



Village of Blacks Harbour Council
 Council Chambers – 65 Wallace Cove Road

Present: Mayor – John Craig, Deputy Mayor – Adam Hatt, Councillors – Ashley Ritchie, Amber Libby, Jordan Thompson, Gerald Welles
 Staff – Assistant Clerk/Treasurer – Stacey Frost, Accounting & Administrative – Cara Hatt

Guests: MLA - Andrea Anderson-Mason, Glen Hawkins

1. Call to order	7:00pm
2. Recording of Attendance	
3. Approval of Agenda	
<p style="text-align: right;">MOVED BY: Councillor Thompson SECONDED BY: Councillor Ritchie</p> <p>Be it resolved; That the agenda for the December 22, 2021 Special Meeting of Council be accepted as presented.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">CARRIED</p>	12222021-01
4. Disclosure of Conflict of Interest on Agenda Items – nil	
<p>5. New Business</p> <p>5.1 Decision on Letters to Government regarding Municipal Reform</p> <p>Mayor Craig gave Council the opportunity to speak with their thoughts and personal views:</p> <p>Deputy Mayor Hatt made a motion to send a letter to the Provincial Government for consideration in our area to adjust the boundaries so Blacks Harbour would not lose its incorporation as the white paper states we meet \$200 000.00 tax assessment criteria. Motion introduced by Deputy mayor Hatt, motion not seconded – Motion Failed</p> <p>Councillor Thompson made a motion to send a letter to Honourable Daniel Allain, Minister of Local Government and local Governance Reform, On November, 18, 2021, the province of New Brunswick released the white</p>	

paper, "Working Together for Vibrant and Sustainable Communities", and held a press conference upon the release. Our Mayor and Council were prompt to read and understand what it entailed. The goal is clear, remove barriers that have prevented communities from working together by ensuring effective collaboration and planning. Efficient use of tax dollars will be utilized to improve the level services for residents and help to foster growth in all sectors for generations to come.

Council has recently been made aware of communications directed to the Department of Local Government and Local Governance reform, which may have mis represented and mis characterized its views on municipal reform. To be clear, Blacks Harbour Council believes we are stronger together as one region and does **not support** an effort to segregate or break up the proposed amalgamation between St. George and Blacks Harbour. The utilization of services offered by Blacks Harbour was referenced as an example in the Green paper to help demonstrate the need of municipal reform in New Brunswick. In an effort to ensure sustainability and growth of services provided, Blacks Harbour Council understands the importance of regional collaboration. For many years Blacks Harbour has carried financial burdens for the greater benefit of the region. Please immediately dis-regard any previous communication that would have stated the Village of blacks Harbours 'position otherwise.

As the smaller municipality in the amalgamation of St. George and surrounding areas, Blacks Harbour Council is dedicated to ensure municipal assets and services are maintained and have opportunity for expansion and growth. Blacks Harbour deserves fair representation within the proposed local government to ensure goals of the new municipality are well aligned with the interests in Blacks Harbour and other areas of the community. Council looks forward to working with a transitional leader to well position the Village within the new framework. Blacks Harbour is looking forward to increased opportunities for growth and economic development. There are questions regarding the implementation and the timeline of reform; however, council is invested in ensuring the region understands the importance of the next step. In closing, on behalf of Mayor and Council, please accept this letter as our official position on municipal reform and proposed changes in our region. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to a bright future.

Respectfully,

Mayor and Council of the Village of Blacks Harbour

MOVED BY: Councillor Thompson

SECONDED BY: Councillor Libby

Deputy Mayor Hatt disagrees with the letter.

Be it resolved;

council move forward with the sending the letter read by Councillor Jordan Thompson

CARRIED | 12222021-02

Councillor Amber Libby -

I'm happy to finally be given the opportunity to publicly voice my thoughts on municipal reform.

Although there are many questions and concerns, I think it's expected with a reform of this size. It is unreasonable to expect all the answers on day one and to reject it based on that. I believe many answers will come as we work through the transition phase.

My biggest concern for Blacks Harbour would be that we have fair representation in the new structure. We do have a few needs that are unique to Blacks Harbour and we are actively working on initiatives to solve those issues. With fair representation we will be better equipped to move the mark on those projects.

Although we have a few unique needs, we share all of the same challenges as St George... housing, Economic development, population growth, recreation, childcare ... to name a few.

We, as leaders, should be promoting what could be gained by working together on some of these crippling challenges in our communities. We need to better position ourselves to gain from reform rather than focusing on the shorter list of what some feel we will lose.

Councillor Ashley Ritchie spoke her views:

I am for reform. Since joining the council, I have always expressed my interest in working together to achieve common goals. I truly believe we are better together, and that reform will ensure we are sustainable with the added benefit of being vibrant.

