

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

March 16, 1998

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 16, 1998, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Deputy Warden Shane Toms in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 - Gerald Yetman

District #2 - Shane Toms, Deputy Warden

District #3 - Bruce Morrison

District #5 - Gerald Sampson

District #7 - David Donovan

District #8 - Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Brian Trask, CAO

Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #4 - John Graham MacInnes, Warden

District #6 - Lawrence Barron

CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Warden Toms called the meeting to order.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Jeremy Frith, Board Member of the Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency, is to be added to the agenda to update Council on the meetings he attended regarding the offshore and natural gas.

JEREMY FRITH

Courtesy of Council was extended to Jeremy Frith, Board Member, Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency.

Mr. Frith presented Council with an update on the meeting he attended on Saturday, March 14, 1998, regarding the offshore and a subsequent meeting held

Page 2, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

today in Antigonish regarding natural gas in the eastern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton municipalities.

He indicated that it was important to realize that natural gas is coming and it is not necessarily going to be brought in through the big companies. A utility franchise can be purchased for a 10 year term and then re-bid. It is very seldom that it is ever bought out, due to the cost of infrastructure. He indicated that municipalities and cooperatives are capable of obtaining a franchise. This would also be the more favourable method.

Mr. Frith indicated that east of Mulgrave could be the last area served. Natural gas is a clean, efficient power and is also economical. Proposals for franchises are to be submitted within 60 days, with a completed feasibility study. Mr. Frith felt that we should coordinate our efforts to keep this initiative going.

Gerald Sampson, who attended the meeting in Antigonish today, reported on the information he obtained. He indicated that one representative from each municipal unit is being requested to serve on a committee to coordinate the efforts for obtaining natural gas. There will be another meeting held in the near future and it is being coordinated by Antigonish. Councillor Sampson expressed his interest in serving on this committee.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that Councillor Gerald Sampson be appointed as Council's representative on this committee. Motion carried.

It was felt that our interest in obtaining a franchise should be noted.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Economic Development and the Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs, advising that Victoria County is interested in operating our own

franchise for natural gas. Motion carried.

Mr. Frith was excused at this time.

CORPORAL TRICKETT, RCMP

Courtesy of Council was extended to Corporal Trickett, Baddeck Detachment RCMP.

Page 3, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

Brian Trask advised that the position of a part-time assistant detachment clerk has been identified at the Baddeck Detachment. Under the agreement with the provincial/federal governments (service exchange), policing costs are a municipal responsibility, therefore, this is a legitimate expense. The costs for this position if approved are to be jointly funded by the Municipality of the County of Victoria and the Wagmatcook First Nation. The position will entail general office duties, along with computer data entry. This will be a part-time position, 20 hours per week. The rate of pay will be \$9.00 per hour. The total cost to the Municipality will be approximately \$5,000 per year.

Corporal Trickett indicated that this position is definitely required. He also indicated that the Baddeck Detachment will be the only rural detachment which will be obtaining computers in their vehicles.

After further discussion with Corporal Trickett, it was decided that the request for additional clerical for the Baddeck Detachment lay on the table and addressed during budget talks.

Corporal Trickett left at this time.

SET TIME TO ADJOURN

8:00 p.m. was set for the time for adjournment.

DONNIE MORRISON, TAX COLLECTOR

Courtesy of Council was extended to Donnie Morrison, Tax Collector. Mr. Morrison was in attendance to update Council on tax collections.

When John Anderson, CA, Roach Perry Roach, was in attendance at Council on February 17, 1998, he expressed concern with the fact that the tax receivables are higher than they have ever been. At this meeting it was decided that a pro-active approach was necessary for the next six weeks to collect outstanding taxes to decrease the amount of the receivables by year end.

Donnie Morrison reported that a target of \$150,000 was set as the amount to be collected by the end of

March. He indicated that during the month of February \$91,800 was collected, and to date in March \$44,000 has been collected. Her advised that letters have been sent and phone calls have been made to collect the outstanding taxes and this aggressive policy will continue until the end of March.

Page 4, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

Discussion took place on tax sale and it was felt that properties should be identified which could be put up on tax sale.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Sampson, that the Tax Collector identify properties to be put up on tax sale. Motion carried.

Discussion took place on the dates for the interim and final tax billing. It was decided that the interim bill be sent April 1, with interest being applied on July 1, and the final bill be sent on August 1, with interest being applied on October 1. It was felt that the public should be notified of the interim tax billing by placing an advertisement in the paper.

The \$100 tax exemption was discussed. To qualify for this exemption income from all sources in the household is to be \$15,000 or less.

Donnie Morrison presented a request regarding tax payment he received from W. D. Grant & Sons. Discussion took place.

After further discussion, Mr. Morrison was extended a vote of thanks and was excused at this time.

SOLID WASTE UPDATE

There are a number of items concerning solid waste issues to be dealt with and it was decided that a meeting of the Solid Waste Committee be set for Thursday, March 19, 1998, at 4:30 p.m.

The meeting then moved to In Camera to discuss a matter pertaining to solid waste.

Council returned to regular session.

RECESS

Deputy Warden Toms advised that Council would recess for a short break.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

A letter was received from Norma Fletcher, Secretary of the Occupational Health & Safety Committee,

requesting that a Council member be appointed to serve on this committee, as well as a representative from management.

Page 5, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

Brian Trask will serve as the representative from management.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that Councillor Gerald Yetman be appointed as the representative from Council on the Occupational Health & Safety Committee. Motion carried.

