

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

March 9, 2020

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 9, 2020, 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 #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
Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer
Heather MacLean, Recorder

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. He advised that the two presenters will switch the order of presentation with the Victoria County Fire Department presentation first and the crosswalk safety presentation following. The tentative public presentation will take place on March 23, 2020.

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

VICTORIA COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT PRESENTATION

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Michelle Symes, Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department, and welcomed the large gallery of firefighters to Council.

Michelle Symes thanked Council for the opportunity to appear and present on behalf of the Chief Fire Officers Association of Victoria County (copy attached).

Eleven (11) fire departments make up the fire service of Victoria County and every department has a mandate to save life, save property and save the environment.

Ms. Symes outlined the list of services the volunteer fire service provides. It is not just firefighting. All services are provided free of charge by dedicated volunteers who donate their time so others may live. There are no days off.

Firefighters give up their time to train and fundraise to be able to make them safe and knowledgeable when responding to calls for assistance. Safety comes at a cost and she outlined the minimum standards cost as set by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA).

The NFPA is a global self-funded, non-profit organization developed to eliminating death, injury, property and economic loss due to fire. Ms. Symes outlined the vision, mission, and minimum standard for automotive fire apparatus of the NFPA.

The total cost to outfit and protect one (1) firefighter is \$14,080.00. An outline of the individual equipment expenses was provided. Ms. Symes outlined that bunker gear, along with the self-contained breathing apparatus become outdated and due for replacement every 10 years. After every use, all firefighter equipment is supposed to be cleaned thoroughly of possible cancer causing contaminants. This gear should be properly washed and inspected at least once per year. The cost is approximately \$2,500.00.

The cost of various pumpers was outlined but Ms. Symes indicated that just includes the truck cost. The unit must also be stocked with the necessary equipment at an approximate cost of \$14,040.48, not including an additional 12 items that she did not outline the cost for.

Ms. Symes outlined the cost of one Victoria County Fire Department over the past six (6) months. The total costs were \$58,862.25.

The financial burden is one of the stresses that firefighters face on a daily basis. In the past two (2) years, three (3) fire chiefs have resigned for various reasons. Recruitment and retention have become extremely difficult.

Ms. Symes presented some visuals of real life fire and accident situations to which the fire service has responded.

The Victoria County Fire Departments are requesting that a committee of two (2) Councillors (including Warden and/or Deputy Warden), two (2) members of the Chief Fire Officers Association of Victoria County, the Fire Services Coordinator and the County's CFO be formed to come up with some methods and ideas to financially stabilize the Fire Service of Victoria County.

Ms. Symes concluded her presentation and thanked Council for taking the initiative to hire Lyle Donovan, Fire Services Coordinator, as this position has taken a great deal of burden from the fire departments.

All Council congratulated Michelle Symes and the gallery for their service and for the excellent presentation provided.

Councillor Patterson advised that he has seen firsthand the services provided by the fire department as first responders. He indicated that he felt the Committee was a good idea and would be beneficial for long term planning.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated he would like to see this presentation made to the province.

Councillor Budge stated that he did not realize the cost of the necessary equipment and also felt the committee would be a beneficial step.

Councillor MacDonald recently joined the Cabot Volunteer Fire Department and expressed his utmost respect for the work firefighters do without compensation.

Councillor MacInnis indicated he was happy to see so many young people in the gallery that have stepped up to serve in the fire departments.

Councillor MacLeod advised that the presentation was excellent and very well presented and she indicated that the formation of the Committee was a good step forward.

Councillor MacNeil thanked everyone in the gallery for the service they provide to Victoria County.

Leanne MacEachen indicated that Lyle Donovan is doing a wonderful job as Fire Services Coordinator. He has assisted all fire departments greatly and has assisted with bulk ordering of certain equipment which has saved hundreds and hundreds of dollars.

Lyle Donovan indicated that all firefighters give what they can give and also Victoria County being a small municipality, also gives what they can give. This Committee can work together to come up with other avenues to protect the fire service in Victoria County.

The CAO advised that she knows the effect PTSD has on people and advised of the “Helping the Helpers” conference held annually in Antigonish. The conference is held at St. FX University in Antigonish and she will provide the information to Lyle Donovan to forward to the fire departments.

Warden Morrison advised that the message was well presented and has been heard and Council would be making their appointments to the joint committee later in the meeting.

Warden Morrison thanked Michelle Symes for the excellent presentation and the gallery for their attendance and the service they provide in protecting the residents and businesses of Victoria County.

CROSSWALK SAFETY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Duncan Matheson who was in attendance to present on community crosswalks and crosswalk safety.

Duncan Matheson advised that he is a 4th year Bachelor of Arts in Community Studies student at CBU and his presentation is a part of a Community Action Project he was required to do as part of his studies.

Mr. Matheson is seeking support for the installation of more visible designs for crosswalks within the Village of Baddeck. From experience, he knows what it is to be hit by a car in a crosswalk. He was hit by a car over 12 years ago at the crosswalk by the Inverary Resort.

The current sidewalks in the Village of Baddeck are not very visible. Duncan provided some designs that would be more appropriate for the marking of crosswalks and he recommended designs such as a solid line, continental, zebra and ladder designs. These designs are much more visible to the pedestrians and drivers.

Duncan also presented an artistic design used on a four way crosswalk in another jurisdiction. The possibility of having artists commissioned to paint artistic crosswalks was discussed.

Traffic increases in the Village dramatically in the summertime and it is pure luck that there are not more accidents. Supporting literature was provided with regard to Nova Scotia

vehicle-pedestrian collision statistics. Nova Scotia pedestrian fatalities almost doubled in 2018. Most of these collisions occur in the daylight in clear weather conditions. Eight (8) of the twelve (12) pedestrian fatalities in 2018 were outside of the HRM. 62% of these collisions occur when the pedestrian is in a crosswalk.

Pedestrians and drivers must share the responsibilities to prevent collisions. Duncan provided tips to prevent collisions.

Pedestrians have the right-of-way at all crosswalks whether marked or unmarked. Crosswalks exist at all intersections, though some may not have painted lines or signs.

Potential solutions for preventing collisions in crosswalks were outlined. Duncan has spoken to the Village of Baddeck and Steve MacDonald, Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, on a possible initiative with regard to sidewalks in the Village.

An estimated cost per crosswalk was provided. Where a new crosswalk is installed, the cost would be approximately \$500.00. Duncan outlined to proposed budget of \$5,000.00 for the ten (10) sidewalks in the Village.

Increasing pedestrian safety will make our roads more navigable for all and could serve as an example for other communities.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Duncan Matheson for the excellent presentation.

Councillor MacNeil indicated this issue is very important and a crosswalk is now being requested for installation at the Rankin School of the Narrows in Iona.

Whether the Department of TIR is willing to work on this initiative was questioned. Duncan indicated that Steve MacDonald has been receptive, but it is not his decision to make.

Council expressed their thanks to Duncan Matheson for the excellent presentation and possible sidewalk initiative. This is a very topical issue and he was encouraged to keep up the great work.

Council and the CAO expressed their interest in the mural sidewalk design. Warden Morrison indicated that Council is willing to support this initiative.

Duncan presented a letter of support from the Village of Baddeck indicating their willingness to work on the sidewalk initiative.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be provided from the Municipality to Steve MacDonald, Department of TIR, in support of the crosswalk initiative within the Village of Baddeck. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Duncan Matheson for his excellent presentation and advised if the project proceeds, to come back to Council.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

FIRE SERVICES COMMITTEE

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Perla MacLeod and Warden Bruce Morrison be appointed as the Council's representatives on the Fire Services Committee. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison indicated that he requested Michelle Symes to send a formal letter of request for the formation of the Fire Services Committee. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 24, 2020

The minutes of the February 24, 2020, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 24, 2020, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

One application has been received for the Returning Officer position for the upcoming Municipal election in October, 2020.

Lynk Electric has been contacted regarding the lights on the Barra Strait Bridge and they will be installing six new lights in the near future.

The possibility of naming the recycling building at the Baddeck Depot for a resident was investigated and it can be done through a policy.

Morley MacNeil, Department of Lands & Forestry, advised that both North Harbour and South Harbour Channels have been unblocked. Councillor MacDonald advised that South

Harbour has been blocked again, however, there is a permit in place and it will be unblocked when required.

Terry Murray has been accepted as Victoria County's representative on the Cape Breton Regional Library Board and she is attending her first meeting in Sydney this evening.

The CAO advised that the County is prepared to move forward to name the recycling depot at the Baddeck Facility as the "Jimmy Bradley Recycling Depot". Mr. Bradley has been collecting recyclables and donating the proceeds to area charities for many years.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality proceed with the policy and naming of the recycling depot at the Baddeck facility as the "Jimmy Bradley Recycling Depot". Motion carried.

Warden Morrison advised that Mr. Bradley and his family are in agreement with this initiative and proper signage and a ceremony will be undertaken to make this building renaming formal in the near future.

Physician recruitment will be on the agenda of the March 23, 2020, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council. Dave Parkinson will be presenting.

CAO REPORT

The CAO indicated that a Department Head meeting was held on Wednesday past and she updated on the initiatives being undertaken by the Tourism, Recreation and Active Living and Economic Development Departments.

A Budget Committee meeting will be held at the Court House, on Wednesday, March 11, 2020, beginning at 10:30 a.m.

Athol Grant has been nominated for the Volunteer of the Year and will be attending the provincial ceremonies in Halifax.

Two RFP's will be closing this week – one for North of Smokey Operations and one for Groundwater/Surface Water Monitoring.

A new WWF (Work Wellness and Fun) Committee has been established and is currently planning a staff appreciation day. The operations may be closed for the day when it is arranged.

It has come to the CAO's attention that the monument in front of the Court House is currently a safety concern and she will be working on this matter.

There was a sewer leak at the Court House last Wednesday and the building was closed on Wednesday afternoon and Thursday. Kevin MacKay and Bruce Morrison worked on this issue and with outside assistance, it was repaired. A permanent solution is being investigated for this matter.

An Innovation Space meeting was held on Friday and several different ideas were presented.

An advertisement was placed for a Returning Officer for the upcoming municipal election and the one applicant will be interviewed.

The CAO and CFO attended an IT meeting and were provided with a risks report. The County has some major IT issues to work on.

The Cape Breton Partnership will be hosting a Job Fair on March 31, 2020.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the status of the Water Operator for Little Narrows. The job description is being revised and in the meantime we have two operators who visit the location as necessary.

STAFF APPOINTMENTS – EDPC

Correspondence was received from John Bain, Director, EDPC, requesting staff appointments of EDPC staff to various municipal positions, effective April 1, 2020.

It was moved and seconded that the following EDPC staff appointments to municipal positions be approved effective April 1, 2020:

- **Building Inspectors – David MacKenzie and Sean Donovan**
Alternates – Harry Martell and Jonathan Martin
Special Constable – Sean Donovan and Jonathan Martin
Assistant Building Inspectors – Andre Samson and Amanda Esterbrooks
- **Development Officer – Wanda Ryan**
Alternates – John Bain, Andrew Jones, Alex Dunphy and Lewis Pope
- **Fire Inspector – David MacKenzie**
- **Alternates – Andre Samson, Amanda Esterbrooks, Sean Donovan, Harry Martell and Jonathan Martin**
- **Dangerous and Unsightly Premises**
Administrators – John Martin and John Bain
Alternate – Amanda Esterbrooks

Special Constable – Sean Donovan and Jonathan Martin

Motion carried.

TAXATION UPDATE

The CAO advised that currently taxes outstanding are at \$1,271,284, compared to \$1,424,651 this time last year for a difference of \$153,367 ahead.

Arrears are below \$500k, which wasn't achieved until June of last year. We are at \$498,241, compared to \$630,141 this time last year for a difference of \$131,901 ahead.

Current is at \$773,044, compared to \$794,510 for the same time last year – a difference of \$21,466 ahead.

\$107k has been collected toward current and arrears since the last Council meeting on February 24, 2020.

Urgent letters were sent out to those with higher current balances.

The Tax Department staff, especially Cathi MacKenzie, who is devoted to collections, is to be congratulated.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL ISSUES

District #1

A MacKay's Point sign and a sharp turn checkered sign are down in the same area and TIR is to be requested to repair same as soon as they are able to do so in the spring.

A small culvert is in need of replacement on the Pony's Point Road, Maskell's Harbour.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that the light at Exit 10 on the TCH 105 is not operating and requires repair.

Councillor MacInnis requested that a letter be forwarded to the Ferry Services Division of TIR requesting that if and when the Englishtown Ferry is back in service, all local residents who were unable to use their yearly pass since early December, be reimbursed or travel for free to honour their 2019 pass.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald brought up an issue with regard to the sand truck and the lack of sanding in the South Ridge Road area. The truck was late and parents expressed concern on the icy road conditions. Also Shore Road is a chip sealed road and salt is not to be used on this surface, but salt is being mixed with sand and placed on the road.

TIR is to be contacted to see what their policy is with regard to prioritizing when and where sanding is done and to clarify the guidelines with regard to salt use on chip sealed roads.

Councillor MacDonald brought forward a concern with regard to the webcam on French Mountain. The sensor probe is in need of replacement and won't be changed until spring. Many of his residents travel to Cheticamp area to do their business, travel for sports, etc.

Five residents were stranded last week when they encountered snow drifts on North Mountain. They had to turn around and were able to get to Pleasant Bay where they were taken in by relatives. The issue is communication. The webcam is owned by Parks Canada and TIR use it for their road updates.

Councillor MacDonald is questioning how a resident would obtain real time notice of closure.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the Beach Crossing Road and the expectations for a more permanent update on the maintenance of the road.

He also brought up the section of pavement in the North Shore heading south which needs to be capped.

District #5

Councillor Patterson brought up the matter of damage to vehicles by travelling on porthole covered roads. He questioned on the form that can be submitted to TIR for reimbursement of repairs.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he could provide Councillor Patterson with the electronic version of the claim form.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he learned at a meeting that there is a Provincial Park being proposed for the Washabuck area. He questioned if Council had been notified and if this is, in fact, true.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Lands and Forestry on the status of a proposed Provincial Park for the Maskell's Harbour, Washabuck area. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod brought up the recent accident at Uisge Ban Fall Provincial Park asking the Department of Lands and Forestry to come to Council to update on this issue. This has been the third close call in this area.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Morley MacNeil, asking for an update on the recent Uisge Ban Falls accident and the department's plans to address this issue. Motion carried.

April 22, 2020 is the Global Cleanup Campaign and Councillor MacLeod requested that the Municipality provide gloves and bags for the cleanup as they did last year.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis received a request if the Municipality provided bursaries for graduating students. The Municipality provides bursaries to all Victoria County schools and Victoria County students attending schools outside Victoria County are also eligible for the bursary.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the date for the next Tax Sale and he was advised that the next scheduled Tax Sale is March 24, 2020, at 2:00 p.m. at the Court House. It is currently being advertised.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee questioned if there is any movement on the Minimum Planning Standards for the Municipality. With the development in the Ingonish area, he felt this topic was timely. It will be further investigated.

District #7

It was moved and seconded that \$1,000.00 be issued to both the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Volunteer Fire Department and the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Development Association from the District #7 budget. Motion carried.

District #8

The recent precautionary Boil Order on the Dingwall Water System was brought up and how this matter can be better communicated with the residents. Councillor MacDonald was contacted by residents who were unaware of the Boil Order until sometime after it took effect.

There should be a method of notifying the public and not all residents have computers or are on social media. This matter will be discussed with Lyle Donovan, EMC, the CAO and Communications Officer.

Councillor MacDonald requested that Public Works come to Cape North to meet with the Fire Chief with regard to the Dingwall Water System to provide clarification. The CAO indicated she would request Robert Dauphinee to address this request and she will also attend this meeting.

It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be provided to the Cabot Education Centre from the District #8 budget. Motion carried.

Jaime Battiste, MP, Sydney-Victoria, recently visited the District #8 area. The meetings were well attended and a good discussion was held.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the CEPI and Pitu'paq Committees have asked to come to Council in the future.

Councillor MacNeil also indicated he met with Lorne Tweedie, Seaside, regarding the Broadband issue in Victoria County. He has good news and a meeting of the Broadband Committee is to be scheduled before the end of March.

A Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP) update will be held on March 25, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. at Membertou Trade and Convention Centre.

BY-LAW/POLICY REVIEW

It was moved and seconded that the Grants Policy be approved. Motion carried.

A Flag Policy has been drafted and submitted to Council for review and approval at a future meeting.

ACCESSIBILITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

An Accessibility Advisory Committee is to be formed prior to the end of March. Advertisement has been made for lay members to serve on the Committee, but no applications have been received to date. The Committee will consist of five members – 1 Councillor and 4 members at large.

ALDERWOOD

A tour of Alderwood will be held at 9:30 a.m. prior to the Budget meeting on Wednesday, March 11, 2020 at 10:30 a.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, March 23, 2020, at the Court House, Baddeck, at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:05 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

