:16] Chris MacNeill

No, all those things stay the same, Mayor Jack. So the, so what the province owns now, the province continues to look after. Okay. But what they don't do is if you take over, so if you amalgamate, yes, they're not going to take over your roads. Right. You're still going to own your town roads. And so coming through the main road here, which is up, or the, it's through this way, I guess, it'd be the provincial roadway.

[00:51:38] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yes.

[00:51:39] Chris MacNeill

There's still, if they're lifting their blade, they're still downlift their blade. Oh, really? But they're keeping their blade down. They're still going to keep their blade down. That's not going to change, but they're not going to, because they're not going to say, well, it's still a provincial road. We want you to take it over. They're not going to do it. They're still going to say it's within the, it's within the community boundaries of Shelburne. You're still going to pay for it. You're still going to have to maintain it. Okay. One of the things that in Liverpool, when they disall, or when they amalgamated there, there was always a \$50,000 grant for towns for roads. And when Liverpool and Queens amalgamated, they took it away because they said you weren't a town anymore. And we are, for years and years and years, penalized us. And we argue for, and still, I think they're still arguing over it. So now, as part of the process, the new ones are keeping that money. So the ones that have amalgamated recently, that's been part of their negotiation, because they've been able to go shake and say, we still have the urban roads. And here'd be Shelburne and Lockport, we still have them. Yes, we still expect that 50,000 for each of those two communities. If you want that has to be part of the process, you can't say sorry because you amalgamated, we're going to take that away because you're not a town anymore. So you have to make sure that that's very clear with them, because we lost the Liverpool. The ones recently have said you're not going to penalize us. So we're keeping it.

[00:52:54] Mayor Stan Jacklin

In \$100,000 you lose. Yeah, and that being said, there's not a list of things that the problem is going to submit to us saying, if you amalgamate, this is what we're not going to be doing. We have to find it if the hard way in other words.

[00:53:06] Chris MacNeill

Yeah, they're going to tell you nothing's going to change. But yeah, but I'm telling you reality is going to change some it's going to change. Yeah, and some it's going to say, well, you shouldn't own that or well. We didn't remember that.

[00:53:21] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yeah, right.

[00:53:21] Chris MacNeill

Yeah. So it's going to be a little.

[00:53:24] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yeah, because those things like 50,000 dollars here and 50,000 dollars there and blah, blah, blah. That's soon going to add up to a fair amount of money. That's right.

[00:53:34] Chris MacNeill

Between two towns, it's \$100,000. So yeah, over five years, that's half a million dollars. And there are probably other little innuendos. That's the one things up now. In fact, if other ones come up, I'll... Yeah, okay.

[00:53:47] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Thank you. Deputy Mayor Hill. Hello, Chris. I just one question I have on that, and it sort of looks... I get the streets that would still fall under the towns or municipalities. But Lockport sort of unique in a sense, and all of the experiences in other communities, trunk three runs through Lockport, but it stops and it's called Great Road, but it's still trunk three, and we know that the province usually maintains the roads outside of that jurisdiction until they hit the town boundary of Lockport, but that road would be a continuation of the same provincial road.

[00:54:25] Chris MacNeill

It's still in lockports, so lockports to the loans it has to maintain.

[00:54:29] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

So we'll still have to change.

[00:54:31] Chris MacNeill

They'll always ask, but they'll always say, no, was your road today? It's still going to be your road. Okay, we can ask, but yeah, we know what the answer might be. Now, one of the good changes that has taken place, not directly with this part of the process, but I was on the Roads Committee for the province for many years. And we did finally negotiate, which just was approved last year, the year before. that now the trunk roads, so room three, and let's forget what this one is, what trunk is that? That's, is it all trunk threes? It all goes three all the way through. It's now eligible for 50% cost sharing. Before a long time ago back in the early 90s when all this stuff started, it was 50% cost sharing for towns, and then it took it away and it gave it to the rural, so it became Jane class money. So all the J-class and the rural areas got the money. But now it's open for urban. So because the province recognizes those are provincial roots as well. So highway three or root three is a provincial root. So now you can get 50% funding to fix that up and up grant. So that would be a possibility for us. Possibly not.

[00:55:39] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Yeah.

[00:55:40] Chris MacNeill

But it makes it much better if you're doing it together. So right now, like Lockport could apply, Shelburne could apply. I'm not sure if District of Shelburne has any roads within that or not, but you'd be competing against each other. But if you're together, you can say, OK, this year we're going to apply for Shelburne, and they'll give you some money. Next year, we'll apply for law important. They'll give you some money. But otherwise you're competing against each other, which is a problem. So in Kentville last year, we got half a million. This year, we got another half a million. Before we get zero, because we're in eligible, it was going to Kings County who had \$50 million in reserves in the bank, or something like that, if you would have previously won. separate all provincially up.

[00:56:23] Mayor Stan Jacklin

I'll just mention one thing briefly folks between Queens County and Savel River. That's not a series 100 highway. It's Route 3. It doesn't it doesn't stand up to the engineering of a 100 series highway.

[00:56:45] Chris MacNeill

Absolutely. Everybody knows that.

[00:56:47] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yeah.

[00:56:47] Chris MacNeill

And I think the province has been hedging and saying, well, we want to wait until we put the main highway through divided rather than spend money on that, which is unfortunate.

[00:56:54] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yeah.

[00:56:54] Chris MacNeill

Because that's a long way to go.

[00:56:56] Mayor Stan Jacklin

It is. Thank you.

[00:56:57] Chris MacNeill

Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Um, the next, the next one is, uh, is one that's hard for people. Um, but it's more and more. I hear it from my colleagues around the province that are going through this full centralization services where we. We want to keep a presence in different communities. We want to try to appease the public to say, yeah, we're still there. You can still see our face. When in reality, if we keep operating three municipal buildings, three public works buildings, three, whatever it's going to be, in your case, there's no cost savings there. You're still doing the same. And so I know that's happening now with some of the ones from 2015, 2016, the ones that are in here with Powersbro and Spring Hill. and hand support in some of those where they're finally saying we've done it for 10 or 15 years. We've got to work the bandaid off and say we can't afford to keep doing this because we wanted the public's expecting efficiencies, expecting money, but we did it because we thought it was going to look good. But in reality, it just cost you more money. And at the end of the day, the leadership says, or all the people that are going through it now, so we should have just done it. Should have just done it. Taking the criticism at the time, and then done the good things with the money. So you might have, so you've got three town halls, you might close to them, but you take the money you're saving and invest it in those communities, so the public in those communities, the residents still see the benefits in their communities, it's just not those buildings anymore, that might be there. And we know with specifically town halls and stuff, a lot more stuff is done online, but we have a lot of seniors too that still want to win. So there's still an opportunity and stuff, but I hear it more and more that that people just wish they had it done it sooner to save the money and invest the money back in the infrastructure in their communities into programs and services for the young people in their community, the seniors in their community, rather than put it into paying Nova Scotia Power, Power Bills or Irving Oil or Irving Oil Bills or whatever it might be, that they put it back in the residents rather than into buildings and stuff. But lots of opportunities doesn't mean everything has to go in one community because you could have a public works in one community You could have a town, your municipal building in another community. You could have the recreation hub for all your recreation people in another community. So it can be spread out. You just don't have three of everything anymore in your particular case. Just it's not efficient. And that's no matter what you do, the public's going to be upset. So you can either be upset with you all at once, or you can keep letting them be upset with you over over 10 or 15 years, whatever it's going to be. The fair sharing of costs This is an issue now. It's always been an issue for a long time. I've seen it in my career in different places. I've worked where often the urban areas of towns provide more of the infrastructure, and they carry more of that burden. The people, if more I live, the people in the country come to town to walk on sidewalks every night. Don't pay ten cents for it, which is unfair, but also we don't want to make it unreasonable for the rural residents as well. And so what's happened in all of these? Yeah, I think all of them, I can think I could say that fairly. When there's been significant costs savings going through this, part of that has been taken to help the urban areas help take us on those services. And so I just read the news the other day, Trenton's closing their pool, talent Trenton, talent Trenton spent in financial problems for a number of years with large industries closing. But I expect probably half of the people that use that pool are probably in Picto County. I don't know if Picto County pays any money towards it. I honestly don't know, but they should be. And that's the case. And a few dollars from Picto County wouldn't affect their tax rate. Wouldn't be a burden for them. And I expect the people in Picto County would probably say, yeah, we should be helping them a little bit because we like that pool. We want to use that pool and we use it. And so we should be good neighbors and should help them because that's what our residents use because we're not going to build that pool right next door in the county. So we should be contributing towards that. Um, so that's that's what this is all about is that through this whole process, there needs to be that lens put on it where it's a fair sharing of resources. And so it's not asking the role residents to pay higher taxes or to pay, they may have to pay a few penny more or two pennies more, but it's about fairness that they're going to give all these extra services that they've been getting for many, many years, often for free. I know here, um, The municipality contributes a lot to the two towns now with cars sharing different programs and services and stuff and infrastructure. So it's not as prevalent here as it is in some areas, but I've worked in some other areas where they just flat refuse and provide anything. Because they say you need our residents to use their facility and you're benefiting from our residents using it. That's a weak argument.

