

## **Municipality of the District of Lunenburg Minutes of a Special Meeting of Municipal Council**

Held in Council Chamber, 10 Allée Champlain Drive, Cookville, NS  
and via audio and video conferencing

Tuesday, May 31, 2022 – 8:30 a.m.

### **Attendance**

Mayor Carolyn Bolivar-Getson  
Deputy Mayor Cathy Moore, District 5  
Councillor Leitha Haysom, District 1  
Councillor Martin Bell, District 2  
Councillor Wendy Oickle, District 3  
Councillor Pam Hubleby, District 4  
Councillor Sandra Statton, District 6  
Councillor Michelle Greek, District 7 (via Teams)  
Councillor Kacy DeLong, District 8  
Councillor Reid Whynot, District 9  
Councillor Chasidy Veinotte, District 10 (via Teams then arrived at 8:52 a.m.)

### **Staff**

Tom MacEwan, Chief Administrative Officer  
Alex Dumaresq, Deputy CAO (via Teams)  
April Whynot-Lohnes, Municipal Clerk  
Sarah Kucharski, Manager, Corporate Services & Communications  
Elana Wentzell, Director of Finance (arrived at 8:53 a.m.)  
Jeff Merrill, Director of Planning & Development Services (via Teams)  
Dave Waters, Director of Economic Development (via Teams)  
Bill Schurman, Director of Recreation (via Teams)  
Joanne Powers, Executive Assistant

#### **1. Call to Order**

Mayor Bolivar-Getson called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and began by acknowledging that the meeting was held in Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq people.

#### **2. Approval of Agenda**

**Moved by Councillor Haysom, seconded by Councillor DeLong that the Agenda be approved as circulated. Carried unanimously.**

Due to a technical issue a short recess was taken at 8:35 a.m. The meeting resumed at 8:42 a.m.

### **3. Staff Reports**

#### **3.1 Administration Department**

##### **3.1.1 Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities Membership Survey**

Mr. Dumaresq reviewed a presentation titled, "Provincial/Municipal Service Exchange" (attached to minutes). The topics covered in the presentation were as follows:

- Overriding Philosophy
- Specifics Needed
- Roads
- Provincial/Municipal
- Increased Support for Discretionary Municipal Spending
- Top 3 Areas for Review
- Unacceptable New Responsibilities
- Discretionary Authorities
- Regulations that Cause Pressure
- Villages
- Consolidation
- New Revenue
- Operating Grant Improvements
- Capital Grant Improvements

Council discussed various items that require consideration when responding to the survey for the provincial/municipal service exchange, including: how gas tax will be affected, erosion on infrastructure, doctor recruitment, policing, housing, consistency in regulation and surplus schools.

Staff will prepare a submission and it will be brought back for review at the next Council meeting.

#### **4. Added Items - Nil**

#### **5. In Camera**

**At 9:32 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Oickle that Municipal Council go In Camera to discuss the following items:**

##### **5.1 Contract Negotiations re NSFAM under Section 22(2)(e) of the MGA**

##### **5.2 Potential Litigation under Section 22(2)(f) of the MGA**

**Carried.**

Municipal Council In Camera in session.

**At 10:14 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Whynot, seconded by Councillor Haysom that Municipal Council come out of In Camera and return to open session. Carried.**

Municipal Council in session.

**6. Adjournment**

**There being no further business at 10:14 a.m., it was moved by Councillor Veinotte seconded by Councillor DeLong that the meeting adjourn. Carried.**

# Provincial/Municipal Service Exchange

Draft MODL position  
May 2022

1

## Overriding philosophy

- The span of control of municipalities is geographically limited
  - Services that require broader coordination are less suited to local gov.
- Municipalities know their communities
  - Governance and strategic decisions requiring local knowledge are best done by municipalities
- Where there are overlapping jurisdictions:
  - work to clarify roles, and
  - provide the maximum discretion at the local level

2

## Specifics needed

- Scope of services need to be clearly defined
- Clarity on what elements of service are being transferred:
  - Capital, operating, planning, regulatory authority, extent of discretion permitted in service level, condition of existing assets, current service levels etc.
- Difficult to comment on service exchange without these specifics

3

## Roads info

- total KM provincial roads: 1238km
  - Trunks, numbered routes, and 100 series highways: 290km
  - Roads excluding the trunks and highways noted above: 948km
    - total KM of "J class" service exchange roads: 73km
- total KM of municipal roads: 11.4km

4

## Concerns with local road exchange

- Current road conditions do not meet standards
- Bridges require engineering expertise and are in very poor shape
- Division of remote local roads from provincial roads could create inefficient and overlapping system
- Loss of economies of scale, concern over sufficient equipment and labour
- Currently roads have centralized planning, design & analysis function
- May be merit in a more consistency applied fee per km of local roads, with Province continuing to maintain.

5

## Conclusion

- There is some merit to considering local road responsibility at the municipal level.
- greater discussion with more specifics is required

6

## Provincial

- Education
  - Incl. surplus schools
- Healthcare
- Inter-regional transit
- Provincial, trunk & route roads
- Corrections & justice admin
- Housing
- Public health
- Env. Regulation (incl. weeds)
- Long term care

## Municipal

- Land-use planning
- Local public transit
- Local roads & Sidewalks
- Water & Wastewater
- Economic Development
- Recreation
- building inspection
- Policing?

7

## Increased support for Discretionary Mun. spending

- Effective and interconnected public transit networks
  - Interconnectivity is critical to public use, not within the span of control of a municipality
- Affordable housing
  - Pressing need, relates to economic development, labour supply, human rights and quality of life
  - Councils well positioned to be aware of needs, opportunities and partnerships

8

## Top 3 areas for review

- Education
  - Single largest “municipal” expense
  - But council does not control amount or how it is spent
- Roads
  - Interconnected and somewhat arbitrary allocation of responsibility creates confusion among residents, dissent between municipalities, and unintended disparities in service level.
- Environment
  - NSE has responsibility to enforce environment act
  - Enforcement (e.g. Release of raw sewage) wholly inadequate

9

## Unacceptable new responsibilities

- Social housing
  - Population mobility and antiquated boundaries would result in unfair cost distribution among municipalities, splintered and unequal services, and therefore a disincentive to provide necessary service to citizens

10

## Discretionary authorities

### Useful

- Power to expend
- Code of conduct
- Accessibility development
- Sell land below market
- Negotiate for affordable housing
- Create commercial districts

### problematic

- Power to spend on hospitals
  - Health is provincial responsibility
  - Power amounts to a download and can create disparities in health care between regions

11

## Regulations that cause pressure

- surplus schools
- **Surplus Schools**
- **SURPLUS SCHOOLS**
- PVSC

### **Not Applicable**

- Federal WW Effluent (MODL supports the environmental improvement to the Lahave that will result from these regs.)
- Police DNA costs (not a considerable cost pressure)
- Minimum planning (MODL sees the value and importance of comprehensive land use plans)
- WCB for FF (MODL supports the expansion of coverage)

### **Other**

- Collective bargaining back pay for RCMP
  - If Feds lag in their negotiations, it should not be to municipalities to bear the backpay

12

## Villages

- Villages that are compliant with reasonable reporting standards to their residents and the province should be permitted to continue to provide service to their communities.
- At minimum, reporting should include:
  - Annual public budget presentation and rate approval
  - Annual election of officers
  - Annual presentation of audited financial statements
  - Submission of sufficient data for municipal affairs to complete FCIs for all villages.

13

## Consolidation

- Opportunities for voluntary merger of municipalities should be promoted.
- Primary benefit of merging is to improve decision-making, particularly where pre 1800s municipal boundaries do not reflect present day settlement and traffic patterns.
  - Mergers can significantly improve strategic investments and service development, and reduce competition for economic investment. Merging will also reduce transaction cost of establishing and managing inter-municipal agreements.
- Incentives:
  - More robust support in engaging community on the topic
  - Infrastructure funding to address aging capital assets (or pre-existing debt) in one unit

14

## New Revenue

Removal of mandatory contributions would more clearly illustrate the tax burden of municipal services.

15

## Operating Grant improvements

16

## Capital Grant Improvements

- Expanded support for municipal initiatives to reduce carbon emissions