

January 30, 2024
For immediate release

Antigonish Town & County Councils Vote to Reaffirm Request for Consolidation

Antigonish, N.S. – At two emergency Council Meetings held on Tuesday, January 30, 2024, both Town and County Councils voted to confirm their decision on consolidation.

“Municipal [Town] Council confirms its October 20, 2022, request that the Provincial Government consolidate the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish into one municipal unit through special legislation.”

The vote was four in favour and three against the motion for the Town. At the County, the vote was five for and four against, with one Councillor having to declare a conflict of interest and not participate in the vote.

In a letter received by the Mayor and Warden on Friday, January 26, from Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister John Lohr, both councils were asked to reaffirm their request to consolidate into one municipal unit by resolution. In his letter it stated, *“If the position of the Town and County remains that you are requesting consolidation of your units, the Province is prepared to introduce special legislation during the next session of the legislature, commencing on February 27.”*

In September 2021, both councils voted unanimously to participate in an exploration of consolidation. Exploration included research on such topics such as policing, taxation, fire services, program service delivery, finance, and human resources, as well as community consultation across the Town and County. On October 20, 2022, both Councils voted in favor of requesting the provincial government consolidate the Municipality of the County of Antigonish and the Town of Antigonish into one municipal unit through special legislation.

A court action was filed against the Municipality of the County of Antigonish attempting to quash the results of the vote, stating the Municipality did not have the legal authority to make the request to consolidate to the Province. The Municipality appeared in Nova Scotia Supreme Court on July 7, 2023. The case was dismissed by Justice Timothy Gabriel on December 5, 2023 confirming that the Municipality has the authority to make the request to consolidate with the Town of Antigonish.

“This process began two and a half years ago,” says Warden Owen McCarron, Municipality of the County of Antigonish. “We have the confirmation from Minister Lohr’s letter that with our reaffirm of our motions from October 2022, that the Province will introduce special legislation this Spring to consolidate us into one. We feel like we are finally moving forward.”

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“I believe having one municipal government for our community is the best path forward,” says Laurie Boucher, Mayor for the Town of Antigonish. “We absolutely respect the past and the history that we have, but we need to look forward not backwards. Having our community represented by one council will allow us to grow together with cohesive planning and decision making.”

“We have a lot of work to do once the legislation is passed but we are ready and excited,” says Warden McCarron. “We are prepared for the task before us, and we will do it together. It is time to put this behind us and move forward to build a municipality that reflects Antigonish of today and tomorrow. This is a historical moment for our community and the province, and one we believe will create a stronger community for all.”

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