[01:01:50] Speaker I

Excuse me, Chris, sorry, I have to interrupt. So it comes back down to the equalization payments. So if that's the case, which we know it is, why would the province not create a formula so that rural communities would get more funding than municipalities, for example? Because we do have the infrastructure.

[01:02:09] Chris MacNeill

They've been debating that since Moses walked off

[01:02:15] Speaker I

I figured it was my job. I mean, you make a really good point because we all feel that, right? So, and I know our neighboring unit here does contribute to both of our towns, but when the province is contributing to our units, we're still feeling the, you know, the infrastructure, the roads, the sidewalks, the plowing, and everyone utilizes them. So how can, I know this question is probably beyond your scope, but I guess it's just a question of thought. I'm sure we all think about it. Why are the formulas tip the other way?

[01:02:50] Chris MacNeill

I assume over the years it's been lobbying, and that's the way it's always been, so they don't want to change it. I know some municipalities have said, well, the provincial routes like number three, a lot of truck traffic, that's provincial truck traffic. It's not a local truck traffic, it's somewhat here, but not as much as in some other areas, but you're banging on our town streets. And so some towns have said we're not we're going to restrict you because there is a more vehicle act that allow you to restrict heavy vehicles on town roads. And so some of them threaten the provinces that we need some help here. Yeah. Yeah. And that's the unfortunate part, but it's, but sometimes when you're in a position of strength, though, you can go to them and say as the group of three and say, we need some change here. You can't keep running those big heavy trucks and calling it a provincial route, provincial highway. and say, sorry, we're not going to help you with any funding for it because it's a town road. Reality is also a provincial route and they need to help fund it. So it's been that way for a long time. And the province won't change it the same with the whole stuff like you talked about the equalization. They said, well, that's the formula. It's been that way. It's a complicated and there's a complicated formula. We're not going to change it for that because they'll say you're benefiting somewhere else. They'll make up some arguments over.

[01:04:06] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Well, that being said, Trains used to deliver things to rural parts. No, they did, obviously, right everywhere. And then smaller trucks would take them around, which wouldn't, you know, were easier on the roads. We don't have that any longer. We don't have trains to bring large amounts of things. So therefore, the big trucks have to bring it all the way around. I mean, I see the one down down in Charlburn, Dr. Trailers parked on the main street because that's where they offload. It's not as if you could bring a smaller truck But that change, but the roles never changed.

[01:04:44] Chris MacNeill

In the big trucks, they're not driving little trucks anymore because they're trying to economies of scale, fill it full, and go from Halifax right down the arm, then drop off along the way, but they're beating on all the rural roads. And you guys are paying for it. So that's the fairer sharing. And that will come out when you do some of your studies. But some of that stuff will come out and say that the municipality right now is contributing a certain percentage or a certain amount to the two towns for recreation facility since the fair amount is the right amount. Or based on the user numbers and all that stuff, they should be contributing an extra \$50,000 or \$100,000 to be fair. That's the type of data that you want as a council member. to understand the public's not through discernible. That they just want to make sure that facilities are still there, and they're still going to be able to access them out of reasonable costs. The next one's policy and bylaw updates. That was one of the questions that was asked. It's similar to the other ones where you want, like the idea that you want to do it quickly. Even if you go to Halifax's website, you still have bylaws and policies from Dartmouth, from the county of Halifax. And because they're just so big, they just didn't invest the time and effort to transition them all and go through them all, and they have their own team of lawyers and health facts. You think they would have done longer ago? They just didn't do it. So the ones now we're trying to, as part of the process, having the province fund part of that. So usually \$100, \$200,000 has been a set aside in some of the other ones. Not always, but some of them to help allocate, to hire somebody to get a, not get them all done for that amount, but get a good amount of work done on it. to help streamline that so you can move forward. Because otherwise, you're going to be operating with three sets of no-ways by-laws, three sets of vending by-laws. And the public is annoyed. So I thought you were a man of a mate. Why do I have to follow all these different rules? Or why do they get a better deal than I get? These should be done better. I know when I was in Queens the first year, we had a staff person looking after, I think they got rid of five by-laws. I think was what they did in the first year. That person left, I was put in the position. We worked with a lawyer. I worked with a lawyer and some other couple other staff. And we went through 120. We got down from 120 to 12 in two to three years. We just, that was a priority. We knew that we had to get rid of all these duplication of rules and policies and stuff. Because it was very time for some of your staff to have to say, OK, what's the rules? Well, where do you live? And then they have to understand what the rule is. And then, well, you live somewhere else and I got to read the other rule. So it was very time for some of your staff as well. So there is opportunities to do that. But I would hope the province would come forward and say that's a meaningful project when you move forward that they should help you do that, to do it. And so if that's one of the things for the public facing, not for you internally, although it's for staff time, but it's more of an annoyance for the public who are trying to just get basic services or understand what the rules are, and when they have to say where do you live and why is somebody in shelter and get a different deal and somebody in lockpork? It should be the same now.

[01:07:57] Speaker F

We hear that now.

[01:08:00] Chris MacNeill

Yeah. Rates cannot artificially decrease. I talked a little bit about that earlier, where the public, what we heard, and I think in every one of these, was the rural areas said, don't make us subsidize the towns or the urban areas. We're okay to keep our rates the same. We don't have to decrease our rate, but don't make us subsidize the towns. And of course, the urban areas and the towns or the urban areas said, we want our rates to decrease. But in reality, they wanted the rates to decrease. But in pretty much every case afterwards, they wanted service levels to increase. They wanted new infrastructure. And they said, well, you should have not reduced our rates so much. You should have put money into investments. But at the time, it was all but tax rates. Because that was what they were being sold on was if you amalgamated dissolve, we should be able to reduce. And the studies will come back when you do the financial studies. They'll come back and say, you can reduce the rates by 15 cents, 20 cents, 30 cents. But as leaders, you need to say, that's nice. But do we reduce the rates by 15, 20, 30 cents? Do we take that savings of \$300,000, \$500,000 and put it in the building playgrounds, parks, trails, libraries, fire hall investments, whatever it needs to be, invest it back in the communities rather than because in the reality, if you reduce the rates on them by 10 cents, I mean, on a \$200,000 house, they're going to save, let's 20 bucks. 10 cents, give you 20 bucks, 200 bucks.

[01:09:38] Mayor Stan Jacklin

I mean, do the math. They're going to save a lot of money. A better outcome if, you know, all of a sudden, a new park was built. Absolutely. And they go, oh, I don't mind paying for that. So it's free. And or a new sidewalk. Sure.

[01:09:56] Chris MacNeill

That's sort of yeah, and that's and that should be part and it's my very last comment and yeah, but about the benefits to the community is they want to see those things. Yes, sir. They'd like to have a reduced taxes. Everybody does. I was in the stuyac. With two months ago, they had a public meeting about the same type of thing about whether they're going to dissolve. And people kept saying, I want to reduce my taxes. Well, stuyacs rate is there a town. It's like a buck 53 or something like that. Thinking that's pretty low for a town. I'm thinking if you reduced it by five cents, they might save 20 bucks, whatever it's going to be.

[01:10:29] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yes.

