



MAR 26 2015

Ref: 157567

Mr. Mark Pendergraft
Chair
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen
101 Martin Street
Penticton, BC V2A 5J9

Dear Chair Pendergraft:

I am pleased to confirm my decision to fund a governance study for Okanagan Falls, as outlined below. The total amount of funding provided by the Province of British Columbia for this study is \$50,000.

This governance study is an opportunity for the community to review the current system of local government and local service provision, identify community issues, and explore the opportunities and implications of undertaking adjustments to better meet citizen needs within the current authority of local service providers.

While the governance study process will give residents of Okanagan Falls a clearer understanding of the current local government context, it will also provide an opportunity to engage in discussions about issues, priorities, and other potential changes facing the community.

A study of this nature does not provide detailed technical or financial information on any specific change proposal, although the Regional District may choose to subsequently undertake such an analysis based on community feedback. This study should also not be confused with a municipal incorporation study, which would examine a fundamental structural change.

I have asked Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development staff to convey the terms of reference, which define the parameters of this governance study project. A community-based study committee would have scope, within those parameters, to customize the process to suit the needs of the community. This customization would be expressed through development of a public engagement strategy and high-level work plan for the project to be included in the Request for Proposals for consultants, and ultimately in the more detailed work plan agreed to with the selected consultant.

As the Regional District Board has identified this study as a priority, I would like to invite Mr. Tom Siddon, Director, to appoint a study committee once the Regional District is in receipt of the funding.

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Mr. Mark Pendergraft
Chair
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The study committee would work with the consultant to implement the public engagement strategy, engaging the community in a public process to share information and define community issues. Finally, the committee would submit a report to the Regional District Board, the Board of Trustees of the Okanagan Falls Improvement District, and the Minister summarizing the process, the study, and the public engagement process. The committee could also offer comment as to whether changes in local service provision or public participation in governance are warranted based on a summary of the public sentiment in the community.

The Ministry staff contact for this project is Mr. Dannie Carsen, Senior Program Analyst of the Governance and Structure Branch. Mr. Carsen can be reached by telephone at: 250 387-2188, or by email at: Dannie.Carsen@gov.bc.ca.

Mr. Carsen will be in touch shortly with Regional District staff to arrange for the transfer of funds and set up a meeting that would include appropriate staff and Director Siddon to discuss matters such as the options for forming the committee, consultant procurement, the process for carrying out the study, and the roles and responsibilities of the Province, committee and consultant.

Sincerely,



Coralee Oakes
Minister

pc: Mr. Bill Newell, Chief Administrative Officer
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Mr. Tom Siddon, Director
Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

Mr. Dannie Carsen, Senior Planning Analyst
Governance and Structure Branch
Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

Approvals: Dir: _____ ED: _____ ADM: JS DM: RFD

Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MINISTER

Ref #: 157567

FOR DECISION

Date: March 25, 2015

Title: Okanagan Falls Governance Study

Issue: Whether to fund a governance study for Okanagan Falls.

Background:

Okanagan Falls is an unincorporated community located in Electoral Area 'D' of the Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS). The core population is approximately 3,500 with an additional 1,000-1,500 in surrounding communities including Kaleden and Skaha Estates. Local services are provided by multiple providers, including the Regional District, improvement districts and the Province. There are three population clusters in the area of Okanagan Falls that share different combinations of services.

The last attempt at incorporation in Okanagan Falls, which was contentious within the community, ended in a failed referendum in 1989. Since that time, the community has seen significant change in terms of evolution of the local economy, demographics and demand for local government services.

The current and previous electoral area directors have advocated for an incorporation process, arguing that the current demographic and economic conditions are likely to lead to a different outcome. Following requests for incorporation studies in 2010 and 2012 that were declined, the electoral area director has been seeking a governance study since 2013 as a means of educating his electorate on their current governance and service arrangements and testing their response to different geographic configurations. In follow-up to the RDOS meeting at the 2014 UBCM Convention, s.13,s.17

Mandate Considerations: N/A	Liquefied Natural Gas Considerations: N/A
Fiscal Considerations: Yes	First Nations Considerations: N/A
s.13,s.17	

Discussion:

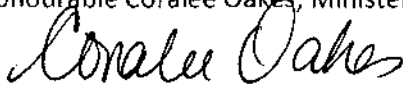
s.13,s.17

Options:

s.13,s.17


Recommendation: s.13,s.17

Honourable Coralee Oakes, Minister



Date:

March 26, 2015

 Approved / Not Approved

Contact: Marijke Edmondson, Director
Telephone: 387-4058