

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL &  
WAGMATCOOK FIRST NATION BAND COUNCIL**  
*Monday, January 30, 2017*

A joint meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council and the Wagmatcook First Nation Band Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 30, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.

Present were:

Victoria County Municipal Council

District #1 – Paul MacNeil  
District #2 – Perla MacLeod  
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden  
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis  
District #5 – Fraser Patterson  
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden  
District #7 – Wayne Budge  
District #8 – Norman MacDonald  
Sandy Hudson, CAO  
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Wagmatcook Band Council

Norman Bernard, Chief  
Peter Pierro  
Cornelia Peck  
David Pierro  
Angela Pierro  
Brian Arbuthnot, Director of Operations  
Alan MacNeil, Director of Finance  
Robert Bernard, Operations Manager/Culture & Tourism Planner, Wagmatcook Culture & Heritage Centre

Also present were:

Andrew Brooks, Bellwether Media Inc.  
Laura Jean Grant, Communications Coordinator, CBREN

**CALL TO ORDER/INTRODUCTIONS**

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and introductions of all present were provided.

**COMMENTS – CHIEF BERNARD AND WARDEN MORRISON**

Chief Bernard thanked Council for the opportunity to meet and he felt this should be done on a regular basis, 4 times per year. There are many things both Councils can work on together – recreation, tourism, job creation and many more.

Warden Morrison echoed Chief Bernard's comments. Working cooperatively will benefit all Victoria County. He felt the four times per year meeting schedule would be a great initiative. This would provide both Councils the opportunity to get to know their counterparts.

Tourism is a big industry for both and we must grab the opportunity to work together for the benefit of all residents of Victoria County.

Court services in Victoria County are also very important, with residents of Victoria County now having to go to Port Hawkesbury or Sydney for Court. Wagmatcook is working on a project to open doors to all citizens of Victoria County to access Court services in Wagmatcook.

Warden Morrison also mentioned the waterfall/trails project that the Municipality and First Nations are cooperatively working on.

Robert Bernard then presented a power point presentation on Wagmatcook First Nation Mi'kmaw Tourism Plan – *"Rediscovering the Path to our Mi'kmaw Culture"* (copy attached).

Mr. Bernard provided history on the Mi'kmaw people in Nova Scotia, dating back to 14,000 years ago. Prior to the European and Norse Vikings, the Mi'kmaw people populated this land. Throughout the past decades, the true history and plight of the Mi'kmaw people has not been included in the history books of Nova Scotia schools. The Indian Act of 1876 still applies for First Nations across Canada.

He outlined treaty rights and the challenge to defend Mi'kmaw treaties. Treaties were signed in the 1700-1800's that still apply today. Mr. Bernard indicated that it is just in the last 50 years that Aboriginal people were allowed to vote.

The importance of tourism development and building on strengths was outlined. Also important is the identification of weaknesses. Creating opportunities by identifying community assets that exist to help support a thriving community tourism initiative is important. Involving community members at all levels to be part of this initiative and utilizing existing facilities is necessary for success. Identifying projects that will help cultural tourism grow and create opportunities for training, employment, and contracting opportunities is critical. Equally important is addressing threats.

Mr. Bernard outlined the importance of community support, regional support, and national support in achieving success.

The next steps in the Mi'kmaw Tourism Plan were summarized.

Mr. Bernard thanked Council for the opportunity to present and provided contact information for the Wagmatcook Culture & Heritage Centre.

Councillor Patterson brought up the matter of upcoming sessions regarding highway twinning, including potential use of tolls. How this will affect our area was questioned and discussed.

Councillor Patterson also brought up the importance of staff training in the tourist industry. Customer service is so important to the success of this industry.

Chief Bernard advised that he would like to take Victoria County Council on a tour of his community to see their assets, culture, etc. He indicated that his door is always open.

The Mi'kmaw population is growing and they want to ensure there are great opportunities and job opportunities for the children.

Warden Morrison advised of the tourism strategy public consultations that are being held throughout the Municipality that will result in a new Victoria County Tourism Strategy. Whether there would be value to setting up a consultation session in Wagmatcook was questioned. Tom Wilson will be contacted in this regard.

Warden Morrison advised that Council would be delighted to accept Wagmatcook's invitation to tour their community whenever the meeting is arranged.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the wharf and the depth of the vessels in can berth. Chief Bernard indicated that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans have been requested to install a marker to the wharf entrance.

The second berth approved for the Port of Sydney was discussed. This offers all kinds of possibilities with relation to increased tourism. It should be viewed on as a golden opportunity.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee questioned whether the toll highway option would be a positive or negative thing for the area.

Chief Bernard indicated that the toll that used to be at the Canso Causeway was felt to be a negative for his population, as they felt they had to pay to come home. He advised that he sits on a number of Boards across the province and this topic has not come forward for consultation as yet.

The ferry fee issue is also a concern. The cost is unreasonable. A number of Wagmatcook residents have family in Eskasoni and have to travel back and forth on the ferry. It is also a deterrent to tourism as the cost to travel back and forth on the ferry is \$15.00.

Physician recruitment and expansion of the Victoria County Memorial Hospital was discussed. The Wagmatcook Health Centre facilities and staffing were outlined. This will be a discussion for a future meeting.

The loss of the Provincial Court in Baddeck affected all residents of Victoria County, including First Nations. Chief Bernard indicated he was not consulted and a decision was made before he was advised. Travelling to Sydney or Port Hawkesbury is a problem for residents and some plead guilty just because they cannot afford the travel. This also affects RCMP coverage as members are required to travel to Court and can be absent from the area for 6 plus hours attending Court.

Chief Bernard advised that negotiations are ongoing with respect to obtaining Court services in Wagmatcook. The judges were very supportive of holding Court sessions there. Chief Bernard indicated that he received a call from the Justice Department that Court will be established in Wagmatcook. He is 99.9% sure it will happen. The Wagmatcook Culture & Heritage Centre has wheelchair access, plenty of parking, a restaurant and other facilities that will aid in facilitating Court. The Court will be a live Court and this is good news, as a video court is only good for the accused's first court appearance.

Warden Morrison indicated that this is a benefit for all Victoria County residents and is a win/win situation. He indicated that the Municipality would be responsive to assisting with costs when more is known. He thanked Chief Bernard for Wagmatcook's efforts in bringing this service back to Victoria County.

The fitness centre at the Wagmatcook Culture & Heritage Centre is free and open to all. This is a positive to both the Mi'kmaq and residents outside the community as they access and learn about each other's culture.

Chief Bernard indicated that once Victoria County Council tour Wagmatcook and see the facilities, they will be impressed. They will also meet with Elders, who are very important to the Wagmatcook community.

Chief Bernard indicated that this year, for the first time, there are 33 children from Wagmatcook First Nation registered in minor hockey in Baddeck. It is great to see this participation and the comradery and fun as a result. This is also a positive for the Victoria Highland Civic Centre.

Wagmatcook's website, [www.wagmatcook.com](http://www.wagmatcook.com), has a lot of information and Victoria County Municipal Council was encouraged to look at this site and view the contents.

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Warden Morrison extended his appreciation to Wagmatcook Band Council for coming to the meeting and indicated that there were a number of initiatives outlined that both Councils can work on together for the benefit of both Wagmatcook and the Municipality. He then presented Chief Bernard with a Victoria County flag.

Warden Morrison extended an invitation to all to stay for the supper provided.

The meeting adjourned.