[01:10:29] Chris MacNeill

Like, that's not going to make a difference in those people that were in that room. But if you told them they're going to improve the ball fields, improve sidewalks, put more asphalt down. They say, yeah, I want to see that too. But that's what they, that's what they see. That's what they want. But in reality, they're going to tell you they want reduced taxes. Because that's what's in their heart right now. They want to save money. But when you tell them, do you want to save \$20 or 50 bucks? Or do you want new sidewalks and new parks and playgrounds and trails and fire halls and libraries, whatever it's going to be? Then they're going to say, oh, that's the way, yeah, I'd like to have that too. And you say, well, you can't have both. But they're going to want to plan. And that's what the process is. This whole 12 month or 15 months gives you time to say, OK, after the financial analysis, we know we're going to save this amount of money. Where are we going to invest it? And then when you say, OK, if we save that amount of money, You can put so much here to this project, that project, then you're going to get their attention real quick versus tell them you're going to save \$20 or you're not going to get their attention.

[01:11:29] Speaker ?

So.

[01:11:30] Speaker C

Easier to explain.

[01:11:37] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Easier to talk to people if you're going to explain to them that the infrastructure and the things that we can build are better than an attack break. If there's a nice place to go swimming or. a park or whatever the case may be.

[01:11:52] Chris MacNeill

You have to give them tangible projects. If you say you're promising, right? If you say we're going to put it in reserve somewhere, you lost them. They won't tell me you're going to put the money in the bank. You're going to save up. You need to tell them what you can do that. You need to tell them specific projects. Tell them specific projects, then you'll get their support. But if you just say, well, we're going to put it in the bank and save it up for a project later on, but they'll tell them what the project is, they're not buying it because they don't believe you.

[01:12:18] Speaker F

It's really about increasing economic development as well, like the more you have to offer in your community. You know, there are potentially more possibilities of new businesses coming in and more people coming in. I mean, I know when we hear it here, when people look to come to the municipality, they, first of all, they want to know if they can get a doctor. Secondly, they want to know that they can get internet. And the third is what you have for recreational activities. for my children or my spouse or whatever. So, you know, it's all interconnected.

[01:12:52] Chris MacNeill

Sure. This is a lifestyle. Like I said, it's not about a building.

[01:12:57] Speaker F

Yeah, that's right.

[01:12:58] Chris MacNeill

It's about a lifestyle and having all those those things here. Number 10 is about tax rates. And there's been so many people trying to play in maneuver and I shouldn't say manipulate. I get in trouble, but But finesse saying tax rates and area rates and not everything else. One of the downfalls in Parshville, I think, was in my Parshville one where they had, they thought their tax rate was too high to staff recommended. Well, let's take off the garbage because the garbage in there was on the general tax rate. They didn't have a separate garbage tax or garbage rate. So they took it off the tax rate to lower the tax rate by like 25 cents or something. But then they put like a flat rate of garbage of \$300 or \$350 or whatever it was, I think. And then people lost their mind. It was a low income, most affected, most of the low income people ended up paying more tax. And the richer people, the higher assessed properties paid less tax. And so there was no savings. It was more of us moving money around than people thought, oh, what are you doing here? You're trying to fool me, you're trying to trick me. And so council bought into it without really understanding the impacts or what was going to happen. I thought there was a lot of public communication and consultation took place, but there wasn't. And so that was one of the things that lit up to the dissolution of parts where it was the people were angry about things like that that they thought they were misled and the council wasn't being honest with them. There's a lot of this stuff around the tax rates and the area rates. And when you get into the amalgamation stuff, it gets into a lot of them now are using base rates. So here's the base rate. So if you could please fire garbage administration, all those things, everybody gets equally access to. So that becomes the base rate. And then if you have extra services, so if you have street likes in your community, then nobody else has, you might pay extra for it, which becomes an area rate. More if you have a particular project in your community, you want a special taxation for. As soon as you use a rate, which is a little different. But certain ones like that are usually on area rates. And some of them like east hands, don't look at their website like they've got like 20 area rates. Area rates for everything. You want to side what you get an area rate. You want to street light to get an area rate. You want to park or something. You get in there. I forget what it is, but they got all kinds of area rates everywhere in these tents. You just have to be careful. So I put here, I was shocked by this. The part of Spring Hill was 48 cents. So, not sure how that is. Because when you think about the cost for police, fire, solid waste, all those types of things has to be substantially more than 48 cents. So I'm not sure how they get to that. I expect they probably work back and said Spring Hill's rate was a certain number. And in order to get them back to the same tax rate, that's what it came up to for the base rate. So I'm not sure how they figured it out, but there was some interesting math that took place to get to that rate. So don't expect anybody's base rate here's going to be 48 cents. But it has to be fair. And so that's what people expect for one type of fairness. It doesn't matter where in Shelburne County, if you get the same garbage service, the same police, the same fire. Um, all those types of services should be the same. So everybody should pay the same for those. It's only where you get special services or actually you should pay extra for that. Water rates are different. They're a user fee sewer rates typically are different. They're a user pay fee. So those become different rates about this, about this.

[01:16:27] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

I think deputy mayor has a question.

[01:16:29] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Yeah, sort of a question, but also a comment. I think because lawports, again, I'll go back to lawport because it's where we're coming from is the rates that are extremely high, some of the highest in the province, actually the highest in the province, but everything has been put into the tax rate. So I think for all men, all those values, part of the that we're certain experience is that people are buying the houses and because They're finding that their tax rates for PVSA after assessment is going through the roof. And it's forcing people out. It's also preventing young families from coming in because they can't afford the taxes on top of scraping the other mortgage. So we have to look at a different model that's more effective because as you know, everything's rising. These assessments that have been capped for so long or on multiple properties, not just the primary residence, and we get the primary residence, but multiple properties. It's really strangling small municipalities from surviving, being able to become viable. So that's where we're sort of kind of looking at, because we don't have user fees, but people are getting the same service. But someone's paying it's like I use the analogy like a carton of milk. I go by a carton of milk for \$5 out of store and that's what it costs to the clerk. My neighbor walks in. There's been here for 25 years. That's only going to cut that same milk carton is going to cost you two dollars. So that causes friction within the community, but it also makes it very difficult for small municipalities with shrinking tax base to make ends meet. So I think when we listen to you from the base rate, that's something I think moving forward definitely have to look at, but there's going to have to be adjustments made. I think all of us have to look how we are models for taxation and user fees.

[01:18:18] Chris MacNeill

So Lockport has one rate, no fees, for some use, for something like that. Everything's locked in. Does, uh, children have, you have a user fee for solid waste?

[01:18:29] Speaker C

Okay, and a county does not, don't you know? Part of parts, but nothing for solid waste.

[01:18:39] Chris MacNeill

So what happened just as an example. So for instance, when we did the Liverpool Queens of Alamation, the county did not have a solid waste. It was in the tax rate. The town of Shell or the town of Liverpool, you pay the 150 or at that time, 30 years, \$150 a year per solid waste. That was one of the savings. So they wiped it off the map. So then Liverpool residents all saved the \$150 a year immediately, and everybody paid the same in their tax rate. Didn't affect the tax rate any? But it saved all the residents of Liverpool 150 bucks immediately because they did that through efficiencies. So it's things like that that you can look at with your financial modeling. Is there some ways that nobody else lost? Nobody else anything? So then everybody's on the same. Everybody pays the same for solid waste. And that's one of the things when you do your financial modeling is one of those types of things that are different. And there's a way to make it fair so everybody's paying the same things. Sewer rates are sure they're all different. They're all different across the province. Even some of these municipalities here have like five or six different sewer rates depending on which community you live in. The same was like the fire rate you have or whenever the different people have different rates. But they know in some of the communities they move to the sewer rates to standardize them. So if they had five or six different sewer rates over a period of five years, they standardize. So it didn't matter where you flush your toilet. They all paid the same sewer rate eventually over like five or seven years they standardize them because it didn't make sense. If you're living in that community, All your flush went to the same place or went to a similar facility that was being paid for it, but you should pay the same rate. So eventually standardize them all across that municipality. So there's things like that that are important things to do as part of the process. And your financial modeling should find those types of things where there are savings to help those people who are paying extra because of high taxes. And there may be an issue where you can say, OK, here's an area where we can help those residents reduce their tax burn, but not impact negative and impact the other municipalities. Um, so that's that one the public perception before and after. Um, everyone wants change, but no one wants to change themselves. Um, and that's the same everywhere I've been, everywhere I've worked. Um, this was one of your questions about structural change. It's I, I don't think any of these I've been involved with and probably eight or nine of them in total that I've had something that like for them directly, but, um, Let's eight or nine them overall across the province. I don't remember any of them where the public was. Let's go ahead and do it. Ra, Ra, Ra doesn't happen. People don't want change. They want. Just like land use planning. They want use land use planning for their neighbors, but not for themselves. You guys been through it. I'm sure. But it's the same thing. People don't want change. They want. the status quo because they don't know what the difference is. They're always worried what's going to come ahead of them is going to be worse. And so that's why I say like the taxes, if they're going to save money on taxes, they can see that that they're going to say, okay, I'm going to save 10 cents or 15 cents. I might save 10 bucks. But if you don't have a plan for what those infrastructure were going to invest that 10 or 15 cents, they're not going to believe they're going to say, give me my 10 cents, give me my 15 cents, whatever that's going to be. And this is the same way the public perception About tax rates and both service levels and all those types of things. The public is never going to be all excited about upfront. But you have to do the hard work. Take it out front of it and say here's the opportunities and here's what the options are. Because if you I do training in different places in the province on leadership and stuff. And one of the sections in that training is on, um, the opposite. It talked about, it was a section on plebiscite level, plebiscite, what they're useful or not. Um, if you look around the province, we had a Sunday shopping plebiscite, the first one, a long time ago, people voted against it. The province said, we're going to do it anyway.

[01:22:42] Mayor Stan Jacklin

So not sure why they did it.

[01:22:46] Chris MacNeill

I guess they're hoping that the results were going to be the way they wanted it, and because it didn't, they said, oh, we're not going to do it anyway. And there's been some other plebiscites too, but people have voted a fear for change, not because. And I always say there's the debate going on right now in Alberta, where they're going to have a plebiscite, I think, about leaving or doing something, whatever they're doing in Alberta. But people are already arguing they don't have the questions to complicate it. And that's always the issue is, how do you ask somebody? They've lived here for all their life, 70 years. And you ask them to go vote in 20 words or less. They want to change what they've known for the last 70 years. Like the question is, do you want to keep the status quo and pay 20 cents or 50 cents more taxes? Or do you want to save 20 cents or 50 cents or have a new park and playground? That's not on the ballot. But even if it was, they'd say, well, I don't understand this. Like, where's the playground going to go? Where the park going to go? What's 20 cents going to do? What if I only, what if I agree part of it? We can't expect the public to go vote with 20 words or less on what you guys do with every day in great detail. For years and years and years, some fair to them. You can have lots of discussions with them in public meetings and so on and so forth with them and do the best you can to educate them, which is the hardest part of all this. Because some will seek out information, but a lot of people want their busy lives. They got lots of stuff going on. They're going to put their trust in you to keep good information and make good decisions. So you never, plebiscites never work anywhere. It's just like encouraged people. It's just because I can, I mean, when I, when I do the training, I give an actual example, and I asked them what the vote of the plebiscite is going to be in most often. They're all, they all pick the same numbers for the most part. They all know exactly. They look at the numbers, look at the community, look at the data. They can pretty much say, who's going to vote? What way? And they know what the percentages are going to come back. It's pretty obvious, most times what's going to be. So, so that's the plebiscite stuff. People talk about what they encourage you not to do because it's, I think it's unfair to your residents, but it's unfair to you too, because at the end of the day, you might get 70% of against it, but in reality it might say okay to vote against it, but we don't have enough weighted payer bills, so we're going to do it anyway. So it's not, it's not a lot of help that way. Rationalized versus happiness is one of those hard things to explain as well, but most of the people that have gone through this has been a lot of time trying to explain stuff that are residents to try to appease them. We talked before about keeping all the public works buildings open, keeping all the staff or keeping all the town halls open, tell them we're going to reduce their rates, and those types of things. We spend a lot of time trying for happiness, trying to keep people happy, and so they're not mad at angry at us. But the people I've talked to even recently said, you know, that was the biggest mistake we ever made. We need to provide them with good information and facts or rationalize. This is the decision we think we should make. This is what we recommend. This is why, which is what we talked about with the tax rate. We think rather than give you that 10 cent or 20 cent tax rate reduction, we think we should spend our money, that money on here. So if you're rationalizing it now, not just saying we're going to reduce the same money, we're going to reduce your rates. And so that's what one of the biggest key things I've heard from the people I've talked to in my experience is to spend more of our time and effort putting together information, literature, holding meetings, could be small groups of people. and explaining what you're recommending. Not what you're going to do. Don't say it's already agreed to, but say what you want to recommend. And here's the reasons why. Because that's why it makes sense. It's good for the community to grow the community. Otherwise, people are just going to stay stagnant. You're not going to grow the community. The whole economic development argument. I mean, if you say you're going to start giving some businesses some money for facade improvements to fix up buildings, paint their buildings, put up some nice signage. And I want to work here before the year in man, Jim, was it year and what's he go by? Not a year in man. What was it?

[01:26:59] CAO MacLeod

Spencer.

[01:27:00] Chris MacNeill

Um, he said the radio ads. Well, if you're the wolf guy, the urine guy or whatever, he was after him. Yeah, he was after me all the time. Get rid of the ugly signs on the highway. I see him coming in today. They're all nice. They're all nice signs. If he's still here, he must be happy and excited. But it was all the times like spend the money like put some nice signs up there. Get rid of those ugly signs.

[01:27:31] Mayor Stan Jacklin

How do you get the wolves to pee in the bottles to get the wolf urine? I mean, you just don't get a wolf everywhere, right? And a willing wolf is even more tricky. I had to say that.

[01:27:48] Chris MacNeill

That's probably a question for the province. They probably have an answer for that one. They probably have an answer for that one, yeah. So don't get dragged into the thing about trying to make people happy because people are going to say we want to keep our town hall. We want to keep our public works building. We want to keep this that we want to keep all of our staff, want to keep all of our services. You're actually going to do better. I think you want to have better service levels, better facilities, better infrastructure, all those types of things. You're going to be able to do better. It's going to take time. But when you tell people you're going to make them happy, You lose the ability because you're spending money efficiently. You're going to lose the ability to do all those great things that people want. Spread the wealth is important. We've talked a lot about that as well that when you do this, if you have cost savings or even going forward, if you do decide to amalgamate, to make sure in your plans that they all say, make sure you, if you're going to put a park in one community, You put a sidewalk in another community. You put a fire hall in another community. You don't do everything in one community. You spread the wealth. You do different projects, different communities, and you do it purposefully every year. So you don't say sorry, you got to wait five years for your turn. Every year, you do it a little bit in every community. So it might be a sidewalk one year, you get might be a park the next year, it might be a new piece of playground equipment the next year. Might be something else, but you do something purposefully every year in every community. So the public sees You're investing in each of them fairly. They won't be equal because they all have different needs, but you do it purposefully every year. And if you don't, then people are going to say, see, Shelmer's getting everything.

[01:29:30] Speaker C

You have to do it every year.

[01:29:31] Chris MacNeill

And it doesn't have to be big projects. If you spend a lot of money, like I know, people hate sewer because you can't see it. But I just worked in anapolis. We were going to spend two million bucks putting sewer and upgrading the sewer treatment plant and the counselors kept saying the public's not going to see that. They're going to pay taxes. They're going to pay their sewer fees. They're going to increase. They're not going to see that. We have to do something they're going to see. We have to do something pretty. We need to do some sidewalks or some paving. But in reality, if the toilet didn't flush, they wouldn't be happy. But we had to spend the \$2 million. I think it's actually \$2.5 million by the time it went to tender. But \$2.5 million that fixed it up so it was going to keep functioning for 20 years. But the public doesn't see that. So that needs to happen. But you also need to spend the \$20,000 on this park or this playground or the \$30,000 on that and two other stuff too. We're going to do it every minute. Urban and rural council members are hurt. Mayor Jackson, let's say a vote. Shelburn's still going to be Shelburn. One of the greatest benefits that happened in Queens when the Malve made it, was it didn't allow one council to represent one community in the former town. So Liverpool didn't have its own counselors. Liverpool was split, so one council represented 50% of Liverpool and 50% of the county. Another one represented 40% of the town, I think, is 60% of the county. Because it was purposely done that way. so that one counselor didn't always come to the table with town issues or former town issues. The smartest thing they ever did, and it wasn't done on purpose, it was done based on trying to get the URB or the RAB whatever they're called now, trying to get their numbers, but it worked out that way and it was the best ad hoc thing they ever did. And so some of the other ones have tried to do that as well. Spring Hill, when they dissolved, they left two counselors in Spring Hill, one in The East end of one of the West end, I think it was. And so I think since then they've had to change it as well because of demographics, but they also realize the same thing. Those two counselors ganged up all the time. And we're always focused on spring hill issues or an issue in the rest of things, but they had to represent. World issues and in urban issues, then they couldn't just go vote to reduce the rate of one because then they did to reduce the rate of one. They had the other people had to pay a little more to help subsidize it or help with it. So they had to be careful. And so that was one of the wisest thing they did. And so then the counselors as well in the urban area understand the rural issues, but also the people in the rural area understand the urban issues, understand that. Oh, yeah, I understand. My residents in the urban area or the rural area using those town facilities, we should be helping pay for them. And they realize that more often when they're representing both sides, they see both sides versus if they're one or the other, they lose that context.

