

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
June 25, 2012

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at St. Andrew's Church Hall, Neil's Harbour, on Monday, June 25, 2012, 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 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and thanked Councillor Donovan for the invitation to meet in Neil's Harbour. He welcomed all in attendance to the meeting and presented the agenda for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

NORTH VICTORIA SIX PORTS HARBOUR AUTHORITY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Osborne Burke and Kim Stockley who updated Council on the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority.

Ms. Stockley circulated a copy of her presentation for Council's review (copy attached). The presentation outlined what the organization does and what they have accomplished this year. She indicated that the cost of operations and the work completed during the 2011/2012 fiscal year was approximately \$1,893,000.00. 88% (approximately \$1,669,000) went to Cape Breton businesses/individuals and 12% (approximately \$224,000) went to North of Smokey businesses/groups/individuals. An outline of projects planned for 2012-2013 was provided.

Deputy Warden Patterson offered congratulations on the accomplishments of the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up a concern with regard to the harbour in Ingonish Beach. The natural barrier is now gone and the whole harbour is open to the sea. Small Craft Harbours is not willing to take this harbour and he questioned if there were any ideas on what could be done in this regard.

Osborne Burke indicated that Small Craft Harbours are cutting \$7.5 million in funding to Atlantic Canada in the next five years. Councillor Dauphinee expressed his concern with what could happen if this harbour is not secured.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he is aware of the challenges with harbours and sees the impact of the collaborative effort of the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority. He indicated that the Little River Harbour is in need of dredging and was envious of the work being accomplished in the harbours under the jurisdiction of the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority.

A question was raised on the number of cruise ship visits anticipated and Ms. Stockley indicated that typically there are one to two per year.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether Small Craft Harbours has done any work on the anticipated impact of climate change and Mr. Burke indicated that there is presently being a study undertaken on the impact of climate change. It was indicated that any new wharf construction is now 20 inches higher than previous construction.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks for the presentation and congratulations on the achievements of the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority.

Ms. Stockley thanked Council for their support and indicated that the support received has provided the organization with the stability they need.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

Warden Morrison extended a welcome to Gerard Jessome, District Director – Eastern Region, and Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he had no real concerns with regard to his district. The concern with regard to the road shoulders is being addressed with reclaimed asphalt. The grader is presently doing the second grading on the gravel roads in the district and Mr. MacDonald indicated there is work planned for the New Campbellton, Black Rock and New Harris Roads.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the quality of service has declined since the salt silo has gone out of service in Wreck Cove and felt that a permanent salt structure is required in this area.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of the passing lane at Ingonish Centre. The new centre line painting has eliminated the passing lane. Stephen MacDonald will investigate this matter.

The condition of the Beach Crossing Road was discussed and Mr. Jessome advised that they visited the site today. This area is a challenge and \$100,000.00 was spent on the road after the storm. A barrier is required there and Mr. Jessome indicated that he will talk to head office to source funding for the road. If the funding cannot be accessed, smaller portions will be done. Nelson Dixon has been advised of work that is to be done to the road at present and this will be completed. Councillor Dauphinee indicated that Nelson Dixon, Supervisor, is excellent to deal with.

Councillor Donovan questioned that now that it has been determined that the New Haven Road requires full reconstruction and paving, has it been placed on the capital projects list for reconstruction. Mr. Jessome advised that the road has been placed on the priority list, but he cannot advise when the work will be done.

Councillor Buchanan expressed a concern that the ditching is very minimal in the area of the new paving on the Cape North hill and he questioned whether the same would be done on the Bay Road Valley road. Mr. MacDonald advised that the culverts and ditching are not a part of the paving program. This work is being completed from the area's budget and Mr. MacDonald indicated he would look at the area and evaluate it.

Councillor Buchanan brought up the matter of the Angus MacLeod Bridge on the South Aspy. The bridge will be closing for a short period and traffic will be detoured through the South Ridge Road, South Ridge Branch Road and the Blaze Road. It is anticipated that the work will take about four days to complete and Mr. Jessome advised that contact will be made within the next month with emergency officials, etc. regarding the planned closure of the bridge. The work is anticipated to be completed in September.

Councillor Buchanan also indicated that the lights on the bridge are not working properly on the side heading north. This will be investigated.

Councillor MacInnis indicated with the new paving plant, resources will be required and he questioned whether some regular staff members would be involved in the process, thereby eliminating other regular maintenance work being completed. Mr. Macdonald advised that he can hire private trucks as necessary and schedule resources from other jurisdictions to assist if necessary and scheduled maintenance work will be completed.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the status of the paving tender process for the North River section. He felt the work should be completed as soon as possible and not late in the fall. Mr. Jessome advised that the preparatory work has been completed and there are a number of processes to be completed in Halifax before tender. He would also like to see the work completed as soon as possible.

