



VILLAGE OF ALMA - AMALGAMATION UPDATE

TO RECALL FROM BULLETIN NO. 1

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 Government of New Brunswick has decided Entity 42 will be divided into six (6) Wards. Our representation on the new Entity 42 Council will be much reduced. We will be going **FROM** a 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 (Alma Village, the Alma LSD or the Harvey LSD). Many other details are 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.

TO RECALL FROM BULLETIN NO. 3

Council was granted a brief meeting with the Deputy Minister of Local Government to convey our concerns and seek better representation for Alma. The outcome of this meeting was not satisfactory to the Council. Council submitted a list of questions to the Department of Local Government and answers have been received and are posted on the village website. Many important details of how amalgamation will affect our taxpayers are still unknown.

TO RECALL FROM BULLETIN NO. 4

Following a Public Meeting held on March 23, 2022, and subsequent to a petition and formal request sent to the Province requesting a splitting of the Entity 42 to provide better representation for Alma, we were informed by the Minister of Local Government that our request was being denied.

---LATEST NEWS---

The new name for our entity has now been established. The name of our entity will be "Fundy Albert".

BUDGETS AND TAXATION:

- We have learned that Fundy Albert will initially be composed of eight different taxation areas with these areas corresponding to the geographical boundaries currently in place for the three municipalities and five Local Service districts that make up Fundy Albert. This means there will be 8 different taxation areas within Fundy Albert.
- Different tax rates will be applied to the different taxation areas with the different tax rates reflecting what services are being provided in that area.
- Some services are considered "shared services" for which all taxpayers within Fundy Albert will pay for equally. The cost of running the Council is an example of a shared service.
- Other services will be considered "local services" for which only the taxpayers in the local taxation area will pay for. Snow removal is an example of a local service.

LATEST NEWS - continued

- A full listing of which services will be considered as “shared services” has not yet been provided to us by the Province.
- It is also possible that some services may be considered “shared services” but not funded completely equally among all Fundy Albert taxpayers. Recreation services such as an indoor arena might fall into this category. Those taxation areas with close proximity to the service might be required to contribute a greater share of the service than taxation areas located far away. Further details on this concept are not yet available.
- The old “Village of Alma” area will be a unique taxation area with its own unique tax rate.
- Alma’s tax rate for 2022 is the highest of all the different taxation areas in Fundy Albert. What Alma’s tax rate will be for 2023 is unknown at this time.
- The 2023 budgets for Fundy Albert are being set by the Province (via the Amalgamation Facilitator). While our Council has had inputs into the budget priorities for 2023, all of the final budget decisions and the establishment of the corresponding tax rates are being made by the Province (via the Amalgamation Facilitator) and the Alma Council has no say in these decisions for the 2023 budget.
- The concept of “User pay, User say” is now effectively lost for our village as our unique taxation rate will be set by others.

WATER AND SEWER:

- The Alma water and sewer system will continue to be fully funded by our local rate payers only. The rest of the taxpayers within Fundy Albert will not contribute any monies to our system.
- The big project to expand Alma’s water system is still underway and progressing with the full support of our Amalgamation Facilitator.

OTHER ITEMS:

The hiring of the Chief Administration Officer for Fundy Albert is currently underway and will likely be finalized by September. Hiring is being carried out by the Amalgamation Facilitator and Human Resources professionals hired by the Province. Your Council has no influence, nor say, in this process. Our Clerk, Hanna Downey, is participating in the competitive hiring process and is in the running for this position.

- Elections for the new Mayor and Council for Fundy Albert will be in November. Before this date, the rates of pay for Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councilors will be finalized.
- Recall that eligible voters in Alma will cast a vote for Mayor and for one Councilor position for our Ward 1 which includes Alma and the Harvey Local Service district (i.e. Waterside, Harvey, West River, etc).
- It is still not clear on what bylaws will be in effect January 1, 2023 but likely the bylaws will be a mixture of existing Alma bylaws and new Fundy Albert bylaws.

NEXT STEPS

- We will continue to provide “Amalgamation Update Bulletins” as new and important information becomes available to us.

Sincerely,

The Council and Clerk of the Village of Alma