A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on September 22, 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

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk and Executive Assistant, Recorder

Alix Redden, CFO

Ursula Melski, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

Morgan MacInnis, Summer Intern

ABSENT

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On Motion of Councillor Hennick seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the Agenda for September 22, 2025.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the August 12, 2025, Meeting and the August 13, 2025, Special Meeting of Council 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 August 12, 2025.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the Special Council Minutes of August 13, 2025.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

RCMP UPDATE – CORPORAL BRIAN BONNELL

Council had questions regarding schedules in certain areas, speeding, distracted driving, impaired driving, traffic control at accident scenes, staffing, break-ins, off road vehicles on public highways.

Corporal Bonnell gave a brief Hunters Mountain Update: Constant negotiations going on, possibility of seeing a larger police presence in the County. Have had little to no problems so far.

GOLF NORTH PRESENTATION – DOUG BREEN (REGIONAL VP AND AGRONOMIST) and MATTHEW MACKENZIE (GENERAL MANAGER)

Mr. Breen gave a presentation and highlights included:

- The Resort has not been profitable for some time and many buildings have suffered deferred maintenance.
- Both GolfNorth and Parks Canada recognize the historical significance, but are bound by economic responsibility.

- Operating within a National Park, lease limits investment.
- State of the golf course is very good, state of the renovated buildings are marketable with the potential of profitability and the state of the Lodge and Cottages are unmarketable and closed.
- $35-45 million to repair the main Lodge.
- There is a reasonable economic plan for the renovation/replacement of the cottages, but no economic plan which justifies renovating the main Lodge—except for reasons of nostalgia.
- There are serious social implications to the destruction of the Lodge building (less so the Cottages).
- Therefore, if we want to keep the Lodge—we must find external funds to make it work.
- GolfNorth proposes that the boundary of the leased land from parks be redrawn to exclude the Lodge building.
- Parks Canada would have 100% control over the historic building(s) without the encumbrance of the lease.
- GolfNorth would be willing to act as a partner in operating a renovated Lodge under a separate agreement, or Parks Canada could operate it themselves.
- In order to make this revitalization of the Keltic Lodge a reality, we trust that Parks Canada participate in the development of a path forward, and to assist GolfNorth in shepherding the plan to its conclusion.
- Request that Victoria County endorse this plan.

GolfNorth would like Council to advocate that this is a good idea, that Parks takes over the Lodge and make it an historical site.

VILLAGE OF BADDECK RESOLUTION REQUEST – ROMAN BRAUN

No financial request, the Village of Baddeck needs the Municipality to approve the following Resolution in order to apply for funding and important to note that the County is just supporting the Village application in principle.

WHEREAS *the Village of Baddeck is applying for a* ***Grant*** *under the* ***Growth-and-Renewal-Infrastructure-Development-Program (GRID)*** *to fund essential upgrades to the village's water and wastewater utility infrastructure;*

AND WHEREAS *these upgrades are necessary to maintain and improve service delivery to the community;*

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED *that the Council of the Municipality of the County of Victoria fully supports the application for the GRID Grant for the upgrades to the water and wastewater utility, and authorizes the submission of the application to the appropriate granting authorities.*

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the Village of Baddeck Resolution to apply for the Grant under the Growth-and-Renewal-Infrastructure-Development-Program (GRID)

Motion Carried.

Councillor Hennick was against.

COUNCIL DISCUSSIONS

- FCM ADVOCACY DAYS

Council Patterson provided information on FCM Advocacy Days and requested approval for travel to Ottawa to participate.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve Councillor Patterson's travel to Ottawa from October 28-30, 2025, for FCM Advocacy Days.

Motion Carried.

- MI'KMAQ HISTORY MONTH BLANKET EXERCISE

Council discussed this exercise and decided to attend the exercise offered through Raising the Villages.

- NSHA QUARTERLY EMERGENCY CARE UPDATES

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Kerr to request that a letter be send to Brett MacDougall, VP of Operations for the Eastern Zone for NSHA requesting that he reinstate their quarterly emergency care updates to Council as passed by Resolution on January 27, 2025.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

DISTRICT 1

Barra Strait Mi'kmaq Friendship Festival: On August 30th, I had the honour of attending the Barra Strait Mi'kmaq Friendship Festival on behalf of Victoria County Council. Hosted by the Grand Narrows Waterfront Development Society, the event brought together Mi'kmaq and non-Indigenous communities in a meaningful celebration of culture, connection, and shared values.

- This festival continues to serve as a powerful example of community-building and reconciliation in action, with music, stories, food, and tradition creating space for learning and friendship. A heartfelt thank you goes out to the organizers, volunteers, and especially the Elders and knowledge keepers whose guidance helps shape a stronger, more inclusive Unama'ki.
- Representing the LNCDA, I attended the Victoria County Community Health Board Wellness Fund celebration and cheque presentation on September 9th at the BOLD Centre in Baddeck. The LNCDA was honoured to receive funding that will enable the nonprofit to offer free Yoga and Wellness sessions to all community members. This support helps eliminate financial and accessibility barriers, encouraging greater participation and engagement throughout the community.
- Upcoming events:

a. Highland Village would like everyone to know that they are still open 7 days a week up until October 18th.

b. Wagmatcook First Nation is inviting the public to come together in celebration of culture, tradition, and community at their annual Powwow, happening October 18th and 19th. The full schedule will be released soon, so be sure to keep an eye on their Facebook page for updates. I'll also be sharing event details on my own pages as they become available.

- District concerns:

a. I would like to offer a small gesture of support to the LNCDA from my district budget to help fund a community family Halloween party. However, I recognize that there is a conflict of interest, as I am a third-generation board member of the association. While I fully acknowledge this conflict, I also believe it would be unfair for the LNCDA to lose municipal support—support it has consistently received in the past—simply because I now serve as the councillor for the district. I am committed to transparency and accountability in this matter and hope that this openness allows the LNCDA to continue receiving the support it deserves. I will follow the guidance and direction of council to ensure that any decisions are made in accordance with proper governance and ethical standards.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Donovan to take $200 from District 1 Budget in support of the Little Narrows Community Development Association.

Motion Carried.

b. I'd like to bring forward an ongoing concern in my district regarding excessive speeding, particularly in residential areas where walking, jogging and cycling is common. This is a recurring issue raised by constituents, and I believe it's a challenge not just in my district, but across the county.

While the RCMP continue to do their part through enforcement and presence, it's important to remember that the responsibility ultimately lies with individual drivers. Safe driving is a shared duty, and community awareness plays a key role in addressing this issue.

To support ongoing efforts, here are some reminders and important statistics related to speeding in Nova Scotia:

Speeding Awareness – Key Facts for Nova Scotia

1. Speed is a leading factor in fatal crashes.

• In Nova Scotia, approximately 1 in 3 fatal collisions involve speeding or aggressive driving. (Source: Nova Scotia Department of Public Works)

2. Most speeding-related crashes happen on rural roads.

• A large percentage of speed-related collisions in Nova Scotia occur outside urban areas, where drivers often underestimate risks due to lighter traffic.

3. Stopping distances increase significantly with speed.

• At 80 km/h, it takes over 60 metres to come to a complete stop—far more than the length of a basketball court.

4. Pedestrian survival drops sharply with speed.

• A pedestrian hit at 30 km/h has about a 90% chance of survival. At 50 km/h, that chance drops to less than 50%.

5. Community complaints help enforcement.

• The RCMP and local law enforcement prioritize areas where concerns are reported. Residents are encouraged to report frequent problem areas.

How We Can Help:

• Encourage community awareness campaigns or signage in high-complaint areas.

• Promote driver responsibility through newsletters or social media.

• Support collaboration with RCMP to identify hotspots.

• Explore traffic calming measures where feasible (e.g. speed bumps, radar feedback signs).

I'd welcome any support from council or staff to explore local actions we can take to address this issue—both in my district and county-wide. Together, we can help make our roads safer for everyone.

DISTRICT 2

- An application has been submitted through ATVANS (ATV Association of Nova Scotia) by the Central Cape Breton ATV Club for the creation of a road trail connecting the parking lot at the transfer station to the Highlands trails.
- Congratulations to the Middle River Volunteer Fire Department on their 50th anniversary! It was a pleasure and an honor to be there. I would like to present them with a certificate for their milestone achievement. Thank you to MLA, Timmons, and EMO representative, Lyle Donovan, for attending, and to Middle River Hall for the excellent dinner.
- The Senior Care Grant is open from September to March 2026, and the HARP Grant will open in October 2025.
- Now that summer is over and school has started, I will be available for "Meet the Councillor Day" starting Thursday, October 2nd, and on November 6th from 12PM to 1 PM at the Municipal Building. I invite everyone to come see me, have a chat, or just say hello.
- All my public works concerns are being addressed to Mr. MacDonald.
- Receiving calls about tourist buses on the main street, requested Tourism staff reach out regarding these issues.

Councillor MacLeod requested that Councillor Patterson advocate for changing the distracted driving legislation within his role with the FCM.

DISTRICT 3

- Tourism traffic is still heavy.
- Work is progressing on the Boardwalk.
- Successful Terry Fox Run, thanks to the Lions Club and volunteers and participants.
- There was an intensive wildfire training for fire departments held in Sydney and there were 8 local participants.
- Baddeck Lions Club will be holding a seniors appreciation dinner on October 8th at the Masonic Hall in Baddeck, free of charge to seniors.
- There was an event held for my wife, and I would like to thank the community for their support.

DISTRICT 4

- I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the 45th Annual Terry Fox Run, which I had the honour of participating in on September 14th in Baddeck. Terry Fox's Marathon of Hope began in 1980 and sparked a nationwide movement dedicated to cancer research. Over the past 45 years, the Terry Fox Foundation has raised more than $850 million to support this vital cause, a powerful testament to his vision and determination. This year's milestone event continues to inspire Canadians from coast to coast. I want to extend my thanks to all those in our community who participated, donated, or volunteered in support of this important cause. I would also like to recognize the

Baddeck Lions Club, who hosted this year's run. Their ongoing volunteer work has been a personal inspiration to me, and their efforts have positively impacted many communities across multiple districts. I would be remiss not to mention Donnie Green, who served as the lead organizer of the event. His dedication and leadership were key to the success of this year's run and to upholding the values Terry Fox stood for. In recognition of their contributions, I would like to put forward the following motion:

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Deputy Warden MacLeod to write a letter of appreciation to the Baddeck Lions Club and Donnie Green, recognizing their efforts in organizing and hosting the 45th Annual Terry Fox Run, and thanking them for their continued dedication to volunteer service and community impact across the region.

Motion Carried.

- I have been in contact with Lyle Donovan -EMO and Drew Davidson NSVFD to organize a meeting focused on the recent adjustments to firefighter training following the closure of the Nova Scotia Firefighters School. The purpose of this meeting is to understand any potential challenges these changes may pose to emergency response capabilities in District 4.
- My goal is to learn more about these changes and to advocate on behalf of District 4 if any gaps or needs are identified in firefighter training or emergency response.
- Efforts are underway with correspondence with Steve MacDonald to address road conditions in Englishtown and the Murray Road in North River. Some work had been complete this past week, and I want to thank Public Works for their quick response. We are working together to address concerns raised by area residents to ensure this work meets community needs and enhances safety and accessibility.
- I want to share some information on a future event, the Dave AuCoin Memorial Hockey Tournament. This Hockey Tournament will take place on December 27-29, 2025, at the Membertou Sport and Wellness Centre and will support the Victoria Highland Civic Centre Redevelopment. More information can be found on their Facebook page.

