

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
February 16, 2004

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, February 16, 2004, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Wayne Budge in the Chair.

Present were:

District #2 – Shane Toms
District #3 – Bruce Morrison (Late Arrival)
District #4 – John Graham MacInnes, Deputy Warden
District #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Lawrence Barron
District #7 – Wayne Budge, Warden
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #1 – Dan E. MacNeil (Recuperating from surgery)

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Budge called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA/TIME TO ADJOURN

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Barron, that the agenda be approved as presented and the time to adjourn be set at 7:10 p.m. Motion carried.

MINUTES

The minutes of the January 5, 2004, and January 20, 2004, Council meetings were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the Victoria County Council meeting minutes of the January 5 and January 20, 2004, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

CAPE BRETON REGION 1 SOLID WASTE EDUCATION REPORT

Courtesy of Council was extended to Michelle Campbell, Region 1 Solid Waste Educator, who presented Council with a report on waste reduction.

Ms. Campbell indicated that residential visits have recently been conducted throughout Victoria County. Garbage bags were visually inspected and if recyclables were found inside, then solid waste educators did home education visits. For the most part, the home visits were well received, with the exception of a few.

Ms. Campbell explained the procedures followed in the remaining municipalities within the Region 1 Solid Waste area with regarding to waste reduction. She presented Council members with a kit containing recyclable materials and a newsletter explaining what should be included in blue bags, composters and your regular green bag.

An Awards Banquet will be held at the Wagmatcook Heritage and Cultural Centre on Thursday, February 19, 2004, and anyone interested in attending is welcome. Invitations were previously forwarded to members of the Solid Waste Committee.

After further discussion, Ms. Campbell was extended a vote of thanks and left at this time.

CAPE BRETON GOVERNANCE STUDY

Courtesy of Council was extended to a delegation from the Cape Breton Regional Municipality, including:

Jerry Ryan, Chief Administrative Officer
Bernie White, Clerk
Doug Foster, Director of Planning
John Whalley, Economic Development Manager
John Morgan, Mayor
Jim MacLeod, Deputy Mayor

Jerry Ryan presented background information as to the circumstances that led to this study be conducted. He thanked Council for the opportunity to make this presentation. He then turned the floor over to John Whalley, Economic Development Manager.

Mr. Whalley then presented a power point presentation on "Governance and Economic Development in Cape Breton" (copy attached).

Upon conclusion of Mr. Whalley's presentation, Mayor John Morgan thanked Council for their attention and offered to answer any questions.

Discussion took place on fair principles and the need to ensure that all citizens are treated equally with comparable service levels. It was felt that if the Cape Breton Regional Municipality is suffering economically, then the surrounding municipalities also suffer. Two main industries have been lost in this area and that has had a profound affect on the economy.

The lack of provincial government presence in Cape Breton was discussed. Cape Breton accounts for 16% of the population of Nova Scotia and we have 10% of provincial services located on the island.

It was indicated that a legal opinion would be delivered to the Cape Breton Regional Municipality Council tomorrow as to whether there is a case to proceed with legal action against the Government of Nova Scotia with regard to Section 36 of the Constitution. Mayor Morgan indicated that he felt it should be subject to litigation, however, that decision is left in the hands of constitutional experts to deliver their decision tomorrow.

Discussion took place on the information received from John Heseltine, Terrain Group Inc., on the population projections for the Cape Breton Municipal Units up to the year 2021. This information indicates that the population of Cape Breton is steadily declining. (copy attached)

Deputy Warden MacInnes indicated that he was in attendance for the release of the Governance Study and he felt that CBRM received bad publicity unjustly at the time. Mayor Morgan indicated that it is hoped that working groups with all three levels of government can be established to collectively acknowledge the problems and develop positive strategies to move forward. These strategies should bring the entire island together and he asked Council to work towards this end.

After further discussion, Warden Budge announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes and invited the representatives from the CBRM to join them for coffee and further discussion.

RECONVENE

Council then reconvened.

ELECTRONIC VOTING

Sandy Hudson presented Council with information regarding electronic voting by Internet and telephone. (copy attached)

Mr. Hudson indicated that he met with a representative from CanVote, a private company who has the technology for conducting elections. He indicated that in 2003 the Ontario Municipal Election used this technology and it was very successful. He explained that the voting is done over a 6-day period by telephone or Internet. After the 6-day voting period the computer calculates the results. This technology addresses the accessibility issue and in the Ontario election showed an increased rate of return, voter participation, accuracy and provided prompt results.

Mr. Hudson indicated that he presented this item for information only.

RETURNING OFFICER

A Returning Officer will be required for the October, 2004, Municipal and School Board elections.

It was moved by Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the Municipality advertise for the position of Returning Officer, requesting interested parties to submit remuneration expected for the position. Motion carried.

The appointment of the Returning Officer will be an agenda item on the March 15, 2004, Council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS/NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Draft Budget – 2004/2005

Mr. Hudson presented Council members with a draft budget for 2004/2005 for their review. The budget shows a decrease in tax rates from \$1.25 to \$1.22 residential and \$2.12 to \$2.10 commercial. With the increase in assessment, these proposed rates will still see an approximate \$200,000 increase in revenue.

