

August 2, 2022

Electoral Area “D” Services and Boundary Configuration Study

The Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen (RDOS) Board of Directors has become aware of incorrect information has been distributed by a member of the Area “D” Services and Boundary Configuration Study Committee; and, by resolution at their regular meeting of July 21, 2022, has rescinded the appointment of this member and chose to provide clarification.

1. Allegation that an employee selected the Committee

The Terms of Reference for the Committee provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and adopted by the Board of Directors for the Regional District required a public call for members. Applications were received and reviewed by RDOS staff, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Director for Electoral Area “D” prior to a recommendation submitted to the Board of Directors for appointment. A ten-member committee was discussed and appointed by the Board of Directors by resolution at an open meeting.

2. Allegation that the Election of Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee was Prejudiced

It has been insinuated that the election of Chair and Vice-chair of this committee was predetermined and biased. In fact, at their first meeting, the committee members nominated and voted for the candidates from those members in attendance fairly and openly.

3. Allegation that the Selection of Consultant was Manipulated by RDOS Staff

The selection of a consultant to assist the committee was conducted in accordance with the RDOS Purchasing Policy. A public Request for Proposals was issued through BC Bid, which is the standard, required process for local governments. It was also advertised on the RDOS website and social media platforms. A proposal was received from a very experienced consulting team and the project was awarded, following discussion with the ministry and the Committee, by the Board of Directors for the Regional District in open session.

4. Allegations of Inappropriate Conduct

An allegation was made that the RDOS staff support for the Committee used strong-arm tactics to influence the recommendation of the Committee for a boundary for a future incorporation study. The staff support for this committee focussed solely on ensuring a transparent and fair process; and, that the committee remained neutral in compliance with the Terms of Reference.

In addition, there was an allegation of financial impropriety in a recommendation to award the contract to the consultant because it was \$10,000 over the estimate. This study was funded primarily by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the award was done following full disclosure in public session by the RDOS Board of Directors.

5. Allegation that the Regional District wanted the incorporation boundary limited to Okanagan Falls because it is a tax liability, and Heritage Hills and other areas were a tax haven (cash cow); that there was a tax surplus that could be used to fund other Regional District activities.

Those understanding regional district finance know that taking funds from one Service (**group of ratepayers**) to fund another Service, can't happen. Residents of a determined geographic area must vote to establish a Service, and a vote for incorporation will be by referendum following a thorough review of the implications of incorporation for those electors within that geographic area. It will be the citizens benefiting who will decide.

6. Allegation that the Resignation of Vice-chair of the Committee was Forced

The Vice-chair of the Committee resigned due to a concern with the impartiality that the Area Director and members of the Committee were displaying, evidenced throughout the recordings of the open house events and the meetings, and which contradicts the Terms of the study

7. Allegation that the Regional District has a Responsibility or Influence on Road Maintenance

Jurisdiction over roads in rural areas is a provincial service. The province is responsible for all road construction, maintenance, and matters relating to roads in electoral areas. The Province of British Columbia has a contract with AIM Roads to provide this service and the Regional District has no contractual relationship or influence on the specifications of the contract.

8. Allegations of Malfeasance of Regional District Staff

A process investigating incorporation is not dictated or guided by one individual, especially not a staff member. The process is guided and conducted by volunteers appointed by the Board of Directors for the Regional District. To suggest that staff, ministry, or consultants influenced the decision, may be an attempt to undermine a group that came to an informed decision on a serious matter, but is certainly not unanimous. That's why those who will be impacted, and after receiving full information, are provided an opportunity to vote.

9. Intent to Interfere with a Regional District Employee in the performance of their Duties

The Regional District understands that the misleading information, the malicious and personal attacks on staff, ministry officials, and consultants appointed to support the Electoral Area "D" Services and Boundary Configuration Committee may be intended to interfere with their ability to fulfill their responsibilities.