

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

October 19, 1998

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Big Bras d'Or Fire Hall, Big Bras d'Or, on Monday, October 19, 1998, beginning at 6:00 p.m. with Warden John Graham MacInnes in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 - Gerald Yetman

District #3 - Bruce Morrison

District #4 - John Graham MacInnes, Warden

District #5 - Gerald Sampson

District #7 - David Donovan

District #8 - Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Brian Trask, CAO

Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Interested Citizens

Absent were:

District #2 - Shane Toms

District #6 - Lawrence Barron

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Warden MacInnes called the meeting to order and expressed Council's pleasure on being in Big Bras d'Or this evening.

He outlined the proposed agenda to the meeting and indicated there would be an open period where the public could ask questions and express opinions.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Sampson, that the agenda be accepted. Motion carried.

KAY CRINEAN

Warden MacInnes extended the courtesy of Council to Kay Crinean, Executive Director, NovaKnowledge.

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Ms. Crinean advised that NovaKnowledge is a unique, multi-stakeholder, not-for-profit association that promotes the growth of our knowledge-based economy by forging links between business, government and our educational communities. NovaKnowledge is able to draw on a wide range of perspectives and expertise to present a non-partisan overview.

Ms. Crinean then proceeded to present Council with an overhead presentation on Nova Scotia's Knowledge Economy Report Card 1998. This is the first in a series of annual report cards on the progress of Nova Scotia's knowledge-based economy.

A knowledge-based economy is one in which:

Industry sectors based on products and services with high knowledge, research and information content are flourishing and playing a major role in wealth creation and employment (i.e. software, cultural industries, engineering, etc.)

Traditional businesses and public sector organizations are increasing the knowledge content of their products, services and internal processes (i.e. satellite data for forest management, remote diagnosis via Tele-medicine, etc.)

In developing this report card a number of questions were considered and Ms. Crinean explained the results to the Council.

In Cape Breton there are 145 technology and knowledge-based companies, employing 785 people.

Ms. Crinean indicated that Nova Scotia is ready to be a player in the knowledge-based economy. Knowledge-based companies already make a major contribution to our economy. Human capital is the critical success factor.

She indicated that the rural areas of Nova Scotia do indeed have a bigger hill to climb, but suggested that if they want to move forward in the knowledge-based economy, they can.

NovaKnowledge hosts 2 conferences annually and there is one scheduled for November in Digby dealing with the rural economy. Ms. Crinean indicated that there was information available at the table, which she encouraged people to pick up and take with them.

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The CAP Sites currently located at various areas within the County are beneficial in getting people started in using technology. It was felt that if taxes were eliminated from the price of computers, such as was done in New Brunswick, more people may be able to purchase same.

Ms. Crinean thanked Council for the opportunity to appear and she in turn was extended a vote of thanks from Warden MacInnes on behalf of Council.

KEITH BAIN, CAPE BRETON-VICTORIA DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER

The courtesy of Council was extended to Keith Bain, Victoria County's representative on the Cape Breton-Victoria District School Board.

Mr. Bain was questioned on the status of the school bus maintenance facilities in Victoria County. He indicated that the Bay St. Lawrence facility would remain unchanged. There has been no progress made on the maintenance facility to be located at Point Edward, so the status of the Baddeck facility remains unchanged at present and Mr. Bain indicated he would fight to maintain the Baddeck facility. Councillor Morrison questioned that if in fact, the Baddeck facility was downsized, wouldn't the long term effect be the elimination of that facility.

Mr. Bain advised that the school maintenance workers are now all working out of a facility located in Mira Road. This should in essence provide better service to Victoria County, as they will have access to all workers, not just the four who used to service Victoria County. Discussion took place on the time spent doing actual maintenance in the schools in Victoria. Most of the time, especially to the northern area, is spent in travel.

Brian Trask advised that the cost of education to Victoria County this fiscal year is \$1,218,197 - 23.4% of the operating budget. Mr. Bain indicated that 85% of the school board's budget is salaries. Out of the 1430 teachers in the Board, Mr. Bain estimated there would be approximately 200 in Victoria County.

Mr. Bain indicated that the P-3 schools are definitely coming. The site selections for the new schools should be made public by the end of October. The gymnasium for the Boularderie School is progressing on scheduled and there are no unforeseen problems.

Mr. Bain was questioned as to how available were the administrators of the Board. He indicated that the superintendent, as well as the senior administrators, do make themselves available when their schedules permit.

