



Amalgamation Steering Committee Meeting

December 3, 2025 | 2:30 pm

Municipality of Shelburne | 414 Woodlawn Drive | Room 114

AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Welcome and Introductions**
- 3. Approval of Agenda**
- 4. Election of Officers**
 - 4.1. Chair
 - 4.2. Vice Chair
- 5. Approval of Terms of Reference**
- 6. Presentations**
 - 6.1. Lisa Wallace, Chief Clerk, Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board
- 7. New Business**
 - 7.1. Discussion with Brian Cullen, CAO, Municipality of Pictou County
 - 7.2. Discussion on high level costs
- 8. Date/Time of Next Meeting**
- 9. Adjournment**



AMALGAMATION STEERING COMMITTEE

~ TERMS OF REFERENCE ~

1. Establishment of the Committee

The Amalgamation Steering Committee (the “Committee”) is a joint body established by the Town of Shelburne, Town of Lockeport, and the Municipality of the District of Shelburne (“the Municipal Units”) for the purpose of exploring the feasibility, implications, opportunities, and challenges of municipal amalgamation.

Participation on the Committee does not obligate any Municipal Unit to proceed with amalgamation. Each Council retains full autonomy regarding next steps.

2. Definitions

- a) Committee means the Amalgamation Steering Committee.
- b) Council means the municipal council of any of the three Municipal Units.
- c) Councillor means a sitting member of Council for any of the Municipal Units.
- d) Municipal Units refers collectively to the Town of Shelburne, Town of Lockeport, and Municipality of the District of Shelburne.
- e) Member means a member appointed to the Committee.
- f) Chair means the person elected by the Committee to preside over meetings.
- g) Vice-Chair means the member elected to preside in the absence of the Chair.
- h) Administration/Staff Resource means the CAO/Clerk of each of the Municipal Units, or their designate, who will provide staff support to the Committee.

3. Objectives

The Committee’s objectives are to:

- a) Explore the feasibility of amalgamation between the Municipal Units, including financial impacts, governance, human resources, service delivery, and legislative requirements.
- b) Provide a structured forum for discussion, information gathering, and collaborative analysis of amalgamation options.
- c) Commission or support studies, reports, public engagement processes, and other research necessary to inform the Councils.

- d) Develop recommendations for consideration by each Council on whether to proceed with further amalgamation steps, including potential application to the Nova Scotia Regulatory and Appeals Board (NSRAB), formerly Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB).
- e) Report regularly to each Council on progress, findings, and emerging issues.

4. Membership

- a) The Committee shall consist of the following voting members:
 - i) Two (2) Councillors appointed from each of the three Municipal Units.
- b) The following non-voting members will serve as staff resources:
 - i) The CAO/Clerk from each Municipal Unit (or designate).
- c) All appointments shall be made by each respective Council.
- d) Members will serve without remuneration but may be reimbursed for authorized expenses incurred in the performance of their duties, subject to applicable municipal policies.

In the event of resignation, prolonged absence, or an election, each Council shall appoint a replacement member(s).

5. Meetings

- a) A quorum shall consist of a majority of the voting members, including at least one representative from each Municipal Unit.
- b) Meetings shall be held monthly or as required, at a time and location agreed upon by the Committee. Meetings may be held in person or virtually, at the discretion of the Chair.
- c) Except as permitted under applicable legislation, meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public, and efforts will be made to accommodate virtual public attendance when feasible.
- d) Members may participate virtually using technology that allows all participants and the public to see and hear one another simultaneously.

6. Voting

- a) Decisions shall be made by majority vote of the voting members present.
- b) A member who fails to vote on a question is deemed to have voted in the negative unless otherwise provided by statute or policy.
- c) In the event of a tie vote, the motion is defeated.

7. Role of the Chair and Vice-Chair

- a) The Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair annually.
- b) The duties of the Chair/Vice-Chair include:
 - i) Assisting Administration in preparing agendas and scheduling meetings;
 - ii) Calling the meeting to order;
 - iii) Confirming quorum;

- iv) Maintaining order and facilitating respectful discussion;
- v) Guiding the agenda;
- vi) Recognizing members to speak;
- vii) Putting motions to vote;
- viii) Declaring the meeting adjourned.

