A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held via Teams on December 15, 2025, at 10:00am with Warden Organ in the Chair.

## COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1 - Donna Matheson-Lefort

District #2 - Perla MacLeod, Deputy Warden

District #3 - Jess Kerr

District #4 - Rosella Born

District #5 - Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Tim Donovan

District #7 - Jackie Organ, Warden

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

## STAFF PRESENT

Alix Redden, Acting CAO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk and Executive Assistant, Recorder

Ursula Melski, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

## ABSENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

## CALL TO ORDER

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

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Organ called the meeting to order and asked for agenda approval with an addition with the appeal for 66 Dundas Road.

***On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Born to approve the Agenda for December 15, 2025 with the noted change.***

***Motion Carried.***

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the November 17, 2025, Meeting of Council of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the Regular Council Minutes of November 17, 2025.***

***Motion Carried.***

## PRESENTATIONS

### THEATRE BADDECK PHASE 2 PRESENTATION – HANNAH ZISS AND CHRISTY MCRAE-ZISS

- Theatre Baddeck presented the plan and scope of Phase 2 of the new theatre space at Greenwood discussed funding. Highlights of that discussion are below:
- Estimated Cost is $2.1 Million.
- ACOA is ready to commit but needs at least one government partner.
- Need commitment for at least $448,000 now so they can proceed.
- Requested $225,000 from Victoria County in hopes that ACOA will commit to the other 50%.

### CABOT TRAIL 100 PRESENTATION – DAN COFFIN

Mr. Coffin provided Council with an update on the planning underway for the Cabot Trail 100 celebrations. Council indicated that potential trail funding will be brought forward for consideration as part of the budget process.

### EDPC APPEAL – JOHN BAIN

Mr. Bain discussed an appeal related to a site plan in Ingonish. The appellant, Gordon MacKinnon, was not in attendance at the start of the session. Council recessed for five minutes at 11:18 a.m. in an attempt to connect Mr. MacKinnon to the meeting; however, due to ongoing

technical issues, this was unsuccessful. As a result, the Warden called the meeting to an end, and Council agreed to reconvene at a later date. The meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m.

Before Council adjourned, Deputy Warden MacLeod asked staff to follow up with Theatre Baddeck regarding the timing of a requested payment.

## COUNCIL WAS RECONVENED ON DECEMBER 18, 2025 AT 9:00AM.

Warden Organ called on Mr. MacKinnon to speak to his appeal and Mr. Alain Beaudie to speak in favour of the site plan.

During the discussion, concerns were raised about potential impacts of mobile homes on property values, road noise, and traffic, while also acknowledging the importance of providing housing for workers. It was noted that the proposed development would primarily consist of homes for purchase, with few rentals, aimed at providing affordable, year-round housing for working residents rather than seasonal use.

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Kerr to approve the site plan as recommended by John Bain.***

***Motion Carried.***

## DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

## DISTRICT 1

- I was honored to be invited to speak at the Seniors Lunch Program in Iona on November 26th. These luncheons are a wonderful opportunity for seniors from across the district to come together, socialize, stay informed, and enjoy a delicious hot meal in good company. It was a pleasure to meet many friendly faces, hear your stories, and share in the warm spirit of community that these gatherings foster.
- During recent snowstorms, some residents had questions about road clearing in our district. I encouraged everyone to help by keeping a brief record of road conditions and sharing observations with the Department of Public Works. Working together helps ensure concerns are addressed promptly and keeps roads safe and clear. Some constituents have expressed interest in possibly reviewing the situation with provincial representatives in the future, to explore any potential improvements, always with the goal of better serving the community.
- Sacred Turtle Boutique Farm Shop – After careful consideration, the shop will close for the season after one final weekend. Don’t miss their clearance sale next weekend, running Friday through Sunday, with a wide range of items available at special prices. The shop will reopen in March next year.

Holiday Events

- I want to take a moment to congratulate all the organizations in our district that have hosted successful holiday events over the past few weeks. Your hard work and dedication have brought our communities together, spread festive cheer, and made the season brighter for so many. Thank you for all that you do to make our district a stronger, more connected place.

