

MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF CUMBERLAND
TRANSITION REPORT #2
September 16, 2015

This is the second report in a series of updates pursuant to the merger of the Municipality of the County of Cumberland and the Town of Springhill. A number of initiatives have been completed by Council since the previous transition report dates April 27, 2015.

Some of the major tasks that have been completed or approved include the following:

Finance Initiatives

Consolidated operating and capital budgets were drafted and approved for the 2015/2016 fiscal year. The preparation of these budgets include a significant amount of analysis, input, and discussion by staff in all departments. Council spends a number of meeting days in reviewing and reaching consensus on major budget items.

A tax policy structure was developed and implemented for the 2015/2016 budget process.

The result of the budget deliberations together with the implementation of tax policy resulted in a decrease in the former Springhill rates and maintaining County tax rates. There were significant property tax reductions in Springhill while providing a high level of services.

Tax payments are accepted at both the Upper Nappan and the Springhill Service Centres.

A number of grants specific to Springhill based organizations were approved.

Operations/Capital/Facilities/Social Capital

A draft consolidated Capital Investment Plan has been prepared that will facilitate capital projects planning and the preparation of funding applications for the future.

A Building Canada Fund application to complete major infrastructure upgrade/replacement was prepared and submitted. Unfortunately, this project was not approved but will be submitted in the next round of applications.

A complete condition assessment was conducted by County staff of the Springhill road network. This assessment formed the basis for the recent paving tender. The amount of paving being completed in 2015/2016 is in excess of \$500,000.

The retrofit and upgrades to the former Town Hall have started. This retrofit will include renovations that will allow this facility to provide quality RCMP services.

Tender specifications are being finalized for roof and window replacement for the former Springhill Town Hall. The objective is to provide a safer and healthier work environment and reduce the environmental footprint of that facility.

A Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee was formed and have held a number of meetings. The objective of this program is to create a safety culture in our organization via programs, knowledge, and audits.

A number of priorities in Springhill have been addressed through the Dangerous and Unsightly Premises By-Law. This program will continue to be implemented in particular with regard to dangerous condition properties.

The building permitting application process is available to residents at both Service Centres.

Council has approved funding for cell phone reception upgrades at the Community Centre. Applications to acquire a portable stage, install a modern sound system, and purchase proper seating for music and theatrical performances were completed and approved. Funding has also been approved for the Connect 2 Program and the construction of a natural accessible playground.

Events hosted at the community centre include a concert, motocross, exhibition hockey game and the Energy Symposium.

Governance and Administration

The Governance and Electoral Boundary Review study was completed and implemented. The Special Election was held with the result being two additional Councillors from the former Springhill jurisdiction were elected.

Service centers and facilities continue to provide customer service. These include Upper Nappan finance services, public works, administration, governance, reception, permitting, land use planning, recreation, capital projects, information technology, energy projects, fire protection services, emergency management coordination, developmental services, human resources administration. Springhill services include finance, public works, administration, reception, permitting, recreation, capital projects, fire protection services, and human resource administration. Police services are provided in all communities as is engineering services.

Boards, agencies and committees have been approved with elected officials assigned to represent Council. Citizen appointments have also been completed.

The 5 Working Group mandates have been drafted and citizen representatives have been selected via a public engagement process. Working binders are being prepared for Committee members.

Pension plan assets have been consolidated with a single Underwriter. Meetings with employees are being organized to discuss risk tolerance, investment options, administrative issues, plan design, etc.

A draft RFP to consolidate all policies and bylaws has been prepared. This process will commence as part of the relevant Working Group mandate.

Council has approved the go ahead for a Springhill recreation facilities concept design.

The geothermal capacity/sustainability project is moving forward via a partnership with the Verschuran Center.

A number of personnel issues have been resolved or continue to be a Work In Progress.

Human Resource Development

An organization development strategy draft has been completed. This strategy includes creating a safety culture, implementing a performance development plan, competency and skills development, organization structure, responsibilities and accountability relationships, succession planning,

organization competency development, leadership, good governance, etc. organization development will take several years to implement to ensure success.

An initial draft Organization Chart was prepared and approved by Council. Since that approval, additional changes have been made and a revised chart will be presented to Council for approval prior to the end of the calendar year.

A Compensation Plan Review Committee has had a number of meetings and have prepared the terms of reference for an RFP to review and recommend a consolidated compensation plan for all staff and elected officials. This is a key component to organizational development.

A Personnel Policy Review Committee has also had several meetings with the objective being to review the various Personnel related policies and prepare a draft consolidated policy that is progressive, fair, and equitable. Again, this is a building block for successful and positive organization development.

We have completed some restructuring, reassigned some responsibilities, commenced the re-writing of position descriptions, and provided enhanced communications with staff. We have also corrected classification and salary scale issues.

A Labour/Management Committee has been formed and has been meeting to discuss a number of issues.

Moving Forward

The April 27, 2015 Communications Bulletin identified a number of transition issues that will require significant time and resources to move forward. Of the 16 priorities included in that report, we will continue to work on the following 13 priorities:

1. Human Resource Development and Planning
2. Municipal Planning Strategy/Land Use By-Law
3. Policy Consolidation and Revision
4. By-Law Consolidation and Revision
5. Communications Strategy
6. Records Management
7. Economic Development Strategy
8. Software/IT Service Review
9. Demolition/Clean-up of Properties
10. Signage and Branding
11. Property Tax Collection
12. Leases, Contracts, Agreements
13. Organization Culture

These priorities will be managed either through the work and efforts of staff or via the Working Groups. In some cases, expertise will be engaged. Reports will be brought back to Council as either information or discussion and decision. These issues will form a significant portion of Council's agenda.