

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
February 12, 2002

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, February 12, 2002, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Present were:

District #1 – Dan E. MacNeil
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Deputy Warden (Late Arrival)
District #4 – John G. MacInnes
District #5 – Gerald Sampson, Warden
District #6 – Lawrence Barron
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Brian Trask, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #2 – Shane Toms (Another Commitment)
District #7 – Wayne Budge (Death in the Family)

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Sampson called the meeting to order.

MARK EYKING, MP – SYDNEY-VICTORIA

Courtesy of Council was extended to Mark Eyking, MP, Sydney-Victoria and Robert Hillman.

Warden Sampson welcomed the gentlemen and extended his appreciation to Mr. Eyking on taking the initiative and requesting a meeting with Council. He indicated that MLA, Kennie MacAskill, was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a commitment in Halifax.

Mr. Eyking indicated his pleasure on coming to Victoria County Municipal Council. He, and fellow MP, Roger Cuzner, did a similar visit to CBRM. He advised that he was in attendance to talk about what the federal government has to offer and to notify Council as to what is happening in government.

Mr. Eyking has been a Member of Parliament for over one year now and indicated that the past year has been both exciting and challenging. He serves on three committees – Immigration, Foreign Affairs/Trade, and Agriculture.

He indicated that he has had the opportunity to travel all over the riding during the past year. Also, he hosted the Rural Caucus last summer when MP's from rural constituencies met to discuss rural issues. This event was well attended and received.

Mr. Eyking indicated that there are a number of challenges in this riding. The thing he finds most difficult is when two groups of citizens disagree on issues, i.e. the St. Ann's Bay Mussel Farm, offshore oil/gas.

Mr. Eyking presented Council with a listing of Victoria County approved projects through ACOA from April 1, 1999, to January 31, 2002. He also presented each Council member with a Pocket Directory of Rural Programs and Services.

The Atlantic Caucus has for some time been pushing for more funds for small craft harbours and Mr. Eyking indicated that an additional \$20,000,000.00 was put in this budget category in the last budget.

Mr. Eyking also presented information on the following government programs:

- Strategic Investment Funds
- Green Municipal Investment Fund
- Green Municipal Enabling Fund

Councillor Barron explained the preliminary plans for a water system for Ingonish Beach and explained the shortage in infrastructure funding, which will prevent this project from proceeding. He requested Mr. Eyking talk to some people in power on the County's behalf and explain the situation to see if further infrastructure funding can be received.

Mr. Barron also questioned whether the additional funding in the budget for small craft harbours could be accessed for the breakwater in Ingonish.

Deputy Warden Morrison brought up the issue of the Baddeck Water Infrastructure application as well. The 1/3 local share will be paid for by the Village, however; the 2/3 federal/provincial share is not there and he questioned if Mr. Eyking could work on obtaining additional infrastructure funding for Victoria County.

Mr. Eyking advised that the topic of additional infrastructure funding for rural areas will be discussed at the next rural caucus meeting.

The rumored relocation of an EI Center to Cape Breton was discussed and Council indicated that they would like to see Victoria County considered as a location for the Center.

Mr. Eyking advised of discussions concerning the location of further call centers in Cape Breton and the possibility of one locating in the Baddeck area.

Councillor MacNeil also discussed water systems for his area and discussions he had previously with Wendell MacGillvary, ECBC.

Mr. Eyking was requested to provide the County with any information pertaining to rural areas and programs so that Council will be aware of what is available. He indicated he would mail out such information to Council as it becomes available.

Mr. Eyking indicated with the money in the budget for small craft harbours, he would encourage port authorities to look at ways to improve their harbours and access these funds.

The offshore oil/gas issue was discussed and Mr. Eyking was requested for his opinion on same. He indicated that he was aware of the two opposing sides to this issue, but felt that provided there was a proper monitoring program put in place, both the fishing and oil/gas industry could be viable. He indicated that he did not feel it was fair for one industry to hold another ransom.

Discussion took place on ECBC and Rick Beaton, Vice-President. Council members expressed their displeasure with Mr. Beaton. Mr. Eyking felt it would be best if Council outlined their concerns regarding ECBC in a letter to the Board of Directors and requested both he and Roger Cuzner be provided with a copy of this letter.

Mr. Eyking advised that effective Monday, February 18, 2002, he will have a new Executive Assistant in his Constituency Office. John Coady, former Mayor of the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, will be assuming this position, and brings a wealth of knowledge to the position.

Ross MacDonald, Director of Development, brought up the matter of the Baddeck International New Media Festival.

At this point Mr. Eyking had to leave to attend to another commitment. He was extended a vote of thanks for his attendance and indicated he would like to see such a meeting on an annual basis.

