



**Amalgamation Update
Joint Friendship Agreement Committee
June 2021**



Throughout June, two public engagement activities were held, and the Procedure and Finance subcommittees made recommendations to JFAC on the remaining topics. The Joint Friendship Agreement Committee (JFAC) met on June 23, 2021 and made decisions on 14 recommendations including topics from the Procedure and Finance Subcommittees, and the public engagement activity topics: naming and electoral representation.

The “Naming” and “Electoral Representation” activities saw significant participation from the public. Detailed results from the activities are available on both Town’s websites.

Naming:

- Participation:
 - Round 1: 150 responses with roughly 222 suggestions for a new name resulting in 70 original name options
 - Round 2: 1100 votes to pick a top choice from the top three ranked name suggestions (Town of Diamond Valley, Town of Black Valley and Town of Sheep River)
- Result:
 - Town of Diamond Valley (74% of responses)

Electoral Representation:

- Participation: 177 votes
- Result:
 - 49%: At Large Representation
 - 44%: Wards
 - 8%: I Don’t Know

On June 23th, 2021 JFAC made the following decisions:

1) Interim Chief Administrative Officer

- a) JFAC agreed to recommend the current CAO of Turner Valley, Shawn Patience, be named in the Amalgamation Negotiation Report as Interim CAO.
- b) JFAC agreed to recommend the current CAO of Black Diamond Sharlene Brown be named in the Amalgamation Negotiation Report as a secondary option for Interim CAO.

2) First Election

- a) JFAC agreed to recommend that a Q4 election date of November 28, 2022 for a new Council of the amalgamated Town and that this is the preferred option to be included in the ministerial order.
- b) JFAC agreed to strongly support the resolution for the Q4 election of 2022 in the Report on Amalgamation as a reduction of one Council is part of the cost saving measures and operating efficiency supporting the amalgamation process.

- c) JFAC agreed to provide an alternative recommendation in the Negotiation Report inclusive of a fourteen (14) member Council comprised of the council elected in October 2021, with a Mayor being appointed from those fourteen (14) sitting Council members (MGA 150) for a period of 90-120 days after incorporation.

3) Library Services

- a) JFAC agreed to recommend the continuation of library services after the date of incorporation of the new municipality.

4) Compensation to other Municipal Authorities

- a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic 16 in the amalgamation negotiation report that the amalgamated municipality would be required to pay Foothills County \$32,154/year until 2024 (for previous contractual agreements which include annexation agreements, and municipal road maintenance agreement) after which time the payment would be reduced to \$10,000/year with the last payment made in 2030.

5) Financial Transition

- a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #17 in the amalgamation report to the province that independent audits be conducted for Black Diamond and Turner Valley for the year ending December 31, 2022, and further that an audit will be conducted for the newly created town as at December 31, 2023.

6) Interim Tax Treatment

- a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #18 in the amalgamation negotiation report to the province that no interim tax treatment is required since incorporation date would be Jan. 1, 2023.

7) Tax Treatment

- a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #19 in the amalgamation negotiation report that for the lands annexed by Black Diamond to unify a boundary between Black Diamond and Turner Valley, for the purposes of taxation in 2020 and in each subsequent year up to and including 2044, these lands must be assessed as if in the County of Foothills and taxed as if in the County of Foothills, until a triggering event noted in the agreement.

8) Authority to Impose Additional Tax

- a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #20 in the amalgamation negotiation report that the Local Improvement levies remain with the Town of Turner Valley properties until such time as they are paid in full.
- b) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #20 in the amalgamation negotiation report that operating revenues continue to support the existing debts of both municipalities before and after amalgamation.
- c) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #20 in the amalgamation negotiation report that designated capital reserves remain in the individual municipalities until they are utilized. All existing undesignated capital reserves should be designated to restricted dedicated

reserves contained within their 10-year capital plans prior to incorporation date. Operating reserves should be contributed to equally based on Black Diamond and Turner Valley's requirements with the remainder to be designated to capital reserves.

d) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #20 in the amalgamation negotiation report that the ten-year capital plan be utilized as the indicator of the infrastructure condition and costs to upgrade. For the ten-year capital plan Turner Valley has \$28.4M planned and Black Diamond has \$38.4M planned. This will assist with addressing the infrastructure variations between the two towns by comparing priorities in each municipality.

9) Assessment Matters

a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #21 in the amalgamation negotiation report that there is no need to treat property assessments differently since the incorporation date would be Jan. 1, 2023.

10) Utilities

a) JFAC agreed to include under Topic #27 in the amalgamation negotiation report that the current utility rates for each municipality be continued until such time as a new utility rate bylaw is established.

11) Westend Regional Sewage Services Commission

a) JFAC agreed to request Westend Regional Sewage Services Commission establish a bylaw as per MGA S609.09(1) and provide the bylaw for inclusion into the Negotiation Report.

b) JFAC agreed to request Westend Regional Sewage Services Commission provide recommendations for the disestablishment date - upon incorporation or extension timeframe of the commission.

12) Electoral Wards

a) JFAC agreed to recommend under Topic #4 in the amalgamation report to the province that an 'at large' electoral representation be the preferred format for the 2022 Q4 election as opposed to dividing the new municipality into electoral wards.

13) Ward Boundary Review

a) JFAC agreed to recommend under Topic #15 in the amalgamation report to the province that a ward boundary review will not be required due to the determination to hold an 'at large' election in Q4 2022 as a result of the public consultation.

14) Name

a) JFAC agreed to propose the name 'Town of Diamond Valley' as the name of the amalgamated municipality in the amalgamation negotiation report to the province pending confirmation of the legal use of the name.

If you have a question or wish to provide feedback about the amalgamation, please email either:

amalgamation@town.blackdiamond.ab.ca or amalgamation@turnervalley.ca.