

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
May 29, 2017

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, May 29, 2017, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Perla MacLeod
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #5 – Fraser Patterson (Out of Town)

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. Dick Grubb requested a minute on the agenda to make an announcement.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved with the noted addition. Motion carried.

VICTORIA COUNTY VISITOR INFORMATION CENTRE

Dick Grubb advised that the Victoria County Visitor Information Centre (VIC) is now open for business. He invited Council members to visit and asked that they call the VIC Supervisor, Florence Hill, in advance to let her know so they can be greeted properly.

The new Victoria County VIC sign has been erected. Hours of operation are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. during the months of June, September, and October. The VIC will be open from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. during the months of July and August.

Constituents and businesses throughout Victoria County who have information they would like to have promoted are encouraged to provide this information to the VIC.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether the VIC is receptive to volunteers. Contact is to be made with Florence Hill in this regard.

K-9 SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Brent Partland who was in attendance to present on a Mutual Aid Asset K-9 Search and Rescue (SAR) Team (copy attached).

Mr. Partland provided background information on himself and his dog, Ruger. Ruger is a Belgian Malinois, who is ideally suited for SAR and other jobs. The team are certified and a member in good standing of the North America Police Work Dog Association (NAPWDA) in tracking, area search and article search. Mr. Partland has approximately 20 years in K-9 explosives, narcotics, tracking and SAR. He is ICS 100 and 200 certified and is a member in good standing of NAPWDA. He is a member of the North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department and a Medical First Responder.

Mr. Partland advised that a properly trained and certified SAR K-9 team is the same as a police K-9 team without the bite at the end. Ruger is trained to detect human scent and is also trained for article search and will bark at and stay with the subject when doing an area search. One search dog can cover the same area as 50 human searchers.

Mr. Partland explained how air-scenting and tracking dogs work. He outlined the probability of detection. A callout should occur the moment it is suspected there is a missing person. Dog teams can deploy quickly and independently of other search resources. Dogs can also work effectively at night and bad weather does not limit the use of search dogs.

Mr. Partland outlined search suitability, terrain considerations and communications. The population is getting older and more people are using trails and backcountry areas. Victoria County has no SAR assets and the nearest SAR teams are 1 to 1.5 hours away with the nearest RCMP dog unit being 3 to 4 hours away.

It was indicated that with a properly trained and certified K-9 team, insurance should be nothing more than an additional rider on the policy. Mr. Partland and Ruger would be available to any fire department in the County day or night as volunteers. The call out should come from the RCMP, EMO or other emergency service. The only compensation being requested is \$2,500 to cover the costs of annual certification and initial equipment including GPS, headlights, use of a TMR radio, etc. at a cost of \$500.00. They are currently certified until 2018.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on a child lost and how the dog would react. Mr. Partland indicated that the dog will not bark until he finds something and when he does find someone, he barks and stays with the person until help arrives. The dog is marked appropriately as a SAR dog.

Councillor MacLeod advised that of search situations in her district in the past and felt that it important to all the County of have a SAR K-9 team available.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on whether any other searchers were necessary to work with the K-9 SAR Team and Mr. Partland indicated that an additional spotter which provides another set of eyes is an asset.

A dog can cover a lot of territory in an hour. SAR dogs can work until they are 8-10 years of age depending on the dog.

How a search begins was questioned and Mr. Partland indicated that they start at the last known position of the person they are searching for.

Warden Morrison encouraged Mr. Partland to have this same presentation and conversation with Inverness and Richmond Counties.

The SAR teams in Cape Breton were identified. In order to be a certified SAR member you must have five years of training and it is hard to get a commitment from public to train.

Further discussion took place and Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Partland for the excellent presentation.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality provide a letter of support and each Council member provide \$375.00 from their district budget to fund the Mutual Aid Asset K-9 SAR Team for the current year. Motion carried.

AGRICULTURE OPPORTUNITY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Chris van den Heuvel, currently President of the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture and the local Inverness-Victoria Federation of Agriculture, who was in attendance to present on an agriculture opportunity (copy attached).

Mr. van den Heuvel provided an update on both the provincial and local Federations of Agriculture.

He outlined that an Advisory Committee for Economic Growth was established in March 2016, with a mandate to recommend ideas to significantly improve Canada's economic growth, focus on actionable ideas, and increase median pre-tax household income by \$15,000.00 by 2030. The membership of this Advisory Committee was outlined.

The Advisory Committee recommendations released in October, 2016, and in February, 2017, were outlined and the number one key sector identified was agriculture. Mr. van den

Heuvel provided information on the numbers with regard to the present and future of agriculture in Canada.

Canada has abundant natural resources – lots of freshwater, long coastlines suitable for agriculture and the least densely populated arable land in the world. It has a strong network of research and development and a low per hectare use of pesticides. The barriers to growth were also outlined.

Mr. van den Heuvel outlined the Advisory Committee goals to increase agfood exports by at least \$30 billion US dollars in the next 5-10 years and to launch a few pilots to put big wins on the board.

The federal government has listened to the Advisory Committee and have included agriculture and agri-food processing in the 2017 federal budget.

Mr. van den Heuvel outlined the Ag resources by County. Victoria County has 34,869 total farm hectares, of which only 1,324 are in use. There are 33 farms in Victoria County. Current farm gate receipts for Victoria County are \$421,754, however; Mr. van den Heuvel disputed this amount and indicated he would research it further. The target farm gate receipts for Victoria County are \$585,272.00.

The next steps regarding the investment in agriculture were outlined. A strategic plan should be created that includes emphasis on agriculture, labour/immigration and housing. Adopting an Agriculture Land Policy with a formalization of a land bank and zero taxation on farmland is recommended. Also the adoption of a pro agriculture business climate, a strong science based approach to agriculture and support for local food hubs and farmers markets is necessary.

The Netherlands and the results achieved there were outlined and this is what Victoria County should want to achieve in regard to agriculture in the future. A trade mission to the Netherlands to see what they do would be a positive next step also.

Council thanked Mr. van den Heuvel for the information provided. The development of a land bank was discussed and should be formalized.

Mr. van den Heuvel indicated that there is an increase in the small scale female farmers and we should welcome any resurgence in farming.

Councillor MacLeod presented a letter from Bruce MacDonald, a farmer on the West Side Middle Road, who lives where the road washed out. He has lost a lot of his hay fields as a result of the flood and washout due to the debris that has landed on his property.

Mr. van den Heuvel is aware of this situation and indicated that there is a commitment from government to look into this matter. Tomorrow's election will have an effect on this matter.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. van den Heuvel for his presentation.

RECESS

The Warden announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes

PROPOSED MULTI-USE FACILITY/ARCHERY FACILITY

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Stephen Kerr, President, Bras d'Or Archers, who was in attendance to make a presentation on a proposed multi-use facility/archery facility (copy attached).

The Bras d'Or Archers Association was founded in May 2014. The club rents the Baddeck Curling Club from mid-April to mid-October and meet three times per week. During the spring/summer months they have nowhere to shoot. Club members range in age from 7 to 65, with a ratio of 50/50 female/male.

Mr. Kerr is proposing the ideal location for such a building would be adjacent to the Baddeck Curling Club. The property is owned by the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

The requirements for the archery building were outlined and Mr. Kerr presented a conceptual floor plan/building layout for the proposed multi-purpose facility

Mr. Kerr indicated that some work has been done on cost estimates based on the conceptual design. He presented the estimates and advised that Efficiency Nova Scotia has been contacted to partner on the proposed project. Research has been done into possible contacts with regard to this project.

The project benefits were outlined and the next step is to determine if there is sufficient support and merit to pursue this project. Once this is determined, then securing the land and a rezoning of the land would be required.

Mr. Kerr indicated that the Village was contacted to see if they would approach TIR about leasing the vacant land and they were not prepared to do so. They also questioned on the existing leases for the Victoria Highland Civic Centre and Baddeck Curling Club and what happens when they expire in 2023. Nothing has been discussed with TIR or the property tenants at this time. Whether they would look at changing the zoning on the property was

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questioned and they indicated this is a municipal issue. The Village, did support the proposed project in principle, but doesn't foresee any funding in the future to allocate to the project.

Warden Morrison indicated that the rezoning of the land would not be an impossible hurdle and it would be a great asset to the southern end of Victoria County. He felt that the same four questions asked of the Village should be forwarded to the Municipality and the Municipality can respond to same and go forward from there.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Kerr for his presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 8, 2017

The minutes of the May 8, 2017, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of May 8, 2017, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Councillor MacNeil requested the contact information for Fred Whoriskey, Ocean Tracking Network.

BUDGET COMMITTEE – MAY 24, 2017

The Budget Committee minutes of May 24, 2017, were presented for approval. The community grant application approvals were included in the minutes.

It was moved and seconded that the May 24, 2017, Budget Committee minutes be approved. Motion carried.

TAXATION UPDATE

Sandy Hudson presented an update on the taxes outstanding. The approximate total of taxes owing is \$1.4 million dollars. A meeting will be held with the Director of Taxation this week to establish regular Tax Sales and collection policy.

Tax Sale searches are being completed but are taking up to five months to be reviewed by the Solicitor. Sandy Hudson will be meeting with Lorne MacDowell to discuss this matter on Wednesday.

There are a number of title searches that have been identified as not having proper descriptions and a survey may be necessary to define the proper description to allow them to be placed for sale. This matter has been discussed with a surveyor to determine the cost involved. This could be looked at as an option.

Tax collection has been identified as a red mark for the Municipality in their Financial Condition Index and must be worked on the enable this red mark to be removed.

2017/2018 BUDGET

Courtesy of Council was extended to Leanne MacEachen, Director of Finance, to present the 2017/2018 budget.

All department budgets have been completed and the community grant applications have been approved. The budget was based on the same tax rates as the previous year.

Ms. MacEachen indicated that the total budget revenue is \$12,658,913.00 and the total budget expenditures are \$12,658,805.00. She reviewed both the revenue and expenditure categories with Council.

It was moved and seconded that the 2017/2018 budget be approved. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that the tax rates for 2017/2018 be \$1.20 residential and \$2.10 commercial. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that the interest rate be set at 10% per annum and the interest date be set at August 1, 2017. Motion carried.

The question was raised as to why the Budget was not on the agenda as an agenda item. The discussions on the budget came as business from the Budget Committee meeting of May 24, 2017.

NEW BUSINESS

SEASIDE COMMUNICATIONS

Seaside Communications provides funding to two Victoria County Fire Departments annually. They provide \$2,000.00 which is matched by the Municipality. This year's recipients are the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department and the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Volunteer Fire Department. The presentations will be made at Council on June 12, 2017.

HOUSING ISSUE

Warden Morrison and the CAO attended a meeting in Inverness County with regard to their recently completed housing strategy and the hiring of a Housing Coordinator.

As both Counties have similar issues in this regard, it was suggested that representatives from Inverness County be invited to attend Council in July to present on Housing and discuss how the two Counties can cooperate.

VICTORIA COUNTY TOURISM STRATEGY

Council met with the consultants earlier today on the Victoria County Tourism Strategy. Some improvements to the strategy were highlighted and will be included in the final document. Mary Tulle, DCBA, was in attendance and her comments will form part of the improvements.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Tourism Strategy be approved in principle and the changes be incorporated in the final strategy. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that residents of his district were out cleaning along the roadsides on the Gillis Point Road and came upon several orange paint cans that were left in the ditches. These cans were used for markings along the stretch of the road that is to be fixed.

Also a resident on the Highland Hill road is no longer getting oil delivery, mail delivery or emergency services coverage due to the condition of the road.

A letter is to be forwarded to the Department of TIR outlining these concerns.

Central Cape Breton Community Ventures has invited all Council to attend World Oceans Day and the Great Trail Opening at the Iona port on Sunday, June 11, 2017, at 1:00 p.m.

It was moved and seconded that a street light order be placed for installation of a light at 44 Rear Estmere Road, Estmere, at the intersection of the Rear Estmere Road and Route 223. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod brought forward a letter from Bruce MacDonald regarding the culvert washout at 2618 West Middle River Road. He is asking for Council's assistance to contact the Department of TIR and request that the unnamed tributary to Indian Brook be turned back to its original state and the debris removed from his hayfield.

This matter will be included in the letter to the Department of TIR and a copy of Mr. MacDonald's letter will be forwarded also.

Councillor MacLeod indicated that Calvin Kuchta recently assisted Lloyd Stone who was injured while skiing and as a result of Calvin's quick action, probably saved Mr. Stone's life.

An appropriate recognition will be presented to Calvin Kuchta at a future Council meeting.

The track and field behind Baddeck Academy is not being properly maintained. 25 students from Baddeck Academy will be travelling to the provincial championships and the use of this field is required.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board in regard to proper maintenance of the field behind Baddeck Academy. Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod indicated that the Community Sector Council will be providing a Board Governance Training Workshop on June 26, 2017, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in Sydney at a cost of \$50.00 per participant.

It was moved and seconded that any Council member wishing to attend the Board Governance Training Workshop be authorized to attend. Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod indicated as of May 31, 2017, Dr. Carlyle Chow will be retiring and there are concerns with the void this will leave.

It was felt that personnel from the Recruiting Department of the Nova Scotia Health Authority be requested to come to Council to discuss doctor recruitment.

An appropriate recognition of Dr. Chow was discussed. It was felt he should be recognized appropriately and that a scholarship be established in his name for both Baddeck Academy and Rankin School of the Narrows.

It was moved and seconded that two \$500.00 scholarships be established in Dr. Carlyle Chow's name to be provided annually to a student from Baddeck Academy and Rankin School of the Narrows who is entering University in the health care field. Motion carried.

An appropriate advertisement thanking Dr. Chow for his years of service is to be drafted in conjunction with the Communications Officer.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that his district has had three major power outages in the last month and this is concerning to residents and businesses.

A letter is to be sent to NSPI concerning this matter and Councillor MacInnis will provide information on dates and locations prior to the letter being sent.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on whether the Fire Services Coordinator for Guysborough County had been contacted to come to Council. The CAO indicated that it was decided at an earlier session to defer this until after the Provincial Fire Services Study is released.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald requested an update on the suitability of the water test site on Bay Road Valley.

Rick Gagne, Hydrogeologist, is currently reviewing the core samples and mineral and water quality testing is being completed. The information provided by Mr. Gagne will determine if this project can go forward. Sandy Hudson felt an update should be available by the end of June.

The residents of the Dingwall Road who submitted a petition regarding their road are questioning on the status of the petition. Contact was made with Pam Eyking, MLA, to see if this petition was tabled in the Legislature but no reply was received.

Also a local B & B in Dingwall wrote a letter concerning the road conditions and received no response from TIR. Councillor MacDonald brought this to the attention of the MLA, Steve MacDonald and Nelson Dixon but received no reply to date.

These concerns will be brought forward to the Department of TIR.

District #7

Councillor Budge brought up two roads in his district – Jack MacLeod Road and Murphy Road. They are identified as courtesy roads and were gravelled and plowed since many years by TIR. Steve MacDonald was contacted and no reply was received to date. Councillor Budge presented a petition signed by the residents of the Jack MacLeod Road to be presented to the Minister of TIR. This will be submitted once the Provincial Election is completed and the Minister known.

The length of time it takes to contact local TIR officials now with the new phone system was discussed and is not acceptable. There are 12 people working in the call centre province-wide.

Councillor Budge questioned on whether there were any programs available to assist with erosion issues.

It was indicated that Debbie Nielsen, UNSM Infrastructure and Sustainability Officer, may be able to assist in this regard.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee, on behalf of the Cabot Trail Lion's Club, presented a plaque to Victoria County Council with gratitude for their continued support of the Cabot Trail Lion's Club annual golf tournament.

District #3

Warden Morrison indicated the FCM Municipal Partners for Economic Development program, in conjunction with the UNSM and REN, have enrolled in a four year program with Vietnam and will be travelling to this Country. Warden Morrison can attend this mission this year at no cost to the Municipality and he requested authorization to attend.

It was moved and seconded that Bruce Morrison be authorized to attend Vietnam under the FCM Municipal Partners for Economic Development Program. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison, Deputy Warden Dauphinee and Sandy Hudson attended a meeting in Whycocomagh with regard to Broadband hosted by CBREN.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that his only concern is that Victoria County is a little more advanced in their program than other involved municipal units and he did not want this to slow Victoria County as we already have a Broadband Strategy.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he has requested Tom Wilson to schedule a Broadband Committee meeting in the near future and requested Warden Morrison to attend this meeting.

It was moved and seconded to agree in principle to join the CBREN joint initiative with regard to Broadband for the three participating municipalities. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison and Councillors Patterson, MacLeod and MacNeil will be attending the FCM Annual Conference in Ottawa from May 31 to June 5, 2017.

Bell Bay Golf Club will be hosting the 2017 Nova Scotia Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament for Literacy. The tournament will be held on June 19, 2017 and the cost is \$300.00 per person.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality enter a team in the 2017 Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament for Literacy. Motion carried.

JOINT COUNCIL SESSION

The CAO advised that Wagmatcook will be hosting a Joint Council meeting between Victoria County Municipal Council and Wagmatcook Band Council on Thursday, June 15, 2017. The time is to be determined and Council will be advised on the agenda and time at a later date.

STAFF FUNCTION

The CAO requested permission to close all municipal facilities on Friday, June 16, 2017, at noon to allow all staff to participate in a team building exercise.

Council agreed that all municipal facilities close for this event.

CABOT TRAIL RELAY

Terry Murray advised that she and Stephen Kerr volunteered at the Cabot Trail Relay Banquet on Sunday past and the comments received from participants were very positive.

The economic spinoff from this event is amazing and congratulations are certainly warranted.

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to the Cabot Trail Relay Organizing Committee on their 30th anniversary. Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING

The next session of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, June 12, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BY-LAW

Council held a Public Hearing prior to Council on the proposed Emergency Management By-Law. No submissions or verbal presentations were received.

It was moved and seconded that the second (final) reading of the Emergency Management By-Law be approved. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 8:05 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