Mr. Hudson requested Council members to review this document and it will be brought to the March 15, 2004, Council Session for further discussion.

Little Narrows Water

Sandy Hudson advised that he and Councillor MacNeil, met with representatives from the Little Narrows Gypsum Company, with regard to the extension of the Little Narrows water line to service the Gypsum Company. At present the system is using

about 18,000 litres of water per day and the Gypsum Company would require an additional 30,000 litres per day. The extension to service the Gypsum Company would cost approximately \$400,000.00.

The additional income realized from the Little Narrows Gypsum Company would be \$20,000.00. They have plans for expansion that they hope to have completed by November, 2004, and request that the water extension be completed by that time.

Mr. Hudson suggested that application be made under the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program to carry out this extension. He indicated that the extension of the Little Narrows Water System be carried out in three phases:

Phase 1 – To the Little Narrows Gypsum Company

Phase 2 – To Ottawa Brook and Orangedale

Phase 3 – To Hazeldale

The Little Narrows System has an adequate supply to service these areas.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that the Municipality proceed with the extension of the Little Narrows Water System to service the Little Narrows Gypsum Company. Motion carried.

Ingonish Water

Mr. Hudson provided an update on the proposed Ingonish Water System. As of last Friday, Harvey Surveys were to have completed the required survey work.

Mr. Hudson has met with representatives from the Department of Transportation and Public Works and they are proposing financial input of \$400,000 towards the project. Negotiations are still ongoing with Parks Canada, but it anticipated that at least \$200,000 will be received from this source. The project is a \$2.4 million dollar project, which leave about \$1 million to be funded. It is anticipated that the system itself will carry about \$600,000 of this debt.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that prior to the end of February, design-engineering firms be invited to submit proposals for the Ingonish Water System, with a view to calling tenders for the system by the latter part of May, 2004. Motion carried.

GST

The Prime Minister has stated that the GST will be returned to municipalities and for Victoria County this should realize at least \$200,000.00. Mr. Hudson indicated that he would like to see this money used for funding infrastructure projects.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Toms, that any GST refund money received be placed in an Infrastructure Fund Account and this money be used for the sole purpose of funding infrastructure projects. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Request from the Smokey Recreation Society for \$10,000 for upgrading their outdoor rink facility.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that this request be forwarded to the Recreation Budget. Motion carried.

2. Request from the Hepatitis Awareness Society requesting that May, 2004, be proclaimed "Hepatitis C Awareness Month" in Victoria County.

Warden Budge will sign this proclamation on behalf of the Municipality.

3. A request was received from the Victoria Highland Civic Centre for funding in the amount of \$10,000.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Toms, that the request from the Victoria Highland Civic Centre be referred to budget for consideration. Motion carried.

Jim Morrow advised Council that on speaking with representatives from Celtic Colours, he was advised that they are very concerned with the state of the Victoria Highland Civic Centre and may possibly not utilize this facility again for the World's Largest Square Dance unless the facility is upgraded.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #3

Councillor Morrison presented a copy of the street description for Hilltop Crescent, Baddeck. This street was brought up to highway standard in 1989 and as 15 years has expired is now eligible for paving.

Councillor Morrison requested that the request to pave Hilltop Crescent be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Public Works for inclusion in their list of paving projects for this year's budget.

Councillor Morrison indicated that Alderwood Rest Home has been named as one of three Homes for Special Care in the Province that should be replaced with a new facility. He requested that Council pass a motion of confidence to allow the Honourable Angus MacIsaac, Minister of Health, to be approached for possible funding for replacement of this Home.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that Council endorse the request to investigate funding for the replacement of Alderwood Rest Home. Motion carried.

Sandy Hudson advised that he attended a meeting in Halifax recently regarding changes to the financial reporting of municipalities and he indicated that the long term debts of Alderwood and Highland Manor are now to be included in the annual financial statements of the municipality.

District #5

Councillor Patterson indicated that his streetlight requests submitted to NSPI were dealt with promptly and the lights have been installed.

Councillor Patterson indicated that he received a complaint with regard to a dog issue and he was advised that this matter should be forwarded on the Hansel McEvoy, Dog Controller, for his attention.

District #8

Councillor MacLellan indicated that the North Victoria Community Centre concerning has not received their \$5,000 annual grant from the Municipality for the current year.

Sandy Hudson will check on this matter.

District #4

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the Department of Transportation be requested to undertake bush cutting along the side of the road in the St. Ann's Bay, North River and North Shore areas, as well as the area from Neil's Harbour to Effie's Brook. Motion carried.

District #1

It was moved by Councillor Toms, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that get-well wishes be extended to Councillor Dan E. MacNeil, who is recovering from major surgery. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORTING

Sandy Hudson advised that he attended a meeting in Halifax in January regarding municipal accounting standards. He explained the changes that will be required to the financial reporting for the municipality as a result of the changes made to the accounting standards.

UNSM SPRING WORKSHOP

The UNSM Spring Workshop will be held at the White Point Beach Lodge on April 29-30, 2004. Councillor Morrison, Deputy Warden MacInnes, and Warden Budge expressed an interest in attending this workshop.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Deputy Warden MacInnes, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Wayne Budge, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