The Englishtown Ferry was discussed and Mr. Jessome advised that the ferries do not come under local jurisdiction and the Director is Kevin Mitchell in Miller Lake. A new Manager of Ferries has just been hired to replace Bill Yarn.

Councillor MacCuspic requested an update on the Big Baddeck Road. Mr. Jessome advised that next year the chip seal crew will be in the Cape Breton area and the Big Baddeck Road will be completed at that time.

The status of the Red Bridge was questioned and Mr. Jessome advised that the structure will be replaced with a two lane structure. There will be a different alignment and the survey work has been completed. The project is now at the design stage.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he had a number of concerns, the most pressing being repairs to the gypsum hole at Jamesville. Mowing and brush cutting is required throughout the district. Mr. MacDonald indicated that money was set aside in his budget for this area prior to the boundary change and this work will be completed. Councillor MacNeil made mention of a sign that is down by the bridge in Iona that he would like to see replaced prior to the ALS Walk this weekend.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the matter of the boundary change issue and that he felt the whole situation was handled very poorly. There was no contact made prior to the change to get any feedback from the area.

Mr. Jessome advised that the whole province has been affected by what was a Union arbitration decision. The process will be tracked and reviewed as we move forward. He indicated that every effort will be made to make the change work.

Councillor MacNeil expressed a concern that now when Stephen MacDonald comes to Council, he will be unable to address District #1 concerns and he doubted that Darren Blunden, Area Manager now responsible for the Iona peninsula, would be willing to come to Council to discuss one district. Mr. Jessome indicated that Mr. Blunden will come to Council. Stephen MacDonald indicated that he hopes to arrange a meeting between Councillor MacNeil and Darren Blunden in the next week.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that Darren Blunden, Area Manager, Port Hawkesbury office, be invited to a future Council meeting. Motion carried.

Scott MacKinnon, Fire Chief of the Cabot Volunteer Fire Department, advised that as fire chief he is obligated to follow the *Fire Safety Act of Nova Scotia* and the closure of the Angus MacLeod bridge is not acceptable and is a public safety issue. Mr. Jessome requested contact information for Mr. MacKinnon and advised he would contact him to discuss this matter further.

Osborne Burke questioned on the weight restriction on the Blaze Road and he was advised that it is the same as the regular highway roads – 41,500 kg.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. MacDonald and Mr. Jessome for their attendance at Council and they were excused at this time.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

BABTA

Courtesy of Council was extended to Glen MacDonald and Dick Grubb representing BABTA who were in attendance to provide further information on the financial request submitted to Council for \$20,000.

Mr. MacDonald thanked Council for the opportunity to present details on their financial request. The Baddeck Visitor Information Centre (VIC) is the only one operating in Victoria County. They receive in excess of 20,000 visitors per year and employ three (3) full-time and one student staff. The building is owned by BABTA and is on land owned by and leased from the Victoria Farmer's Co-op. The Baddeck VIC do more than promote Baddeck and area.

BABTA have a MOU with Destination Cape Breton Association regarding the training and administration of employees. They receive \$11,000 from DCBA.

BABTA has a membership of 94 at present and membership fees are approximately \$19,000. BABTA is running an operational deficit every year and have a shortfall at present of \$15,000. With the membership fees collected, this shortfall leaves \$4,000 to operate BABTA.

Councillor MacNeil questioned if there was membership in BABTA from the Iona area and he was advised there was. Mr. MacDonald indicated that the VIC staff are very knowledgeable and are trained by DCBA. They receive a morning update of all activities within the County, so they are knowledgeable in the information provided.

Councillor MacCuspik questioned on the display of brochures in the VIC. Mr. MacDonald advised that the Province of Nova Scotia tell what and how items can be displayed. There are display areas available and he cannot recall anyone ever being turned down. They have a rate schedule for advertising.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on whether BABTA had any members from the North of Smokey area or if they have ever looked at increasing their membership by expanding to the northern area of the County. Mr. MacDonald indicated they had not.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether BABTA would be receptive to Councillors coming to the VIC to see its operation and he was advised they would be more than happy to accommodate this request.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on annual funding for the VIC and Mr. MacDonald indicated they do not know from year to year what the funding will be. They are fortunate to receive the provincial money each year.

Councillor Donovan questioned on what they felt was a normal time to travel the Cabot Trail and Mr. MacDonald indicated that he felt three days would be appropriate to see all there is to see.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on the quality of service and Mr. MacDonald indicated that they are in the 3rd year of the MOU with DCBA and this has been a positive in terms of training and service.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that there is a Parks Canada information centre located in Ingonish.

It was felt it was very important to retain the VIC in Baddeck and discussion took place on the funding received and how it benefits the Municipality. Deputy Warden Patterson questioned whether this would be an annual request to Council and it was indicated it could be. It was felt that this should be a provincial responsibility. The province run 11 VIC's now and it was felt that Baddeck should be one of them.

Warden Morrison thanked the gentlemen for coming and questioned when the funding was required. Mr. MacDonald indicated that a decision would be needed by the end of the tourist season.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a notice of motion be given that a decision will be made on the BABTA request at the July 16, 2012, Council session. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 11, 2012

The minutes of the June 11, 2012, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Councillor MacInnis indicated a change in the minutes on Page 5 – it should read Ms. Grant Fiander not Mr. Grant Fiander.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of June 11, 2012, be approved with the noted correction. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Helipad

Whether confirmation has been received from DNR on the location of the helipad at their Depot was questioned.

Sandy Hudson advised that he contacted Gordie MacIver in this regard and has heard nothing back to date.

Nova Scotia Power

Warden Morrison updated Council on the Nova Scotia Power meeting he attended in Port Hawkesbury. There were only four members of the public in attendance.

Provincial Parks Review

Warden Morrison advised that he attended the meeting with regard to the review of the Provincial Parks and provided Council with an update.

ST. PAUL'S HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The matter of the municipal heritage registration of the St. Paul's Historical Society Lighthouse was discussed. Joan MacInnes provided a brief history of the lighthouse for Council's information.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that Council approve the designation of the St. Paul's Historical Society Lighthouse as a municipal heritage property. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

VICTORIA COUNTY FLAG

Sandy Hudson presented a prototype of the new Victoria County flag for Council's review and approval. He indicated that along with the flag, banners will be purchased also for use in advertising at sponsored events, etc.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the flag be approved as the official flag of Victoria County. Motion carried.

An order will be placed for the flags and banners.

The proposed logos for the Physical Activity Strategy were previously forwarded to Council for review. A decision on the logo will be made before the end of the meeting this evening.

TAX EXEMPTION

A letter was received from Robert Costelo, North Highlands Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada, requesting that their property located in Cape North across from the manse, be added to the Tax Exemption By-Law listing.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the requested property owned by the North Highlands Pastoral Charge of the United Church of Canada be added on the list for tax exemption in the Tax Exemption By-Law. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that the Big Bras d'Or Ferry Wharf Restoration Society will be doing some work, on a smaller scale, on the wharf.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that \$5,088.75 be approved from the District #5 budget for the Big Bras d'Or Ferry Wharf Restoration Society. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee advised that Signature Resorts are providing guests with a \$25 gas card for every night's stay through Irving Oil. This puts other retailers at a disadvantage and the question was raised as to the cost to the province for this promotion.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Percy Paris, Minister of Tourism, indicating that

Council are pleased with the Keltic Lodge operations this season and expressing concern on the free gas vouchers for guests at the Keltic Lodge, and other Signature Resorts, as this puts other gas retailers at a disadvantage. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that one of the two linemen in the Ingonish area has applied for and received a job in Sydney. He questioned on what the plans are for this area now. He has spoken to Leah MacDonald, NSPI, on this matter and would like to see her, or another NSPI representative, invited to appear before Council.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the cost of pumping septic tanks in the northern area of the County is increasing and the Municipality is being mentioned as the reason for the price increase as the septic disposal site in Dingwall has closed.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Robert Dauphinee be requested to investigate the requirements and costs for the Municipality to assume this activity in Victoria County and this be referred to the new Council for decision. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Donovan questioned on whether the new order of Victoria County pins has been received. The order has not been received as yet and will be investigated as to when it will be received.

Councillor Donovan indicated that the “To Do” list is getting long and work should be done to clear some of the issues of the list.

District #8

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that letters be forwarded to Bell Mobility and Bell Aliant expressing concern on the cell phone service coverage in the area from Aspy Bay north. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources requesting that next year’s moose draw be held in Victoria County. Motion carried.

District #4

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to Brenda Alexander, Small Craft Harbours, questioning on when the harbour dredging will be completed in Little River Harbour, Victoria County. Motion carried.

District #2

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting “No Littering” signs be erected on the highway in the area by Tim Hortons and a reduction in the speed limit at the foot of Hunter’s Mountain adjacent to the MacMillan Mountain Road be investigated. Motion carried.

Councillor MacCuspig advised that he was advised by Kate Oland that the Provincial Immigration website does not have a link to the Victoria County site.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a request be made to have a link on the Provincial Immigration website to the Victoria County website. Motion carried.

Councillor MacCuspig indicated that the Pitu’paq Committee will be hosting a presentation on fracking at the Baddeck Community Centre on July 5, 2012, at 7:00 p.m. Jessica Ernst will be the presenter.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil brought up concern about the price of gas.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that a letter be forwarded to the NSUARB expressing concern on the price of gas in Nova Scotia. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison indicated that an ambulance on two occasions was dispatched to a property on Harvey Drive and both times went to the wrong property as signage was an issue.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Eastern District Planning Commission be requested to check the E911 signage on Harvey Drive, Baddeck, to ensure it meets the provincial/municipal requirements and if not, notify why and request that the residents in question comply with the regulations. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan requested that the status of the signage for the Corbett and MacNeil Roads be investigated.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO