A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on September 16th, 2024, at 2:00PM with Warden Morrison in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1 – Paul MacNeil

District #2 – Perla MacLeod

District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden

District #4 – Barbara Longva

District #5 – Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden

District #7 – Jackie Organ

District #8 – Norman MacDonald

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Alix Redden, CFO

Jessica Klein, Communications

Colby MacRae, Recorder

Dan Coffin, Tourism

ABSENT

All Councilors and staff in attendance.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Warden Morrison welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting is being held in Unama'ki, one of seven traditional districts of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw People.

CALL TO ORDER

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

On Motion of Councillor Longva to approve agenda as circulated, seconded by Councillor MacLeod.

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison shared his appreciation to council, staff and his constituents for the support, advice and guidance given to him throughout the years. Deputy Warden Dauphinee also offers his appreciation to his fellow Councillors as well as staff for their work alongside them.

PRESENTATION – CAPE BRETON REGIONAL LIBRARY

Representatives from the CBRL brought a presentation to council, the PowerPoint can be viewed at the following link, Click Here!

Erin and Lisa from the Ingonish Library came forward to talk about issues facing the Library, their space has been denied a renewal on their lease and have come to council to seek a solution.

The Ingonish Regional Library representatives have been surveying, collecting data and interacting with the community about the importance of the library with positive results.

Ingonish Library is interested in partnering with the Ingonish Fire Department and having a piece added onto the Fire Department expansion. This would allow for shared washrooms and meeting space between the two.

QUESTIONS

Warden Morrison asks if anybody has any questions for Erin and Lisa.

Councillor Patterson said that he is impressed by the support the library received. 55 people showed up to show their support for the library, Councillor Patterson acknowledged the importance of the library to the residents of Ingonish and is in support of assisting their relocation.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee is in support of assisting in the relocation.

Councillor MacLeod, and Councillor Organ, expressed concern over the wording of the proposed resolution.

Lisa explained that it was to ensure that a lease is signed, and they have a location by the time the municipality agrees to.

The council agrees that the Ingonish Library is a positive community social program, and Council is offering the support of the Municipality to help with the relocation.

On Motion of Councillor Organ for staff to engage with the CBRL to go forward with planning for a new library location in Ingonish, as well as work out budget details and renovation needs, etc., seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATION – GARDENER PINFOLD: ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGERS

Mr. Gregor MacAskill came to Council to discuss the RFP him and his group from Gardener Pinfold completed surrounding charging stations for electric vehicles in Victoria County. Mr. MacAskill came to council to see what is viable and makes sense for our county. The following link will direct you to view their presentation. Click Here!

Mr. MacAskill explained the influx of electric vehicles in recent years, now in Canada approximately 3.8% of all cars on the road are electric vehicles. It is estimated that figure will rise to 16% by 2030, and to 40% by 2035.

As we move towards an electric vehicle future, it's becoming more important to understand the challenges these vehicles come with, and work towards making the surrounding areas accessible to EV users.

Charging is different from fueling - charging is not a 5-minute endeavor like fueling is. Charging an EV can take up to 9 hours on a level 2 charger. Which is creating demand for more charging stations, as well as faster ones.

The RFP included eight level 2 chargers and eight level 3 chargers, for a total cost of $1,549,200. The government of Canada is funding corporations investing in EV chargers for 50% of that cost. With an estimated return on investment over 7-8 years.

QUESTIONS

Councillor Patterson asked about the difference between levels 1, 2, and 3.

Mr. MacAskill explained the levels determine the power being sent to the battery. Level one is like plugging your car into a wall outlet, level 3 would be like plugging it into 50. Essentially, the higher the level the quicker the car's battery can recharge.

Councillor Patterson saw the upcoming need of having more than one charger per station, the wait times can be quite long, and especially as more people begin using electric vehicles.

Councillor MacNeil observed that there are no charging stations at all in the Iona area, or upper central Cape Breton, he asks if there will be a station there as well.

Mr. MacAskill responded that the focus will be to first complete the Cabot Trail loop.

Councillor MacLeod asked about the winter seasons.

Mr. MacAskill answered that EV chargers should not be impacted heavily by colder seasons, but electric vehicles could see disadvantages in the winter.

Warden Morrison asked about the upgradability of the charging stations. Would upgrades include buying new infrastructure or making mechanical additions to update existing infrastructure?

Mr. MacAskill explained that the way it's being developed makes upgrading more feasible and a level 2 can be upgraded to level 3 in the future.

CAO MacEachen explains that from a tourism perspective it would be mindful to invest into EV infrastructure, for example, if people who own an electric vehicle are planning to travel this way they're going to want a map of the chargers across the county, and if people can't get that information or if we don't have the infrastructure, our visitors would likely be impacted.

CAO MacEachen reminds council of the strategic priorities they set, one being to invest in responsible infrastructure, which would be a step in that direction.

Mr. Horton wants to receive feedback and finalize reports to make a final recommendation, in hopes to come back to Council in November.

