A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Baddeck on July 20, 2026, at 10:00am with Warden Organ in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1 - Donna Matheson-LeFort

District #2 - Perla MacLeod, Deputy Warden

District #3 – Ian Nicholson

District #4 - Rosella Born

District #5 - Fraser Patterson

District #7 - Jackie Organ, Warden

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Alix Redden, CFO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk, Recorder

Ursula Melski, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

ABSENT

District #6 – Tim Donovan

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Nicholson to approve the Agenda for July 20, 2026.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The following Minutes were approved.

May 19, 2026, Regular Meeting of Council.

June 1, 2026, Special Meeting of Council.

June 8, 2026, Emergency Meeting of Council.

June 22, 2026, Regular Meeting of Council.

PRESENTATIONS

VILLAGE OF BADDECK REQUEST – ROMAN BRAUN-HUENTTER

Council discussed the Village's request, including the age of the wells and clarification that the Village is not seeking any financial contribution from the Municipality.

It was noted that the grant funding would flow through the Municipality before being transferred to the Village, requiring the Municipality to undertake administrative work associated with receiving, administering, and disbursing the funds.

Council agreed that, prior to proceeding with the funding application, an agreement must be executed between the Municipality and the Village to clearly establish that the project is the responsibility of the Village and not the Municipality. The Village will prepare and provide the draft agreement.

Council further noted that should the project exceed its budget, any request for additional funding would need to be brought forward by the Village Commission for Council's consideration.

On Motion of Councillor Nicholson seconded by Deputy Warden MacLeod that Victoria County will apply for the SCCF Grant on behalf of the Village of Baddeck with an agreement drawn up between the two parties before the application can be sent and that the Village will draft the agreement.

Motion Carried.

AGING IN PLACE PRESENTATION – ALISON GRITTNER

Ms. Grittner presented the Homeward Bound initiative, a 7-year, $12.4 million research project led by CBU and funded by Research Nova Scotia, working with rural communities to develop solutions that help older adults age safely and independently in their homes. The project focuses on healthcare, housing, and social supports through partnerships with 34 organizations.

Highlights include;

- The population is aging, most older Canadians wish to remain in their homes, and long-term care waitlists continue to grow.
- Identified Iona/Christmas Island and St. Ann's Bay/North Shore as proposed Victoria County project communities due to their high proportion of residents aged 65 and older.
- Outlined the supports project communities would receive, including:
    - Community Navigators to connect residents with services and programs.
    - Community Handypersons to assist with home repairs and accessibility modifications.
    - Health and wellness programming.
    - A Mobile Research Van to bring services and research directly into communities.
- Explained that community feedback will directly shape the design of programs, with surveys, interviews, and community engagement planned throughout the project timeline.

Requested Items

- Endorse Iona/Christmas Island and St. Ann's Bay/North Shore as Homeward Bound project communities.
- Support research activities within the communities by assisting with local engagement opportunities.
- Help promote the project by sharing information with local organizations, community halls, churches, and residents.
- Connect the Homeward Bound team with community groups and organizations interested in participating in the project.

Council agreed to the project in Iona and St. Ann’s Bay/North Shore, and they support the initiatives of the project.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to recognize and support the Homeward Bound projects in Districts 1 and 4.

Motion Carried.

COUNCIL REPORTS

DISTRICT 1

- Concerns regarding Provincial Public Works raised by residents have been forwarded to the appropriate departments for review and follow-up to help ensure timely attention and resolution.
- On July 17, I had the opportunity to volunteer as the photographer for the Golf, Lighting the Way tournament in support of the Victoria County Memorial Hospital Charitable Foundation. As a board member, I was pleased to help capture this important community fundraiser and be part of an event that brought together participants,

sponsors, volunteers, and supporters in support of exceptional healthcare close to home.

- Thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, the annual tournament raised tens of thousands of dollars to support healthcare initiatives in our region. Events like this demonstrate the strong community spirit and continued commitment to strengthening local healthcare services.
- Congratulations to the newly elected and re-elected Chief and Council of Wagmatcook First Nation following the July 4 election. I extend my best wishes for a successful 2026–2030 term and look forward to continued collaboration between Wagmatcook First Nation and the Municipality of the County of Victoria.
- Thank you to everyone who participated in the election and helped strengthen the democratic process within the community. I wish Chief and Council every success as they work together to provide strong leadership and continue advancing priorities for Wagmatcook.
- Residents and visitors are invited to attend the 65th Annual Highland Village Day Concert on August 1 at Highland Village Museum. This longstanding Cape Breton tradition celebrates our rich Gaelic culture with an afternoon of music, dance, storytelling, and community overlooking the beautiful Bras d'Or Lake.
- Following the concert, a family dance will be held at the Little Narrows Community Centre, offering another opportunity for residents and visitors to gather and celebrate. It promises to be another wonderful day showcasing Cape Breton's rich heritage and hospitality.

DISTRICT 2

- Requested a moment of silence for Rollie Thornhill, a local resident and former Deputy Premier who passed away and requested that the County send a card to his wife. He will be missed by all who knew him in Baddeck and Victoria County.
- Requested to invite EHS to Council to meet the new councillors and get some updates.

DISTRICT 3

- The last few weeks have been quite a learning experience, with many community events taking place. Canada Day celebrations on July 1 were well attended, including the Baddeck Area Parade, activities at the Legion, and a great fireworks display. Thanks were extended to all the volunteers who worked hard to make the day a success.
- Attended the BRHS graduation and presented an award on behalf of Victoria County. Congratulations were extended to all graduates.
- Attended the Baddeck Mooring Authority meeting and Annual General Meeting. Recognition was given to Chair Denise Gallant for her hard work in keeping everything in order.
- Attended the Alderwood Board Meeting.

- Attended the Eastern District Planning Meeting and received an update on new planning initiatives for the Baddeck area later this year.
- Attended the opening of the new Boardwalk. It was recognized as a tremendous asset to Victoria County. Congratulations were extended to the Baddeck Waterfront Committee and the Village of Baddeck, with appreciation for everyone's hard work in bringing the project to completion.
- Recognized the Royal Canadian Legion on the celebration of its 100th anniversary and the renaming of Branch 53 to the Maj. Percival Anderson Memorial Branch 53 in honour of a local war hero who led the charge at Vimy Ridge. The Legion was also thanked for its continued dedication and support of the local area and community groups.
- Recognized Jennifer MacDonald for her service to the residents of Baddeck as Chair of the Village Commission and congratulated Anna MacDonald on her new role as Village Chair.

DISTRICT 4

- With summer now in full swing, communities throughout the district have been busy welcoming visitors and hosting local events. Appreciation was extended to the many volunteers, organizations, and community members whose hard work makes these events possible and helps showcase District 4 as a wonderful place to live and visit.
- As another lobster season came to a close, recognition was given to harvesters, crews, processors, and everyone who supports the fishery. Best wishes were extended for a safe and successful season ahead.
- Attended the Northshore & District Volunteer Fire Department's weekly training night on July 8, where members partnered with the Ingonish RCMP to conduct a roadside safety checkpoint focused on speeding, seatbelt use, and public education. The initiative was recognized as an excellent example of community partners working together to promote road safety.
- During the evening, presented Capt. Nancy Smith with a certificate of recognition on behalf of the Municipality for 35 years of dedicated volunteer service. Congratulations were extended to Capt. Smith, along with thanks to Chief Al MacDonald and all members of the department for their continued commitment to protecting local communities.
- Recognized the Royal Canadian Legion's 100th anniversary. Although unable to attend the official renaming and unveiling ceremony on July 16, attended the Legion in the Community: Legacy and Remembrance display and community BBQ on July 17. Congratulations were extended to Branch 53 on its renaming as the Major Percival Anderson Memorial Branch, and thanks were offered to everyone who organized the weekend's events and to Legions across Canada for a century of service to Veterans and their communities.
- Received concerns from residents regarding missing road signs, road and highway maintenance, and sandwich board signage. Road and highway concerns were forwarded to the appropriate provincial departments, while sandwich board concerns were shared with the appropriate local representatives for follow-up.
- Continued to follow up on an unsightly premises complaint first reported in November 2025. While cleanup has begun, the property remains non-compliant. Disappointment was expressed that the previously communicated timeline was not met and that no update had been provided. It was noted that councillors rely on accurate information to

keep residents informed, and better communication from the department would have been appreciated. It is hoped the matter can now be resolved without further delay.

- Reviewed correspondence from the Gaelic College and Property Valuation Services Corporation regarding the 2022 property assessment. It was noted that PVSC acknowledged the 2022 property classification was incorrect and advised that, had the circumstances been known at the time, the assessment would have been amended within the applicable taxation year. It was emphasized that this is not a request for a new exemption or special treatment, but rather a request to address a one-year tax charge resulting from an acknowledged classification error. It was further noted that, if Council has the legal authority under the Municipal Government Act and other applicable legislation, consideration should be given to cancelling the 2022 municipal tax account, including any associated interest and penalties, in the interest of fairness, consistency, and good governance.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the write off of the 2022 municipal tax owing for the Gaelic Collage, including any interest and penalties associated with that account, subject to confirmation that Council has the legal authority to do so under the Municipal Government Act and any other applicable legislation. In consideration of the Property Valuation Services Corporation's acknowledgment that the 2022 property classification incorrect.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve $2,500 be out of the District 4 District Budget for the Northshore & District Volunteer Fire Department.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Nicholson to approve $1,500 be out of the District 4 District Budget for the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 5

- Big wave was held last week, lots of young people in attendance from all over Canada.
- On July 1st Ross Ferry Marine Park held their Canada Day celebrations, had over 800 people in attendance.
- Noise complaint received and requested staff to take a look at the previously proposed Community Standards Bylaw again. CAO said it will be brought forward to a COW and will send out to council ahead of time.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Born to direct the CAO to present the Community Standards Bylaw for Council consideration.

Motion Carried.

- Received an email from Ross Ferry Marine Park because they did not get funding as they did not submit a final report for last years funding as required from the Municipal Grants Policy.

DISTRICT 7

- Attended the Cabot High School graduation and presented a bursary on behalf of Victoria County. Congratulations were extended to all graduates.
- Attended the official opening of the Baddeck Boardwalk. Congratulations were extended to the committees and the Village of Baddeck for creating a wonderful new community asset, and it was noted that the event was well attended.
- Recognized the 100th anniversary of the Royal Canadian Legion in Ingonish. Although unable to attend, it was noted that the celebration was a successful community event featuring music, food, and entertainment.
- Congratulations were extended to Councillor Nicholson on his prize at the annual Lions Club Tournament.
- Attended a sold-out local talent night at the Cultural Centre. The event was recognized as a great success, and anticipation was expressed for future performances.
- Attended a meeting in Baddeck with the RCMP to discuss opportunities to increase patrols and policing resources throughout Victoria County. It was noted that this will continue to be a focus moving forward.
- Received concerns regarding roadside brush cutting, which have been forwarded to Mr. MacDonald, with the NS Department of Public Works, of for follow-up.

DISTRICT 8

- Another lobster fishing season has come to a close, with the crab season now underway. It is encouraging to see local businesses and restaurants experiencing a busy summer season.
- The annual fishing derby hosted by the Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department was postponed due to poor weather. Residents were encouraged to watch for the rescheduled date.
- The Bay St. Lawrence Boat Parade will take place on August 1, featuring a full day of activities and a boat parade at dusk.
- Senior's programming continues every Tuesday at 11:30 a.m. at the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre.
- A variety of events and programming continue to be offered at the Culture Centre in Cape North.
- The 4th Annual Kevin Chiasson Duck Race will be held on August 4 at 3:00 p.m. at Cabot Landing Provincial Park, weather permitting. Residents were encouraged to purchase ducks and support the event.

- Gaelic lessons with Kaleb Deleskie continue on Mondays at 7:00 p.m. for the next five weeks.
- The Maxim and Gervais Cormier Concert will take place on July 23 at 7:30 p.m., with tickets still available.
- The film Celestial Queer: The Life, Work and Wonder of James MacSween will be shown on July 26 at 7:00 p.m., with the filmmakers in attendance.
- The Cape North Farmers' Market continues every Saturday from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., featuring a wide variety of local vendors.
- The RCMP Golf Tournament will be held on September 10, with proceeds supporting schools north of Smokey. Those interested in entering a team were encouraged to contact the Ingonish RCMP Detachment.

RECESS

Warden Organ called a 15-minute recess at 11:08am

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

a) BADDECK LIONS CLUB – COUNCILLOR NICHOLSON

Councillor Nicholson spoke on behalf of the Baddeck Lions Club as their municipal grant was not approved this year as they did not submit a final report from last years funding as required from the Municipal Grants Policy. Councillor Nicholson expressed the importance of this organization and the contributions made by them to ensure the operation of the island boat.

On Motion of Councillor Nicholson seconded by Deputy Warden MacLeod to fund the Baddeck Lions Club request of $3,500.00 out of Council Special Projects.

Motion Carried.

b) PITU'PAQ REQUEST – CAO MACEACHEN

Council discussed the appropriate funding mechanism for the Pitu'paq request, including whether it should be considered through the Municipal Grants Program given its status as a partnership with participating municipalities. Questions were raised regarding how the Municipality funds other partnership organizations and whether a community grant is the appropriate funding source. Council approved funding the $2,000 request from the Council Special Projects budget for the current year and directed the CAO explore the appropriate funding approach for future requests.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to fund the Pitu'paq request of $2,000.00 for this year out of Council Special Projects.

Motion Carried.

SUBMITTED REPORTS

a) CAO REPORT

Things of note from the report:

- The Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) program has now concluded.
- Feedback indicates the term "fire protection" is causing confusion, as it's also used specifically in the water utility context. Alternative terms, such as fire area rate or fire services rate, may have better described what this rate actually funds: fire department funding, fire services coordination, fire-related grants, hydrants, etc. However, “fire protection” is used by some other municipalities. Setting this rate is within our authority.
- The next tax sale (by tender) is September 14. 60-day letters have just gone out.
- We're working with Communications to address a rise in incorrect account numbers on tax payments, including reminding ratepayers to use the "W" prefix for water accounts. Correct account numbers remain the account owner's responsibility, and interest may apply where payments are misapplied.
- Morgan, the Solid Waste Educator, has started “Tidy Fridays” which is a great to assist in keeping our communities clean.

b) AGING AT HOME REPORT

- Report was included in the Council package for information purposes. Presenters gave more context of the report.

MOTIONS

a. SECOND READING OF MARKETING LEVY AMENDMENTS BYLAW:

On Motion of Councillor Hennick seconded by Councillor Nicholson to approve the Second Reading of the Markeing Levy Amendments Bylaw.

Motion Carried.

b. RINK DEMO TIPPING FEES

On Motion of Councillor Nicholson seconded by Councillor Born to write off the Rink Demo Tip Fees for $1,642.20.

Motion Carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

None to report.

CORRESPONDENCE

Warden Organ read a thank you card from Cheticamp Search and Rescue for receiving funding from the County.

QUESTIONS FROM GALLERY

No members of the public were present.

Councillor Nicholson received a last-minute request from the Alderwood administrator asking permission to hold a bonfire on the property to honour those living with terminal illness, all appropriate permitting has been issued.

On Motion of Councillor Nicholson seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to grant permission for the bonfire to be held at Alderwood.

Motion Carried.

NEXT MEETING

August 17, 2026, at 10:00am. (Later changed to 1pm).

ADJOURN

Warden Organ moved to adjourn at 11:54am.