

Memorandum of Understanding Steering Committee Meeting
Thursday, August 13, 2015 at 9:30am
Municipality of the County of Pictou - Council Chambers

In attendance:

Municipality of the County of Pictou	Warden Ronald Baillie Councillor Deborah Wadden Brian Cullen, CAO Carolyn MacIntosh, Deputy Clerk
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Town of New Glasgow	Mayor Barrie MacMillan Councillor Jack Lewis Lisa MacDonald, CAO
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Town of Pictou	Mayor Joe Hawes Councillor Cam Beaton Scott Conrod, CAO
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Town of Stellarton	Mayor Joe Gennoe Councillor Denise Taylor Joyce Eaton, Town Clerk
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Sean Liu, MOU Policy and Research Assistant

NS Department of Municipal Affairs	Municipal Advisor Emily Pond
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Observers in Attendance:

Town of Pictou	Councillor Alta Munroe Councillor Lynn Vigneault
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Town of New Glasgow	Councillor Nancy Dicks
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Municipality of the County of Pictou	Deputy Warden Andy Thompson
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Call to Order

Warden Baillie called the meeting to order.

Approval of Agenda

Motion: To approve the Agenda.

Moved: Mayor Barrie MacMillan

Seconded: Mayor Joe Hawes

Motion Approved.

Approval of Minutes – July 30, 2015

Motion: To approve the Minutes for July 30, 2015.

Moved: Councillor Denise Taylor

Seconded: Councillor Jack Lewis

Motion Approved.

Business Arising from the Minutes

a. Electronic Voting Report

Deputy Clerk Carolyn MacIntosh and Town Clerk Joyce Eaton presented the report prepared by the Sub-Committee. Deputy Clerk MacIntosh noted the report reflects the modern voting process known as e-voting. There is an opportunity for a bulk purchase of the e-voting process for the next election and the province could see over 50% of the municipalities using the process based on the expression of interest by the municipal units. The majority of the information was obtained through HRM as they have the most experience related to this process. She noted that a bylaw must be adopted by all units related to the e-voting process. The total collective cost for the 2012 election was \$124,215.28 and a number of options were reviewed for the plebiscite with a hybrid model being recommended for a modified version with reduced polling stations. Electronic equipment is a cost driver for the polling stations. She noted that equipment after the election may not be utilized based on demands. The participating municipal units have expressed interest in the provincial bulk purchase to reduce costs for our plebiscite efforts.

Mayor Joe Gennoe asked how the electronic voting costs would be divided. Warden Baillie said the fairest way is to divide the costs based on voters within each unit / population as recommended within the report. Mayor MacMillan asked if we are planning for an advance poll. Town Clerk Eaton noted that the Election Act process must be followed and therefore, physical advance polling stations will be required on two separate days. The reports notes electronic advance polls would be held over 10 days. MacIntosh noted that it is Councils' decision on what type of election process will be undertaken. Mayor MacMillan asked if we would have four sets of rules so it would need to be decided at the MOU Steering Committee and recommended to the individual councils. CAO Conrod

noted that the letter from the UARB indicates that they are not opposed to a jointly managed process. Councillor Wadden asked about the recounts for electronic votes. MacIntosh noted that the electronic voting, a website tracks the results but there is no software tracking for recounts. Wadden asked about the reduction of polling stations for the advance poll. MacIntosh noted that the Valley View Villa and the Wellness Centre is being recommended for advance polls. There would be less polling stations within the rural areas of the County. Mayor MacMillan noted concerns about the timelines and the 1st reading of the bylaw would need to occur not later than October. He recommended a legal review of the bylaw immediately in order to meet the timelines. Councillor Wadden noted that 8.1 of the MOU withdrawal clause would be impacted based on the plebiscite timelines. CAO Conrod advised that he felt a pre-condition report would be submitted prior to the plebiscite but if a municipal unit decides to withdraw, they may be responsible for their pro-rata share of the costs incurred. Mayor Gennoe noted that he appreciates a lot of work went into this but he questioned if we are wise to spend our money on an electronic voting as he felt the majority of rural residents do not have computers. It was noted that electronic voting is available through the telephone, computers, smart phones, tablets, etc. Councillor Cam Beaton noted that the goal is to have more people engaged in voting and having modern tools will assist in engaging more people to vote. Councillor Taylor also supported the process of incorporating the electronic voting option.

Warden Baillie indicated that the plebiscite is a very important part of the entire MOU process and perhaps considering cost cutting in this area would not serve the citizens or process well. Mayor Hawes reiterated those points and Mayor MacMillan agreed. CAO Conrod advised that the recommendation is Option 5 with one caveat as we need to have clarity on the ability to consolidate polls outside of the physical jurisdiction or certain municipalities and modify the number of names the Units are allowed to carry on an election list.

Motion: To approve the advancement of option 5 with advance electronic polls and regular voting day polls with paper ballots. This option is contingent upon a favorable response from the UARB or Chief Municipal Elections Officer regarding the consolidation of polling stations and the voters list.

Moved: Mayor Joe Hawes
Seconded: Councillor Denise Taylor

Approved.

1 Nay Vote – Mayor Joe Gennoe

b. Execution of MOU Amending Agreement

CAO Conrod advised that the amending agreement to the MOU is ready for execution and signing will take place in the end of the meeting. The amending agreement outlines three components:

- 1) Authorize the execution and filing of a joint voluntary PMU application to the UARB provided that the application is conditional on the outcome of the public consultation including a plebiscite;
- 2) Approval of the agreement as an amendment to the MOU; and
- 3) Agreement that failure to meet a MOU precondition is a substantive reason per s.8.1 of the MOU, thereby permitting PMUs to withdraw from the UARB process and the MOU.

c. Communications Report

CAO MacDonald reviewed the recent media coverage contained in the steering committee package with related reference to the MOU initiative.

d. Governance Study – Public Release

CAO Cullen noted the final version of the Grant Thornton report has been received and the document will be circulated to the MOU Steering Committee. This is the final version which will also be presented to the public and filed with the UARB conditional application.

e. Electoral Districts – Public Consultation Scheduling

CAO MacDonald advised that the public consultation activities are currently being planned as approved at the previous meeting. Councillor Taylor noted that she wanted to ensure a student and public session were planned for Stellarton in the NSCC location.

f. Human Resource Study Update

CAO MacDonald advised that Grant Thornton is still collecting benchmark and supporting information for the report.

New Business

a. NSUARB Conditional Application

CAO Conrod reviewed the key components of the conditional application and the submissions required to the UARB.

b. Scheduling of Next Meeting Date

Tuesday, August 25, 2015 at 9:30am in the Municipality of the County of Pictou's Council Chambers.

Motion: To go into Private Session.

Moved: Mayor Barrie MacMillan

Seconded: Councillor Cam Beaton

Approved.

The Committee reconvened in public session. There were no recommendations from private the session.

Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn the meeting.

Moved: Mayor Joe Hawes

Seconded: Councillor Cam Beaton

Motion Approved.