Upcoming Events

- The Wagmatcook First Nation Annual Christmas Gathering will be held on Thursday, December 18th. Doors open at 4 p.m., with dinner served at 6 p.m., at the Great Hall inside the Cultural and Heritage Centre. Attendees can enjoy a turkey dinner, entertainment, Santa gifts for the children, door prizes, and plenty of holiday cheer.
- Little Narrows Community Drive-By — “Our Shining Lights” December 22
- Join us for a special Christmas Light Drive-By in memory of Charles Ellis and all our loved ones. The event, hosted in partnership with the Little Narrows Community Development Centre and the Ellis family, including their extended relatives, will feature a visit from Santa, tea, hot chocolate, treats, and live music.
- Donations for the Barra Food Bank will be collected at 89 Little Narrows Road from 5–7 PM, with a Christmas Gathering at the Community Centre starting at 7 PM. Non-perishable food items and monetary donations are welcome, with tax receipts available for monetary contributions.
- This event is a wonderful way to honour loved ones and share some holiday cheer with the community.
- As we wrap up our final council session of 2025, I want to wish everyone in our district and across the county a joyful and peaceful holiday season. Thank you for your support this year — I look forward to working together in 2026. Happy Holidays and a wonderful New Year!

## DISTRICT 2

- Happy holidays and drive safe and see you next year.

Deputy Warden requested that the following motion made at the December 5. 2025 Emergency Meeting of Council be amended to include sections of the sidewalk to the hospital on Old Margaree Road:

***On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Kerr that based on discussions with the Village of Baddeck, and them reiterating that they do not own the sidewalks and will not plow them. that Victoria County will plow Chebucto Street in Baddeck for the 2025-26 winter season, until March 2026.***

***Motion Carried.***

Amended Motion:

***On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Kerr that based on discussions with the Village of Baddeck, and them reiterating that they do not own the sidewalks and will not plow them. that Victoria County will plow Chebucto Street and a section of Old Margaree leading up to the hospital in Baddeck for the 2025-26 winter season, until March 2026.***

***Motion Carried.***

## DISTRICT 3

- The Village is looking very festive
- Thanked municipal staff members, JD and Bruce Morrison and Nova Scotia Power staff, Sean and Logan for installing the new Christmas lights on the trees in front of the Municipal Building.
- The Christmas parade was well attended.
- Free dinner put on by Rev. MacLeod and Chef Mat Smith.
- Boardwalk project is shut down for the winter.
- Lions Club held a successful auction, thanked the organizers and Scott Macaulay and staff at the Inverary Resort for hosting.
- Thanked everyone on Council, staff and the community for their support to his family through a difficult time.

## DISTRICT 4

- Hosted a Community Safety Meeting on November 26th at the Indian Brook Fire Hall with an RCMP constable in response to the recent break ins. The session was well attended. Look forward to hosting another session in the new year.
- In early December the community experienced a situation that required repeated responses from our volunteer fire department and the RCMP, thanked both groups for their professionalism and persistence under difficult circumstances. Behaviors that put firefighters, police, residents or the environment is unacceptable and will continue to support and facilitate the ongoing efforts to resolve this situation through the appropriate channels while continuing to work with the First Responders and partner agencies to ensure safety and wellbeing for our community.
- On December 13th I attended the North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Fighters Awards, Recognition and Retirement dinner, was a pleasure to attend and acknowledge and recognize the sacrifices and dedications by our volunteer fire fighters. Our community remains thankful for these volunteers and their families for their sacrifices.

- Attended several AGM" s and Hall meetings as well as local social events. I enjoy attending these events as they keep me connected to residents.
- North Shore and District Volunteer Fire Department will be hosting their annual Lobster Dinner Fundraiser on January 10, 2026.

***On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to take $2,000.00 from District 4 Budget for the North Shore Volunteer Fire Department.***

***Motion Carried.***

- Wished everyone a wonderful safe and peaceful holiday season.

## DISTRICT 5

- Snow plowing is an issue as it usually this time of year.
- Thank the Senior Safety program for the work put in on the Monday coffee meetings.
- Wish everyone a happy holiday, merry Christmas happy new year.

## DISTRICT 6

- The ski hill is up and running
- Baddeck rink donated the boards to the outdoor rink in Ingonish, nice folks in Baddeck helped us take them apart. Really nice of Baddeck rink to donate them.
- Work continues at the WWTP.
- The daycare is now being pushed for an opened date in February.
- A consultant, Adam Brown from CBU sent him a lot of information on heat recovery systems and passed it on to the construction manager at cape Smokey to look into.
- Wishing everyone a happy and safe holiday.

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Born to take $1,000.00 from District 6 Budget for the North of Smokey Food Bank.***

***Motion Carried.***

## DISTRICT 7

- Attended a Christmas concert at St. Andrew's Anglican Church where 5 local musicians serenaded us with carols to get us in the Christmas spirit. Thank you, Bruce, Norman, Derron, Miranda and Katie, for taking the time out of your busy schedule and sharing your talent. All donations approx. $900.00 will be shared between Highland Manor and Highlands Vision.

- The Danny- Ainsley Boys and Girls basketball tournament will be this weekend starting on Friday. Come out and cheer your team on. Also, on a heartfelt note a brief ceremony will be held to retire Clayton Organ's number 13 jersey.
- On Saturday Dec 20 (weather permitting) Santa will be visiting with the help of the Cape North Fire Dept. Starting around 4:30pm. Councillor Hennick and myself will be going along for the drive. Please stay safe.
- The annual food bank drive organized by the local RCMP "Fill a cruiser" for the North of Smokey Food Bank was held over two days. Day one in front of the Freshmart with the Paramedics and North Ingonish Vol. Fire Dept helping out. Day 2 was held in front of the Neil's Harbour Co-op Store again with the help from our Paramedics and the NHNH Vol Fire Dept. was a great success. Thank you to all that donated time, money and food to this needed cause. 6 cruisers were filled and $3030.00 was brought in and was matched by the Paramedics and Ingonish Beach Scotia Bank branch for a total of $9090.00
- I would like to take this opportunity to wish my fellow Councillors, Municipal staff, and all residents of Victoria County a "Merry Christmas and Happy New year" Please check in on your neighbours although this is a festive time for most some are struggling to get through.

## DISTRICT 8

- Had a very busy weekend with the Cabot Fire Auxiliary having a delicious Spaghetti Supper on Saturday along with the Bay St. Lawerence Community Center doing their 13th Annual Santa Workshop. Then on Sunday the Cabot Fire Auxiliary had their 4th Annual Christmas Family Fun Day in which all events were well attended. We truly live in an awesome community.
- On Wednesday December 17th at the Culture Centre in Cape North there will be a community toy exchange drop off from 3 to 6 pm and on Thursday December 18th donate a toy and take a toy or donate a nonperishable food item. Please see the municipality Facebook page for more information.
- Merry Christmas and happy New year to all residents of District 8 and to everyone in Victoria County.

## MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS

***On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Donovan that Council direct staff to undertake a comprehensive review of the proposed Net Zero Community Building Project for Victoria County, and to report back to Council with a detailed assessment of feasibility along with recommendations concerning potential implementation.***

***Motion Carried.***

***On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Donovan that Council direct staff to research how other Nova Scotia municipalities track reports of dry or low-yield private wells, including the approaches used by the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, and to provide Council with options for implementing a voluntary reporting mechanism in Victoria County for emergency planning and future preparedness.***

***Motion Carried.***

## CAO AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

**CAO Report:**

- Drones - budget discussion? Deputy Warden MacLeod requested staff to look into this. There needs to me more information on this and Deputy Warden said to reach out to Lyle about it.
- Dry Hydrants - Quotes for costs are coming in end of November. The 6 FD's that don't have hydrant service are to find the best location to serve their needs. Then we can start on a priority list.
- Q2 review finally complete. It was more comprehensive than previously done which made it more time consuming but puts us in a strong position for the year-end audit. We will seek further improvements to balance depth and efficiency going forward. Audit committee scheduled for December 15.
- Tax sale was held on November 25. There were originally six properties remaining at time of advertisement: three paid prior to the sale, one was deferred to a future sale, and two proceeded to auction. One property sold; one did not.
- We are working on the Municipal Grant Program online application and supporting communication pieces to launch in January
- The updated Waste Sorting Guide is now online and will be sent to mailboxes across Victoria County in January.
- New recycling changes came into effect December 1st. Staff have already seen a decrease in the amount of garbage generated from blue bags.
- Tender to design an extension on our current C&D cell has been posted. We will be extending the closing date to January 5th, 2026.
- Meter reads will start late December, early January.

- Fencing that had to be removed for new Dingwall tower has been replaced and extended.
- There is a leak in Little Narrows that staff are trying to narrow down.
- Attended the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia conference in Halifax December 1st to 3rd. Congratulations to Cathy Lamey and the Cabot Trail Motel team on their winning of one of four Nova Scotia Tourism Pineapple Award winners for their dedication to customer service.

- Continued programming around the county.

- Alexander Graham Bell Walk program
- Planning for 2026 – programs, equipment loan program and youth

- The first road trail in Victoria County has been approved in Big Baddeck from our Waste Management site to the highlands. This was applied for by Central Cape Breton ATV club with assistance from ATVANS (ATV Association of Nova Scotia) and big thanks to Councillor MacLeod for her work in getting community feedback for this route.
- We have received environmental approval for our Transfer stations to May 2028
- We have received our permits for WWTP, and work has begun!
- Sean McSween and Logan MacLean - thank you so much for taking down and installing our new Christmas lights.
- Cell service letter, perhaps put that in a motion at some point about a consolidating letter to work with other municipalities to advocate for better cell service.

***On Motion of Warden Organ seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to work on a consolidating letter to work with other municipalities to advocate for better cell service.***

***Motion Carried.***

***On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to Raising the Villages to sponsor their spring conference for $1,000.00.***

***Motion Carried.***

- NSFM Coastal Support Program planning …go in with other municipalities funding for community engagement. Application due in February.
- Happy holidays and it has been a pleasure this year with council and staff. The County sponsored 7 families for adopt a family this year.
- Received a bill for FCM - $2600. Is Council renewing their membership for the 26/27 year?

***On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to renew FCM Membership for $2,600.00.***

***Motion Carried.***

- Councillor Patterson asked for permission to travel to the next FCM Board Meeting.

***On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Kerr to grant permission to Councillor Patterson to travel to the next FCM Board Meeting.***

***Motion Carried.***

## CORRESPONDENCE

All forwarded.

CAO MacEachen discussed the incident at Hunter's Mountain and made the following statement:

The Municipality agreed to assist the Mi'kmaw land protectors and the Snowmobile Association of Nova Scotia with cleanup and site adjustments at Hunter's Mountain, both to support winter access and to continue building our relationship with the Mi'kmaw community around future use of the site.

Over the weekend, cabins belonging to the Mi'kmaw land protectors were destroyed by fire. This matter is under active RCMP investigation, so we will not comment further.

But it is important to know that the Municipality does not condone violence or destruction of property, and we recognize the serious impact this incident has had on the Mi'kmaw community.

VCT: Deputy Warden MacLeod said she received quotes for B2 and needed responses back from the Board.

***On Motion of Councillor MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to write a letter to Terry Murray for her dedication to Victoria County Home Support Services.***

***Motion Carried.***

Councillor Donovan discussed fire department funding and suggested a further discussion can be brought to budget to possibly look at allocating money to each fire department. Perhaps $5,000 every year to every fire department for equipment, gear, etc.

## QUESTIONS FROM GALLERY

2 members of the public were in attendance.

## NEXT MEETNG

January 19, 2026, at 10:00am.

## ADJOURN

Warden Organ made a motion to adjourn at 9:53 am.