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Shelburne to receive strong mayor powers: Operations to continue ?business as usual?

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Shelburne Mayor Wade Mills has reassured fellow councillors he ?doesn't plan to exercise? the new authority allotted to him with the province's proposed expansion of ?strong mayor? powers.

During their meeting on Monday (April 14), Shelburne Town Council addressed the provincial government's announcement, which proposed the expansion of strong mayor powers to the heads of council in 169 additional municipalities, including Shelburne and Orangeville.

Mills told Shelburne councillors that there was no prior notification of the expansion given ahead of the press release that was issued on April 9.

?I was as surprised as anybody else,? said Mills.

The province's press release says the strong mayor powers will help deliver on provincial priorities such as building more homes, transit and other infrastructure. All Ontario municipalities with six or more councillors were selected to receive strong mayor powers.

The move allows mayors to appoint the municipality's chief administrative officer, hire and fire certain municipal department heads, create committees of council, and appoint committee chairs as well as vice-chairs. It also allows heads of council to veto bylaws and approve budgets with only one-third of council's support.

While Mills noted that he doesn't anticipate any change to come with the new powers given by the province, he did express concerns with the decision.

?The power, once it's implemented, is there and we aren't always going to be the ones in these seats. But that power is given by the province and can be taken away by the province,? said Mills.

?From a practical level, it's business as usual and we'll continue to operate the same way we have.?

The expansion of strong mayor powers to 169 Ontario municipalities is expected to go into effect on May 1.