[01:32:30] Speaker F

Well, when you do something like this, you're supposed to be with the frame of mind of being one. So if you keep that separation, you're never going to be that, right? So, and then you learn from the other, because, you know, we all kind of again, like if we're in the rural, we understand that more perhaps than what we would understand with the town and town's perspective. So if we're combining that, you're learning both. And that's that only strength is the whole. It's important.

[01:33:00] Chris MacNeill

And what's important is you have seven or eight great people around the table making decisions for the whole community and not focused on their one neighborhood. And that was when I went to the handsport hearings, when I wasn't directly involved in handsport, but I went to their hearings. before the URB and the public members kept coming forward and said, we don't want, we, handsport has to have their own counselor. Because otherwise it might be somebody in the rural area outside of handsport. So handsport proper may have anybody lives in handsport on the council. They fought and fought and fought. But the end of the day, the people that are around the table, if they're good people, they're going to want handsport to be a good community that has lots of infrastructure. They got a pool there and they had a library. until the other day when they're going to close it, like ours and Kentville. They're going to close it. But good people around the table are going to make decisions for everybody. You're not going to say, well, we're not going to, the rules are going to gang up and not fund the towns anymore. The former towns doesn't work that way. You elect good people. And that's the concern. So you will hear that. That when it comes to the, if you go before the board, you will hear that, well, we need to protect Shellburn and we need to protect Rockboard. We need to have special seats for those people. But in reality, you don't have those people. You just need good people in the area in that area. So there might be a West Green Harbour somewhere, but they might own a business in Lockport. They might work in Lockport. They might spend more time in Lockport than they do in West Green Harbour. So just the fact that they sleep in Lockport might not be the benefit. So you need to, you're going to get that pushback in the community. You just need to be able to understand and be able to answer that and make sure when it does come time, you get good people to run for office.

[01:34:44] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Um, that's absolutely going to be a question from the communities, but I'm wondering as a process proceeds, is that something because what we saw, uh, what the province letter said they wanted boundaries. Now we know that we're looking at the main geographical boundaries and the boundaries of the current towns, but is that a recommendation that from that we approve from our various councils to to the board to say, listen, can you look at this one? You're making this because it has worked in other communities such as the ones you've described, right?

[01:35:13] Chris MacNeill

It'll be part of your application to the URB. So, I say URB, it's, you know, I'll always call it URB, T-I-R, motor vehicles or whatever, everybody's called now, it'd be something different. But that'll be part of your application. So, to the point originally, your initial application is very simple. Like, there's not a lot of detail in that application that you put in. Once you put it in, then they will come back and they'll schedule some, they'll send you back documents and expect some more reports and so on and so forth. But as part of that, you will be required to submit one of the reports they will ask is a boundary report. So you will decide that, whether you decide it, whether you delegate that to this committee as the body to put the application in and submit it on behalf of your councils or if you will or if it's somebody else. So if you typically the province appoints a transition coordinator, and they would be the one that would coordinate with the councils and say, okay, what's going to be in the transition coordinator would submit it to the province on your behalf. You have to decide yourself, though, with what that looks like and agree to put it in that way.

[01:36:18] CAO MacLeod

Yeah, so when we did our boundary report, can you do? Okay, they, they provided council with options. That council then can sort of decide on which options that they wanted. So they had slightly different boundaries and that. And then it was debated amongst council and then agreed by council on the ones that they wanted to go for. So We would have to do a boundary report that's jointly agreed by all three councils. And that's submitted to the NSR will be.

[01:36:48] Chris MacNeill

And I know the studies, you're talking about the expensive sites, but the boundary report shouldn't be very expensive because you can do it almost yourself or have somebody do it. Because you know, you've got, you know what your population is. You can look at around the province and see what the average is for councilor. The less of the URB is looking at is what's the average 1,500, 1,200, whatever it's going to be. That's right. And you could say amongst yourself do we want to do you want a new council of six, seven, eight, nine, 10, 11, 12 and you want to mayor award. Yeah, I'll just leave it on.

[01:37:19] Mayor Stan Jacklin

But is it not that we say we have this many people.

[01:37:31] Chris MacNeill

And they tell us how many, you know, oh, I was under the understanding you do your own study, you decide you recommend a new argument before them.

[01:37:38] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Okay. I was under the understanding that we got so many thousands of people in the in in this area that they say, oh, that, okay, you've got to have seven counselors and one and one warden or mayor or whatever the case may be.

[01:37:54] Chris MacNeill

No, all in your hands, right?

[01:37:56] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Oh, okay.

[01:37:56] Chris MacNeill

You've got the power. The power to recommend anyway, this is what you're proposing. And so, they went, so you have to go through a public consultation process with the public things. And I just went through and in anapolis there a year or so ago, year and a half ago, it was painful. We went through 22 public meetings, just because the URB wanted more public consultation. At the end of the day, the public want good representation. Okay, you have the people out there who want less government, less government, less government, less government. Doesn't matter what it is. Some some suggests the council of three. Because they want less government, but the majority of the people were comfortable with what they had there. And so that's what the, but we argue that, even though there's lots of people want less government, but we had the facts, the figures, the amount of workload it was, the complications of it's, it's not a simple job anymore. You're responsible for running water systems, sewer systems and roads and streets and everything else. It's very high tech now. And the world's very litigious. Lots of lawsuits are there everywhere. So we put for a strong proposal and they couldn't argue a lot with it. Because all the data and numbers were there and the workload and everything was there. So you get the proposal though. But you'll have to decide that amongst yourselves about what that looks like. And then that will determine the boundaries. It's because you'll start from one into the county. and say, what's the number? So it's 1,000 people per district. You bring it over until you get to 1,000 people or so, and then that's the first district, and then you go to the next one. So it works pretty slick. It's not, like I said, you don't have to hire a consultant paid them \$50,000. Some do, but you don't have to. It's not that complicated.

[01:39:39] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Is the Mayor Warden looking at Queens? They're at large. They're not to any specific district. They sort of represent the entire

[01:39:48] Chris MacNeill

municipality or region yeah so the municipal government acts as if you're a regional municipality it must be a mayor okay okay but if you're a rural if you're a town of course it's a mayor if you're a rural it can be a mayor or award you could pick so if you went forward as a regional it would have to be a mayor if you went forward as a rural municipality you would have the choice to have a mayor award okay but if you change to a mayor you can't change back okay but you can stay with award So that's the boundaries. Rip the bandaid off. I talked a little bit about that. I hear that from all the people now that I deal with in my experience with them is we did all these things. We tried to be nice. We tried to do things slowly. We tried to get people slowly moved into what we were doing and change and so on and so forth. Because most people include myself. We were so focused for that 12 months or 15 months on doing our own stuff, we did do a lot of public consultation, we did do enough. And so we should have spent more time, less time focused on ourselves internally, focused more time on what the public, because the public was anxious, they were nervous, they didn't know what was going to happen. So we should have spent more time doing that, but we should have, at the same time, rationalized those things and tried to stop and not work focused on much on trying to keep people happy, because no matter what we told people, The people that were against it were against it and the people that weren't said, I don't, I just don't have enough information. I don't live your life every day. I don't work in government. So I don't understand what it entails, what the differences are, what's going to affect me. So I trust you to make a good decision. So so we heard that over and over again. And so he's so I just say here, we'll rip the bandaid off. You just hear that sometimes. But you just have to do that, make the tough decisions, but not without consulting with the public or the discussion with the public of what looks like and what the opportunities are. And people will understand that. And so I always use our Guile and Yarmuth, and this fellow Yarmuth on examples all the time, because they hate it. Because they've had lots of these discussions as well, and they brag all the time, both 27 intermissible agreements. And I say, 27 lawyers fees, 27 CAO fees to do in these things. 27 times for finance people do in this. 27, three councils have 27 different meetings to do these agreements. And you think that's efficient. I keep saying you're living together, you're also getting married. 27 agreements, but they don't like that. They say it works well, being separate. And it works well being separate for them. but not for the public who keeps saying, why do I have three sets of rules? Why if I live in the county? Can I use, why do I have to pay to use the water tap in the armen? The Italian armen says, well, the people in the armen with water, you feel that you're paying for that water? Not you, you should be paying for it. You want to come get our water in town, you got to pay for it. So it doesn't divide the community, people are angry. So when you do decide to do something, it's a matter of And you're going to have to rip the bandaid off because the province isn't going to help you by the sounds of it here if you're going to move forward. Focus on long-term community growth and development together, which is what Ward and Smith talked about earlier. Right now, we do a lot of things separately. We do some of you guys do a lot of stuff together as well, but there's a lot more stuff you could do together that there's opportunities I could talk about that the SON program for businesses. The county can probably, the district can probably afford to do it, but the two towns probably can't afford to do it. And so if you're a one, you can spread the wealth and you can do it for everybody. So everybody gets fair access to it and people say, oh, that's nice. We get a lot, we get some access to that. Not really going to cost anybody any more money, but so types of things you can do to help support businesses to do that stuff. There's lots of opportunity for growth and development to work together. Those are the intangibles of things that the public doesn't necessarily see. If you're not going to see on day one or day two, but you're going to see it over a period of time, the developers are going to see it over a period of time and so on and so forth. And when you're talking about applying for funding, it's not three municipalities applying to municipal affairs for funding for the same program. You're deciding as three municipalities, one municipality and three communities. Here's our priority this year. We're going to apply for that one. And chances are you're going to get the money. Otherwise, three are going to apply and one is going to get it the other two are going to be just points. And then the program might not come back again for another couple of years and everybody loses out for a bit. But then when the next time it comes, the important part is you focus on another community to make sure that their project gets the one that's on the top of the pile next year. And the last one is, unfortunately, the province kind of shot this one down, but this is Someone, one of the questions that you asked me was about, provided me beforehand, what's the greatest thing that comes out of this? And by far, the greatest gift that they'll all tell you is they get the assessments. They understand the financial realities of themselves in their community, but also the other municipalities are partnering with. They understand the condition of their infrastructure, like their water, their sewer, and what that cost is going to be to upgrade the next five years, 10 years to understand what the legislation's changing. They understand if you've got three sets of books, you probably all use different financial software too, unless you're,

what are you guys? You're all the same, well, thanks a little bit. But things like that, you can understand what those costs are going to be and you get that as part of the process. That's the greatest gift. So if you look at some of these places now that have it, they all understand what the infrastructure cost is going to be to upgrade their water and so are they all understand what the cost is for the roads. They've got a plan now. Most of them do an asset management plan on that says here's where they're going to start investing in asphalt money. Here's where the priorities are. They understand parks and trails and stuff. So they know we have parks and trails. And they see the map, the big map. Here's where they are through their towns and the county, the district. And they know where the gaps are. And they say, OK, the studies says the reports says here's where the gaps are. So here's where we need to focus our time and money. a playground in this community because this is where housing developments go and this is where younger kids are living. We're going to put the next one there because that's the right place to do it. Otherwise, if you're in one or the other and one of the three municipalities, you're going to do it in your own. When in reality, it may need to go somewhere else. It may need to go just outside the boundary line. It may not need necessarily need to be right inside the town line. It may need to be just outside, but the people in the town in the district are both going to use it. But that's the greatest thing that they all tell me, is that was the great? They learned so much from understanding what their assets were and what their liabilities were. And then they could put a lot of spreadsheet for the next 10 years or 20 years understand what those costs are going to be. Even things like the Wharf and Shelburne. Do you guys still own that? You still own the Wharf?

[01:47:01] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Yeah.

[01:47:02] Chris MacNeill

I mean, what's the cost? What's the lifespan of that? What's it going to cost to fix that up? And is it time now before it gets in too bad a shame? Now, they get sold off, or somebody else takes it over, but you have some agreement with somebody that they fix it up or the profit skews. Now, the province of the feds give you a bunch of them, but I guess it'll be the feds. Give you a bunch of mine to fix it up. We can say now it's just going to get worse and worse and worse. Do we get rid of it now? Find somebody that's going to use it, but also somehow protect public access for 10 years or 20 years, for a period of time. But move that out now. If that's the case, I don't know what the condition is, it used to be rough shape when I was here before. But if that's the case, then it gives you the information. You know right now, the independent consultant says you're going to spend \$5 billion on it in five years time. It's time you're ready, but now probably. Before that person says, you're only getting ready, but now in five years, you're going to get ready right now because it needs \$5 billion. I'm not going to give it take it. And then the public's going to be mad at you saying, why didn't you plan for this? That's what happening in an apples royale. The Wharf there in the town of Annapolis, where they closed it for six months or eight months. The public lost it up seven. But they realized the cost was high, but they knew it was coming. And so now they it's back open again for a bit, but it's restricted to heavy vehicles. I think so it's it's hard. They knew it was coming and probably you're all good people, but you're not experts in engineering or wars. And they probably didn't think about it. They were worried about the playgrounds. They were worried about the sidewalks. They were worried about the asphalt. They weren't worried about the war. They just assumed it would be there for a long time. But then when it comes to falls apart or it's not safe anymore, it becomes a problem for them. So that's the challenge they have. So if they had a plan earlier, they probably would have set five years ago. Five years time we're going to spend a million dollars. So we need to find a way to transition to somebody else now so they take it over.

[01:48:58] Speaker C

So that's my.

[01:49:06] Chris MacNeill

and sent stories. And so that's kind of a summary of some of the key points I think you need to understand. And go into it with your eyes wide open that there's going to be opportunities based on the, whether it's a dissolution or a automation that said, I didn't mention policing, but policing is wanting to award mentioned. Is this a talent shelter still have direct contract? Oh, you're in the parental contract now, okay, because you weren't a direct contract before. So because direct contracts are different. So it's And so that's why you go into, if you're negotiating a position of strength, you can go negotiate that this is the rate you want to pay. You don't want to be penalized because that was the issue in some of the argue. Well, if I am Algamate, we then become more than 15,000, equals 15,000 or 10,000, 15 or 10, we become bigger. And then we lose our cost share. So now is the opportunity of the position of strength you suggest you argue with the province or whatever it is that If you're going to move forward, you want commitment from them that you're going to be treated as a, as still as a 70-30, you're not going to be punished and go to 90-10. Otherwise, it's the turn. Why would you do it? You're going to lose money. So that money you're going to save by being a regional on the equalization, you just lost. And so you're being punished. There's things like that that you'll learn to the point.

[01:50:21] CAO MacLeod

It'll be less than 15,000, so we'll qualify for the MPSA. It's, we'll have a population of less than 15,000 people in the argument, so we'll still qualify for the 17th, the 7030. The 73rd, okay. So that's good.

[01:50:35] Chris MacNeill

So that's, so those are the types of questions you need to know that was 15,000. However, it isn't make sure you don't get penalized for things like that. So that's fine. I have a quick question. I said pitch answer.

[01:50:46] Speaker L

So in the ones that, that you've been involved in, you went in with the human resources part of it, involving union. that each unit has a, I don't know if everybody's the same union, but what happens there?

