



VILLAGE OF ALMA - AMALGAMATION UPDATE

Bulletin No. 3
March 4, 2022

TO RECALL FROM BULLETIN NO. 1

The amalgamation process has begun! Here is what we know so far:

- The incorporated Village of Alma and its Council will cease on January 1, 2023.
- Alma will become part of a larger local government entity (currently known as Entity 42) that will include Alma, Riverside-Albert, Hillsborough, Harvey, Hopewell, a portion of Lower Coverdale, and all points in between.
- Municipal elections for the new entity will be held on November 28, 2022.

TO RECALL FROM BULLETIN NO. 2

- The Elected Advisory Committee has decided Entity 42 will be divided into six (6) Wards. Mayor Andrew Casey and Councillor John Ereaux represented the village during the new Council composition deliberations putting forth many reasons why they believed MORE representation was necessary for the Village of Alma. In the end, our low (permanent) population in comparison to the other areas in Entity 42 was deemed by the other Committee members, to be reason enough, that the Village of Alma NOT be allocated even a single Councillor of its own. Our representation on the new Entity 42 Council will be much reduced.
- What this means for the Village of Alma. We will be going:
 - **FROM** >> our current Council that has one (1) Mayor, no Wards, and three (3) Councillors, all residing in the Village of Alma;
 - **TO** >> a situation under the new Entity 42, where Alma voters, will elect one (1) Councillor for our Ward, and one (1) Mayor for all of Entity 42.
 - The Mayor could reside anywhere within Entity 42.
 - Our Councillor could reside anywhere in our Ward (Village of Alma, the Alma LSD, or the Harvey LSD.)

--- LATEST NEWS ---

VILLAGE OF ALMA SEEKS BETTER REPRESENTATION!

- The Council has become increasingly concerned that the stated benefits of amalgamation may be outweighed by the negative outcomes of amalgamation – at least for our village.
- Many details remain unknown – how amalgamation will affect our tax rates, how our tax revenue will be spent, what services we will receive, and how much of our tax dollars will actually stay in Alma. The same goes for the village's assets (e.g. buildings, fire trucks, bobcat, trucks, etc.) – we simply do not know whether these assets will remain in Alma.
- Council asked for a meeting with Minister Allain from the Department of Local Government. On Thursday, March 3 we were granted a thirty-minute call to state our concerns to the Deputy Minister of Local Government. Council made clear that Alma was seeking better representation and better control of its destiny under amalgamation.

- Sadly, we must report that our plea was rejected. The Deputy Minister stated his belief that Alma will be among the biggest winners of amalgamation. It is his belief that Alma must be amalgamated with the entire rest of Entity 42 to have a sufficient population and tax base to take advantage of all the available opportunities. He believes that amalgamation sets up the capacity for Alma not just to “survive, but to thrive,” and make us stronger.
- Council understood the Deputy Minister’s position. However, we felt that he did not appreciate our position, which is:
 - A lack of sufficient representation on the new Council, combined with;
 - A population distribution of Entity 42 that is skewed heavily in the northern part of the new entity; and
 - A Mayor, Councillors, and Council office that is likely residing many kilometers away; will not be conducive to realizing Alma’s full potential, nor to safeguarding the assets that we worked so hard to acquire.
- Council is aware that several concerned residents have sent letters of concern to various government officials (including our MLA, the Minister of Local Government, and Premier Higgs). Council thanks these residents for their initiative in voicing their concerns. We are also aware that many of these letters have yet to receive a reply!
- Council is also concerned about how the senior administration officials (e.g. Clerk, Treasurer, Chief Administration Officer) for the new Entity will be selected. At present, our understanding is that the province’s appointed facilitator will personally establish a human resources (HR) sub-committee of four people, plus himself and an HR consultant. Together, the sub-committee will select the new administration officials(s) using a process open to the public (meaning anyone may apply).

NEXT STEPS

- Council intends to schedule a Public Meeting to address the topic of amalgamation and its potential impacts on the Village of Alma. Council will use this opportunity to provide the latest information available to us and to seek input from Alma residents that we can take forward to the Premier. We expect the Public Meeting will be held the week of March 14-18. Once the date is set, we will announce it using all our usual communication channels.
- Council is writing a letter to the Department of Local Government to reiterate that our meeting on March 3rd has not alleviated our concerns and our residents’ concerns about Alma’s future in the new Entity 42.
- We learned just today that finalizing outer entity boundaries (drop dead) deadline is today, March 4.
- We will continue to provide “Amalgamation Update Bulletins” as new information becomes available to us.

Sincerely,

The Council and Clerk of the Village of Alma