



NEWS RELEASE
March 7, 2024

Amalgamation Committee Advances Process With Various Reports and Public Consultation Dates

(Rocky Mountain House, AB) – On February 29, 2024, the Amalgamation Negotiation Committee convened for its scheduled meeting, discussing various aspects of the negotiation process, including operational plans and financial considerations, with the aim of providing clarity and transparency to stakeholders.

A key outcome of the meeting was the decision to enhance community engagement by setting public participation dates. These meetings offer community members a chance to share their views and contribute to discussions on the amalgamation. Additional highlights from the meeting include:

- 1. Environmental Services Operational Plan** - Clearwater County currently provides services to the Village of Caroline under the following provincial legislation: *Weed Control Act*, *Agriculture Pests Act*, *Soil Conservation Act*, and *Environmental Enhancement and Protection Act*. Services will continue under the amalgamated municipality by staff appointed to administer and enforce these Acts.
- 2. Telecommunications Agreements & Telus Next Generation 911 Operational Plan** - Existing contracts with Clearwater County and Village of Caroline will transfer to the amalgamated municipality. The County is currently working with Telus to prepare for migration of emergency services data, expected to take place March 2025. Caroline data will be included in the transfer under the amalgamated municipality.
- 3. Compensation to Other Municipal Authorities** - There is no compensation due to other municipalities resulting from the proposed amalgamation. However, the amalgamated municipality would be required to pay Clearwater County's existing funding agreements, approximately a total \$3,656,549 in 2025, to other municipal authorities, as follows:
 - Wetaskiwin County – Tax Sharing Agreement (expires 2033)
 - City of Red Deer – Emergency Dispatch Services (expires 2029)
 - Town of Rocky Mountain House
 - Community Support Service Agreement (expires 2025)
 - Library Agreement (under negotiation)
 - Airport Operating Agreement (expires 2028)
 - Recreation & Culture Operating Agreement (under negotiations)
 - Family & Community Support Services (perpetual)
 - RCMP Administrative Support (expires 2027)
 - Wastewater Facility Upgrade Funding (expires 2025)

Funding amounts payable in later years, will continue under the amalgamated municipality.

- 4. Financial Transition** - Based on the proposed January 1, 2025, date of amalgamation, independent financial statement audits will take place as follows:
 - Clearwater County – as at year ending December 31, 2024
 - Village of Caroline – as at year ending December 31, 2024
 - Amalgamated Municipality – as at year ending December 31, 2025



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5. Municipal Assets/Debt/Liabilities - All assets, debt, liabilities will transfer to the amalgamated municipality (below amount are based on 2022 audited financial statements).

| Type | Clearwater County | Village of Caroline | Amalgamated Municipality Combined Estimated Total |
|----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---|
| Financial Assets | \$123,380,679 | \$1,289,926 | \$124,670,605 |
| Liabilities & Debt | \$ 24,464,734 | \$ 537,683 | \$ 25,002,417 |
| Net Financial Assets | \$ 98,915,945 | \$ 752,243 | \$ 99,668,188 |
| Non-financial Assets | \$382,010,465 | \$7,683,527 | \$389,693,992 |
| Accumulated Surplus | \$480,926,410 | \$8,435,770 | \$489,362,180 |

6. Stakeholder Engagement Response & Future Public Participation Activities - Out of 381 Village and County stakeholders who were notified of the proposed amalgamation and invited to comment, only ten (10) responses were received, as follows:

| Respondent | Impact of Amalgamation Concern/Comment |
|---|---|
| Local Business | Concerned with costs to taxpayers, future expansion of Caroline lagoon to receive hauled waste |
| Caroline Library | Concerned with library sustainability |
| Clearwater Regional Family and Community Support Services | Commented that agreement, budget, board membership will need updates |
| Fortis Alberta | Minimal concerns |
| ID #12 Jasper National Park | None |
| Lacombe County | None |
| Parkland Regional Library System | Minimal concerns |
| Resident | Commented that excessive land use policies ruining land-owner investment |
| Rocky Community Learning Council | None |
| Clearwater County Taxpayers' Association | Concerned with Committee's agreement for a 12 member interim council (full representation from the Village and County) giving significant 'representation weight' to Caroline residents |

The Committee agreed to schedule public meetings for consultation on the proposed amalgamation as follows:

- Caroline Community HUB, 4 to 6pm, April 17, 2024, in-person
- Leslieville Community Centre, 4 to 6pm, April 18, 2024, in-person
- Virtual Online, 11am to 1pm, April 19, 2024

7. Annexation of Land for Contiguous Boundary - The Committee agreed that annexation of lands to achieve contiguous boundaries for the amalgamated municipality is not required.

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More information is available on the project website at www.clearwatercounty.ca/m/amalgamation.

Public Inquiries: amalgamation@clearwatercounty.ca or amalgamation@villageofcaroline.com

Media Inquiries: communications@clearwatercounty.ca