[01:50:59] Chris MacNeill

They have successor rights. So the legislation of the Trade Union Act indicates that whenever it may, it might be in the, it's probably not the best government act, but it might be in the, in the URB or one of those other acts as well, but the Trade Union Act, they still cover by the Trade Union Act, so they have successor rights. She'll end up with the same. If you have two unions, you'll have the same two unions. Those don't change collective room and stay in place. And then when it comes time for renewal, it becomes the opportunity to the unions want to have a chat, and they not want to have a chat. We were doing one of, I think, Queen's just recently, so not that long ago, they're building an nursing home there. And Queen's matter had one QP union, Hillsvie acres, which we owned as the municipality had a different QP union. So I'm not sure what they eventually decided, but we had this discussion, because there's two QP unions, whether two QP unions want the form one. So I don't know if they did, because at the beginning, they said, no, we want to keep our separate QP unions. But they had the opportunity to combine them. I expected their separate. They'll probably want to stay separate. Not going to get one of them probably to dissolve and go into the other union and probably want to keep. But they do have success or rights. Nothing changes. The collective agreements go forward. You have to negotiate the same.

[01:52:16] Speaker L

So you could have and the Malibu made it units, all three units, and still have three units.

[01:52:25] Chris MacNeill

So you've been like mine, Town of Cancel, I have two units, two different units. So I'd like to please, as our police has a separate union that we operate as a police, and we have our public works and recreation as a separate unit. So that's not uncommon, like if you go to Halifax, they have like 16 different units, something like that. So it's not an uncommon thing. but they have all the same rights and nothing changes for them. We all have the same union, so we'd probably be able to negotiate one contract out of ten. The unfortunate part of that though is they're going to want to negotiate up. So if you've got a labor in one, the labor in the other, they're going to want the low labor to go up to the high labor rate. So you're going to, it's going to cost you money. But the end of the day, the question is, is that difference when you do them all? Is it significant enough? that it's a deterrent. Because if it isn't, then you only got to negotiate one collective agreement going forward. You're going to save a lot of legal money. Or other agreements stop at dealing with one union. You're going to save a lot of time and effort and stuff. So maybe work that we have to do the math, though.

[01:53:30] Speaker L

And I would think you'd want one because you wouldn't want a divide in your employees when one follows making \$21 and the next follows making \$26. Because you're going to have trouble then.

[01:53:41] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Exactly. You can fight you on that anyway. \$21 and \$16, same ending. They fight you on it anyway.

[01:53:51] Chris MacNeill

They are. Well, you know, you know, the next time you go to negotiations, the first, the first argument is going to be you're paying me \$21 to start, because that's what the other guy's getting.

[01:54:00] Mayor Stan Jacklin

So you're not going to, you're going to end up paying it anyway.

[01:54:02] Chris MacNeill

You're going to have to pay them, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Because it would be unfair to have. Because those employees may be working together. We're not here to be fair, sir.

[01:54:17] Speaker F

Yeah, I just wanted to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the conversation, the presentation this evening. As a steering committee, we continue to learn as much as we can so that we are making the best choices, the best decisions for our residents. So just thank you very much for that. And there are lots of takeaways, especially Number four, with the funding formulas there, with regional governments that, again, we've had many discussions, and I don't think that was ever mentioned to any of us. So that was a big one, but the others as well. And, you know, for me, it's always been, whether it's the town of Shelburne, or the town of La Corte, or us doing well, when one does well, we all do well. And I think we all want what's best for the community as a whole.

[01:55:09] Chris MacNeill

And you show that by being here and establishing this committee and being here and having these discussions, there's not a place that the province that are doing it informally, but don't have the intestinal fortitude, I guess, to actually sit down formally and do it. She's also be very proud of yourselves for actually at least to entertain the discussion, having the discussion and wanting to do the hard work to come up with the numbers. There's lots of people out there that help you. Like I said, the boundary view is not a complicated process. Even some of the financial stuff, I'm sure we can round up some people in the province who are experts in this and do it on a regular basis for a living, but also been involved with some of this stuff that would volunteer some time to help you out and do some preliminary number because I'm just, I shouldn't say shock because I'll get in trouble. But the letter or the commentary from the province, but there's lots of people out there that we can reach out to or you can reach out to them to help you. do some of those information that reports and stuff and talk a lot more to about the communication part of it. The public is very hard to do and there's some failures in here as you'll see. But even some of that stuff, I know there's some people that are experts in communication to a lot of engagement stuff in the province very well and I'm sure we can round up a few of those to help put together a plan or approach to do that as well that engage with your residents to help them understand and find the best way to do it because people nowadays try to do stuff online, but a lot of people want face-to-face. They want to look in the eye and want to know that you're telling them the truth and what's my options here and help you put together a plan or whatever.

[01:56:39] Speaker J

Are there any questions, comments, concerns, or compliments for Mr. McNeill?

[01:56:46] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Chris, maybe somebody here could actually say, NSRAB, is that URAB? Yeah, it's the same creature, right?

[01:56:55] Chris MacNeill

It was always the no-squish utility review aboard URB. Yes. the premium. The province, the province decided to divide it. Yes, sir. So now there's an energy side which deals with no scotia power and those types of things. Those are the characters that put the tax up and down on gas. No, the cost of gas up and down. Exactly. So now they have, so now they divide it into, so now there is the energy sector which deals with, and maybe gas, I'm not sure who's how it splits, so there's energy. Why do you tell these maybe? Electric utilities natural gas or those types of things they have four or five. I think board members who deal specifically with those and then they separated out. So there's another four or five board members who now are called the RAB regulatory appeals board. They deal with municipal planning issues, probably assessment appeals, probably they deal with dissolutions, amalgamation stuff, they deal with that part of it. Okay. And I guess they deal with the water rates too because we just do the water rate hearing and panels of the water rates too. So it's now divided into two. So it's the same, used to be one boarded law. Now they have a separate, they're specialized, so four or five board members specialize on one and four or five support members specialize in the other.

[01:58:16] Speaker C

Thank you.

[01:58:20] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Just reiterate the wardens comments and we really appreciate you coming and your lived experiences invaluable for us moving forward. So yes, thank you and I'm sure I'm sure we'll hear from us again.

[01:58:30] Chris MacNeill

No, thank you. Anytime. But like I said, reach out to the other municipalities that are in there or that other ones you've known gone through and I'm sure they've all the CEOs of finance people or whatever more than please have these discussions. So they know they were happy to discuss with me their trials and tribulations went well and went didn't go well and recognizing now if they had the information that you're getting doing your homework first, they would have probably made some different decisions to help them be more efficient and helps the residents understand do a better job about that part. Wonderful.

[01:59:02] Speaker J

All right. Good luck with your deliberations. We move on to residents, comments, and questions.

[01:59:14] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

circulated in the package was a list of resident questions. Many in some of which have already been addressed, but we'll open it up for discussion. And members of the committee would like to specifically answer any of the questions.

[01:59:30] Speaker J

So I'll open it up. Deputy Mayor Helen will go first. Thank you.

[01:59:33] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Thank you. I'll speak to the first one that is both the similar municipalities and I think what we've heard because we've had a couple of sessions of people and today was a terrific example of that. We all know that amalgamation can be contentious and complex process and does not achieve the desired results if it's not properly executed and planned out and this is why we're here this is why we're doing this process so we can take those recommendations back to our council but I think two of the most successful Missed palates that have gone through this process from my opinion from what I've heard so far has been Liverpool and the region of Queens and also Windsor West hands. They've seen not not perfect. There's no silver bullet for anyone, but they to me they seem to be the most in modern times the most successful.

[02:00:29] Speaker F

Yeah, I would just echo Deputy Mayor's comments. I think you're bang on with that. Just a question to Mayor Derek. So it's my understanding that you've already answered these questions on behalf of the committee.

[02:00:43] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah, yeah. Some of those questions have been, uh, have been answered already addressed. Yeah.

[02:00:48] Speaker F

Okay. And just looking through them again, I mean there are a number of them here that you know we really don't have the answers at this point because we're still learning we're still getting the information together and excuse me as we we talked earlier you know we're still waiting to. Hopefully find that way forward with the province to continue the discussion. But you know, when I look at some of these questions, you know, like how can the committee guarantee taxpayers want to see tax increase? I mean, I don't know how we could honestly say that because, you know, there are so many variables at this point, you know, that we don't know about. And, you know, we don't know what all the infrastructure needs are. We don't know about economic conditions. We, you know, it's just inflation. I mean, the list goes on and on. So I would be, I would want to be very careful with answering some of these questions when we truly don't have the answers to them all.

[02:01:47] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah. Yeah, I comment. agree, agree. That's the word I'm looking for. Yeah, so much of this stuff is still be to determine. So addressing specifics around taxation, going up and down, like question four and question nine and 10 falls into that same five and 15 about future staffing models, the full length of a transition number 11, potential governance models, 13 and 12 like These are the answers that we're trying to determine and and we, as Chris said, we wouldn't want to say something now that we don't know to be true. So I know, I know residents are looking for answers. We are to and echo that frustration of not having those hard facts. And this is part of the journey that we're going through right now.

[02:02:41] Speaker F

And I think we're doing it the right way. You know, we're having the experts and the people with the lived experiences come in and have the conversations with us and residents so that they're hearing the same things that we are.

[02:02:54] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah, it really puts us in an unfortunate spot where we can learn from the learnings and missteps or improvements that others would have, would have taken, how they do it again. So yeah. The fact that we're going slow and trying to take in all the information, I think Chris' comment is commendable on our part. And yeah, we're going to continue to push forward through this to find the best information. Councilor Cruz.

[02:03:18] Speaker B

Yeah, I just would like to make a comment. We'll just based off of what we've heard earlier from the province about how, well, when we first started gathering information, just to even create this steering committee, We were given something different, and then now it's like, oh, but there is this policy now. But where was that when we first started it? And so I think, and this is why we also echo the frustrations from folks that are asking these questions time and time again because we've been given multiple different answers as well. So we don't want to do that as a committee. And so that's why we want to gather as much facts before we answer questions, specifically like these questions.

[02:04:08] Speaker C

I would just like that too.

[02:04:10] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

I think the seeding was, again, I can't echo the sentence, how informative that was for me, and in combination with the meeting we had the presentation from Mayor Zebian. Windsor West and I think for us for committee is to make a summary of that of this information was provided to us would be very helpful and would actually answer a lot of questions for the public because when we make that summary eventually will make those recommendations to our respective councils. But that for our own use to I think that would be very important to be forward. because there's a lot of really good information and good points brought forward in both of those presentations.

[02:04:54] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

And I think one of the questions number eight here was about reports and that being shared with the public and and so far our work all of our work has been shared with the public and that that wouldn't change. So that that we continue that our work is for the public. It's not for the numbers of this room. It's for the public and for our council so that everybody can have a good understanding going forward and that seems to be a common theme with all of these is that that communication right from day one with our residents and respective councils is crucial.

[02:05:26] Speaker L

Deputy Mayor, I think. The number eight, when they say that we arrived at the recommendation on the mountain nation, we haven't come to a recommendation or gather information as well as there. I think some of the information that's being put out there is incorrect as well. And that's where a lot of the controversy and that sort of thing is coming in that we are a melting or for dissolving or whatever they want to call it. And it's not true. So that's why we have these doors open for people to come in here or talk to us or whatever. And we have one public and one counselor here tonight. So, you know, Are they getting the wrong information? We need to make sure that they're directed to where they're going to find out. Like very good said. that we need to put that out there on the website or somewhere that they know, don't hear. This is where your information is. Don't listen to that. The naysayers basically because we all have a minute in our communities.

[02:06:32] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

Yeah, and this committee is is made up of equal parts so that we can all take that information to our councils to give them the same information so that everybody who's who's going to make this decision moving forward has the same set of the same set of details. So yeah. Anybody else have.

[02:06:52] Mayor Stan Jacklin

I'd like to thank Mayor Derek for providing this information. As I read through this, I see that there are some of the general public have some of the same questions that we're asking, obviously. There are also some questions here that I believe that the people can answer their own questions if they read what they sent into you or us, I should say. And to echo what Heidi just said is, This is a discovery. And that's what we're doing. And we'd like the general public to, to, you know, they have to be able to consider that the fact of mine was we're asking the questions that they're asking. And when we get the answers, we will let them have the answers. And as saying that, you know, in general, because the public know we're coming here and doing this. And Mary shows up. Thank you very much for that, Dale. You're here. Thank you as well, sir. But that being said, the interest, it's only, it'll only interest certain people when it starts to, starts to stain. So I'd like to, I'd like to thank you definitely for coming to your Mary because you're well informed.

[02:08:10] Warden Penny Smith

This is not a decision that's been paid.

[02:08:19] Speaker N

by you're just down in the station, at the time, and all that, and then once you have these answers, you go to the hospital to that. And you just can't have a public meeting. You don't have answers. So if you have to make the time to get more answers, then have some. I mean, you're probably going to do it at some point how to have something to tell people what you do know. And again, to that crowd, it's playing still gathering.

[02:08:54] Warden Penny Smith

I mean, I know it's great to say both. And I've been even just going on. And I mean, I'm just doing it together. And I'm like this, I think I'm trying to go on with this now.

[02:09:13] Speaker N

Anyway, I ended up by helping this. But I mean, I got, I got the, like I knew it was going to happen, but I just want, because I knew you had a guess coming. So I thought maybe they're going to have it at 5 or something and I want to try where I want to. But yeah, so I am an ex- counsellor that was involved in some of this process. And when you do stay in those wet cans in a thing, that is a consolidation, isn't it? So, you know, it is a little bit of a different field and one down to make a plot of it. And then they worked it for some time. So, you know, times are harder, you know, everywhere.

[02:10:08] Warden Penny Smith

Some of it's totally unnecessary, you know, but really it's fine.

[02:10:17] Speaker N

And so I will continue to pass on and just try to defend the right real life because it is.

[02:10:31] Mayor Stan Jacklin

And last thing I'd like to everybody here to understand or to know I'm not happy with what the minister said either. That's that's not good. to come and basically tell us, go spend a bunch of money and then we'll tell you know about money. When precedent's already been set and these guys are playing around with taxpayers' money, you know, we're trying to better things for our population and these guys are up there playing house or whatever they're doing up in Halifax. and say no to what I would refer to as very positive forward-looking things for our citizens, right? Thank you.

[02:11:19] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

And also thank you to those of us or those that are online and that have submitted these questions. So yeah, thank you. Keep that feedback coming and keep being involved. That's how us as an entire community are going to get through this. So it'll be together.

[02:11:35] CAO MacLeod

I'm just from a staff's perspective. Just wanted to get some direction from the committee. Does you want staff to communicate at all with the NSA RB about the dilemma we're in? Do you want us to have those conversations? Good question. Yeah. What does everybody think?

[02:11:51] Mayor Stan Jacklin

Clearly, I would say for the most part, Warren is what do you want? Right? Just don't give us five or six bullets on bottom up. you know, wherever that information comes from and go, oh, fetch or throw it out in the ocean and go swim forward or something. It's very vague and I believe, as I said before, these are all government stall tactics. I don't know, they don't want to go to work, you know, to get too much and they don't want to do anything. I don't know what's going on. But to me, it's a stall tactic.

[02:12:25] CAO MacLeod

The answer would be much better. We'll get we'll get we'll get solid answers.

[02:12:31] Speaker L

Even if you have to share the letter to to what they they sent us.

[02:12:35] CAO MacLeod

We will share the letter for sure.

[02:12:38] Speaker J

Great. Any any other questions, comments, concerns, compliments and questions.

[02:12:45] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

I have one because we've we've had some discussions on our council we've presented with from public regarding accessibility to meetings. So. I don't maybe discussion around our group here. I know we meet here and we all agreed initially this would be the spot. I still think this is probably the best form to do it, but for some people, and we do have a lot of elderly senior people that just don't have accessibility to come to Shelburne. I'm wondering what the feeling of the committee here is if we were to rotate like once every third meeting and to lock forth or something that we could

[02:13:26] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

So it's a great segue into our next agenda item, which is next meeting.

[02:13:31] Speaker J

Oh, thank you. Thank you. Sorry. Yeah. No, no, perfect. Perfect.

[02:13:35] Chair, Mayor Derek Amalfa

So yeah, any thoughts from the rest of the committee on taking the show on the road once in a while? Lockwood's pretty.

[02:16:46] Speaker J

So any other business for today, call for a motion to adjourn. Thank you. Second.

[02:16:53] Speaker C

Second.

[02:16:54] Speaker J

Okay.

[02:16:55] Deputy Mayor Craig Hillen

Thank you, everybody.