



Victoria County Municipal Council

July 3, 2018

A meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck on Monday, June 11, 2018 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 #5 Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 - Norman MacDonald

Staff:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Jocelyn Bethune, Recorder

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as distributed.

Motion carried.

NEW CFO ALIX REDDEN

The Warden welcomed Victoria County's new Chief Financial Officer Alix Redden to council. Ms. Redden introduced herself to council. She originally from Victoria County – she grew up in Iona; moved to Halifax to earn her Bachelor of Commerce, MBA and an accounting designation. She has lived in NWT and Alberta and is now home to stay. Each councillor introduced themselves and their districts (each identifying their district as the most beautiful) and welcomed her to the municipality staff, many mentioning how nice it is to reverse the out-migration trend and see young people come back home.

CAP REMOVAL

The Warden extended the courtesy of council to Paige Hoveling, Government Relations Coordinator with the NS Association of Realtors. This organization is the voice of real estate in Nova Scotia.

The tax assessment cap was put in place in 2005 by the provincial government. It is limited to CPI (consumer price index) and new constructions are not capped.

Although the cap was felt to be a good policy, there has been some unintended consequences for buyers and sellers. It has created disparity in neighbourhoods and between neighbours. Since the cap is removed at the sale of a house – if a resident has been in their home for 30+ years, and the cap is removed at a sale, the new owners have a steep increase in property taxes. This means home purchases may be out of reach for many first-time buyers. This has a cascading effect in municipalities like Victoria County as it makes it harder to attract young families.

According to the NSAR stats 45% of people are paying higher taxes for the rest and it works out, on average to be an additional \$200 per property. The system is not fair. So, the NSAR feel it is time to take action.

NSAR wants to create a provincial working group on CAP to bring all the stakeholders together, including the real estate industry, mortgage brokers, homebuilders' associations and the NS Federation of Municipalities to meet with the province. This group will look at ensuring any new system is phased in, easy to understand, has built in protections for low income families and provides for an education phase prior to implementation.

Immediate next steps include gathering expressions of support that the NSAR can take to the province. If there is enough support, it is hoped the province will consider removing the CAP.

The CAO provided a financial impact of the CAP on Victoria County.

Based on assessments this year, the CAP is costing Victoria County \$1.156 million dollars. Our residential assessment is \$606 million dollars and we collect \$524 million, so we are missing out on \$82.3 million dollars in property taxes, or 9.3% of our budget.

Councillors asked questions about the CAP process. The Warden thanked Ms. Hoveling for her presentation.

It was moved and seconded that council write a letter to the minister of Municipal Affairs to create a working group with stakeholders to look at removing the CAP from property tax assessments.

Motion carried.

Shout out to a new reporter in the gallery – Sean MacDougall is reporting for the VS.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the June 11, 2018 meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as circulated.

Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- There will be a conference call on Monday for the members of the Cannabis Committee. Councillors wondered who is on the committee. Discussion followed. Councillor Patterson and Councillor MacLeod expressed an interest in participating.

It was moved and seconded that Councillors Patterson and Councillor MacLeod be appointed to the Cannabis Committee.

Motion Carried.

The CAO will forward details to them about the call. Staff are looking into drafting a Substance Use Policy before October 17 legalization.

- Council inquired whether the Aspy Fault Trail presenters had spoken to other councils. Not as of yet.
- SAT says they are preparing a presentation and look forward to coming to council in the future. Shuttle buses may play a role in the new health care services proposed by NSHA for CBRM. There are concerns as well that with this new plan, that EMT's will be shuttling patients and be pulled from our area.
- Have a new proclamation regarding National Pharmacare program. (See Proclamations)
- Council will send a letter regarding the future of Canada Post. Councillor Patterson provided a generic letter that includes a resolution.

It was moved and seconded that council send a letter of support regarding the future of Canada Post.

Motion carried.

- CB Food Hub Update – Council requested the amounts other councils were providing to the Food Hub. Richmond provides \$4000; Inverness \$12,000; Port Hawkesbury provides \$1000 and provides fridge and freezer space. Our contribution amount is dependant on what other municipalities are providing. Last year we provided the CBFH with \$4000.

It was moved and seconded that municipal council contribute \$6000 for the Cape Breton Food Hub.

Motion carried.

- Dog Control: Applications are in with the department of justice so our dog control officers can begin to issue summary offence tickets. DOJ will certify them once they take some training, which we are lining up for them.

- Washrooms: BYC washrooms are closed. Welcome Centre washrooms are open. Council has committed \$3000 towards BYC washrooms. Not just a Baddeck issue. Looking into grants for basic infrastructure. In the meantime, short term solution is portable washrooms for each district. Councillor Dauphinee says 2 in each district we hear the concerns. Councillor MacInnis says the loss of the Englishtown ferry facilities means people are looking to local businesses to provide the service. Councillor MacDonald said there is a place in Bay St. Lawrence, but would the county pay for renovations. Discussion followed on locations, vandalism concerns, how long to provide them. It was decided to get a price on 9 port-a-potties for this summer. Locations were decided as: Wreck Cove Store (2), Washabuck Community Centre (1), Ski Cape Smokey Lodge (2), Cape North Food Market (1), Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre (1), and Baddeck (2), location to be determined.

NEW BUSINESS

TAXATION UPDATE

The CAO updated council on tax collection:

Tax department is in the process of printing the bills. Will be out in the next few weeks.

Currently - \$1.136 million is outstanding. This time last year there was \$1.332 outstanding, which translate to \$194,000 better year over year. \$43,000 has been collected since last council session. Our 'current' is \$67,000 better than it was on this date in 2017; our 'arrears' is \$127,000 better than this time in 2017.

Council questioned what is a reasonable expectation is in terms removing the 'red' designation by the province. According to the provincial financial indicators – we should be below 10%. It is a long way to go, but the Municipality of the District of St. Mary's went from 28% to 8% in one year, so it can be done.

It is Council's expectation that getting out of the red zone is a priority for the Tax Department.

Notice of Motions - none

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1 Paul MacNeil

TIR Letter

- Beaver Dams at St. Columba and South Cove road need to be removed as they are endangering the roads
- Lack of maintenance on the roads – trees down, sign flipped along North Shore– needs attention (MacInnis)

- intersection at Dingwall Road and Cabot Trail needs trimming and or signage as drivers can't see (MacDonald)
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District #2 Perla MacLeod

- Letter to Minister of Health Randy Delorey, thanking him for listening and meeting with councillors on June 13. Remind him and his department that advocacy for day care and doctor recruitment go hand-in-hand.

Moved and seconded

Motion carried

- Letter to Robert Bernard, organizer of

Moved and seconded

Motion carried

- Letter to Minister Hines – regarding Irving property acknowledge community has spoken, council has spoken and now business has spoken cc local MLA too

Moved and seconded

Motion carried

- Thanks to Jocelyn Bethune for help with recent Canada Day parade.

District #4 Merrill MacInnis

- addition to TIR letter (downed trees & flipped sign needs attention).
- Area managers will be meeting in Baddeck next week. Each councillor to provide issues to the Warden to be discussed with TIR at this meeting.
- Councillor MacInnis invited council to meet in Indian Brook on August 7 at noon.

District # 8 Norman MacDonald

- TIR letter addition – intersection at Dingwall Road and Cabot Trail needs trimming and or signage & a sign identifying a hearing-impaired person lives in the area is required.
- Inquired regarding status of street light moved to Capstick Road.
- John Cabot Day celebrations were well attended – almost 200 people took part and the community is pleased this event has been revived. Organizers looking forward to next year.
- Annual Bay St. Lawrence Crab Fest takes place July 22 at the Bay St. Lawrence Fire Hall. A great fundraiser and a way to celebrate local fishermen, local community and enjoy fresh, local, eat yummy food.
- Cape North Cultural Centre is books for the next council session on Tuesday, July 24 at 5 pm

- A Public Works meeting will take place in Bay St. Lawrence on July 19 at 3 pm at the Bay St. Lawrence fire hall to discuss water.

