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Let?s talk about it: More discussion needed about fire board?s fate

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Shelburne officials have indicated a desire to disband its district fire services board.

It's proposed that the board, which is comprised of representatives of some Dufferin County municipalities, be dissolved in early 2026. But Mono officials believe a little more time is needed to fairly consider Shelburne's issues.

The agreement that established the Shelburne and District Fire Department outlines a process to be followed should a participating municipality wish to leave the board. Shelburne has indicated its intent to establish the Shelburne Fire Department, which includes a model where municipalities, including Mono, may purchase contracted fire services.

It's similar to what's done with fire services from Orangeville.

Deputy Mayor Fred Nix, Councillor Melinda Davie, and Mike Dunmore, the town's CAO, met July 17 with Town of Shelburne representatives to discuss the future of the Shelburne District Fire Department and its board.

Mulmur, Melancthon, and Amaranth were also represented at the meeting.

In a report to Mono council, Dunmore said the meeting's purpose was to get details of Shelburne's concerns about the board.

Those concerns were about unfunded board administration services provided by Shelburne, according to the report. That unfunded service includes cyber security, IT services, human resources, treasury, and water provision from the Shelburne Water Department.

?It's very clear to us that Shelburne would like to leave and dissolve the board,? Dunmore said during Mono council's Aug. 26 meeting.

While he can't speak for other municipalities that have representation on the board, Dunmore said he sensed support for ?continued collaboration at a board level.?

He acknowledged that representatives of some towns were silent at the July meeting.

?I think the board deserves the opportunity to address the concerns of the Town of Shelburne,? Dunmore said.

It wasn't clear if board members were aware of the financial impact and administrative concerns identified by Shelburne.

?I feel there was a general consensus to work towards retention of the board with improved collaboration rather than dissolving it,? Dunmore said in his report.

But that's only Dunmore's opinion and may not be shared by other board members or their municipal councils.

?I will agree that Shelburne does have some issues that are legitimate,? Nix said.

He suggested that Shelburne needs to provide specific details to board members about the administrative costs. Then a fulsome discussion can be had about those operating costs and how to cover them.

And that's the substance of a motion passed by Mono council during the Aug. 26 meeting.

Coun. Ralph Manktelow said administrative service could rotate among the board's municipalities, similar to what's done by the Rosemont and District Fire Board. Mono is also a member of the Rosemont group.

?We haven't got the fee assessed of what the administrative help would be before we can even talk about rotating,? Dunmore said. ?I think you're onto a good matter, which would be a potential for rotating.?

?This is a power move,? Davie said. ?There's no question about it that this is a power move.?

She said Shelburne's board representatives feel strongly that their town has done the heavy lifting and has paid heavily for the board.

?What they (Shelburne) are proposing is not allowed by the agreement,? Dunmore said. ?The goal is to let Shelburne know we're happy with the services of the board right now and the board should have an opportunity to respond to the issues that really are troubling to Shelburne.?