



April 11, 2025

### “Statement of Fact” Letter to Brigus Residents

Although Council is reluctant to engage in public interaction on Town governance matters; as a result of recent social media and in-person “chatter” about town affairs, and, in response to questions posed by residents; Council has decided it is appropriate to address matters concerning apparent and unfortunate misinformation especially relating to Council’s relationship with the BVFD [Brigus Volunteer Fire Department] by providing relevant and factual information.

During a BVFD sponsored social held in December 2022, an incident occurred involving three [3] Fire Department members. Generally speaking, the BVFD considers this a sponsored affair, and, although this occurrence has no real bearing on BVFD activities, it was, nevertheless brought forward during a BVFD meeting in early 2023. This resulted in the suspension of a member of the BVFD. This firefighter subsequently filed a formal complaint with Council. As required by Provincial legislation and regulations, Council enlisted an appropriate, independent, investigative body to examine the complaint. The independent Investigator presented a Report to Council in April, 2023. The Report found that there had been an “Abuse of Authority” on the part of the Brigade’s leadership as to how the matter was handled. The Report provided recommendations which should be followed to rectify the situation. Council reviewed this document in detail and accepted the Report in full. Council provided copies of the complete Report to the complainant and the BVFD executive with the request that it be shared with all members and its recommendations followed. Council assumed this was done and the matter concluded. However, after repeated queries from the complainant and Council’s subsequent questions to the BVFD, Council came to realize the Report’s recommendations had, in fact, not been followed and the matter was still unresolved. Council then interacted with, and received advice[s] from both Municipal Affairs Director, OHS Director and Manager as well as the Town’s solicitors. In December 2023, appropriate Councillors met with the BVFD Executive and provided to them clear Directives along with a full explanation and addressed their questions.

These Directives were not actioned.

Council was subsequently informed the Complainant had retained Legal advice and his Solicitors reached out to Council seeking redress for their client. In 2024 and, again, in early 2025 Council received correspondence from the Complainant’s Lawyers and met several times with the BVFD leadership in attempts to reach resolution but to no avail. Council facilitated a formal session in March, 2025 which included Council members, BVFD Executive including the Fire Department Chief, Mr. Chris Stamp, Director of Municipal Affairs and Mr. Robert Fowler, Fire Commissioner and Director of Fire Services for the province. The current BVFD leadership has repeatedly

indicated they are not prepared to cooperate in following Council's requirements needed to resolve the issue as per the Investigation's report and as directed by Council. Most recently, an ad hoc committee of Council hosted meeting[s] with BVFD leadership members in yet, another attempt to reach a compromise to avoid further dissention. This has not proved useful to date. It is important to note the legal position and responsibility[s] of Council in general and, as it relates to this situation. All rural municipalities in the province operate under the Rural Towns and Local Service Districts Act and any other policy adopted by Council. This Act and its policies govern the behaviour of Councils, councillors and all individuals under the Town's umbrella including a town's departments, committees and any other volunteer groups and/or individuals providing service to the municipality. Ultimately, your Council, on behalf of the Town, is responsible and liable for the actions of its departments and groups and all associated financial and legal liabilities that may accrue from their actions. The BVFD members are included in this provision and, therefore are, and must be, subject to the direction of Council. Of course, any individual may withdraw their involvement if they so wish – in fact several months ago, several BVFD members, including its leadership, did, in fact briefly “resign” over another misinformation driven matter altogether, although it was short lived. In all cases, Council must make every reasonable effort to protect the Town and all its residents from harm...financially, legally and otherwise. In this circumstance, Council is striving [1] to protect individual rights as has been determined by fair process and, [2] to mitigate the Town's exposure to a pending lawsuit with all its potential fallout, financially and otherwise to the community.

It is unfortunate if individuals withdraw from municipal related activities [ex.–the regular Eastertime “Fish & Brewis” activity]. Such efforts serve to bring residents together for the common good and certainly have a positive impact on our Town. The Blueberry Festival is only, perhaps the most well known of these efforts. This present Council and all its members work diligently in the Town's best interests. We do not seek accolades or thanks, but, as your duly elected representatives, we do wish to be fairly assessed.

On a positive note, consider the Town's infrastructure and our ongoing expansion efforts – last year this Council completed approx. \$800,000.00 Public Works expansion. Our roads and paving situation is, virtually, next to none in our region, and improvements are ongoing. Unlike virtually any other small NL community, our Town sees, annually, new and renovations' construction much beyond that of comparatively sized communities in NL. Thanks to individual efforts our Town even has its own weather web site presence @ brigusweather.com. We have seen a marked increase in seniors' wellness activities. Our children's playground and our ballfield have seen continued improvements. Our community garden continues to ‘grow’. It is likely that no other Town or region is the target of so many, daily, dog -walking visitors. Our general services are exceptional...not many communities provide residents free “phone call only”, white metal pick-up. Our annual Blueberry Festival is unparalleled in the province and beyond. All of this is so, while keeping our taxes to residents at one of the lowest rates in NL.

We could go on...but just to say here: Thanks to all!

Council works tirelessly on your behalf and meets challenges without complaint. These past few years have seen Council deal with and address many major issues in our community that have taken up far more time than is normally expected of any Council. It is worth remembering that Councillors are volunteers although they are chosen by residents. But, as explained, Council, at

the end of the day, has a fiduciary responsibility to, act in the Town's best interests. Contrary to the ramblings of social media of late, this Council is committed to working in harmony and cooperatively with all groups as much as possible. In conclusion, whatever the present circumstance with respect to the Fire Department, be assured, regardless, Council will fulfill its legislative responsibility and requirement to ensure continued [fire] protection without interruption.

As we noted at the beginning, it is the opinion of Council that the ongoing activity on social media especially, may have a negative impact on the Town and this is most unfortunate. Council is anxious to prevent this possibility, which is why we take this unusual measure. Although this will be the only effort on the part of Council to engage on this issue via social media or mail drop; we would ask any resident who may still have any unanswered question[s], to reach out to the Town Office or any of your councillors.

Sincerely,  
Town of Brigus