8. Administration / Staff Support

- a) The CAO/Clerks of the Municipal Units shall jointly provide administrative and technical support to the Committee.
- b) Staff resources may assist with research, analysis, report preparation, engagement planning, and coordination of external consultants or studies.
- c) Committee members shall not direct or instruct staff except through the Committee and in accordance with established municipal policies.

9. Reporting

- a) The Committee shall report regularly to the Councils of each Municipal Unit, providing updates, findings, and recommendations.
- b) Major reports, studies, or public engagement results shall be formally submitted to all three Councils.

10. General

- a) The Committee shall conduct its work in accordance with all relevant legislation, municipal by-laws, policies, and codes of conduct.
- b) These Terms of Reference may be amended by mutual agreement of the Councils of all three Municipal Units.
- c) The Committee will dissolve upon completion of its mandate or upon mutual direction of the three Councils.

Approved by Councils:

Town of Shelburne: _____

Town of Lockeport: _____

Municipality of the District of Shelburne: _____

PRESENTATION

TOWN OF SHELBURNE, TOWN OF LOCKEPORT AND MUNICIPALITY OF THE DISTRICT OF SHELBURNE

AMALGAMATIONS AND DISSOLUTIONS



**Nova Scotia Regulatory
and Appeals Board**

OVERVIEW OF PROCESS

- 1) Application is filed with the Board
- 2) Hearing for a Preliminary Order (procedural issues)
- 3) Studies prepared and filed
- 4) Hearing on the Merits held in the region
- 5) Board Decision and Order





Overview of the process (9-10 months):

- Application
- Hearing for a Preliminary Order is held
- Prepare studies/reports required in Preliminary Order
- Hearing on the Merits is held in region
- Issuance of Board's Decision (within 60 days)
- Board's Final Order is issued – dismisses the application or sets the effective date for amalgamation/dissolution



PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Important to engage, inform and consult
the public

Engage the local media

All filings are available on the Board
website

(except a few confidential filings)



Hearing for a Preliminary Order

The Board must hear:

- (a) the applicant*;
- (b) representatives of affected municipal units;
- (c) the Minister of Municipal Affairs; and
- (d) any person who has previously notified the Board (formal intervenors/members of the public).

*Note: An applicant (usually the municipal units) may include the greater of 10% or 100 of the electors in the area proposed to be amalgamated (10% of electors for dissolutions)



Test under s. 363(1) of the MGA for amalgamation

The Board must determine if amalgamation is “in the best interests of the inhabitants of the area, taking into account the financial and social implications”.

Note: There is no express test for town dissolutions in the MGA. The Board has considered the financial impact and the “necessity and expediency”.



Procedural points covered at Preliminary Hearing

- who will be allowed to participate as Formal Intervenors?
- studies or evidence to be provided
- who will pay for the studies?
- timeline for the filing of the studies and evidence by all parties
- date for the Hearing on the Merits



STUDIES



STUDIES

- Which studies is determined at the Hearing for a Preliminary Order
- Studies may include reports, documents, financial projections, status letters (i.e., from Province for roads, policing, service exchange and equalization), lists, or any studies
- “any other evidence that the Board may direct”
– *Municipal Government Act*

