A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on May 26, 2025, at 11:00am 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 #6 – Tim Donovan

District #7- Jackie Organ, Warden

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk and Executive Assistant, Recorder

Alix Redden, CFO

Natasha Kochhar, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

ABSENT

District #5- Fraser Patterson

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Council had the following additions to the Agenda:

- Table tax write-offs.
- Recommendation for a Water Rate Study.
- Recommendation to approve Water Utility Budget.
- Recommendation to approve the Capital Budget.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the Agenda for May 26, 2025, with the noted changes.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the May 5th, 2025, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Born to approve the Regular Council Minutes of May 5, 2025.

Motion Carried.

COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICIES – NATASHA KOCHHAR

Ms. Kochhar went over the submitted Communications Plan/Policy and the Social Media Policy for Council approval.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the Communications Plan and Social Media Policy.

Motion Carried.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD – YVETTE ROGERS

Ms. Rogers went over the submissions and the voting results and Council awarded Nancy Cronin as Volunteer of the Year.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

DISTRICT 1

- Thanked Denise and David MacKeigan who have been picking up litter and recyclables in District 1 for years and they donate all the proceeds of the recyclables to the Little Narrows Community Centre. A letter of recognition will be written and sent on behalf of the County.

DISTRICT 2

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor for a streetlight at 102 West Side Middle River.

Motion Carried.

- Hal Oakly, a local resident and a driver for Victoria County Transit passed away, our condolences to the family.
- Need to start to talk about green space for residents and tourists.
- Illegal dumping in the districts is getting bad again, requested there be some education/communication put out on that.

DISTRICT 3

- Great progress on the waterfront in Baddeck.
- Recognition to some residents and business for willing to take over the planting, maintaining of some of the gardens in the Village of Baddeck as the Village will not be planting any gardens or doing garbage collection on properties not owned by the Village.
- Congratulations and thank you to all the volunteers who helped at the Cabot Trail Relay and the rink was very missed this year and we need that rink and I encourage MP Battiste to recognize that the federal government is the last piece to get the rink.

DISTRICT 4

- May 24 – June 8
    - The annual District 4 Spring Clean-Up encourages residents to remove litter from roadsides, ditches, and public areas to improve community appearance and environmental health. Free gloves and bags will be available at Englishtown Post

Office, North River Hall, and The OC Emporium (Indian Brook). Volunteer hours count toward the Neighbours Helping Neighbours program via Timebank. Prizes will be awarded to participants.

- May 23, 2025
  - Attended the 15th anniversary of Alderwood Rest Home's new building, alongside Councillors Matheson-Lafort and Kerr. As members of the Board of Directors, we recognize and support the valuable contributions of Administrator Heather MacLean and her team.
- May 17, 2025
  - Participated in the Housing Matters Forum with Councillor Matheson-Lafort, organized by the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce and the Strait Richmond Housing Matters Coalition. The event provided important insights and facilitated discussions on sustainable housing and community development.
- May 9, 2025
  - Attended an informative session on hydro dam refurbishment projects, including work at the Wreck Cove site. Greg Hart, Community Liaison for Kwilmu'kw Maw-klusuaqn (KMK), detailed efforts to ensure environmental protection, conservation, and archaeological safeguarding throughout the projects.

DISTRICT 6

- Most of the restaurants are opening.
- New restaurant opened, 285 Take Out.
- Had conversations with Smokey Rec Society regarding the Daycare, work is moving forward, they are still hoping to open in August.
- Attended the Blessing of the Fleet, hope all the fishermen have a safe and prosperous season.
- Some repairs have been done on Ropers Bridge.
- Requested to invite parks Superintendent to update council on the status of the Keltic Lodge.

DISTRICT 7

- Invited to the Lion's Club dinner and had to decline as I was ill, but Citizen of Year was given to former Deputy Waden Dauphinee.
- Congratulations to the Cabot Trail Relay for a successful event.
- Contacted DNRR on a local area that has a lot of illegal dumping.
- Contacted Public Works regarding the White Point signs.
- Thank you to Anne Marie and Melbina for arranging the Gordie Budge Memorial Clean Up and to all the volunteers who participated. Also thank you to Mr. Best, a local resident who is always picking up garbage.
- Also attended the Youth Summit at Cabot High, it was very good.

DISTRICT 8

- Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre will soon be open.
- Bay Café is open.
- New culvert has been put in at the bottom of Cape North Hill
- John Cabot celebrations taking place July 6th at Cabot's Landing.
- North Highlands Community Museum will open June 3.
- Attended a Youth summit at the High School.
- Hope all the tourism operations have a busy season this year.

MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the Second Reading and adoption of the Land Use By-Law and Municipal Planning Strategy.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to sponsor the Recreation Nova Scotia Conference with a $1,000.00, Silver Sponsorship package.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Hennick to sponsor the Wagatmatcook Summer Games with a Silver Package Sponsorship for $5,001.00.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Born to accept the recommendation to allocate an additional $5,000 in professional fees to initiate a water rate study, with the process to begin this Fall.

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Born to approve the recommendation to approve Victoria County Water Utility's Operating Budget for fiscal 2025-26 with revenues of $1,272,248 and expenses of $1,267,622.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to approve the recommendation to approve Victoria County Water Utility's five-year Capital Budget for fiscal 2025-26 of $460,000.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Born to approve a water rate study for VC water utility.

Motion Carried.

CAO AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Awaiting a response from MP Battiste on our request for him to come to Council.
- Ingonish survey was extended.
- We have received funding from FCM Climate Risk Assessment division, to do a flood risk assessment plan. Work will start soon (Up to $70,000).
- Purchased the Northern Victoria Community Association.
- May 27 front counter is closed for software upgrade work. Might need a second day but unsure at this point.
- Still planning on doing tax bills in early June, will work with Communications regarding potential postal strike.
- Grant application review happening next week.
- The tower in Ingonish is being recoated next week. Community will be fed from the Park while this work is being completed.
- STGI – Sustainable Tourism Growth Initiative – Has been Launched and is administered through the Cape Breton Partnership. This program will be available to businesses and organizations in Victoria County looking to grow or improve a tourism experience and will give them access to up to $10,000 in funding. A project Brief and link for the project will be sent out when live.
- Updating the equipment Loan program details and Active games and equipment available.
- Wayfinding and Signage Survey for feedback open for another week.
- Working on Stage loaner program for Community Organizations. If any not-for-profit group requires a stage for their event this summer, contact Yvette to get check availability.
- Newsletter went out May 20th.
- Engage is ready to be launched after some final reviews.
- Invited to sponsor Rec NS Conference - different funding levels, Oct 21-24 in Sydney
- Invited to sponsor MikMaw Summer games in Wagmatcook - different funding levels.

- Deputy Warden mentioned the VCT meeting on Wednesday.

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to take $1,200.00 out of District 3 Budget for the Baddeck Public Library Society.

Motion Carried.

Warden Organ mentioned that there will be $300 being sent to the Lions Club.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Born to go into an In-Camera session to discuss a legal matter.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to come out of In-Camera and accept the recommendations made in the In-Camera Session.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Born to give permission to the Provincial Department of Public Works to erect Gaelic signs at each end of Baddeck.

Motion Carried.

NEXT MEETNG

June 16, 2025.

ADJOURN

Councillor Kerr made a motion to adjourn at 12:33pm.