DISTRICT 5

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Kerr to approve a road name change for an unnamed private lane to Crystal Lane in Big Bras d'Or pending more information from EDPC.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 6

- The daycare centre in Ingonish is nearing completion.
- A local group are looking for both volunteers and material to create a playground area at the daycare.
- Huckle Buckle Festival preparations are under way.

- Surf and Turf Adventures were able to pivot their operations when the woods ban was on, and they also did a free day that provided free access to their equipment to the local community.
- Signage and wayfinding are still an issue in Ingonish, Beach Crossing Road in particular.
- The sign for Lakeview Drive is not visible enough and this is a safety issue. CAO will ask Nova Scotia Public Works getting the sign moved.
- There was a request from the Ingonish Beach Volunteer Fire Department for the County to purchase an off-road emergency vehicle, and the fire department will be in charge of installing the patient carriage unit on the back of the vehicle. Total for the entire unit is about $73,000.00 and they are asking the County for $49,065.20 +tax. CAO MacEachen said there is some funding in the Fire Department reserves that could be used for this purchase.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Born to approve $55,934.33 in funding for the Ingonish Beach Volunteer Fire Department to purchase an off-road emergency vehicle with a patient carriage. All fire departments and emergency responders will share this equipment.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Born suggested that in the future that Parks Canada and possibly Cape Smokey go into a cost sharing agreement at some point and investigate some of the communication gaps with Parks Canada.

Deputy Warden MacLeod asked about the number of quotes and confirmed the total cost.

Councillor Kerr requested confirmation that this vehicle could be used County wide in the event of an emergency and Councillor Donovan believes that is the case.

DISTRICT 7

- Attended several municipal functions.
- Speeding is an issue in District 7.
- ACW had their tea event, was a great time.
- The Half and Half Fundraiser held for the Neils Harbour/New Haven Lighthouse is still going on so please support if you can.
- Please remember the Provincial fire ban is still in effect.

DISTRICT 8

- The state of Iron Bridge is bad, and in need of repair. There are plans to redeck the whole bridge this Fall.
- Several complaints have been received regarding speeding near North Highlands Elementary School. Speeding signs should be installed, and trees and brush need

trimming for visibility. I will have a supervisor inspect the school zone signage and brush. Although radar display signs aren't typically used in these cases, I'll confirm with our traffic authority. Police have been contacted.

- There are also speeding concerns near the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre. I'll have a supervisor review signage in the area. While "Children at Play" signs are no longer used, Playground Ahead signs can be considered if the Community Centre has a playground. Police have also been contacted.
- After a busy summer things are starting to slow down and as the students are back in school, please remember to slow down in our school zones.
- Everyone is waiting for the leaves to change and bring on the Celtic Colors Festival.

MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Born to approve the Audit Committee Policy

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to accept the recommendations made at a previous In-Camera meeting on September 8, 2025, to discuss a legal matter.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the First Reading of the Mobile Food Vending Bylaw.

Motion Carried.

CAO AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Solid Waste Municipal Collection project has kicked off. Expected to have an implementation plan by end of October. We should look at the structure of how we are going to run this. We want to mitigate our risks.
- We have reached out to Jaime Battiste's team for a meeting for Council, it is with their scheduler.
- Alix just attended an International Property Tax conference in Halifax. Attendees from all over the world – Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Hong Kong, UK, etc. Very interesting to hear about other countries and other provinces in Canada do in terms of property taxation and assessment. Great knowledge building opportunity and a few takeaway times that will be explored in the near future.

- August tender tax sale – 3 properties were remaining, two of three sold.
- Northern Victoria Community Centre property that we purchased at tax sale was redeemed
- Next tax sale is in November, and it is a public auction – started with 25 properties but down to 9.
- September has numerous deadlines with the province related to funding and reporting. We've submitted a several already and are working on the statements/reports due September 30.
- Manager of Solid Waste Collection position is posted and is open until filled
- Wastewater Operator position will be posted very soon.
- Morgan MacInnis our administrative summer intern has been hired on a one-year term as our Solid Waste Educator
- AMANS conference is next week – multiple staff are attending to show their support for it being in the CB region.
- An Ingonish Wastewater Treatment System project update for September was posted to Engage, our website and Facebook.
- The municipal calendar on the county website was updated making it easier to navigate and more accessible. A Harassment Free Workplace statement was also added.
- EPR is coming December 1st. Have yet to sign contracts due to concerns with contract language. Very few municipalities have signed yet because most have the same concerns.
- SW Educator has been hired and is working on a survey to get a better understanding of public perceptions toward recycling, how to best do messaging, etc. plan to no longer allow public access to the tipping floor.
- The province has requested that we move our waterlines that are suspended from three bridges within the Municipality. Our lines are preventing them the ability to install a portion of guardrail. In the interim, they will use jersey barriers but, we are going to have to move the lines at our cost. Locations: Dingwall (2), Little Narrows (1)
- Signage and Wayfinding strategy project. included community and stakeholder feedback recap as well as common themes and issues. next phase of finalizing recommendations and next steps of the strategy.
- STGI – Sustainable Tourism Growth Initiative – Responses to the 1st round of applications are ready to be sent out this week. There were 4 successful applicants and the Cape Breton Partnership will administer the funding process.
- Cabot Trail 100 planning is focused on preparing for some upcoming community engagement processes. Check out CabotTrail100.com to see the engagement process.
- Draft process for Washroom supply costs support program for businesses and organizations providing public washrooms.
- Organizing fall Community programs within the schools
- Creation and planning for next round of Multi-Activity programs
- Collaborating with O2 program in hopes to coordinate some administrative support and volunteer placement opportunities / project opportunities with local nonprofits
- J Class Roads - Anyone interested in funding 50% on roads in their district?

- GRID (Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development) applications - WWTP and in Ingonish Beach - we need a motion to apply.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to apply for the GRID (Growth and Renewal for Infrastructure Development) funding.

Motion Carried.

- Staff have been doing some " what if" scenarios, proactively looking at EMO situations, to plan out our response.
- We are working on a baseline "Technology policy" to be implemented here in the County. Council can add tighter controls, but we cannot take away.

Deputy Warden MacLeod wanted to confirm that we can do both a resolution for the Village of Baddeck request and also still apply for the same GRID funding as a municipality and CAO MacEachen confirmed that we can.

Deputy Warden MacLeod thanked the Victoria County Transit Board for the support in purchasing a hybrid vehicle that will be down North.

CORRESPONDENCE

Warden Organ asked Ms. MacLeod to leave Council Chambers for Council to have a discussion on this.

Warden Organ received a letter from the Village Chair, Jennifer MacDonald regarding a staff member, Steff MacLeod's, attendance at Village meetings and requested to know a number of things, such as, if Ms. MacLeod's attendance was directed by CAO, Council, if she was getting compensated, etc.

Council were surprised a member of the public was seen as being unwelcomed at a public meeting, further Council suggested that because the Village is within the County, it would be beneficial to have a County representative to attend their Commission meetings to observe and that representative will be compensated.

On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to go into an In Camera to discuss a legal and real estate issue.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to come out of the In Camera.

Motion Carried.

CAO MacEachen had to leave before the meeting ended.

On Motion of Councillor Kerr seconded by Councillor Donovan to accept the recommendations made in the In Camera meeting.

Motion Carried.

QUESTIONS FROM GALLERY

None.

NEXT MEETNG

October 20, 2025, at 10:00am.

ADJOURN

Councillor Organ made a motion to adjourn at 2:15pm.