

Friday, February 5, 2016

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS--Agreement Supports New Governance Model in Pictou County

Municipal Affairs Minister Zach Churchill signed an agreement today, Feb. 5, with four municipalities in Pictou County to support a new governance structure.

The agreement provides more than \$27 million over five years to help with the costs of amalgamating the Municipality of the County of Pictou and the towns of New Glasgow, Stellarton and Pictou.

"These municipalities recognize the benefits of joining forces to provide efficient, sustainable local government for their citizens," said Mr. Churchill. "If they choose to amalgamate, this transition funding will help establish the new governance structure and address some key infrastructure needs in the area."

If amalgamation proceeds effective Nov. 1, 2016, \$15.2 million will support infrastructure, operating and capital investments for roads and transitional costs associated with amalgamation. Equalization funding for the amalgamated municipality will be frozen for five years at the levels that the four separate municipalities are currently receiving, totaling \$11.9 million.

The details are in a joint letter of intent being filed as evidence today with the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, along with financial reports.

"We believe in creating a structure for a strong Pictou County and more vibrant communities through regional collaboration that can respond efficiently and effectively to the needs of both citizens and businesses," said Ronald Baillie, warden of the Municipality of Pictou County. "If we amalgamate, this agreement will help us transition to a new governance and operational structure that is in the best interests of residents of Pictou County."

Last August, the municipalities applied to the Utility and Review Board for amalgamation. They continue to gather citizen input, with public plebiscites planned for May 28 in each of the four municipalities.

More information about the amalgamation process is available at onepictoucounty.ca.

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