The cleanliness of the Baddeck School was discussed. Mr. Don Matheson has recently been appointed to the position of Director of Property Services and he is aware of the situation.

Councillor Yetman questioned on the status of the gymnasium for Rankin Memorial, Iona. Mr. Bain indicated that the Board received a proposal for Rankin Memorial for what was wanted and the price tag associated with same was \$6.4 million. This was unacceptable as it was felt a whole new school could be built for that amount. At this point they are looking at three alternatives - to downsize the plan, build a new school or do nothing.

Councillor Donovan expressed concern that the northern Victoria schools do not receive the same service as urban schools in industrial Cape Breton. There are not enough computers at Cabot High and there is a need for a full-time resource teacher at Cabot. 64 students (20% of the student population) have been identified as in need of resource. Mr. Bain indicated that he requested at a meeting earlier today, that a full-time resource person be hired to fill this void. This is now in the works and Mr. Bain indicated that hopefully hiring for this position will be approved at the November public board meeting.

Mr. Bain reported on the Information Employment Initiative Fund of \$22,000,000, which will over the next 3 years, see computers put in school classrooms - starting with the Grade 12 and Grade 9 classes this year.

Further discussion took place with Mr. Bain and he indicated that as he received information on areas concerning Council, he would pass this information on for Council's information.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that a vote of thanks be extended to Mr. Bain for his attendance and that Council meet with our School Board representative on a quarterly basis. Motion carried.

BREAK

Warden MacInnes announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes

FLASHING LIGHT - ROUTE 205

The matter of the installation of flashing lights at the intersection of Highway 205, Chebucto Street, Old

Margaree Road and Twining Street, Baddeck, has been a concern for some time, not only of Council, but also the Village Commissioners of Baddeck and the RCMP. There has been numerous accidents at this location, as well as one fatality. A letter of support for the installation of this light was also forwarded to the Department of Transportation for our MLA, Honourable Kennie MacAskill.

It was felt that Council should continue to request the Department of Transportation to install the lights.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation advising that Victoria County would be willing to contribute towards the cost of placing the required safety lights at the Highway 205, Chebucto Street, Old Margaree Road, Twining Street intersection in Baddeck. Motion carried.

NORTHEAST HIGHLANDS SHUTTLE SERVICE

Brian Trask advised that he met with Melvin Burton, Northeast Highland Shuttle Service, and drafted a report on the request for financial assistance for the bus service from Bay St. Lawrence to Sydney.

Councillor MacLellan declared a conflict of interest at this time.

The service has been operating for 4 ½ months, with a monthly average of 53 passengers. Mr. Trask presented a detailed report giving financial statistics on the service. Under the *Municipal Act, Section 78 (bd)*, the Municipality has the authority to pay a subsidy to a person who will agree to operate a transit service.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that that Mr. Trask's report on the Northeast Highland Shuttle Service lay on the table, to be perused by Council and dealt with at the next meeting. Motion carried.

DINGWALL WATER UTILITY

John Anderson, Roach Perry Roach, has determined that two Dingwall Water accounts are uncollectable and indicated that these accounts should be written off.

The accounts are as follows:

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's Bakery \$984.16

Arnold A. MacLeod \$1,914.23

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the write-offs of the two Dingwall Water accounts be approved. Motion carried.

ST. MARGARET'S PARISH, BAY ST. LAWRENCE

A letter of thanks was received from Father Duncan MacIsaac, on behalf of St. Margaret's Parish, Bay St. Lawrence, for the financial donation provided by the Municipality to assist in the rebuilding of their church.

RITC

Councillor Sampson indicated that he sits on the Board of RITC (Regional Industrial Training Commission). In the 1997/98 fiscal year, 29 Victoria County residents received training in various vocations, and to date in 1998/99, 13 have received training.

This training is provided at no cost and it was felt to be a valuable service and a good organization to belong to.

Councillor Sampson indicated that an application has been made to RITC to train 12 individuals for our CAP sites in Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that Councillor Sampson's report on RITC be received and he be thanked for his report and advised to keep up the good work. Motion carried.

OPEN PERIOD/DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT #1

Councillor Yetman indicated that the most contentious issue in his district remains to be the ferry fees. He feels that the increase to \$1,75 is not justifiable and wondered whether a reply had been received from the leaders of the opposition parties in regard to Council's concerns.

Warden MacInnes advised that a reply was received from Opposition Leader, Robert Chisholm, and he would provide Councillor Yetman with a copy.

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DISTRICT #3

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that the CAO forward a

letter to the shipping agents advising that further cruise ships visiting Victoria County ports will be charged 50 cents per bag for the disposal of their garbage. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Sampson, that the Municipality honour their commitment to encase the ship's bell from the HMCS Baddeck for display purposes. Motion carried.

DISTRICT #5

Councillor Sampson indicated that the bus shelters in his district are in need or repair, especially the one located adjacent to the fire hall. He requested that as these shelters have been placed at no charge for the benefit of the children, possibly the parents could assist in refurbishing the shelters.

He also suggested that for future students grants in his district, perhaps parents could volunteer to assist with the supervision of the students.

Councillor Sampson indicated that he was advised that a turning lane on the TCH 105 at the intersection to the New Harris Road (Seal Island Trailer Park) has been approved and has been put on the Department of Transportation's priority list. The cost of installing this turning lane will be in the vicinity of \$80,000.

The third piece of snow removal equipment for Boularderie Island will be stored in Boularderie this coming winter season to be used in the Boularderie and North Shore areas.

Councillor Sampson indicated that Bruce Aikman, P. Eng., wanted Council to be aware of his concern in regards to Crown land in Victoria County. 57% of Victoria County is crown land and the replanting of crown lands at present is just with softwood. He feels that a mixed forest is required to prevent eroding of land, etc. There will be information sessions held in various areas of the County by representatives from DNR and Stora and he feels that Council should make an effort to attend the sessions in their areas and voice their opinions. Mr. Aikman will be attending the sessions also.

DISTRICT #7

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Councillor Donovan that the letter received from Transport Canada regarding *Public Harbours and Port Facilities Act*, contains two harbours in his area - North Bay, Ingonish and White Point. The harbour authorities in his district are aware of same and he felt councillors with harbours/ports in their districts should ensure the local harbour authority is made aware.

Councillor Donovan indicated that the extension of the waterline to the new Neil's Harbour Subdivision would be a distance of 1 km.

DISTRICT #8

Councillor MacLellan questioned on the disconnect notices that have been forwarded to Dingwall Water Utility customers who are in arrears.

The deadline for payment or making arrangements for payment is the end of the month and those who have not complied will be disconnected. There will be no exceptions.

OPEN PERIOD

Warden MacInnes then opened to meeting to questions from the floor.

Emerson Kaiser questioned on the status of a heavy garbage collection for the District #5 area, in particular.

This matter was addressed by Council during budget discussions, however, it was felt that the estimated cost received was too expensive for this fiscal year.

Mr. Kaiser requested that Council re-examine doing heavy garbage collection in the next budget year.

A resident of the Black Rock Road expressed concern on a garbage problem in an adjoining property which is effecting her property. There is an infestation of rats and unwanted vegetation in roadside ditches.

This matter could be investigated and possible action could be taken under the Dangerous and Unsightly Premises Act. Councillor Morrison indicated he had information on contacts that could be made which he would provide to the resident.

This resident also had a concern about the excessive speed vehicles travel on the Black Rock Road.

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It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that contact be made with the RCMP to set up radar on the Black Rock Road at indiscriminate hours to monitor the traffic in the area. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that a letter be forwarded to Bruce Fitzner, District Director, Department of Transportation, with a copy to Charlie MacDonald, requesting that a re-evaluation be done on the speed limit on the Black Rock Road due to the present population, who have young children. Motion carried.

Keith Bain questioned on whether the extra piece of snow removal equipment would have an operator mandated for that machine only.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that a letter be forwarded to Bruce Fitzner, Department of Transportation, questioning if the third piece of snow removal equipment to be housed in Boularderie will have a separate operator and that the third machine not detract from the two other machines presently located there. Motion carried.

Emerson Kaiser indicated that the Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department are requesting a non-repayable grant to assist them in developing an EMO plan. Mr. Bain indicated Big Bras d'Or would request the same.

This matter will be taken under advisement and brought to a future meeting. It was felt that these requests should be received in writing.

THANK YOU

A vote of thanks was extended to the Big Bras d'Or Fire Ladies Auxiliary for the delicious lunch provided.

IN CAMERA

Warden MacInnes thanked the public for coming to the meeting and expressing their concerns and thanked Big Bras d'Or for their hospitality and ensured that Council would be back at some point in the future.

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The Warden announced that this concluded the public portion of the agenda, and Council would now be moving In Camera to deal with confidential taxation matters.

John Graham MacInnes, Warden

Brian E. Trask, CAO