

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

November 4, 2019

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, November 4, 2019, 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 #5 – Fraser Patterson
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

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

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

Warden Morrison advised that there would be a brief Victoria County Transit meeting after Council.

CAPE BRETON-UNAMA'KI ECONOMIC AND POPULATION GROWTH STRATEGY

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Carla Arsenault, President and CEO, and Jeremy Martell, Communication Coordinator, Cape Breton Partnership.

Ms. Arsenault expressed her pleasure on being in Victoria County and was in attendance to outline the Cape Breton-Unama'ki Economic and Population Growth Strategy.

Ms. Arsenault outlined that the current population growth strategy is the 2011 Prosperity Framework. This strategy is long past its time and work has commenced on the new strategy. Now that there is strategic alignment through the REN and increased island-wide collaboration it is good timing for the review.

Potential areas of focus include:

- Population growth
- Labour shortages and skills gaps
- Key sector development
- Support and revitalization for industries (fishing, agriculture and forestry)
- Infrastructure gaps
- Technological advances
- Entrepreneurship and start up support
- Enhancing Cape Breton's competitive position on a global scale

In July, Group ATN was hired to develop the new strategy. October was the public launch and through the months of October to December, there will be engagement sessions throughout the area. It is anticipated that the final strategy will be completed by February, 2020.

Jeremy Martell presented a short video on Cape Breton-Unama'ki's future.

Ms. Arsenault indicated that the County can be of assistance by meeting with the consultant team, taking a survey and promoting the survey to others. The link to the survey is <https://capebretonpartnership.com/growthstrategy/>.

It was indicated that Cape Breton has not had an economic strategy for some time. The declining population was discussed.

Council felt that the video shows an exciting picture of what is being undertaken and they looked forward to participating in the engagement sessions and survey.

The Cape Breton Partnership staff was extended a thank you for the work being undertaken and Council made mention of our EDO, Patrick Austin, who has been doing a great job for Victoria County.

Ms. Arsenault presented Council with a copy of the CBP's annual year-end review and a copy of their *Elevate* magazine.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Carla Arsenault and Jeremy Martell for their attendance and presentation.

VICTORIA COUNTY COMMUNITY HEALTH BOARD

Courtesy of Council was extended to representatives from the Victoria County Community Health Board, including, Jim Morrow; Ruth Schneider; Nancy Smith, Chair; and Connie Ross-MacDonald, Community Health Board Coordinator.

The representatives were in attendance to update on the Collaborative Community Health Plan 2019 for Central Inverness, North Inverness and Victoria County. Aron Ashton, NSHA, one of the NSHA staff involved in developing this plan was also in attendance.

Jim Morrow indicated that the Collaborative Community Health Plan came from the ground up. In March 2018 thousands of surveys were distributed throughout the local communities. The purpose of the survey was to encourage residents to share what they believed were the most important issues affecting their health and well-being.

From the four areas of concern came three health promotion priorities.

Ruth Schneider outlined the first priority which was access to health services in rural-isolated communities. The first recommendation was to advocate for improved transportation options to access healthcare providers and/or bring specialized healthcare directly to rural-isolated communities via mobile health services. The second recommendation under this priority was to partner with municipalities to support the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals.

Transit is now a reality in the County and it is hoped the service will last beyond the pilot project and become a sustainable service. The Community Health Board is willing to assist in the recruitment efforts.

Jim Morrow indicated that the second priority identified was economic conditions, employment and poverty. The recommendations from this priority are to advocate for a living wage for families in our communities and advocate for affordable housing and reduction of home energy costs.

There are an increased number of initiatives that focus on improving housing situations for vulnerable people and for reducing home energy costs.

Nancy Smith, Chair of the VCCHB, advised that the third priority is education and physical activity. The recommendations from this priority are to work with the municipality, partners and facility managers to increase access to recreation areas and facilities and to determine which workplaces have a health and wellness plan in place. It was further recommended that an event to promote health and wellness programs for the workplace be hosted in collaboration with the business community. Some progress is being made in these areas and will continue to be addressed.

Council advised that a Committee of the Whole meeting was held prior to Council and the topic of housing was a primary agenda item.

The Victoria County Transit service is operating and needs to be used to prove that it is a necessary and sustainable service at the end of the two year pilot.

The Municipality will also be hosting two public sessions in the County with regard to healthcare. The first meeting will be held at the Baddeck Community Centre on November 13, 2019, beginning at 7:00 p.m. and at St. Andrew's Anglican Church Hall, Neil's Harbour, on November 20, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. It is hoped there will be a large turnout for these sessions.

The VCCHB also have wellness grants for community groups that apply.

Council advised that a number of the VCCHB priorities are also Council priorities. The transit uptake was discussed and so far it appears to be a very welcome service. The Transit Committee will meet after Council to formalize the Committee and appoint a Chair. The service has been operating for 6 weeks now and information on ridership will be available soon and will be shared.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the VCCHB members for their presentation.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 21, 2019

The minutes of the October 21, 2019, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of October 21, 2019, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Whether a reply was received from the Department of Lands & Forestry to Council's request was questioned and the CAO advised that a reply has not been received to date.

