

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**February 27, 2012**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, February 27, 2012, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil  
District #2 – Keith MacCuspig  
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden  
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis  
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden  
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee  
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO  
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #7 – David Donovan (Out of Town)

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**MOMENT OF SILENCE – BRIAN TRASK**

Warden Morrison asked Council to stand and observe a moment of silence for Brian Trask, former municipal employee from 1981 to 2002.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SESSION**

**NEDAC**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Bruce MacDonald, Executive Director, NEDAC. Mr. MacDonald indicated that he would be making a presentation on the

history of NEDAC and in attendance with him are Gordie MacGean, Senior Loans Officer and Charlie MacLellan, Manager of the Northside Employment and Resource Centre, who would provide additional information.

Mr. MacDonald indicated that NEDAC has been in existence for the past 27 years and began with a \$1.5 million dollar investment fund through Canada Manpower at the time. Victoria County did not come under their umbrella until 10 years later. NEDAC provides term loans to small businesses. Businesses must provide a business plan and NEDAC have a template available for use. NEDAC operates on an 11 member Board of Directors and all loans require Board approval. Their lending rate is 8% for a 10 year term and payment arrangements are flexible - may be seasonal, quarterly, monthly, etc.

NEDAC has had a fair amount of activity in Victoria County over the years; however, in the past 3 to 4 years there has been a decline. In fact, Mr. MacDonald indicated that this is indicative of their entire jurisdiction. Declining population and decline in the pulp, fishery and tourism industries have been factors in Victoria County.

Deputy Warden Patterson questioned on what could be done to kick start the economy. Mr. MacDonald indicated that the Muskrat Falls project and the Halifax Shipyards shipbuilding contract should provide some opportunities for the entire area. When the economy picks up, everything picks up. Mr. MacDonald indicated that a federal government façade program to help tourist establishments upgrade would also be a positive.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on availability of training locally and Mr. MacDonald indicated that there is the Maritime Drilling School, North Sydney, that is now a recognized school and tuition can be funded for participants who qualify. Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of the fisheries and compared the funding received for the drought in western Canada in the amount of \$480,000,000, whereas the fisheries only received a \$50,000,000.

Councillor MacCuspic questioned whether there was any interest in existing businesses or succession planning. Mr. MacDonald indicated there are very few succession deals. Again this could be due to the declining population.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the matter of the forest industry and the fact that a contractor received a \$10 million dollar forestry contract which he was unable to fulfill as there were no wharves from which to ship the product. He questioned whether there was any funding for the upkeep of wharves and was advised there is not.

Warden Morrison questioned on how the Municipality could raise their profile and attract businesses. He questioned whether NEDAC would partner on an incubator

mall with the Municipality and Mr. MacDonald indicated there could possibly consider it and advised that the maximum funding is \$150,000.

Gordie MacGean, Senior Loans Officer, NEDAC, advised that the new BRAND for NEDAC is the Northside-Victoria Community Business Development Corporation (CBDC). They are one of 275 CBDC's across the Country and one of 2 that are no longer funded by the federal government and are completely self-sufficient. They have been successful in doing what they do for many years and have a \$9 million dollar asset base.

He outlined that a typical year would see about \$1 million loan funding, but this has gone down in recent years. Victoria County in the past has accounted for 25 to 30% of the loan funding, but in the past few years this has decreased to the point that during the current year, which is 10 months in, only \$50,000 has been provided in loans in Victoria County.

Mr. MacGean presented various statistics with regard to loan funding over the years and outlined the Self Employment Benefit Program through Employment Nova Scotia which can provide a wage subsidy up to 40 weeks while starting a business. Activity has also decreased in this program.

Whether any advertisement was done on the Employment Subsidy Program was questioned and Mr. MacGean indicated that most contact is made by word of mouth or through the local Employment and IT Centres. A link to these services could be placed on the Victoria County website.

Henry Fuller is a representative from Victoria County on the Board and there is a position for another Board member from Victoria County, but it has remained unfilled.

The question was raised as to whether non-profit organizations are eligible for the programs offered by NEDAC and Mr. MacLellan replied to same.

Charlie MacLellan, Manager of the Northside Economic and Resource Centre, advised that the Centre is one of 30 in the Province under the umbrella of Employment Nova Scotia.