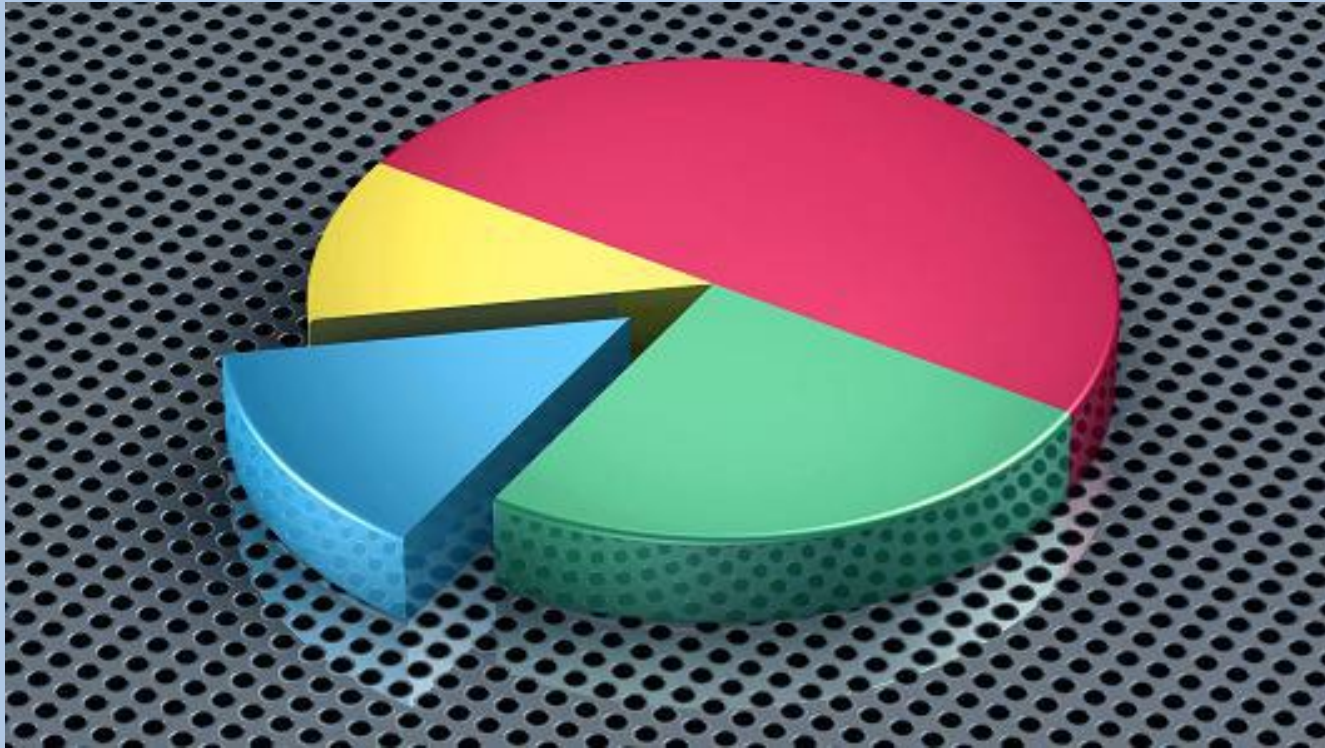


Issues include:

- Financial implications on the affected municipal units and on the Province
- Cost/service delivery for services such as fire services, solid waste, streetlighting
- Policing
- Roads and streets
- Equalization
- Water utilities – significant infrastructure costs expected?
- Recreation and community organizations



Financial implications – 5 year projections



Infrastructure studies



Policing

Policing – under the Police Act ss. 5 and 6, the Minister of Justice reviews policing services in a municipality



Roads and Streets

- Roads and Streets – under MGA s. 401, the Minister of Public Works or Cabinet may issue directives for Town dissolutions
- Municipal units should confirm the status of provincial roads with the Minister
- Bridges – ownership and maintenance



Polling Districts and Councillors

- Board powers under MGA s. 368 and s. 369 to determine the number and boundaries of polling districts and the number of councillors
- Mayor or Warden?



Polling District Boundaries

- Communities of interest
- Relative parity of voting power
- Board expects variances (from the average number of electors) between polling districts to be within +/-10%
- Variances up to +/-25% may be permitted in extraordinary circumstances where the Municipality provides an explanation for the necessity of an increased variance



Planning policies and by-laws

Policies and by-laws in effect continue in force until repealed by the new municipal council

MGA s. 400(4) – town dissolution

MGA s. 366(1) – amalgamation

BUT there should be a plan on the composition of the Planning and Heritage Advisory Committees and the delivery of planning services by the new municipality



Hearing on the Merits



Hearing on the Merits

- Matters scheduled over several days or a week
- Applicant(s) will present its case first, with its witnesses explaining the reasons for the application and highlighting the important points in the studies or in the evidence
- Formal Intervenors
- Minister of Municipal Affairs
- Board counsel's consultant, if any
- All parties will be subject to cross-examination
- Evening session for members of the public
- Plebiscite – “any other evidence” (non-binding)



After the Hearing

If Board Orders amalgamation or dissolution:

- effective date of amalgamation or dissolution
- Council size, polling districts and boundaries
- amalgamate or dissolve boards and commissions
- transfer of assets and liabilities
- transitional issues based on fiscal year (no new extraordinary spending during transition)
- other matters necessary or incidental
- Board may reserve further directions



QUESTIONS

