

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

December 4, 2018

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, December 4, 2018, beginning at 4:30 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

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:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Alix Redden, CFO
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil (Medical Appointment)
District #5 – Fraser Patterson (Out of Town on municipal business)

CALL TO ORDER/IN CAMERA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order.

It was moved and seconded to move In Camera to deal with a labour relations issue. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded to return to the regular meeting of Council. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

IN CAMERA RECOMMENDATIONS

It was moved and seconded to approve the recommendations from the In Camera session. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 15, 2018, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of November 15, 2018, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Councillor MacLeod brought up the funding for the Cabot Trail and where we are in the process.

The CAO advised that the Department of Business is in charge of the Cabot Trail funding and the Seawall Trail development and washroom facilities around the Cabot Trail are two priorities.

There was a washroom study completed a number of years ago, and this study will be reviewed to see if the locations are still appropriate.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

At the previous meeting, approval was given that four Councillors attend the Federation of Canadian Municipalities conference in both 2019 and 2020.

The 2019 FCM Conference will be held in Quebec City. As Councillor MacInnis has never attended, he will be attending in 2019. The remaining Councillors interested in attending the Quebec City FCM Conference submitted their names. Alix Redden, CFO, then drew three names by lot and they included Warden Morrison, Deputy Warden Dauphinee, and Councillor MacNeil.

The remaining four Councillors MacLeod, Budge, MacDonald and Patterson will attend the 2020 FCM Conference in Toronto.

NEW BUSINESS

CAO REPORT

The CAO advised that Gordon McIntosh will be coming on February 17 and 18, 2019, to do a strategic planning session with Council and Department Heads. This is a Sunday and Monday.

Marie Walsh, CAO of CBRM, has presented a position paper, with recommendations, on the CAP assessment and is currently waiting to meet with the Minister of Municipal Affairs. She will be presenting her report to Victoria County Council at a later date.

The Family Medicine Forum in Toronto went well. Dr. David Heughan and Graham MacKenzie manned the booth, along with visits by Dr. Nicola Smith and Emmanuel Comtois. Thirty names were registered visiting the booth.

A de-briefing meeting has been planned for December 17, 2018, at 9:00 a.m. to review what went well, what can be improved upon, etc.

There is a Rural/Remote Recruitment Session to be held in Halifax and the Town of Port Hawkesbury has expressed an interest in sharing a booth with the County at this session.

The Asset Infrastructure Management is progressing and an inventory of the County's assets is be compiled.

The waste collection rejections figures of November 19-23 and November 26-30, 2018 were presented. There were 80 bags rejected in total the first week and 57 in total the second week.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee outlined concerns he had with regard to garbage being rejected. Discussion took place. A progress report is to be provided for the next meeting.

The CAO advised that there is a draft agreement in place for the multi-use trail bridge on over the TCH 105 outside of Baddeck. A contract has not been received from the Department of TIR as yet.

Warden Morrison advised that he attended a meeting last week at the Provincial Building regarding the bridge. Currently the access is being cleared and the contract for the bridge awarded. The bridge will be made offsite and put up in sections. The bridge should be in place by the end of March/early April.

The CAO attended a CAO Strategic Session, along with representatives from the Fab 9 group and meetings were held with representatives from Innovacorp, Develop NS, Tourism NS, Department of Business and NSBI. The session was very well done and was arranged by the Cape Breton Partnership.

Union negotiations will begin this week starting tomorrow, December 5, 2018.

COUNCIL STIPENDS

At the previous meeting, Councillor Patterson, requested that a report be provided on how the various percentage increases would affect the monthly Council stipends. She provided information to Council for review and it will be brought to the December 17, 2018, Council session for a decision.

Warden Morrison advised that the removal of the 1/3 non-taxable portion of the Council stipends has been discussed in meetings held in September, October and November also and a decision will be made on December 17, 2018, prior to the January 1, 2019, change. The decision will be made in open Council.

Elmourne MacKinnon provided Council with a letter indicating that he feels increasing the percentage to offset the tax change is the wrong position to take.

Councillor Patterson had forwarded a letter to the editor on this issue.

The Warden advised that some time will be allotted on the agenda of the next meeting for residents wishing to speak to this issue. It is a public issue and will be discussed and decided in public.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised the Council would recess for 10 minutes.

TAXATION UPDATE

Leanne MacEachen advised that the tax arrears balance is \$814,431, down from \$977,706 at the same time last year. This is a decrease of \$163,275.

The current arrears are \$1,198,779, compared to \$1,150,021 at this time last year. The current arrears are \$48,758 behind last year.

\$7,753 has been collected since the November meeting and it was indicated that December is a difficult time to collect tax money.

Overall we are ahead in collections by \$115,000 over last year.

A Tax Sale will be scheduled for March, 2019. The criteria for properties be placed on Tax Sale was outlined.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated a letter was sent to the Minister of TIR, with copies to the Minister of Fisheries, Minister of Lands and Forestry and the Minister of Environment concerning the Ingonish Barrier Beach. To date, no reply has been received.

With the recent stormy weather this barrier has been breached in three areas and is now critical.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to Premier Stephen MacNeil, indicating that a response has not been received to our letter to the Ministers concerning the Ingonish Barrier Beach and the situation is now critical and as it is a provincial responsibility, we request that work be completed in this area as soon as possible. Motion carried.

The Beach Crossing Road was also compromised during the recent storms. It was temporarily fixed some time ago by the placement of armour stone.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, DTIR, questioning on their plans to repair the Beach Crossing Road. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Budge brought up the concern with regard to the number of power outages in the past month or so in the northern area of the Municipality.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to NSPI requesting a meeting to discuss the number of power outages in the northern area of the Municipality. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald also expressed concern with the power outages in the north of Smokey area. Since October 24, 2018, there have been 10 power outages in the area. This is upsetting to residents.

He felt that NSPI should be questioned on their plans to upgrade their maintenance and this will be added to Councillor Budge's letter. Councillor MacLeod indicated her area has also experienced power outages.

Councillor MacDonald also expressed concern on the closure of North Mountain during recent storms.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Superintendent of the CBHNP, questioning on why North Mountain wasn't plowed during recent storms. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee declared a conflict of interest as he is an employee of Parks Canada and did not participate in the vote on this motion.

Councillor MacDonald introduced two letters from residents of Cape North concerning the Cape North Water Supply.

There will be a meeting on Bay St. Lawrence Water scheduled in January, 2019. Councillor MacDonald will arrange the meeting location and date and advise Council.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he provided diesel fuel to a NSPI employee who could not get fuel in the northern area because of the power outage. This employee travelled numerous hours from Canso in a storm to assist in returning power to the residents.

An ad is to be placed in the *Victoria Standard* commending Nova Scotia Power employees who worked to restore power during the recent power outages in the County.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod advised that Jackie MacLellan and James Young wish to come to Council to do a presentation on a property adjacent to them.

Mr. Young was in and indicated they would prefer to present in the New Year.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Polytech Products on receiving the Business Award from the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce. Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod indicated that Westside Middle River is still under construction and there is still a detour. Residents are concerned with the winter conditions and whether the road is good enough to travel on.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, DTIR, asking for a timeframe on when Westside Middle River Road will be completed and questioning if the detour will be in place all winter. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that the Council write a letter to the Honourable Mark Furey, Minister of Justice, showing support to Waycobah and requesting that he ensure all possible avenues are undertaken to find justice for Cassidy Bernard and ask the Warden to

reach out to our Cape Breton/Unama'ki group to do the same, along with all municipalities and First Nations Band Councils. Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod brought up the issue of rats on the Westside of Big Baddeck. There is a significant increase in the rat population and they are now invading the Southside of Big Baddeck and she is worried they will travel to the Village soon.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Lands and Forestry concerning the increase in the rat population and asking if they can address this issue and also to the Farm Practices Board, Department of Agriculture to see if they have a means to address this issue. Motion carried.

The month of June is "Pride Month" and Councillor MacLeod indicated she would like to obtain a pride flag for June, 2019, to be flown at the Court House during the month.

Council thought this would be a good idea and a flag will be purchased.

Councillor MacLeod advised that community members and elected officials from the Town of Port Hawkesbury, CBRM, Inverness and herself are planning a school for women in local government in 2019. It will be a weekend of learning how local government works and will assist women who are interested in running in 2020. More information will be provided at a later date.

A ceremony will be held on December 6, 2019, in front of the Court House at 4:30 p.m. in "Remembrance of Violence against Women". This is the anniversary of the Ecole Polytechnic massacre.

FAMILY MEDICINE FORUM

Warden Morrison indicated that appreciation, in some form, should be provided to Graham MacKenzie, Dr. Heughan, Dr. Smith and Emmanuel Comtois on their attendance at the Family Medicine Forum. The County was fortunate to have these individuals give of their time to assist in recruiting physicians to our area.

Council will think of an appropriate way to recognize these individuals for their time and effort.

NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY

Janet Knox, President and CEO, NSHA, cancelled her meeting with Council due to illness. This meeting will be rescheduled.

The Cape Breton Transition Team has been put in place to review and reshape healthcare delivery in Cape Breton. How Victoria County is a part of this picture was questioned.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Cape Breton Transition Team of the NSHA to question on whether Victoria County healthcare is a part of their transition planning process and to request they meet with Council in January, 2019. Motion carried.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The Council/Staff Christmas Party will be held on December 15, 2018, at the Baddeck Curling Club at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 6:35 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, CAO