I have never identified with one place in Charlotte County, but rather Eastern Charlotte as a whole. I grew up just inside the boundaries of Lepreau, and over the years have attended Pocologan, Pennfield, and Blacks Harbour Elementary School, and Fundy High School back when it was still called Fundy High School. This entire region has contributed to my education. Blacks Harbour was where I held my first job at the fish plant. Lake Utopia was where I held my second job, and Pennfield was where I held my third job. When I left this area after high school to pursue my post-secondary education, I always returned to the local area to work to save money before leaving again. I always connected it back to the region that set me up for the real world, not an individual place.

When I returned home to Charlotte County to settle down for good, I didn't zone in on a specific place, I zoned in on Charlotte County. I can't say I solely identify with St. George, Blacks Harbour, or the surrounding communities, as I

use them all to sustain my life now. Whether its medical appointments, getting groceries, kids extracurricular activities, getting supplies at the hardware store, getting homemade goods at the Esso, taking the kids out to Lake Utopia on a hot summer day, or taking a Sunday drive out to Back Bay to enjoy the local scenery, they all have a space in the life I have created today.

Other communities have amalgamated long before the announcement of the White Paper. Examples include Grand-Bay-Westfield, Tracadie, and Hartland. These communities collaborated to ensure their own survival. I think we should embrace reform like these communities have in the past.

It's important that we don't get tunnel vision when thinking about sustainability. We don't need to compete against each other for the viability of new businesses, industry, investments, and economic growth. We need to work together. We know what has been happening in Blacks Harbour financially for a while now has not been sustainable. We have previous raised the alarm bells to ask surrounding communities for help sustaining our recreation facility, and have not been met with the support, even though Blacks Harbour residents only represent 10% of the user group. We don't need a new arena built in a surrounding area, we need to sustain the one we have.

I agree with what was said earlier, "What's good for Blacks Harbour is good for St. George, and what's good for St. George is good for Blacks Harbour". I look forward to working with my colleagues and transitioning Blacks Harbour into the new reform structure. We should be leading people to growth and opportunity, not creating and fuelling fear of the unknown. We have many communities doing great things individually now, so why not meet at the same table and elevate us all.

Mayor John Craig switched seats with Deputy Mayor Hatt to state his views: Tonight, I have mixed emotions; the issue with amalgamation is probably the first issue that has divided our council. As I continue to remind council we must agree to disagree. Debate is good, debate is healthy. We are fortunate to live in a country that our forefathers fought for so we have the freedom and the right to ask questions. A mere seven months ago, we all were elected in the Village of Blacks Harbour to lead this village forward for 4 year team. Now, we are being told by the provincial government we are done in a year without finishing. I know it is going to happen, it's a done deal, it's irreversible but I do feel bad because we are going into the 50th year of Blacks Harbour being incorporated as a village and now as we are finding out it will be our final year. As well, St. George will be celebrating their 118th year of incorporation as a town next year and it will be there last year as well. There are many unknowns going forward to say that this will be a good thing or not with all these unknowns would be impossible to say. Nobody, nobody in this room can say otherwise. One of these unknowns is fair representation for our village after this council is gone. It is nice to say, yes, our tax rate will go down but if we do

not have fair representation on decisions would be a loss. at the end of the day this council does not have the final say, we are at the discretion of the Province of New Brunswick. All we can do at this point is argue our point of fair representation and ensuring everyone working for our village now will continue to work in the new reform. We have a responsibility. Finally as a Village I want to be clear as your Mayor we did not ask for this nor do we have final say all we can do is ask for fair representation.

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5.2 2022 Insurance Policy from low Insurance

Be it resolved;

That Council accept the 2022 insurance renewal of \$56 253.00 from Low Insurance and explore other options in the new year.

MOVED BY: Councillor Libby
SECONDED BY: Councillor Ritchie

CARRIED 12222021-03

7. Next Meeting/s: Regular Meeting December 15, 2021 @ 6:30pm

8. Adjournment

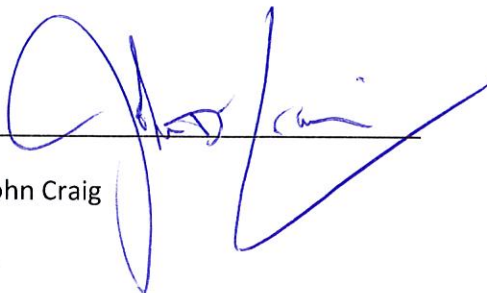
MOVED BY: Deputy Mayor Hatt
SECONDED BY: Councillor Ritchie

Be it resolved:

That the meeting be adjourned at _7:19pm_.

CARRIED 12222021-04

Mayor John Craig



Assistant Clerk/Treasurer, Stacey Frost

