

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
May 11, 2015

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, May 11, 2015, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Athol Grant
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #8 – Johnny Buchanan (Work Related Absence)

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

The order of the RCMP and Seaside Wireless Communications presentations are to be reversed and Deputy Warden Patterson requested that a Committee of the Whole update be added to the agenda. The introduction of our new Municipal Advisor, Emily Pond, will be added as the first agenda item.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the agenda be approved with the noted changes and additions. Motion carried.

EMILY POND

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Emily Pond, Municipal Advisor, Department of Municipal Affairs.

Council provided introductions outlining their districts and welcomed Emily as our new Municipal Advisor.

Ms. Pond indicated that she replaces Mark Peck and is the Municipal Advisor for all municipal units from Pictou east, including all of Cape Breton. She previously worked for the Municipal Finance Corporation as a Policy Analyst and prior to that at Dalhousie University.

Ms. Pond indicated that she looks forward to her new position and working with Council. If Council have any issues or concerns, she advised they get in touch with her and indicated she would be leaving her business card with contact information.

Warden Morrison, on behalf of Council, welcomed Emily and indicated they look forward to working with her on municipal matters.

SEASIDE WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS

Courtesy of Council was extended to Brenda Stewart, Seaside Wireless Communications, who was in attendance to make presentations to two Victoria County volunteer fire departments.

Ms. Stewart indicated that Seaside Wireless Communications is proud to support volunteer fire departments throughout rural Nova Scotia. They have designed the NSFire.ca project to help volunteer fire departments in several ways. She thanked the Municipality for supporting the volunteer fire department program and matching the funds provided by Seaside.

Each year two departments are selected and provided with a cheque for \$4,000.00 from Seaside and the County.

Cheques were then presented to Wayne Jardine, Chief, Big Bras d'Or Volunteer Fire Department and Donnie Tower and Chief Merrill MacInnis, of the North Shore & District Volunteer Fire Department.

The representatives from the departments thanked Seaside and Victoria County for their support and indicated that the funds will come in handy and be used for the betterment of the fire departments.

Ms. Stewart indicated that fire halls within range of one of Seaside's towers, will be provided free internet service, including a public Wi-Fi hub. The web portal NSFire.ca will serve as a one-stop source of information about rural fire service in Nova Scotia and will provide an easy-to-use website template if the department does not currently have a website.

Unfortunately neither department fall within the range of a Seaside tower for free internet service, but can avail of the other program services.

Warden Morrison extended thanks to Ms. Stewart and she and the fire department representatives were excused at this time.

RCMP PRESENTATION

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Staff Sgt. Craig Yorke, Victoria County District Commander, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP).

Staff Sgt. Yorke then presented the Victoria County District Policing Report for 2014-15 (copy attached). He outlined the annual performance plan priorities including highway safety and crime reduction. He provided an update on the staff resources in both the Baddeck and Ingonish Beach Detachments.

The RCMP's community policing initiatives in the Victoria County District were outlined. Both crime statistics and traffic statistics for the period April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015, were provided. Staff Sgt. Yorke indicated the report also included media releases of noteworthy investigations within the District.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the absence of break and enters in both his District and District #1 is a positive.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the high presence of RCMP in the north of Smokey area is noticeable and the enforcement of failing to comply with conditions is a positive in the area. He questioned on when the new detachment would be opening and it is anticipated the opening will be the end of September/early October, 2015.

Councillor Budge stated that it was good to see the reduction in crime in the northern area of the County.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on speeding enforcement and whether the area of the 90 km zone near Tim Hortons was being targeted. There are a number of speeders in this area and Staff Sgt. Yorke indicated that traffic enforcement is conducted in all areas.

Councillor MacNeil also mentioned the absence of break and enters in his district and the increased RCMP presence in his district.

Warden Morrison brought up the recent provincial announcement with regard to the closure of satellite courts and the added costs that will result from this action. This matter was discussed in detail and Staff Sgt. Yorke outlined the impact this will have on policing. He indicated he has passed the concerns on to his superior and the courts.

Warden Morrison indicated that the Municipality has requested a meeting with the Minister of Justice to discuss the concerns with regard to Court closure and he questioned whether it was possible for Staff Sgt. Yorke or another RCMP representative to attend this meeting.