Warden Morrison called for a 10-minute recess.

APPROVAL OF AUGUST 21, 2024 MINUTES

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald to approve minutes of August 21, 2024 Council Meeting, seconded by Councillor Longva.

Motion Carried.

CAO REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

OLD BUSINESS:

- D1 - Mercer Lane is the registered name, but mail is going to an old road name, we will look into updating and making necessary changes.
- Hospital zone – there is no such thing as a hospital speed zone, so no speed reduction, but Steve is investigating putting up Hospital signage.
- Iona washroom funding - Dan is working with the group on this.
- Garbage allowance in D4 (but not just D4) - There is only one PID, and there is a max of what we can pick up based on our bylaw. They should look into purchasing Bag Tags, if there are more bags to be picked up, or subdivide land into two PIDs.
- Sewer smell - has been reported to Keith Bain, he was doing work on this matter. The smell is due to dead seaweed.
- Burning concerns/picnic parks signs - I have contacted Morley MacNeil, DNRR on these items, awaiting a reply.
- Met with NSFD to discuss "Old School property". Deciding on next steps. If the land can be subdivided, is Council OK with donating land to them? Or do we want a lease on it?

On motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee to subdivide the lot of the Old Elementary School and transfer ownership of the road frontage portion to the North Shore Fire Department, seconded by Councillor Organ.

Motion Carried.

TOURISM:

- Advisory Group meeting with Cabot Trail 100 to finalize Community Engagement project and begin with the government liaison plan.
- Arranging visits with new tourism operators and following up with their requests for information.

RECREATION:

- Organizing the Fall addition of the Victoria County Walking Series.
- Organizing a multi-week Family fun Night program to be delivered at both Cape Smokey and North Highlands elementary schools.

TRAILS:

- An RFP was closed, and bidders evaluated two weeks ago. DM Rogers has been contracted to complete work outlined in the RFP. Known as Upgrade 2 & 3 of the trail development plan. Work began this week and is scheduled to be in progress until December.

ELECTION:

- Planning for new councillor orientation well underway. Facilitated session for council and management on November 14-15. Location TBD.

WASTE MANAGEMENT:

- Received a quote from Bio-Burn to manage the brush on site in Dingwall. The expectation is that they will begin processing toward the end of October.
- Energy Efficiency Upgrade Tenders (heating and lighting) have been posted on the procurement site.
- MacLean Rd. is not in good condition; therefore, the waste collection vehicles will continue to collect material at the main road.

WATER:

- The old water tower in Dingwall has been decommissioned.
- Source water protection signs have been ordered and will be installed at all supplies in the coming weeks.

ECONOMIC DELEVEOPMENT:

- Cape Breton Partnership Website: The "Welcome to Cape Breton" website has been updated with an investor's tab highlighting key sectors for potential investors.
- Business & Breakfast: A business & breakfast focused on labour solutions for the hospitality industry will be held at the Frolic and Folk Pub in Iona on 25 September.

- Newcomer Event: A newcomer event will take place at Cape Smokey on 27 September from 11 AM to 1 PM.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee asks for an update on septic development in Ingonish.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Councillor MacNeil received an email about the Reunion of the British Home Children, on September 28 the Municipality was asked to participate in the Beacons of Light Ceremony, Councillor MacNeil asked for a lighting of the Baddeck Courthouse in support. As well as a post of support to our website.
- Getting together with Steve MacDonald for a tour of the Area roads.
- After 17 years today was also Councillor MacNeil's second to last meeting, he shared some kind words with his fellow Councillors and wishes everyone the best in their futures.

DISTRICT 2

- Councillor MacLeod visited the ReUse center and expressed how lucky we are to have the program. The building is running out of space for their items to the point where things are being stored under tarps outside.
- Councillor MacLeod requested that staff come up with a quote to evaluate the possibility of an extension.
- Asked about forming a committee for the ReUse center. To be advised by the new council.
- Councillor MacLeod is running again in next term's election.

DISTRICT 3

- Warden Morrison told everyone that this would be his final Council Meeting, after 11 years as a Councillor and 16 as Warden. After years of hard work and dedication to the County and his community we see him off into retirement.

DISTRICT 4

- Councillor Longva expressed her gratitude to her fellow councillors; this is her final meeting, and she is excited to open the next chapter with a new granddaughter coming into her life.

Make a motion to contact Steve MacDonald to request again for road repairs, there's a severe washout 138 Twining Street; 2 Manholes one by Masonic Hall, another by Greenwood Church that both need to be reseated, seconded by Councillor MacLeod.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 5

- Councillor Patterson heard rumors of School Board fees, seems some groups are paying, and some are not expected to, it seems inconsistent.
- Councillor MacLeod was in contact with Ron Muller, Principal of Baddeck Academy, who has said there was a glitch in their system.

Moved by Councillor Patterson to draft a letter of clarification to CBVRCE Susan Kelly Executive Director, inquiring about the Fee schedule. If there is one, there seems to be confusion, seconded by Councillor Longva.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 6

- Deputy Warden Dauphinee requested a letter of appreciation be sent to Ann and Keith Hussey for allotting space for the Ingonish Library to rent and use for their location. They rented it at an affordable rate to allow for ease of use and accessibility of the library services.
- Working towards granting two lots (***PID #85053874*** *and* ***#85053866****)* to Highland Manor.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee to send a letter of appreciation to Anne and Keith Hussey for allotting space for the Ingonish Library over the years, seconded by Councillor MacDonald.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee that $1000 be allocated accordingly;

$500 to Cabot High School, seconded by Councillor MacLeod;
$500 to North of Smokey Food Bank seconded by Councillor Longva;

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee that staff look into transferring PID #85053874 from the Municipality of the County of Victoria to the Highland Manor Housing Corporation, seconded by Councillor Organ.

Motion Carried.

On motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee that staff in conjunction of MLA Keith Bain's office look into what the process would be to have PID #85053866 transferred to Highland Manor Housing Corporation, seconded by Councillor MacNeil.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 7

- Councillor Organ was invited to the Highland Manor Q&A, she brought back some concerns that were brought up and will be coming to council:
  - The timeline of new build.
  - When the tender will be signed.
  - What's the municipality's plan for the old manor?
  - There will be a room in the new building for a hair salon; would that be able to be removable to allow for other uses such as a dentist office, eye exam room, hearing aid fitting area, and adult community program space.
- Spoke to Councillor MacLeod, they're looking to use the transit bus, and wonder why they can't have a driver on the weekends and if that could be accommodated.
- Councillor Organ attended the community meeting regarding the Ingonish Library, which was a great success, lots of the community came out to show their support for the Library.
- There is a no-exit sign at the end of Fairview Road in New Haven, it faces the main road and so it's confusing to tourists who see it and think to turn around, could potentially cause an accident.
- Request for signage for the community of White Point.
- A road in Ingonish is not receiving maintenance, specifically plowing or gravel, they claim it is a public road. Councillor Organ asked for clarification.
- Contacted Steve about brush cutting and a speed reduction in Ingonish.
- Requested signage for school bus-stops in White Point.

On Motion of Councillor Organ that $2000 of the district 7 budget be allocated accordingly;

$1000 Neils Harbor New Haven Fire Department and $1000 North Ingonish Fire Department, seconded by Councillor MacDonald.

On Motion of Councillor Organ that $3000 dollars of the district 7 budget be allocated accordingly;

$1000 to St. Andrews Anglican Church, $1000 to St. John's Anglican Church, $1000 to Ingonish United Church, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.

On motion of Councillor Organ that $1500 of the district 7 budget be allocated accordingly;

$500 to Cabot Education Centre, $500 Ingonish Development Society for the Hucklebuckle Festival, and $500 to St. Andrews Anglican church for children's Christmas party.,

DISTRICT 8

- Street Light repair request 1935 Bay St Lawrence Road. Contacted NS Power, but was informed the request has to come from the Municipality.
- Request to draft a reminder notice to Keith Bain for funding of North Highland Nordic ski lodge, Municipality and ACOA are on board.
- Cape North Community Centre was rented out to a now dissolved NFP, Councillor MacDonald asks about what next steps need to be taken to transfer the building for someone else to use as it is currently vacant.
- CAO MacEachen said that they should get in touch with the NFP group and see if they want to transfer the assets to another.

MOTIONS

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald, to have CAO MacEachen draft a letter to MLA Keith Bain regarding the funding aspect from the province for the groomer at North Highlands Nordic.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee to write off taxes for duplicate property, seconded by Councillor MacLeod.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Barbara Longva to approve forgiveness of Highland Manor's $45,000 Loan, seconded by Councillor Organ.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil to approve a temporary borrowing resolutions of $150,000 to bring to the Province to offset costs incurred for the construction of the new Dingwall water tower, seconded by Councillor MacDonald.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil to sponsor the Wagmatcook Pow-Wow for $5,000, seconded by Councillor MacDonald.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor MacLeod to approve first reading of the Land use By-law, and Municipal Planning Strategy, seconded by Councillor MacNeil.

Motion Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

All forwarded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fences Arbitration Committee met twice since the last council meeting, a new complaint was received regarding sheep and cattle escaping their enclosures and letters were sent to both parties so far, we heard nothing back.

We met last week the committee set up a site visit to flag areas of concern. If the landowner chooses not to comply than the Municipality has the right to contract someone to fix them for the owner, right now we are waiting to see what our next steps after the site visit.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

On Motion of Councillor Longva to go In Camera, seconded by Councillor MacDonald.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Organ to come out of In Camera, seconded by Councillor MacNeil.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil to accept the changes to the Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Planning Strategy as an amendment to the document approved for First Reading, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee.

Motion Carried.

NEXT MEETING

Next meeting scheduled October 10, 2024 @ 2pm.

ADJOURN

Warden Morrison made a motion to adjourn at 4:45pm.