

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
August 25, 2014

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the North Shore & District Volunteer Fire Department Hall, Indian Brook, on Monday, August 25, 2014, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Athol Grant
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and thanked Councillor MacInnis for hosting Council on a boat trip earlier this afternoon and tonight's Council meeting.

The agenda was presented for approval.

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

CAPE BRETON DISTRICT HEALTH AUTHORITY

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Jim Merkley, VP – Corporate Services, Cape Breton District Health Authority (CBHDA).

Mr. Merkley thanked Council for the opportunity to appear and introduced Rose Anderson, Associate Facility Manager, Victoria County Memorial Hospital; and Eileen Woodford, Director of Rural Health, CBDHA.

Mr. Merkley was in attendance with regard to the sale of the Baddeck house owned by the Cape Breton District Health Authority to the Municipality. He advised that as Victoria County wishes to actively partner with the CBDHA in physician recruitment, discussions have been held regarding purchasing the house adjacent to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital.

Mr. Merkley provided Council with background information concerning this matter. Drs. Genge and Chow have indicated that they intend to retire in the near future. A physician recruitment committee has been established to focus on steps the Municipality might take to assist the search for physician replacements. It is agreed that the best location for new physicians is in the hospital.

The CBDHA purchased the house adjacent to the hospital for \$320,000.00. Continuing care staff and the Director of Rural Health have moved their offices into the house. There is the potential for an apartment in the basement of the house. A master plan has been completed for an expansion to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital but this is 3 to 5 years in the future at the earliest.

The meeting tonight is to investigate a partnering opportunity with Council. In order to accommodate new physicians in the hospital, additional programs and offices need to be relocated to the house. As the District has no funds available, there is the potential that the Municipality purchase the house which would enable them to carry out the necessary house renovations. Included in the renovations could be the basement apartment which could serve as temporary accommodation for medical personnel.

The CBDHA is suggesting and recommending that the Municipality purchase the house for \$1.00 on the following conditions:

- It continue to be used for the betterment of health care in southern Victoria County, as if the CBDHA retained ownership
- CBDHA would no longer be responsible for operating and maintenance costs and, as a tenant, would not pay rent for a minimum of five years
- Should the Municipality wish to sell the house in future, the CBDHA would have first right of refusal, for \$1 plus a pro-ration of the Municipality's renovation costs.
- The sale would be subject to approval of the Minister of Health and Wellness as required by legislation.

Mr. Merkley advised that George McLellan has been appointed as Administrator of the Province's Health Authorities and the CEO's of the current DHA's report to him as of July 1, 2014.

Warden Morrison advised that the Building Inspector has visited the house and has indicated that an outside entrance to the basement would be required, as well as drop ceiling in the basement area. The cost of renovations was discussed and Eileen Woodford advised that Spiro Trifos estimated \$185,000 two years ago.

A general discussion took place on this matter and various issues were addressed. Incentives that Council could offer in physician recruitment were discussed. An investigation will be undertaken on how other areas deal with this matter. The MGA also limits what the Municipality can do in this regard.

The fact that more than one doctor is required for the area was discussed. There is a general doctor/patient ratio, although this can vary depending on various factors.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the proposal to purchase the house adjacent to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital be approved in principle and the details be worked out as the process progresses. Motion carried.

Neighbours are to be advised of the proposal as a courtesy.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the CBDHA representatives for their presentation and they left at this time.

VICTORIA COUNTY WATER UTILITY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Robert Dauphinee, Director of Public Works; Kelly Brett, Water Utility Clerk; and Leanne MacLellan, Director of Finance; who were in attendance to make a presentation on the Victoria County Water Utility (copy attached).

Robert Dauphinee indicated he would be reviewing the operations; Kelly Brett, the water accounts and Leanne MacLellan, the finances of the Water Utility.

Mr. Dauphinee indicated that Victoria County operate four water systems – three groundwater systems and one surface water system. The water systems are located in Dingwall, Ingonish, Little Narrows and Neil's Harbour. In total there are 450 residential accounts, 21 commercial accounts, two senior homes, one hospital and one seasonal fish plant.

Mr. Dauphinee updated Council on the four systems, outlining their water source, treatment requirements, distribution piping, customers and sampling requirements. He also outlined future anticipated expenditures.

Kelly Brett updated Council on the water customer accounts. There are 450 accounts and 75 seasonal accounts. In 2010 customer arrears were approximately \$40,000.00. In 2012 a policy was implemented to assist in the handling of arrears and she outlined the procedure followed. Presently all accounts are current.

Leanne MacLellan provided a water supply comparison. Dingwall Water with its 84 permanent users has operating revenue of \$802.57 per user and a total of \$970.44 in operating expenses, for a net loss from operations of \$167.86. Little Narrows Water has 82 permanent

users, with operating revenue of \$898.28 per user and operating expenses of \$1,283.48 per user for a net loss of \$385.21. Neil's Harbour Water provides water to 132 permanent, with operating revenue of \$1,031.64, and an operating loss of \$1,501.30, for a net loss per user of \$469.67. Ingonish Beach Water has 151 permanent users and is the only utility to generate a profit. Their total cost per user is \$1,487.87 and their operating expenses amount to \$710.29, for a net income from operations of \$777.59.

The Municipality provides \$239,000.00 to the Victoria County Water Utility for fire protection as set out in the Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board water order. Gas tax funding has been allocated over the next couple of years (\$368,000.00) to pay off the funding provided for Baddeck Water.

Robert Dauphinee advised that ways of cutting expenses are being investigated and the loss of water is being investigated and repairs are being undertaken as leaks are identified. An increase in users would also provide additional revenue to make the Utility cost effective.

Some of the expenses, i.e. travel for Little Narrows Water Operator, were questioned. Mr. Dauphinee indicated that there are ways for improvement and by working as team to make improvements, things will get better.

The difference in the operation of ground water and surface water systems was explained.

Mr. Dauphinee indicated that recommendation will be provided to address issues and where efficiencies can be achieved in the future. New contracts for the Water Operators are being finalized.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you for the presentation.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 15 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 11, 2014

The Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of August 11, 2014, were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the minutes of the August 11, 2014, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

The CAO advised that Merrill Bustin, DNR, will be in attendance at the September 22, 2014, meeting of Council concerning open fires.

The Economic Development Committee will be meeting on September 8, 2014, and it was felt that the Ivany Report should be on the agenda of this Committee.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he spoke with Lawrence MacKinnon concerning the easement at the old Rankin School, Iona, and Mr. MacKinnon will be in contact with the CAO in this regard.

A meeting on the REN will be held tomorrow at the Court House, Baddeck. Mayors/Wardens of the four municipalities in Cape Breton will be in attendance and the draft agreement will be reviewed.

NEW BUSINESS

Anti-Graffiti Conference

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that there is an Anti-Graffiti Conference to be held in Halifax on October 15-16, 2014, and he expressed an interest in attending. Councillor Budge also expressed his interest in attending.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Deputy Warden Patterson and Councillor Budge be authorized to attend the Anti-Graffiti Conference in Halifax on October 15-16, 2014. Motion carried.

Industry Canada

Councillor MacNeil indicated that Industry Canada has announced funding to upgrade highspeed internet in rural areas from 1.5 to 5 Meg. He, Tom Wilson and Gerard MacNeil met and Tom Wilson has written a request to Industry Canada that Victoria County be involved in this project.

The CAO asked that Tom Wilson provide a copy of this letter to him.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #7

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that \$1,000.00 be provided to the Friends of the Veterans from the 2014-2015 operating budget. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that Remembrance Day is approaching and Councillors should make every effort to attend ceremonies in their areas.

Councillor MacInnis advised that a party welcoming newcomers to his district was held last November and was so successful that another function is planned for November 1, 2014. He urged other Councillors to keep this in mind for their districts.

Councillor MacInnis reminded Councillors to register with Gail Montgomery to be volunteers for Celtic Colours.

District #2

Councillor Grant provided the name of Shirley Hart as the senior from his district to be invited to the Age-Friendly Conference.

District #3

Warden Morrison brought up the matter of a streetlight out on Grant Street, Baddeck, which he has and will be again reported.

Warden Morrison presented a primer on the Victoria County Clear Bag Program and indicated it would be forwarded to Council for review. It is anticipated that the Clear Bag Program will launch on October 20, 2014, during Waste Reduction Week.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Economic Development Committee

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Economic Development Committee met on August 21, 2014. The Economic Development Strategy developed in 2009/10 is to be reviewed and will be on the agenda for the next meeting to be held on September 8, 2014, at 4:00 p.m.

Age-Friendly Conference

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that plans for the inaugural Age-Friendly Conference are progressing well. The opening reception will be held on September 11, 2014, and the conference will be held on September 12, 2014, at the Inverary Resort.

Warden Morrison provided the name of Willie Roberts as the senior from his district to be invited to the conference.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence from Julie McEachern concerning NSLC Agency Stores and how they impact communities.

CAPE BRETON AND CENTRAL NOVA RAILWAY

Discussion took place on the Cape Breton and Central Nova Railway's plans to file an application with the NSUARB in October to formally launch the process of abandoning the rail line in Cape Breton.

Railway officials have been asked to a one year extension and the province and municipal officials will work to show a business case for the line. The four CAO's, ACOA, and other governments departments are working on this matter.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 8, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. The later start is to facilitate meeting with the Honourable Mark Furey, Minister of Municipal Affairs, who will be in attendance at 7:30 p.m.

The Economic Development Committee will meet prior to Council at 4:00 p.m. on September 8, 2014.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, the meeting adjourned.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