A couple of years ago the Baddeck IT Centre came under this Centre. The Baddeck office is located in the Old Post Office building and is staffed with one person – Melanie Garland. Mr. MacLellan indicated that Melanie does an excellent job. Both Centres work to get people job ready. They host workshops on preparing resumes, interview skills, job skills, etc. Melanie is very familiar with the employers and the people in the area and this is very helpful when assisting clients.

There is an Employment Counsellor on staff in the northside office that comes to Baddeck once per month on a regular basis and more if required. The Resource Centres have computers available for use – 5 in Baddeck and 20 in the northside. Photocopying and fax services are available free of charge.

Job ready is considered as anything that needs to be done to get the individual back in the workforce. Mr. MacLellan outlined the Skills Development that will assist clients interested in upgrading their schooling. Tuition payment is available of up to \$10,000 per year if the required criteria is met. The client may also be able to draw EI or equivalent. In order to qualify the client must be EI eligible or has been during the past 3 years and has been out of school for a period of two years.

Mr. MacLellan provided numbers on the program accessed in Victoria County and the northside area over the past year.

Mr. MacLellan was questioned on whether the Ingonish Employment Outreach Office staffed by Derrick Hawley provided that same services and he advised it does provide exactly the same services.

The forms are accessed through a computerized system only and the staff will assist those interested in the programs. Mr. MacLellan indicated that the numbers are staying pretty constant and they have a great deal of repeat business.

Mr. MacLellan was questioned as to whether he or other staff would be willing to come to talk to community organizations on the services provided. He indicated that they would be happy to do so.

The Older Worker Program was outlined. There is a session now being held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's and there are four participants from the Baddeck area enrolled in the program.

After further discussion, the gentlemen were extended a vote of thanks for their presentations and they were excused at this time.

### **RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

### **MARLENE USHER, ECBC**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Marlene Usher, Executive Director General, Advocacy, Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation (ECBC).

Ms. Usher indicated that shipbuilding announcement and the Muskrat Falls project are two positive initiatives that will help the economy of all of Nova Scotia. The Muskrat Fall project will consist of two large construction projects – a underwater pipeline from Newfoundland to Cape Breton and a convertor station at Lingan. The shipbuilding will create jobs and a contract to build an arctic control vessel has been received to start in 2012.

On March 9, 2012, ACOA and Irving will be hosting a session at Membertou on how to become a supplier for the shipbuilding industry. Invitations will be forwarded. If Council is aware of any businesses that might have an interest, they will be invited if their names are provided.

ECBC can also assist companies to become bid ready and provide ISO training. Irving has taken advantage of some of the programs through the Nova Scotia Community College and Nautical Institute.

A Strategic Brainwork for Cape Breton Island has been established and consists of the RDA's, NEDAC, Community College, CBU and ECBC. They meet regularly as a group and this is very beneficial as no one group is working in isolation.

Ms. Usher touched on port development and the coal to leave Donkin. There is no rail line from Donkin to Sydney Harbour and it is not in the plans. Ms. Usher indicated that the Province of Nova Scotia should be compelled to provide this link and we should be pressuring them to do so. The Donkin Coal has the potential to impact the economy.

Ms. Usher indicated that the assets she sees in Victoria County are the Cabot Trail, golf, AG Bell National Historic Park and the Gaelic College, to name a few. Destination Cape Breton's marketing levy was discussed and it is hoped that Inverness County will come on board in the next year. ECBC works directly with DCBA who have their office in the ECBC building.

Ms. Usher updated on the Canada 55+ Games which will be coming to Cape Breton.

The Highland Links Golf Course and Keltic Lodge are both recognized internationally and there is a great deal of interest in packaging them together. The Gaelic College is also internationally known and represents an opportunity to development.

Ms. Usher updated on ECBC's Festival and Events Program and Community Halls Program.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the matter of the Community Halls Program. He indicated that in his district, it is difficult to obtain funding under this program as the Legion is the main community hall in the area and does not qualify. He felt there should be a policy change for rural areas and also a policy change on the \$20,000 maximum that can be received.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether a follow up was ever done on the FAM (Familiarization) Tours. These tours are specific tours to see specific assets, such as golf, tour club operators, etc. He also felt that funding for the agriculture sector is lacking. Ms. Usher said they do fund shared equipment and are providing support for an enhanced farmers market in Sydney. There is a great deal of potential in all sectors of agriculture and she indicated she has met with Neal Conrad in this regard and suggested that questions pertaining to agriculture should be forwarded to him.

It was indicated that the highest farm gated business in the Maritimes is the Eyking Farm in Millville. The fur trade was also discussed and it was noted that Nova Scotia is producing 1.5 million in pelts – ½ of Canada's production. There is only one remaining fur farm in Cape Breton.

Warden Morrison expressed frustration with the \$20,000 maximum funding. The Victoria Highland Civic Centre had a \$160,000 to \$200,000 project. It is an integral part of the community and is necessary for economic development because it affects our ability to attract people to the area and retain them. The \$20,000 does not help in the long run.

Councillor Buchanan mentioned on the Muskrat Falls transmission link and the fact that it goes through a lot of the fishing grounds, especially the crab grounds and this will be an issue.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he will be meeting with Gerard McPhee, ECBC on March 8, 2012, and would like to meet with Ms. Usher at that time also. He made mention of the announcement regarding Ben Eoin and questioned whether this would open the door for Ski Cape Smokey. Cape Smokey is the only hill with natural snow and the only qualified hill for running Giant Slalom races.

The fact that most of the awards received by the Province in the past five years have been related to the Cape Breton and the Province does not take full advantage of that recognition was discussed. The Province has to be on board marketing and celebrating these achievements. The role TIANS play was discussed.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the community halls are vital to the areas and are a driver of economic development. He made mention of the first ½ marathon

road race that took place last weekend in Boularderie with 84 participants and the hall was an integral part of that event.

Discussion took place on the decentralization of government to areas such as Victoria County and the benefits that would be derived economically if the government would consider such action.

Further discussion took place with regard to ECBC and Ms. Usher was extended a vote of thanks for her presentation.

**NONA MACDERMID, ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Nona MacDermid, Economic Sustainability Officer.

Ms. MacDermid reported on the Business Succession Planning Seminar that took place at the Gaelic College in November. Tom Deans, a best selling author of “Every Family’s Business” was the guest speaker. It was difficult to get registration for this event and with the cost being only \$35; it was very worthwhile to attend. Those who participated felt the information provided was very useful. There will be a 90 day follow up with the participants.

Ms. MacDermid advised that Victoria County partnered with the Small Business Development Centre at Cape Breton University for this event. The services by the Centre were outlined and a question was raised as to whether the Centre would travel to communities to host training sessions and she indicated that she felt they would be open to that initiative.

Melanie Garland indicated that she has difficulty attending events such as this during the work week and she questioned whether such seminars could be offered on the weekend. Ms. MacDermid outlined the pros and cons of same.

Ms. MacDermid indicated that a problem being encountered is that we are losing our population and she advised that the Newcomer Navigator, a joint venture of CBCEDA and Victoria County, is one that should be taken more advantage of. It is an excellent program that provides outreach to people interested in coming to Cape Breton. Attracting new families to our area could only be a positive measure.

Discussion took place on the “shop local” theme and the challenges associated with same. Ms. MacDermid felt that the decline of Chambers of Commerce in the County has had an affect on local initiatives and she felt that one solution would be to establish a Victoria County Chamber of Commerce, with regional units providing a sub-

committee for this venture. This would re-engage the communities and reinvigorate Victoria County as a whole.

Discussion took place on the incubator concept and the possibility of developing this in the Municipality. Ms. MacDermid felt this would be very doable and that this should be investigated with ECBC.

The Junior Achievement Programming was discussed. Ms. MacDermid felt that the full spectrum of the Junior Achievement Program should be introduced in Victoria County schools. There are a number of programs associated with this program (entrepreneurial training, business simulation, etc.) that would encourage our youth to become engaged.

Henry Fuller indicated that he has been a Board Member of NEDAC since 1992 and was the only Victoria County resident who applied to a position. He is very pleased to be a Board member of this non-political organization that has provided \$5 million dollars in funding in Victoria County in the past 20 years. NEDAC is now independent and does not access any funding from ACOA.

Mr. Fuller also indicated that he was the last President of the Baddeck Board of Trade when it ceased operation in 1989. He indicated that there are all sorts of opportunities out there and more cooperation is needed.

Jim Morrow indicated that the VCCAPS could also be another partner for consideration in the incubator concept.

Discussion took place and Ms. MacDermid advised that as a go forward plan, Council has to seriously consider the funding for economic development in the upcoming budget. Ms. MacDermid was advised to provide Council with a figure on what she is suggesting.

Ms. MacDermid was requested to provide Council with a summary by email of her presentation.