District #6 Larry Dauphinee

- TIR letter addition – traffic study through Ingonish- looking for lowered speed zone and no passing lanes through Ingonish; web cam on the North Shore, consult with Victoria County regarding the plans for any changes to top of Smokey pull off; update on frost heaves in Ingonish Ferry.
- **It was moved and seconded that Council put a team in the annual Fisher Hudson-Buddy MacLeod Golf Tournament. Cost is \$500 and proceeds go to the Cabot Trail Lions Club.**
Motion carried.

District #5 Fraser Patterson

- Beached whale at Black Rock, needs to be towed to sea. Was informed by DNR that this is a municipal responsibility. This needs clarification.
- Victoria County flags – what is the cost of flags? Can they be provided to businesses?

District #7 Wayne Budge –no updates

District # 3 Bruce Morrison

- Invite Margaret Fraser, President of CB Physicians to speak to council in September
- Request that Age Friendly Committee partner with Alderwood Working Council to fund extending the sidewalk beyond the Silver Dart to Alderwood Lane so that Alderwood folks with scooters can safely get into town. It is estimated to be about a tenth of a kilometer.
It was moved and seconded to get a price on finishing a 10th of a kilometre section of sidewalk from the Age Friendly/Active Living budget.
Motion carried.
- A letter to the NSHA indicating that Victoria County provided funding for the parking lot at the Baddeck Hospital and the expectation is that there be no charge for parking.
It was moved and seconded that a letter be written to the NSHA ensuring that since the Municipality providing the funding to construct the parking lot, that there is no charge to park in the Baddeck hospital parking lot.
Motion carried.
- Letter to Destination Cape Breton inquiring why the funding for the golf event Cape Breton was cancelled.
Moved and seconded.

Motion carried.

- Proclamation July 15-21 – National Drowning Prevention Week.
Moved and seconded.
Motion carried.
- Proclamation – September 21-28 – International Right to Know Week.
Moved and seconded.
Motion carried.
- EPR – letter to the minister to show Victoria County support the proposed new Extended Producer Responsibility
Moved and seconded
Motion carried.

Bylaw Review – none

Correspondence – done.

RESOLUTIONS:

NATIONAL PHARMACARE

Whereas the Municipality of the County of Victoria has recognized and has demonstrated in the past, its commitment to healthy citizens as the foundation of a healthy, engaged and economically vibrant community; and

Whereas over 3 million Canadians, including many in our local community, don't take medicines prescribed by their doctors because they can't afford them; and

Whereas Canada is currently the ONLY country with a universal Medicare program that does not have a national, universal pharmacare program; and

Whereas the risk of having no insurance for medicines is higher among lower income Canadians, which includes the service industry, precarious workers and seasonal workers; and

Whereas studies show that adding a national, universal pharmacare program to our health care system would lower costs to businesses by over \$8 billion per year, providing companies in Canada with a competitive advantage; and

Whereas recent research confirms that these gains can be achieved with little or no increase in public investment; and

Whereas municipal government expenses for employee benefits would be significantly reduced by a national, universal pharmacare program; and

Whereas a national prescription drug formulary would support better quality prescribing, including reducing dangerous and inappropriate prescribing to Canadian seniors; and

Whereas a national, universal pharmacare program is sound policy, both economically and socially, since health and economic studies show that such a program would improve health in municipalities, give local businesses a competitive advantage in the global marketplace and lower costs for municipal governments;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Municipality of the County of Victoria call on the federal government to work with the provinces and territories to develop and implement a national, universal pharmacare program;

and further, that Municipality of the County of Victoria forward this resolution to Members of Parliament whose constituencies include Municipality of the County of Victoria, the Nova Scotia Minister of Health, the Premier of Nova Scotia, the Federal Minister of Health and the Prime Minister.

***Need other proclamations (drowning prevention and right to know)**

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting of the Victoria County Municipal council will take place on **Tuesday July 24** at the Cape North Cultural Centre in Cape North. There will be a Public Works meeting on July 19 at 3 pm at the Bay St. Lawrence Fire Hall to discuss water. The August Council meeting will take place on Tuesday August 7 at the Indian Brook Fire Hall at 12 noon.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:00 pm.

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden