

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**January 24, 2011**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 24, 2011, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil  
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic  
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden  
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis  
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden  
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee  
District #7 – David Donovan  
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO  
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

An In Camera session is to be added as that last agenda item.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the agenda be approved with the noted addition. Motion carried.**

**MARATHON HUMAN RESOURCES CONSULTING GROUP LIMITED**

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Brian Duggan, Brian Smith and Mike Eddy of Marathon Human Resources Consulting Group Limited who were in attendance to provide a preliminary report on the Victoria County Fire Service Study (copy attached).

Mr. Duggan began the presentation outlining the mandate, process used and the current situation of fire departments in the County.

Mr. Smith provided a listing of fire fighting resources in the County, as well as an analysis of the basic principles, the fire expenditures and other funding models used in rural municipalities in Nova Scotia.

The draft recommendations were then presented. Mr. Smith outlined the recommendation pertaining to finance and Mr. Eddy then reviewed the recommendations relating to communications, response levels, training and recruitment, facilities, record keeping and organization.

It was indicated that there would be a two week period for feedback on the draft report and then the final report will be prepared and presented.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the record keeping recommendation and whether the introduction of a common data collection system would be one system throughout the County. It was indicated that this is what is anticipated.

Councillor MacCuspic questioned whether Victoria County is able to have one common dispatch system for all departments. Mr. Eddy indicated that it is a possibility, but there would be a cost issue. He advised that they researched the matter of a common dispatch and felt it would be definitely possible and beneficial.

The question was raised as to the status of the Englishtown Department and it was indicated the Englishtown see themselves as a substation of Baddeck, however, the Baddeck Department does not. The Englishtown Department uses a 7 digit phone number with fan out calls to notify firefighters of a fire, and Councillor MacInnis felt that this was not an acceptable method.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned whether they met with all departments and was advised that all departments were met with, with the exception of Englishtown. This was simply a scheduling issue and a lengthy phone conversation was held to obtain the required information from Englishtown.

Mr. Smith indicated that during the course of the visits the departments were very cooperative and the representatives, being volunteers, worked hard for them.

Deputy Warden Patterson felt that a record of department's calls should be available.

Warden Morrison questioned on whether the fire services coordinator position mentioned in the report is considered a full-time position. It was indicated that there is a body of work contained in the report that needs to be done. All departments were of the same consensus that a fire services coordinator is the number one issue.

A further discussion took place and Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to the gentlemen for their presentation and looked forward to receiving the final report.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

**NONA MACDERMID, ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Nona MacDermid, Economic Sustainability Officer, who was in attendance to provide an update on economic development.

Ms. MacDermid outlined the 2011 Victoria County Business Discovery Challenge. This survey is seeking input from residents age 14 plus on how they feel about the present business climate in Victoria County.

Ms. MacDermid indicated that a Business Discovery Taskforce was formed and met to develop a series of questions to be contained in the survey. On reviewing other similar surveys, she added additional questions she felt were important.

The survey will be available online, put in various business establishments, the bookmobile, the Court House and the group decided that one would be mailed to every household in the County. As an incentive, people who respond to the survey will be eligible to win one of ten \$100 gift certificates to the Victoria County business of their choice.

It is hoped that the results of the compiled surveys will provide valuable information about services and supports that are most likely to improve business and career development in Victoria County.

The length of time to complete the survey was questioned. Ms MacDermid indicated that this was one of the biggest challenges in building the survey. It is hoped that 10 minutes will be sufficient, as anything longer than that increases the risk of abandonment.

Councillor MacNeil questioned whether an invitation could be placed online on the community portals. The link will be forwarded to Council members who can also distribute same to interested people.

Ms. MacDermid indicated she will be on CBC's Community Line in the near future to talk about the survey. The party liner is also a good resource, as is Facebook or any other electronic mechanism available.

The privacy issue was discussed and it was indicated that we must be extremely careful with the data collected, as to ensure the privacy of the respondents.

The deadline for completing the survey is midnight on February 11, 2011, and the random draws for the gift certificates will take place at Council on February 14, 2011. The possibility of posters being developed to post in various public places in the County was discussed and will be done.

Further discussion took place and Ms. MacDermid was extended a vote of thanks for her presentation.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 5 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 10, 2011**

The minutes of the January 10, 2011, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of January 10, 2011, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

The motion contained in the January 10, 2011, minutes concerning cutbacks to education, health authorities and municipalities was discussed.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the motion contained in the January 10, 2011, Council minutes requesting that letters be forwarded to the following indicating that the Municipality of the County of Victoria is opposed to any cuts in education, health authorities and municipalities be rescinded.**

- **Premier Darrell Dexter**
- **Honourable Maureen MacDonald, Minister of Health**
- **Honourable Ramona Jennex, Minister of SNSMR**
- **Honourable Marilyn More, Minister of Education**
- **Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board**
- **Billy Joe MacLean, President of the UNSM**
- **Keith Bain, MLA, Victoria-The Lakes**

**Motion carried.**

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that letters be forwarded to the following individuals indicating that the Municipality of the County of Victoria is opposed to any cuts in education, health and municipalities until it is determined what effects these cuts will have on Nova Scotians. Every effort must be made to minimize the effects of these cuts.

- Premier Darrell Dexter
- Honourable Maureen MacDonald, Minister of Health
- Honourable John MacDonnell, Minister of SNSMR
- Honourable Ramona Jennex, Minister of Education
- Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board
- Billy Joe MacLean, President of the UNSM
- Keith Bain, MLA, Victoria-The Lakes

**Motion carried.**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that VCCAPS is requesting confirmation that they will be included on the February 28, 2011, Council agenda. He was advised that they will be given time on the February 28<sup>th</sup> agenda.

The letter was forwarded to the Chair of the Chief Fire Officers Association requesting that the invoices for communications equipment submitted by Fire Departments be forwarded to the Municipality so this matter can be resolved by March 31, 2011. A reply has not been received to date and Sandy Hudson advised that a copy of this letter was also forwarded to each fire department.

The 911 matter in District #2 mentioned at the last meeting was investigated and will be discussed with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

There were no Committee Reports.

### **POLICY REVIEW**

There were no policy items to be reviewed at this meeting.

### **DISTRICT CONCERNS**

#### **District #5**

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that the Minister of Seniors announced the Aged Friendly Communities funding today and indicated that a Press Release would be issued to advise of Victoria County's funding.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that he received notification that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Conference will be held in Halifax this spring. It was felt that as it is being held locally, it should be opened up to any Council member that wishes to attend. Deputy Warden Patterson will forward this notification on to Council for their information.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that he and Councillor MacInnis attended a meeting recently with other Cape Breton municipalities and felt that this should happen on a more regular basis to discuss matters of common concern. The possibility of Victoria County being host to the meeting was discussed.

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Victoria County explore ways of networking with other Cape Breton Island Councils to discuss common concerns. Motion carried.**

Deputy Warden Patterson attended a tele-health meeting on Aging in Place and he questioned whether there were National Regulations in place that the Building Inspector would be aware of in this regard.

#### **District #6**

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the Council members North of Smokey, the Warden and CAO met with Minister Paris last week on the Keltic Lodge. It was a good meeting and he felt that movement has been made to address some of the concerns already and felt positive that the operation will improve this tourist season.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he has received complaints concerning the condition of the community postal boxes in Ingonish Centre. They leak and are unsightly.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to Kathy Edwards, Canada Post Corporation, requesting that the postal boxes located in Ingonish Centre be replaced with a new technology type mail box unit that is more attractive and secure. Motion carried.**

#### **District #7**

Councillor Donovan indicated that he has an elderly resident in his district that has been receiving treatment for macular degeneration with Avastin at the hospital in Antigonish. He has been informed that the Government will now pay for treatment of this disease with Lucentis and this cannot be administered in Antigonish and he will have to travel to the Nova Scotia Eye Centre in Halifax for treatment.

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Maureen MacDonald, Minister of Health, requesting that they consider providing this treatment in Antigonish, to alleviate the undue hardship of travelling to Halifax for the treatment. Motion carried.**

Councillor Donovan advised that Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has recently provided an update of the Household Income Limits. The Department of Community Services has accepted the new Household Income Limits for housing programs that are cost-shared by the federal and provincial governments. Councillor Donovan indicated that the Household Income Limits for rural municipalities is \$26,000, whereas in HRM it is \$28,000. He felt this to be unfair to rural areas.

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Community Services expressing Council's concern with regard to the differences in the approved Household Income Limits for housing programs that are cost-shared by the federal and provincial governments. Motion carried.**

Councillor Donovan brought up the matter of a new County flag and felt this should be done in conjunction with a contest for school children. Prizes would be awarded for the winning design.

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a contest be initiated within Victoria County Schools for design of a new Victoria County flag. Motion carried.**

Councillor Donovan advised that approval has been received from ECBC for the comfort station to be located at the Neil's Harbour Volunteer Fire Department. Council has previously approved \$55,000 towards this project. Councillor Donovan indicated that this funding has been split to be accessed over two phases of the project. \$30,000 is being requested for the first phase.

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that \$30,000.00 of the County's financial commitment of \$55,000.00 be released for the first phase of the Neil's Harbour Comfort Station project in conjunction with ECBC's approval of funding. Motion carried.**

#### **District #4**

Councillor MacInnis expressed his displeasure that only 5 of the Victoria County Fire Departments attended today's presentation of the preliminary report of the Victoria County Fire Study. Discussion took place.

Councillor MacInnis will address his concerns in this regard to the Chief Fire Officers Committee.

Councillor MacInnis advised that the Cabot Trail Working Association is trying to rejuvenate and they are looking for sponsors to assist with a day long meeting they hope to initiate in the near future. He questioned whether the County would consider sponsorship. The Association is to be advised to send a letter of request in this regard for consideration of Council.

**District #2**

Councillor MacCuspig advised that the Crowdis Mountain Snowmobile Club have received provincial approval for funding to erect a bridge across Middle River and are requesting \$5,000 in capital funding through the Recreation Department's budget.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that \$5,000 be approved for the Crowdis Mountain Snowmobile Club from the Recreation Department's capital budget funding. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacCuspig brought up the matter of the County website and whether action is being taken to revamp the website. It was indicated that Tom Wilson, Nona MacDermid and the CAO will be meeting on the website in the near future and this matter will be tabled until after this time.

Councillor MacCuspig indicated that Gary MacDonald, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, will be retiring within the next year and the position is being transferred to the North of Smokey area. The fear is that the Baddeck Office of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans will close.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans requesting that the Baddeck DFO Office remain opened and staffed. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacCuspig advised that snowplowing and sanding in his district appears to be slow at times and he questioned whether a lack of snow plows is responsible for this delay. He questioned whether there has been a decrease in the equipment inventory during the past number of years.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting an inventory of the present snow removal equipment as compared to what was in place 15 years ago. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacCuspig indicated that a request has been received for a street light on Alderwood Lane. As it is a County road, it was felt the Municipality should be responsible for the cost of same.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Municipality install a new technology LED streetlight, if possible, one-half way up Alderwood Lane adjacent to Roddie MacRae's residence. Motion carried.**

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil concurred with Councillor MacCuspig on his action with regard to the snowplowing situation. Snow removal in District #1 has also been delayed. He also felt that it is necessary that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal do an inventory of the culverts in the County that require repair. It was indicated that this was done in the northern area of the County. Councillor MacNeil advised that with the last storm, the armour stone located at MacKay's Point has been compromised and requires replacement.

**It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that these concerns be included in the letter to be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. Motion carried.**

**District #3**

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

**It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that effective January 1, 2011, the Municipality cover the increase in rental cost for the Baddeck Public Library from \$1,000.00 to \$1,200.00 per month, payable to the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison then reassumed the Chair.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Sandy Hudson advised that the Annual Conference of the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia will take place at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck, in October, 2011.

**IN CAMERA**

**It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that Council move In Camera. Motion carried.**

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that County come out of In Camera and return to the regular session. Motion carried.**

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Grant Thornton LLP for an opinion on the issue raised In Camera. Motion carried.**

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacNeil, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Sandy Hudson, CAO**