Staff Sgt. Yorke advised that it would be possible for an RCMP representative to attend. He also mentioned that Brian Arbuthnot, Wagmatcook Frist Nation, has expressed concern with regard to the affects the Court closure would have on Wagmatcook and it might be possible that he would be interested in attending the meeting.

Warden Morrison indicated he would notify Staff Sgt. Yorke when the meeting is arranged.

The relationship between the Baddeck and Wagmatcook Detachments was questioned. Staff Sgt. Yorke outlined the staff complement in Wagmatcook and indicated that he can draw on these members to answer calls outside Wagmatcook.

Whether false alarms from building security systems were a problem was questioned and Staff Sgt. Yorke indicated this is not an issue. The wide loads over the Seal Island Bridge are an issue that is being addressed with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

The enforcement of noise complaints was questioned and Staff Sgt. Yorke indicated that the Criminal Code covers this matter under causing a disturbance.

Councillor Grant questioned on the offences that come to Court in Victoria County and he was advised that only offences that occur within Victoria County come to Court in Victoria County.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Staff Sgt. Yorke for his report and indicated when the meeting is arranged with the Minister of Justice, he will contact Staff Sgt. Yorke.

ALTERNATE HOUSING

Courtesy of Council was extended to John Aylward, Venture Solutions, who was in attendance with regard to alternate housing possibilities.

Mr. Aylward indicated that Venture Solutions has been involved as a partner in a variety of projects, some of which are geared toward housing. He has attended meetings with the Alternate Housing Committee in the past to discuss housing options in Victoria County.

A number of options were considered and the interest appeared to be seniors housing options. There did not appear at this time to be an indication of the need for the affordable housing option.

Mr. Aylward indicated that this particular research was done for the Baddeck area and Councillor MacNeil questioned whether similar could be done for other areas and it was

indicated that it could to determine the need and demand and this may vary in the different areas of the County.

Councillor Grant outlined the public process held in the Baddeck area and the interest resulted in higher end seniors units. A developer has expressed interest in doing so.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that in his district there are a number of seniors living alone in large homes. He felt that if these seniors could live together in one residence, especially during the winter months, it would be much more cost effective and the sensible thing to do. It is a time for new thinking and anything can be looked at as a possibility.

Councillor Budge indicated that seniors housing is what is most asked for and needed. There is a lengthy waiting list for the established seniors units in the County.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that it is not so much seniors in his area, as the younger people looking for affordable housing. Some of these younger people are short term seasonal workers. He felt it to be important that a meeting be held in his area.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he, like Councillor MacInnis, has a number of elderly living alone in big homes in his district, but he did not feel they would be receptive to leaving their homes.

Warden Morrison indicated that the housing meetings held in Baddeck took a life of its own. They did not expect it to reveal what it did. The public meeting route invites everyone and it is a community driven result. The key is to get the people who need housing to attend.

Mr. Aylward advised that he is willing to share information he has acquired and having these public meetings will determine to need and demand in each area. The findings can be a surprise.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether CMHC would have any international research available with regard to housing issues in other countries.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison thanked Mr. Aylward for his attendance and the information provided.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 27, 2015

Page 6, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, May 11, 2015

The minutes of the April 27, 2015, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of April 27, 2015, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Solid Waste Collection

Councillor Grant brought up the matter of a bi-weekly curbside solid waste collection as opposed to the current weekly. This is done in some other municipalities and he felt it would be feasible to look into even doing this during the winter season.

The matter of a bi-weekly solid waste collection was referred to the CAO for review.

Budget

The budget process will begin next week and a review of all the applications for financial assistance will be completed. The grant requests will be compiled and outlined according to past support, first time request, etc. and reviewed by Council.

Strait Area Transit

Deputy Warden Patterson and the CAO will be meeting with Dwayne MacDonald, Strait Area Transit, at 9:00 a.m. tomorrow to discuss transit possibilities.

NEW BUSINESS

Municipal Boundary and Number of Councillors Matter

The Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board (NSUARB) have approved the Municipality's application regarding municipal boundaries and number of Councillors. The number of polling districts is set at eight, electing one Councillor from each. The changes to the polling district boundaries was also approved and new descriptions for the polling districts are to be completed and submitted to the NSUARB.

Heavy Solid Waste Collection

Two tenders were received for the heavy solid waste collection – one for each Area 1 and Area 2.

The Area 1 tender from Dingwall Trucking in the amount of \$15,800.00 plus HST will be accepted.

The Area 2 (south of Smokey) tender received from Loch Bhreagh Excavating in the amount of \$32,500.00 plus HST was felt to be too expensive and will not be accepted.

Possible options for Area 2 are being investigated with the view to begin the collection in both areas of the County on June 8, 2015.

Child Care Awareness Days Month

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that June, 2015, be proclaimed “Child Care Awareness Days” month in the Municipality of the County of Victoria. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil again brought up the condition of the Gillis Point Road and the gravel roads in his district. Darren Blunden, Area Supervisor, has advised that his maintenance budget has been cut in half for this season and he will be doing as much maintenance as he can with the dollars allotted.

District #2

Councillor Grant advised that an Alternate Energy Committee meeting will be held at 4:00 p.m. prior to the next Council meeting on May 25, 2015. Mitch Underhay, Scotian Windfields, will be in attendance at this meeting as well as Council that evening.

Councillor Grant again brought up the matter of Wilderness Protected Areas in Victoria County. He provided background information and he believes that the designation of some of these lands is against the statutes and common laws of the Province, as well as against the provisions of the *Wilderness Act* which he outlined to Council.

Councillor Grant advised that no socio-economic analysis has been made available to the public on areas considered for designation and the Statutes of Nova Scotia, as well as common law provisions provide the right of access to users of public roads and historic trails.

Discussion took place on this matter and Council agreed this matter should be investigated.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the information provided be forwarded to the Solicitor and he be requested to review the *Wilderness Areas Protection Act* and the proposed new protected areas to see if legal avenues are available to ensure the rights of Victoria County residents are respected. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis questioned on an update with regard to the Fire Services Coordinator. The CAO advised that he is waiting a reply from Inverness County and the Town of Port Hawkesbury with regard to a possible shared service.

District #6 and #7

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that \$500.00 be approved from both the #6 and #7 budgets for the Ingonish United Church Food Bank. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of Golf North's acquisition of the Highland Links Golf Course and the Keltic Lodge.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Budge, that a letter be forwarded to Golf North congratulating them on their successful bid and advising how important both Highland Links and the Keltic Lodge are to Victoria County and requesting that they come to Council to present on their plans for these facilities. Motion carried.

The Cabot Trails Lions Club will again be hosting the Buddy MacLeod and Fisher Hudson Memorial Golf tournament on July 19, 2015, at Highland Links.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the Municipality enter a team in the golf tournament at a cost of \$500.00. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that congratulations be forwarded to Lyle Donovan, EMC, on his graduation from CBU this past weekend with a Bachelor of Technology in Emergency Management. Motion carried.

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson requested that a street light ordered be placed for the installation of a light at 1698 Old Route Five, Big Bras d'Or.

District #3

Warden Morrison indicated that Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, has agreed that his senior staff meet with a Committee of Council with regard to the ferry issue and other highway issues.

When the meeting is arranged, Councillors able to attend are to travel to Halifax to meet and keep this dialogue going.

The designation of the Cabot Trail as a Heritage Highway was discussed and Warden Morrison indicated that he would like to see Victoria County host a Summit with a view to the designation of the Cabot Trail as a Heritage Highway. This designation may make more infrastructure funding accessible for necessary work to the Trail.

Warden Morrison also indicated that he will contact the Federal Minister of Transport, Honourable Lisa Raitt, and also the two area MP's Rodger Cuzner and Mark Eyking, with regard to the Cabot Trail designation, to arrange a meeting and if necessary, Council will travel to Ottawa to meet with them on this important issue.

Council agreed to host the Summit on the Cabot Trail and send representatives to Ottawa to meet if necessary.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Joan Cottell, on behalf of Minister Keith Colwell, Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, acknowledging receipt of Council's letter, and advising it will be brought to the Minister's attention.
2. Letter from CAA advising that the Gillis Point Road has been selected as the worst road in Atlantic Canada for the second consecutive year.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Economic Development Committee

The Economic Development Committee met earlier today where an update was provided on REN 6, the hiring of an EDO, ferry fee issue, immigration and other development issues.

The Economic Development Committee will be meeting again on May 21, 2015, with Rhonda MacDougall, Nova Scotia Business Inc.

Subdivision By-Law

Committee of the Whole met prior to Council with regard to the updating of Victoria County's Subdivision By-Law.

Two Council representatives from both north and south will sit on the Committee to review and update the Subdivision By-Law.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