The Occupational Health & Safety Committee accepted a Safety Policy and Assignment of Responsibility and Accountability for Safety on January 15, 1998. Approval of these documents is required from Council.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the Safety Policy and Assignment of Responsibility and Accountability for Safety be approved. Motion carried.

MINUTES

The minutes of the following meetings were presented for approval.

Victoria County Municipal Council - February 17, 1998

Victoria County Municipal Council - February 26, 1998

Committee of the Whole - March 4, 1998

Court House/Solid Waste Committee - March 4, 1998

Discussion took place on the debenture funding requirement for the infrastructure projects. It is necessary that this funding should be put in place. The debenture funding requirement is \$1,300,000.00 and will increase the County's operating expenses by \$120,000 per year for a period of 20 years. Mr. Trask advised that he has contacted the Municipal Finance Corporation in regard to obtaining a debenture.

Discussion took place on the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Water Supply project. The original project approval was \$2,383,800 of which the federal and provincial share was \$700,000 each. The remaining \$983,800 was the municipal share. The fact that this was to be a user pay system was discussed. Councillor Donovan expressed concern on the hookups to the system. There are a number of people who cannot afford to connect to this system. He questioned whether there was a way in which the County

could cover this cost.

Brian Trask presented comparative rates for water in the other utilities within the County.

Page 6, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

A meeting is to be set up concerning the Neil's Harbour/New Haven project. Wayne Vervaet, Washburn & Gillis; John Anderson, Roach Perry Roach; David Donovan and Brian Trask are to attend this meeting. In the meantime, David Donovan indicated he would do a polling of the area residents to determine the number of people willing to connect to the system.

It was moved by Councillor MacLellan, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that a temporary borrowing resolution in the amount of \$1,500,000.00 be approved. Motion carried.

Brian Trask advised that Stora has signed an agreement in principle with regard to the land exchange in New Haven.

Solid waste concerns will be dealt with at the Solid Waste Meeting on Thursday, March 19, 1998.

Brian Trask is to contact Calvin Hillier with regard to the ship's bell from the HMCS Baddeck.

On August 9, 1997, Home Care policy and procedures were distributed to Council, however, although approved in principle at that time, no formal motion was made regarding the approval.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the policy and procedures for the Home Care Department be approved. Motion carried.

A request was forwarded to the Department of Municipal Affairs for assistance with the cost of a feasibility study for water for the communities of Ottawa Brook, MacKinnon Harbour and Cain's Mountain. A reply was received from Aileen Waller-Hebb, advising that funding is usually available up to 50% of the cost for water studies, however, the funding has been depleted for 1997/98. The cost of such studies usually run around \$30,000 and the County would be responsible for the remaining 50%.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that this matter lay on the table and brought up again after the provincial budget has been established. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Sampson, that the Victoria County Council minutes for February 17 and 26, 1998; the Court House/Solid Waste minutes of March 11, 1998, be approved, and the Committee

Page 7, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

of the Whole minutes for March 4, 1998, be approved with the exception of the appointment of Osbourne Burke to the Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency and this matter be addressed at the next meeting. Motion carried.

OPEN PERIOD/DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor Yetman expressed his pleasure on being back to the Council table and thanked everyone for the support given in his absence.

District #3

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that a request be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Public Works that Hilltop Crescent, Baddeck, be placed on their list for paving. Motion carried.

Councillor Morrison questioned when the Victoria County Tourism Development Committee would be holding their next meeting. Tom Wilson will be contacted in this regard.

District #5

Councillor Sampson indicated that an advertisement appeared in today's *Cape Breton Post* regarding a CBRM Council meeting tomorrow evening at 6:30 p.m. pertaining to the Cape Breton/Victoria boundary line. Brian Trask is to contact Bernie White, CBRM, to find out the details regarding this matter.

Councillor Sampson indicated he received a call from Regina Reid regarding the change made in the membership on the Cape Breton Regional Library Board.

Councillor Sampson questioned as to whether it was his responsibility as Chairman of the Safety/Environmental Committee to call a meeting. He was advised to call a meeting to determine how the County will proceed with regard to EMO.

District #7

Councillor Donovan again brought up the matter of the cost for residents to hook up to the Neil's Harbour/New Haven water supply.

District #8

Councillor MacLellan brought up a concern with regard to the two articles regarding development which appeared in the last issue of the *Victoria Standard*.

Councillor Sampson expressed his displeasure with comments made at the February 26, 1998, meeting from the audience when representatives were in attendance from the SHRDA.

District #2

Deputy Warden Toms questioned whether Little Narrows Gypsum had lost their water supply. If so, we could sell them water from the Little Narrows Water Supply.

Deputy Warden Toms also felt that a meeting of the new Watershed Protection Committee should be held in the near future. This meeting will be scheduled.

District #5

Councillor Sampson updated Council on the happenings at the last Rural Cape Breton District Planning Commission meeting.

IN CAMERA

Councillor Donovan indicated that he had a matter he would like to address In Camera. The meeting then moved In Camera.

Council then reverted to regular session.

NEXT MEETING

The next Council meeting will be held on Monday, April 6, 1998, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Tom Wilson will be in attendance at this meeting. A presentation on coastal mapping will also be given at this meeting.

It was indicated that the representative to attend the provincial volunteer awards ceremony will be Eddie Keeling.

Page 9, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, March 16, 1998

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Yetman, the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

E. Trask, CAO

John G. MacInnes, Warden