NEW BUSINESS

The CAO advised that details are being finalized for the Health Care Discussions on November 13, 2019, in Baddeck, and November 20, 2019, in Neil's Harbour.

Compostable toilets are being again investigated for the public washrooms throughout the County. Robert Dauphinee, Director of Public Works, recently travelled to Peggy's Cove and saw some interesting options in this regard.

Fred Bonnar, Bay St. Lawrence Harbour Authority, was contacted with regard to the blocking of the beach at Bay St. Lawrence. The federal government doesn't want public using federal beaches.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Jaime Battiste, MP for Sydney-Victoria, concerning the federal government blocking off the Bay St. Lawrence Beach from public access. Motion carried.

Leanne MacEachen advised that the annual Christmas Party has been scheduled for Saturday, November 30, 2019, at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's.

CUPE negotiations will resume on December 4-5, 2019.

The CAO advised that calls are being received related to the PACE program for sewer systems. We have a Water Lending By-Law in place and an amendment could be made to this by-law to include lending for septic systems also. This will be given consideration.

TAXATION UPDATE

Total taxes outstanding as of today are \$2,058,720 compared to \$2,204,921 at this time last year. We are now ahead \$146,202 from last year.

Current outstanding is \$1,371,848 compared to \$1,371,825, for a difference of only \$23.01 ahead.

Arrears numbers are continuing to improve with numbers being \$146,225 better than last year.

\$162k has been collected in the past two weeks and a Tax Sale is scheduled for December 10, 2019.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL CONCERNS

District #5

Councillor Patterson indicated that a portion of the graveled part of the Kempt Head Road has been graveled.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that north of the Knotty Pine Cottages, a new home was built and in a recent rain event, the driveway washed out on the Cabot Trail. There is a pylon at the location, but the gravel needs to be removed.

Grading of the Roper's Road and Rocky Point Road is required before the winter season.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee also indicated that there is a trench in the middle of the Ferry Road and no work has been done in this area for a few years.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald indicated that the Fraser Road, St. Margaret's Village is in need of immediate attention with brush cutting, shouldering, and culverts. A request was sent in on July, 2018, and to date the work was never completed. Residents are inquiring why. There are fifteen families on the road.

The road washout in Bay Road Valley (road shoulders) is at a dangerous level with most of the area with no road shoulders present. There are many sections that have straight embankments.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis requested that a thank you be extended to the Department of TIR for alleviating the two bump issues in the Port Bevis area.

A request is to be submitted to look into the approach at Kelly's Lane in Englishtown.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated he was in contact with Steve MacDonald, TIR, and they are going to look into some patching for the Washabuck Road, but they do not have much money remaining in their budget. He indicated he addressed the Red Point Road and grading to Mr. MacDonald and they are looking into fall grading, so hopefully this will be done before the snow season.

The Little Narrows Community Development Association is requesting “No Parking” signs be located along the sides of the road in front of the wharf in Little Narrows.

Councillor MacNeil thanked MLA Keith Bain for requesting that additional funding be added to the maintenance budget.

District #3

Warden Morrison requested that a cross walk be painted on the western side of the Bell Museum entrance.

The results of the traffic studies for both the Tim Hortons/Irving on the TCH 105 and the Ingonish area are to be requested from the Department of TIR.

District #8

The CAO and Councillor MacDonald met with Steve MacDonald with regard to the Gaelic signage for District #8. Steve MacDonald advised that these signs will go in under the new provincial system and the placement of these signs may result in moving existing community sign names. This is for information.

It was moved and seconded that all TIR issues be forwarded to Steve MacDonald, Regional Manager, TIR, for consideration. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil advised that he received another call regarding the \$1,000.00 water connection fee and felt this must be looked at during the next Water Rate Study.

He requested an update on the Maskell’s Harbour issue and was advised it is in the hands of the insurer and nothing has been heard. The CAO will investigate this matter.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that Eastlink are requesting a letter concerning the tower at Hazeldale. This letter is to indicate that the County is satisfied that Eastlink followed the

proper public notice requirements and there are no further concerns with this proposal moving forward. The EDPC will also be requested for a letter and these letters will provide Eastlink with what they need for federal approval.

District #2

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Megan Cooper, Clerk-Treasurer of the Village of Baddeck, for the proactive action and notification that took place during the Baddeck water issue. Motion carried.

District #4

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Jaime Battiste, MP, Sydney-Victoria, on his recent election win to become the new Member of Parliament for Sydney-Victoria. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he came to Baddeck recently and went to use the public washroom at the VIC and it was closed. There were 2 bus tours in the Village that day and washrooms were required. He questioned why they were closed.

The CAO advised that the washrooms are under BABTA's operation and they were unaware there was a cruise ship in Sydney that day. The VIC is now closed and the washrooms are only in operation when the VIC is open.

It was felt that the hours of operation should be looked at prior to next season. The possibility of having the washrooms open during the tree lighting and parade was questioned and will be investigated.

Whether a reply was ever received concerning a possible program for cemeteries was questioned.

It was moved and seconded that a follow up letter be sent to the Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, concerning possible assistance for caring for abandoned cemeteries. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald indicated that the new bridge at Effie's Brook needs to be lit up. The area is very dark at night and there are two poles at the location.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the CBHNP Superintendent requesting that street lights be installed on the two poles at Effie's Brook Bridge, with a copy of letter to NSPI. Motion carried.

District #7

It was moved and seconded that \$400.00 be approved for the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Development Association from the District #7 budget to assist with fireworks. Motion carried.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the Ingonish Barrier Beach and indicated that a study was completed in Lockport on a similar issue and he requested the CAO to find out who conducted the study and whether a copy of the study would be available.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee also requested that a representative from Home Care/Continuing Care be invited to attend Council to provide an update.

District #5

It was moved and seconded that \$3,000.00 be approved from the District #5 budget for the Boularderie Island Connected Society. Motion carried.

District #3

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality sponsor both Christmas Parades in the Municipality. Motion carried.

MLA KEITH BAIN

Keith Bain, MLA, met with Peter Hackett, TIR, concerning transportation issues. MLA Bain requested an increase in the maintenance budget for TIR in the legislature and indicated that there is no preventative maintenance being undertaken.

MLA Bain mentioned possible funding for doctor recruitment. Leanne MacEachen advised that \$5,000.00 was received from Doctors Nova Scotia.

CONDOLENCES

Warden Morrison extended condolences on behalf of Council to Deputy Warden Dauphinee on the death of his brother.

CHRISTMAS PARADES

Warden Morrison indicated that permission has been provided to have the Victoria County Transit vehicle for the November 23, 2019, parade in Baddeck.

It could be possible for the same at the parade in Ingonish on November 30, 2019.

The staff/Council Christmas Party will be held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's, on Saturday, November 30, 2019, and Council members were encouraged to attend.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

A brief Transit Meeting will be held after adjournment of Council.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that a Broadband Meeting will be schedule before the next Council meeting.

A Committee of the Whole meeting was held prior to Council and there were two recommendations to be brought to Council.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality switch their banking to the Royal Bank of Canada (RBC). Motion carried.

The second item was to recommend that the Internal Communication Policy be approved with one change and that is to include a definition for electronic correspondence of a formal nature.

It was moved and seconded that that Internal Communication Policy be approved with the one noted change. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Jim Mustard requesting a letter of support for a Regional Early Years Coordinator position.

It was moved and seconded that a letter of support for a Regional Early Years Coordinator position be provided. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison advised that he is now Chair of the Destination Cape Breton Association.

2. Stephen Kerr questioned on when the letter he submitted to Council would be discussed.

Leanne MacEachen advised that a Recreation/Active Living Coordinator will be hired in the very near future. Interviews have taken place and the interviewers are currently scoring those interviewed.

Mr. Kerr indicated that infrastructure is required and it is something that should be on Council's radar. In order to attract new residents to the area and retain the ones we have, new facilities are required. He felt that the conversation should start here and there should be an impetus to get this going.

The role of the new Recreation/Active Living position will be different that it was before.

Mr. Kerr indicated that he doesn't have the use of a facility in the winter months for his archery classes. He mentioned the age of the Victoria Highland Civic Centre and the Masonic Hall, two facilities in the area.

Warden Morrison indicated that all groups interested in a new facility should get together and form a collective group to bring their vision forward.

The state of the current municipal building and the new accessibility regulations was also discussed as to whether it would be best to build a new facility or upgrade.

It was indicated that the Municipality would be responsible for 1/3 of the cost of any infrastructure funding that may be available. There are also 7 other districts in the Municipality to consider.

The previous strategic plans of 2000 and 2009 and the content of these documents were discussed.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council just met in Committee of the Whole and one of the items for discussion was housing; including affordability, lack of, and a number of other concerns with regard to housing.

The County is also working on the doctor recruitment issue and will be holding two public sessions this month in each area of the Municipality.

Whether the Village of Baddeck has been contacted in regard to a facility was questioned and it was indicated that this may be the place to start.

After a general discussion on this matter, Warden Morrison indicated this could be on as an agenda item for a future Council meeting.

INGONISH BARRIER BEACH

MLA Bain indicated that he spoke with Minister Coldwell on the Ingonish Barrier Beach and he indicated that funding may happen easier through EMO, in conjunction with our EMO Coordinator. This will be investigated.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next meetings of Victoria County Municipal Council will be Tuesday, November 26, 2019, and Tuesday, December 10, 2019, both at the Court House, Baddeck, at 5:00 p.m.

Stephen Kerr's letter will be on the agenda of the November 26, 2019, meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn Council at 7:10 p.m.

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden