

An Open Letter to the Residents of the Village of Baddeck

NOVEMBER 1, 2024



On behalf of our newly elected Municipal Council, I am writing to you to provide context and next steps relating to recent matters relating to the Village of Baddeck, and reported by local news media.

The Village of Baddeck is an integral community within Victoria County. Its contributions to Atlantic Canada tourism and the economy of the region are vital. We are so very proud of this community. In that spirit, our Municipal representatives and employee team work diligently to ensure a sustainable and thriving future for Baddeck, as we do for all the communities throughout the County.

As you may know, the Village of Baddeck Commission oversees general operations of the Village including water, wastewater, Village public works, waterfront, and Village amenities. The Village of Baddeck collects property tax, sewer rate and water rate payments from residents to help fund these required services.

For many years, the Municipality of the County of Victoria and the Village of Baddeck enjoyed a strategic partnership that was based on annual planning and mutual support. This partnership ensured not just the continuance of important Village services, but also the pursuit of new opportunities.

On June 20, 2024, the Village of Baddeck presented two specific funding requests to Victoria County Council for consideration—maintenance and upgrades of its Wastewater Treatment Plant (up to \$211,000 over three years) and an engineering study to develop a capital plan (up to \$154,000). At that time, Victoria County Council granted \$27,529.84 of property tax relief in relation to new water utility assessments, and offered a \$50,000 one-time direct funding contribution as well as a \$150,000 loan at a 5% interest rate, repayable over a five year period. This was not accepted by the Village of Baddeck.

In late September, the Village of Baddeck withdrew its long-standing service to clear and salt Village sidewalks in winter, stating financial constraints as well as risk issues due to the poor condition of the sidewalks. Since 1999, Victoria County Council provided \$8,000 annually to the Village to assist with the cost of this service. Earlier this year, the Village made a request for \$24,000 to Council to continue with the service. Requests by the County to the Village of Baddeck for information as to why the cost had tripled were not answered.

As mentioned, the Village of Baddeck is responsible for water, wastewater, Village public works, waterfront, and Village amenities (including sidewalks) for the Village, and it charges residents property taxes, sewer and water rates to fund these services. However, the Village of Baddeck is asking the Municipality to cover more of the costs associated with the Village's long-standing services.

Our Council and senior management team are committed to working with the Village of Baddeck to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each body. We believe that a clear governance structure moving forward will improve the working relationship and ultimately lead to new opportunities for the Village.

It is the Municipality's intention to invite the Village of Baddeck Commission to a working session to begin this important process. This will be a transparent process, and we will keep you informed of outcomes and next steps through our website and newsletter.

Please be assured that the residents of the Village of Baddeck will be of the utmost importance as we engage in these discussions.

Should you have any questions, we invite you to reach out to your local Councillor or to me directly.

Thank you,

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Municipality of the County of Victoria