Ms. MacDermid was extended a vote of thanks for her presentation and was excused at this time.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 13, 2012**

The minutes of the February 13, 2012, session of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 13, 2012, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**C-Difficile Matter**

An invoice was forwarded to the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority for the cost of the C-Difficile cleanup at the Baddeck Municipal Solid Waste Management Facility and has been paid.

**Alternative Energy Strategy Study**

Genivar came back with proposed dates for the five public consultations sessions to be held throughout the County on the Draft Alternative Energy Strategy Study. Council reviewed the dates and expressed some concern. Sandy Hudson is to go back to Genivar to try to obtain alternate dates to be held on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

**Rankin Memorial School**

Councillor MacNeil questioned on whether the Eastern District Planning Commission had sent the letter on the condition of the school property. Sandy Hudson advised that an inspector was sent to view the property, but he was unsure if a letter had been forwarded.

**I-Fit Gyms**

Eight expressions of interest were received from 6 municipal districts with regard to the I-Fit Gyms. This will be dealt with later in the meeting.

**Right Some Good Food Adventure**

Sandy Hudson advised that he checked on the venue cost of the Right Some Good Food Adventure and was advised that the cost was \$3,000 per event. There is also the opportunity to sponsor a Foodie Street at a cost of \$35,000.

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Victoria County sponsor one Right Some Good event at a cost of \$3,000, the location to be determined. Motion carried.**

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #6**

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that \$2,000 be approved from the District #6 budget for Ski Cape Smokey Society for the inspection of the quad chair lift. Motion carried.**

**District #8**

Councillor Buchanan presented a petition concerning the South Aspy River Bridge. Almost a year ago, the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal put up stop lights and closed one lane of the bridge because it was unsafe. Nothing has been done since that time to remedy the situation. The petition contains 590 signatures from concerned public.

Councillor Buchanan also presented a copy of an email received from Gerard Jessome, P. Eng., District Director – Eastern, outlining the repair work that would necessitate the complete shut down of the bridge for up to 4 days. The detour of traffic would be through the South Ridge Road, the South Ridge Branch Road and the Blaze Road. The plan is to have the work completed by early June. Concern was expressed on this plan and the detour.

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the petition concerning the South Aspy River Bridge be accepted and forwarded to:**

- **Honourable Bill Estabrooks, Minister, DOT&IR**
- **Gerard Jessome, District Director – Eastern, DOT&IR**
- **Kimberly MacDonald, P.Eng, DOT&IR**
- **Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, DOT&IR**
- **Bruce Fitzner, Deputy Minister, DOT&IR**
- **Keith Bain, MLA – Victoria-The Lakes**

**Motion carried.**

Councillor Buchanan was contacted by Ricky Fraser, Dingwall Water Maintenance Man, concerning the proposed changes in the management of the water utilities. Sandy Hudson will be meeting with the Water System Operators on Wednesday.

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that if the issues concerning the water utility operations are not resolved with the meeting with the CAO, a meeting of the operators be arranged with Council. Motion carried.**

Councillor Buchanan indicated that he has received a request from a basketball team for a County flag to use at an upcoming tournament. There is an old flag possibly available for use.

**District #4**

Councillor MacInnis apologized for not remembering to take food items for the Municipal food bank collection.

Councillor MacInnis requested that the DOT&IR Supervisor of Ferries be requested to attend Council at a future meeting.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that the Supervisor of Ferries for the Province be requested to appear before Victoria County Municipal Council. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacInnis presented a letter from the St. Ann's Bay Development Association (SABDA) offering its support to any efforts undertaken by council to create a public transit service in the County.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the letter of support for a public transit system from SABDA be accepted by Council. Motion carried.**

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that it is anticipated there will be an Age-Friendly Communities Committee meeting next Thursday and public transit will be a topic of discussion at this meeting.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a street light order be placed of the installation of a light at 502 Murray Road, North River. Motion carried.**

**District #2**

Councillor MacCuspie questioned on the topic of fracking and whether presentations both pro and con had been scheduled for Council as yet. He indicated this subject was discussed at the last Pitu'paq meeting and provided the name of Jennifer West as a possibility for making a presentation against fracking.

Sandy Hudson advised that he contacted the Department of Energy and has not heard back to date. These presentations will be scheduled later in the spring.

Councillor MacCuspig indicated that there is a “Climate Change: Getting Ready” conference in Halifax on March 5 and 6, 2012, and he expressed an interest in attending. Councillor MacCuspig and any other Council member interested in attending were authorized to do so.

Councillor MacCuspig brought up that matter of the condition of the Big Baddeck Road. Two sections of the road were paved five years ago and three years ago. The paving done three years ago was a total failure and the work done to remedy the situation was a failure.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, with copies to Charlie MacDonald and Stephen MacDonald, DOT&IR; and Keith Bain, MLA, expressing concern on the condition of the Big Baddeck Road and indicating that it is an insult to the intelligence of the residents of Victoria County to carry out such deplorable work; that the repairs undertaken are unacceptable; that the competency of the engineers who approved this work should be questioned and work be undertaken to remedy the situation and also remedy the condition of the Mountainview Road and Bay Road Valley Road, Bay St. Lawrence. Motion carried.**

### **District #1**

Councillor MacNeil brought up the condition of the new pavement in the Jamesville/Ottawa Brook area. The condition of the road has worsened and a meeting was held with Keith Bain, MLA, and Stephen MacDonald, DOT&IR in this regard. It was felt that Gerard Jessome, District Director, and Bruce Fitzner, Deputy Minister of DOT&IR, should be requested to visit the area.

Councillor MacNeil presented a thank you from the MacKinnon Harbour Survival Association for the funding received to assist with the dredging of the harbour. The harbour entrance has been restored and the quality of the harbour has been enhanced as a result of the dredging.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **I-FIT GYMS**

Eight expressions of interest were received from non-profit organizations for the I-Fit Gyms. The applications were received from six municipal districts, with two districts having two applications. It was felt the appropriate way to decide would be to draw the district numbers by lot.

The six district numbers were placed in a container and four were drawn, with the successful districts being Districts 1, 4, 6, and 7. Two applications were received from District #1, so the two submissions were placed in a container with the successful application being from the Rankin School of the Narrows Recreation Committee.

The successful applicants will be advised by letter and requested for proof of insurance, the installation specifications, and other required information.

The remaining four districts will be eligible to receive the equipment in the next fiscal year.

### **GAELIC COLLEGE**

Sandy Hudson advised that Rodney MacDonald, Gaelic College, has requested a letter of support from Council for the Gaelic College's Development Plan. They may be seeking financial support in the future.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that a letter of support for the Gaelic College's Development Plan be approved. Motion carried.**

### **OLD LAPTOPS**

Sandy Hudson advised that Carl Thistle has requested that the old Council laptops be provided to him and he will clean them and then donate them to the hospital. Council indicated that they would have them cleaned out and donated as they deemed appropriate.

### **VICTORIA COUNTY VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION**

Tom Wilson provided Council with three applications for the Victoria County volunteer who will attend the Provincial Volunteer Ceremony in Halifax in April.

The three applications were reviewed and were as follows:

- Jim Steele nominated by the St. Ann's Bay Development Association
- Michelle Symes nominated by the Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department
- Elliot and Marie Frosst nominated by the Ross Ferry Stewardship Society

As Council felt all three submissions were equal, it was decided to draw the successful name by lot. The names were then placed in a container and the name selected as the Victoria County Volunteer of the Year is Michelle Symes.

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that Michelle Symes be Victoria County's Volunteer of the Year. Motion carried.**

**COMMUNITY GARDEN**

Sandy Hudson presented plans for a proposed community garden on the upper level of the Court House property. The estimated cost of developing the garden according to the plan is \$25,000 and he is suggesting that the funding if approved be ½ from the 2011-2012 budget and ½ from the 2012-2013 budget.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the community garden project be approved. Motion carried.**

**ELECTRONIC VOTING**

Sandy Hudson advised that he attended a seminar today on electronic voting provided by Intelivote. He was quite impressed with the system and the checks and balances in place and he felt it would be worthwhile pursuing. He requested Intelivote to provide Council with a one hour session and they agreed to come and do a presentation.

**NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on March 12, 2012, with presentations by Veronika Breski, LFA27; and Ambrose White, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board.

Another meeting will be held on March 26, 2012, at which time presentations will be received from Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority (CBCEDA); the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia; and Parks Canada.

The April Council meetings will be held on April 16, 2012, when the Gaelic College will be making a presentation and on April 30, 2012, when Economic and Rural Development will be in attendance and possibly TIANS.

The RCMP are to be requested to attend a future meeting also.

**REGRETS**

Warden Morrison indicated that he forgot to extend regrets from Keith Bain, MLA, who had planned, but was unable, to attend Council this evening.

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacCuspik, the meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Sandy Hudson, CAO**