Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee
Committee Meeting
November 27, 2024

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Ian Bowen	Eugene Dettling
	Judy Garner	Kelvin Hall
	Randy Ludwar	Eleanor Walker
	Marcel Olsthoorn	Rick Wilson
	Kea Adachi	
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Debbie Rose	
EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT:	Electoral Area "D" Director Matt Taylor	
OTHERS PRESENT:	Allan Neilson, Neilson Strategies Inc. Sherry Hurst, Leftside Partners Inc. Simon Rasmussen, Senior Planning Analyst Patrick Thompson, Director, Governance Structure	
STAFF PRESENT;	Christy Malden, Corporate Officer / Deputy CAO Marc Aucoin, Legislative Services Coordinator Kim Roemer, Legislative Services Clerk Nils Finnsson, Network Systems Administrator	

The meeting was called to order at 6:22 pm by Rick Wilson, Chair

1. **INTRODUCTIONS**

2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

   MOVED AND SECONDED
   THAT the Minutes for the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee Meeting of May 28, 2024 be adopted. – **CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

3. **STUDY PURPOSE and PROCESS**
   The consultants reviewed with the Committee the purpose and process for the Incorporation Study.

4. **OKANAGAN FALLS INCORPORATION STUDY DRAFT REPORT**
   The consultants presented an overview of the Draft Report, including the Study's Engagement Phase.

MOVED AND SECONDED
THAT the Committee receive the Draft Report. **– CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

5. LETTERS PATENT

Simon Rasmussen, Senior Planning Analyst, Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, presented to the Committee on Letters Patent and what they might look like for an incorporated Okanagan Falls municipality.

6. RECOMMENDATION ON INCORPORATION REFERENDUM

The consultants presented potential recommendations that the Committee could make to the RDOS Board of Directors.

MOVED AND SECONDED
THAT, based on the results of the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study and the work of the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Study Committee, the Regional District of Okanagan Similkameen Board of Directors recommend to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs that a referendum be held on the incorporation of Okanagan Falls.
AND
THAT the Chair of the Okanagan Falls Incorporation Committee deliver the recommendation for a referendum only after the Committee has received the signed Offer of Restructure Assistance letter from the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs, and has confirmed that the terms of the letter are materially consistent with the terms outlined by the Ministry staff and incorporated into the Incorporation Study. **– CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

7. MUNICIPAL CLASSIFICATION AND COUNCIL SIZE – PROVINCIAL GUIDANCE

The consultants presented options for the class of municipality and size of the Council for a potential incorporated Okanagan Falls municipality.

a. *Question asked whether there are any differences in Districts, Towns, etc with regard to grants.*
    i. *In terms of eligibility to apply for grants and in terms of legal authority and responsibility to provide different kinds of services and in terms of every other factor we can think of, anything that may apply to the benefit of a city, village or a town would also apply to a district.*
b. *Question asked in regards to attracting industry to a district vs to a town if there are any practical differences or if it just the name.*
    i. *Yes it is just semantics. If we look at the District of Summerland, the District of Lake Country, there are lots of different districts around us and across the province.*
c. *A member of the Committee clarified that when he was working for another District there was no difference when applying for the same grants that the City of Vancouver, City of Burnaby, etc were applying for and there was no difference in how their applications were treated.*

MOVED AND SECONDED
THAT the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen Board of Directors recommend to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs that the Letters Patent designate an incorporated Okanagan Falls as a District municipality with a five person council. **– CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**

8. NEXT STEPS

The Committee will send the "Recommendation on Incorporation Referendum" to the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen Board of Directors meeting on December 19, 2024. If the Board of Directors accepts the Committee's recommendation, the request will be forwarded to the Minister.

If the Minister agrees that a referendum is warranted, the Minister would issue a call for a referendum to be held. There is a sixty day waiting period for referendums.

The RDOS would administer the referendum on behalf of the Ministry and would ensure that information regarding the referendum is provided to the community.

If the referendum does not pass then the process ends and Okanagan Falls would remain an unincorporated community within Electoral Area "D" of the Regional District.

If the referendum does pass then the Ministry would hire an individual to begin putting the corporate infrastructure into place for the new municipality, leading up to the election of the inaugural council.

The timing of the incorporation study has been managed to allow for the referendum to be held in the spring of 2025 and the inaugural election to happen in October, 2025, but the final say on these matters belongs to the Ministry.

9. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC IN ATTENDANCE

Members of the Public that were in attendance in person were given the opportunity to identify themselves and indicate if they lived in the study area before asking questions.
Questions and discussion included but were not limited to:

a. *Could the consultant review who has authority over drainage issues and the designation of the council members.*
    i. *All Villages / Towns / Cities and Districts have the same authority over drainage issues to make decisions that are necessary. Districts have the additional authority to remove water by diverting water to natural waterways without the further considerations that a Village, Town, or City would have.*
    ii. *Based on population it would be easier to establish a five person council and to ensure that enough people are competing for and filling council spots.*
b. *How many members would be on the council?*
    i. *There would be 5 council members, a Mayor and 4 Councillors.*
c. *When would the referendum happen?*
    i. *If the Ministry makes the final decision that a referendum is to be held, the study has been designed so that it would be in the spring of 2025.*

10. CONCLUDING REMARKS

- The Consultant thanked the Committee members for all of their time and effort they put into the Study.
- A member of the Committee thanked the consultants and RDOS for their excellent work with the Committee, as well as Rick Wilson and Kea Adachi for taking on the roles of Chair and Vice Chair, and doing an incredible job.

- Simon Rasmussen, on behalf of the Ministry, acknowledged the Committee's clarity of purpose and sense of common vision throughout the Study and commended them for staying neutral and objective and thanked the Chair and Vice Chair for their leadership.
- Director Taylor thanked the citizens of the community, members of the Committee, and staff for helping to get the incorporation process to the point of providing the community with the opportunity to choose for itself whether Okanagan Falls incorporates or not.
- Chair Wilson thanked the Committee for their work and their neutrality, and thanked the consultants and RDOS staff for their work with the Committee.

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOVED and SECONDED
That the meeting adjourn at 7:36 pm. **-CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**