

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
March 1, 2010

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 1, 2010, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – David Donovan
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval. Councillor MacCuspic requested that a short presentation by Lonnie Dowe be added to the agenda.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the agenda be approved with the noted addition. Motion carried.

JOHN MALCOM, CEO, CAPE BRETON DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITY

Courtesy of Council was extended to John Malcom, CEO, Cape Breton District Health Authority.

Mr. Malcom began by thanking Council for their generous donation to the Cancer Centre Expansion Campaign. The funding for this project secures this Centre for the next decade and Mr. Malcom indicated that they are now in the process of trying to recruit another radiation oncologist to the Centre.

His attendance at tonight's meeting was to update Council on physician recruitment for Victoria County. He indicated that both Baddeck and Neil's Harbour have lost a physician in the past year and he commended the two remaining physicians in both areas for their phenomenal effort in providing medical services.

Mr. Malcom indicated that he wished he had better news on the physician recruitment, but advised that to date their efforts have not resulted in securing physicians for these areas. He indicated that they have been successful in obtaining locums (temporary physicians) to cover in the short term and a new family physician will be locating in Waycobah and has agreed to assist at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital.

Their efforts to obtain physicians will continue for both areas and they are constantly working to achieve this goal. He indicated that they do have a possibility for Baddeck and have added a Nurse-Practitioner to the staff to work collaboratively with the doctors. This action has been well received and extremely successful. The placement of a Nurse-Practitioner in Neil's Harbour is also being considered.

Mr. Malcom indicated that they will continue on their lead for the Baddeck position and the possibility of sponsoring a student is being considered for Neil's Harbour. The recruitment process will continue.

Mr. Malcom indicated that increased enrollments in all medical schools was undertaken six years ago and it will be this June when the first half of these graduates come into fruition.

The expected time frame for physician replacement in Neil's Harbour was questioned. Mr. Malcom indicated that the two doctors in Neil's Harbour agreed to give it a year to find the right person to fill the position and this year is coming to an end and the doctors are more willing to be aggressive in the recruitment process. The longer locums and the addition of a Nurse-Practitioner will be welcome, but the efforts for a long term replacement will continue.

John Malcom was questioned on the sponsorship of physicians and what it entails. Each year there are a number of physician sponsorships provided in each health authority for both specialists and family practitioners and there is the possibility to buy additional residents at a cost of \$60,000 to \$80,000 per year. These physicians then must return one year's service for each year of sponsorship. Mr. Malcom indicated that 80% stay in the area after their return service commitment is completed.

Mr. Malcom indicated that the physician recruitment market is very competitive and it is very hard to compete with the packages offered from other jurisdictions. The Cape Breton District Health Authority's selling point is the quality of life and good working environment.

Mr. Malcom indicated that a new Dean of Medicine, Dr. Merry, has recently been appointed for Dalhousie University and he felt that Dr. Merry's leadership should provide positive change in physician training. Mr. Malcom also advised that the Northern Ontario Medical School's first class will be graduating this year and have been trained and prepared specifically for rural practice.

Sponsorship was again discussed and Mr. Malcom indicated that the Authority offers a reasonable package, but it is difficult to compete in the recruitment market. There are also obstacles with regard to certification of physicians trained outside of Canada.

The question was raised as to the possible relocation of the doctors' offices in Baddeck to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital. The approach of everything under one roof works well and a role study and master plan is being investigated with regard to renovating the Victoria County Memorial Hospital to include doctors' offices. Mr. Malcom indicated that Victoria County is very lucky to have two new, well-equipped hospitals.

Further discussion took place and Mr. Malcom indicated that Dr. Naqvi is a great recruiter and the recruitment process will continue for Victoria County.

Mr. Malcom was extended a vote of thanks and was excused at this time.

LONNIE DOWE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Lonnie Dowe.

Mr. Dowe thanked Council for allowing time on the agenda and indicated he was in attendance, along with the other gentlemen in the audience, with regard to a street lighting problem at Beverly's Hill, Baddeck Inlet.