RECESS

Warden Sampson advised that Council would recess for 5 minutes.

EXCUSED

Councillor MacInnes was excused at this time.

ROSS MACDONALD

Ross MacDonald, Director of Development, presented Council with information concerning presentations scheduled by Mike Queripel, Program Officer, on the Community Economic Development Investment Funds. Mr. Queripel will be making a presentation to the Community Economic Development Committee on February 18, 2002, and will have further presentations at the Bell Museum on February 18, 2002, at 1:30 p.m. and the Keltic Lodge, Ingonish, on February 19, 2002, at 10:00 a.m.

VIDEO PRESENTATION – NOVA SCOTIA HIGHWAY WORKERS UNION

Council then viewed a video forwarded by the Nova Scotia Highway Workers Union Local 1867.

Discussion took place on the video and the Union is to be notified of Council's viewing of same.

Brian Trask advised that a reply was received from the Department of Transportation and Public Works to Council's request concerning a policy for snow removal for the areas put under private contract.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Barron, that a letter be forwarded to Charlie MacDonald, Department of Transportation and Public Works, questioning on what cost savings has been realized since certain roads were put under private contract. Motion carried.

BROADBAND PRESENTATION

Tom Wilson requested that a notice of motion be made that the Cape Breton Broadband project (High speed internet to communities on Cape Breton Island) be placed on the agenda for the February 18, 2002, Council meeting.

It was felt this presentation should be referred to the March meeting of the CED Committee.

NORTH VICTORIA BRANCH – REGIONAL LIBRARY

A request was received from the North Victoria Branch of the Regional Library for the County to purchase a video cabinet for the library. Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Deputy Warden Morrison, that this request be denied. Motion carried.

INGONISH BEACH WATER UPDATE

Brian Trask presented an update on the Ingonish Beach Water. A meeting was held on February 4, 2002, with members of the Water Committee; Bruce Langille, Risk Manager, DOT&PW; Tim Reynolds, Cape Breton Highlands National Park; and Ian Greene, Manager of the Keltic Lodge. This meeting was to discuss possible funding for this project.

Mr. Trask indicated that Mr. Langille from the Department of Transportation & Public Works indicated that there would be funding available, as they are presently dealing with a number of salt contaminated wells in this area.

The Cape Breton Highlands National Park presently provides water to 22 residences, plus the Keltic. Mr. Reynolds could not advise on funding at this time. Ian Greene, Keltic Lodge, indicated that the Keltic has just been put under a new management contract. Funding will be requested from the Keltic.

URB – NSPI RATE INCREASES

A letter was received from the Utility and Review Board acknowledging receipt of Council's letter opposing any increase in NSPI rates until an adequate distribution system is in place in Victoria County.

BADDECK VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

Brian Trask updated Council on the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department's plans for purchasing and equipping a new fire truck. The Municipality allowed the fire department to purchase the truck through the municipality to allow them to receive the 57.14% HST Rebate. The Department has also requested that the Municipality guarantee a \$221,000 loan over a 10-year period.

It was felt that this request should be referred to the Chief Fire Officers Organization for clarification and when a reply is received from this organization, then Council will deal with this matter.

PROVINCIAL ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES

A memorandum was received from the Provincial Electoral Boundaries Commission acknowledging receipt of Council's letter opposing any changes to the provincial electoral district of Victoria. An information package was also included. Council are to review the information contained in the package and this topic will be placed on the agenda of the next Council meeting for further discussion and action.

EQUALIZATION

Brian Trask advised that he and Warden Sampson will be attending a meeting on equalization in Halifax on Friday, February 15, 2002.

ALDERWOOD REST HOME

A letter forwarded by the Administrator of Alderwood Rest Home to the Department of Health concerning their operational shortfall was discussed. This shortfall is a result of the empty bed days realized since the initiation of the Single Entry Access, due to the length of time it takes to process a client's financial information.

The problem with the empty bed days is the reason the Municipality recently guaranteed a loan for Alderwood.

TOBACCO REDUCTION STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

Warden Sampson reported on the Tobacco Reduction Stakeholders meeting he recently attended at the North Star Inn, North Sydney.

CAPE BRETON CATALOG

Brian Trask distributed for viewing a copy of the Victoria County advertisement recently included in the Cape Breton Catalog. Ross MacDonald, developed this advertisement in conjunction with Ronald Caplan, Cape Breton Magazine, and it is an excellent quality advertisement.

IN CAMERA

The In Camera meeting which was to be held at this meeting will be deferred until the Monday, February 18, 2002, meeting.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Barron, the meeting adjourned.