The eastern entrance to the Beverly's Hill Road from the TCH 105 is a concern due to the lack of proper lighting. The location is at the top of a hill and the terrain is quite dangerous at the intersection where there is a 10 to 15 foot ditch. It is only a matter of time until there is an accident.

Mr. Dowe indicated that they would like to see proper lighting installed at this intersection and also an upgrade to the lighting at the western entrance to Beverly's Hill Road by Baddeck Bridge.

Councillor MacCuspig indicated that the eastern entrance on to the TCH 105 is not up to highway standards. He is investigating various scenarios with regard to lighting this area, whether it be solar, NSPI installing a new line, underground, etc.

Councillor MacCuspic indicated that at some future time, he will be introducing a notice of motion regarding this lighting.

It was felt that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal should have responsibility with regard to lighting this area. There are over 20 homes on this road, five of which are occupied permanently.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that they re-investigate the location of appropriate lighting at the eastern entrance to the Beverly's Hill Road, Baddeck Inlet. Motion carried.

Mr. Dowe requested a copy of the letter.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Dowe.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 15, 2010

The minutes of the February 15, 2010, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 15, 2010, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Biosphere Reserve

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he attended a meeting in Halifax with regard to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve designation. They met with three Ministers where a presentation on the biosphere reserve designation was made and the province's commitment to the project was requested. A reply is anticipated from the province within the next two weeks.

Trails Presentation

Councillor Dauphinee questioned whether any further information was obtained with regard to a contact for the presentation from Trails Nova Scotia. Sandy Hudson will contact Tom Wilson in this regard.

Meeting With Minister Jennex

The meeting with Minister Ramona Jennix, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, will be held on March 12, 2010, in Port Hawkesbury. The time of the meeting is not known as yet.

Along with the issues of the property mapper and seasonal tax, Councillor Dauphinee also requested that the topic of libraries be added to the meeting agenda. The MOU with the province has never been acted on and the province is also eliminating providing the funding for the cost of internet services at the libraries.

Councillor Dauphinee will provide further information to the CAO and a request will be made to have this included on the agenda for the meeting with Minister Jennex.

Curfew By-Law

To date, no information has been received with regard to Curfew By-Laws in other municipal units. Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he is still receiving calls with regard to adopting such a by-law.

Committee Structure

The topic of Committee structure and function was discussed. It was felt that a decision on this matter should be made in the near future.

The matter of the Economic Development Officer position was discussed and it was indicated that the applications have been shortlisted and interviews should take place in March.

A meeting to discuss Committees will be held on March 8, 2010, at 5:00 p.m., followed by a Public Works Committee meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Wind Energy

Inverness County and Victoria County will be submitting a joint in Expression of Interest with regard to the Wind Energy initiative through the UNSM.

Fire Department Study

Sandy Hudson is still investigating whether the fire department study initiative is through the UNSM or through the Rural Caucus.

Gulf Trading

The Gulf Trading properties remain on the tax sale list for March 23, 2010.

Seal Island Lighthouse

The letter has not been forwarded to Acadia University as yet.

Solid Waste Driver/Supervisor Position

Fifteen candidates were interviewed for the Solid Waste Driver/Supervisor position and a decision on the hiring is anticipated to be made tomorrow. Council will be advised.

The remaining Driver and Striker positions are presently being advertised within the Union and will be advertised publically next week. Some of the candidates interviewed for the Driver/Supervisor position have expressed an interest in the remaining positions and will be considered for same.

The Driver/Supervisor will be in attendance at the Public Works Committee meeting on Monday, March 8, 2010.

NEW BUSINESS

TENDER – ONE TON CAB AND CHASSIS WITH FLAT BED BODY

Two tenders were received for the one ton cab and chassis with flat bed body.

Canso Ford Sales (2005) Ltd.	\$60,768.00
Midway Motors Ltd.	\$66,361.51

Sandy Hudson advised that although Canso Ford is the low tender, they did not meet the tender specifications in that they bid on the wrong size flat bed body and did not include a price for an engine brake. It is therefore recommended that Midway Motors Ltd. tender be accepted.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that Midway Motors Ltd. tender in the amount of \$66,361.51 be accepted. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from the Honourable Bill Estabrooks, Minister of Energy, concerning Nova Scotia's development of an aggressive renewable energy strategy. By 2015, the government's goal is to have 25% of the province's electricity produced by renewable sources such as wind, tidal and biomass.
2. Copy of a letter from the Honourable Sterling Belliveau, Minister of Environment in reply to the Eastern Region Solid Waste Management Committee regarding waste diversion programs in Nova Scotia.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil expressed concern with regard to the condition of the secondary roads in his district.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that the secondary, non-paved roads in District #1 be given high priority for RIM funding in the upcoming construction season. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he felt the tidal energy should be investigated, especially in the Barra Strait area.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to Nova Scotia Power requesting that they consider the development of tidal energy for power in the Barra Strait area. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated as a point of interest, that Coxweld Ltd. is presently developing the stand ups for the new horizontal windmill coming from Ireland.

Councillor MacInnis brought up an issue with regard to the North Shore Gaelic Singers Hall. The community wishes to develop an interpretive centre for the Gaelic Culture at this facility. There is a \$2,400.00 outstanding tax bill on this property. He questioned on how this could be dealt with and was advised that if they form a Society and obtain a charitable tax number, they can be exempt from property tax, or at the very least the taxes can be reduced from commercial to residential.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that when he finds a streetlight for relocation, he will be making a request to relocate the light to 4489 TCH 105, South Haven.

The possibility of requesting the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to install additional lighting on the TCH 105 in South Haven was discussed and could be investigated.

District #7

Councillor Donovan indicated that the St. Paul Historical Society is hoping to bring the lighthouse that was located on St. Paul Island back to the Dingwall area. They wish to restore and preserve this structure.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the Municipality provide a letter of support to the St. Paul Historical Society in their efforts to obtain, restore and preserve the lighthouse. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee advised Council and expressed his concern on the plans by New Castle Marketing to make changes at the Keltic Lodge. Thirty workers will be laid off and plans are being made to eliminate fine dining, bell hops, the gift shop and reduce room rates. This will have a detrimental affect on the first class tourism destination status it has achieved in its 70 years of operation.

The provincial government, owners of the facility, has approved the management companies plan and the reputation of the facility which took 70 years to build, is being destroyed. Councillor Dauphinee requested that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Tourism to express our concern and request a meeting.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Percy Paris, Minister of Tourism, Culture & Heritage, condemning the action being undertaken at the Keltic Lodge facility and requesting a meeting with the Minister to discuss our concerns. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee also expressed concern on the secondary roads in northern Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that the secondary roads in Northern Victoria County be graded early in the upcoming construction season. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison indicated that Steve MacDonald has been appointed as the Interim Acting Area Manager for the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and he suggested that he be invited to the next Council meeting.

The Baddeck Water Project is the number one infrastructure priority for Victoria County and they are now in the process of proceeding with the \$5.8 million dollar project. Under the infrastructure program, 2/3's of the funding will be provided by the federal and provincial governments, with the remaining 1/3 to come from the Municipality. He is requesting approval for the Municipal share and advises that the Municipality would not be responsible for any overages on this project.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the Municipality approve their 1/3 commitment for the Baddeck Water project in the amount of \$1.9 million dollars. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison reassumed the Chair.

VICTORIA COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

The Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 3, 2010, to review the Economic Development Strategy. This will be the only agenda item.

DATE FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, March 29, 2010, beginning at 5:00 p.m. A policy session will be held prior to Council at 4:00 p.m.

PROVINCIAL VOLUNTEER

Council was provided with the list of County nominees to date for the Provincial Volunteer Awards ceremony in Halifax. Victoria County sends one representative annually to the awards ceremony in Halifax. The deadline for submission for is March 3, 2010.

Council scored the candidates and provided their results to the CAO. The CAO will tabulate the results.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the candidate receiving the top score be the Municipality's representative to attend the provincial volunteer award ceremonies in Halifax. Motion carried.

Additional nominations received by the March 3, 2010, deadline will be considered by Council.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacNeil, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Sandy Hudson, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden