

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**March 2, 2009**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 2, 2009, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil  
District #2 – Keith MacCuspig  
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden  
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis  
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden  
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee  
District #7 – David Donovan  
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO  
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

**CALL TO ORDER**

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The agenda was presented for approval.

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**BRAS D'OR LAKE BIOSPHERE RESERVE**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Dr. Teresa MacNeil, Chair of the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association.

Dr. MacNeil introduced Jim Foulds, Secretary of the Association who would be making a presentation on the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve and Board Member, Vince MacLean.

Mr. Foulds made a presentation outlining the history of the initiative, the makeup of the association, what a biosphere is and is not, the geographic zones (core and buffer areas), the submission proposal and their request to Council.

Dr. MacNeil indicated that the nomination document has been sent to the Canadian Council for UNESCO, and the association is working on gathering endorsements from municipalities and other agencies to accompany the document. She indicated that CBRM and Richmond County Council's have provided their letter of endorsement and they are hoping Victoria County will also endorse the submission.

She indicated that the development of the nomination submission document was a totally voluntary effort. The Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association has no budget and in the past 6 years approximately \$5,000 has been spent on the development of a brochure and its distribution. The Association is not sponsored by anyone.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he feels he has a better understanding now of the process and questioned why Inverness County had voted against it. Dr. MacNeil indicated that they can only speculate the reason, but feel it is related to what the Council feel are increased protected areas and that the designation could be a disadvantage in terms of attracting mining development to the area. This is not the case.

Councillor Donovan questioned on why the Association did not go to the grassroots industries of farming, fishing, etc. with their initiative. Dr. MacNeil indicated that if they had a staff member they could have done a better job, but they held public meetings in various areas that were well advertised. There was a fisherman on the original steering committee.

Councillor MacLellan indicated that he also understands the process a little more now. He felt those opposed see increased protected areas and even though this is not so, it is the interpretation out there.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he has attended a number of meetings on the biosphere and the question that always comes up is related to the mining industry and how the designation would affect the development of new mines. Dr. MacNeil indicated that the president of the Mining Association of Nova Scotia indicated at a meeting that if a mine is to be developed it must following the environmental regulations set out by the government. Such developments would fit perfectly with economic development that is sustainable.

Dr. MacNeil indicated that the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association is a non-lobby group. The Association is not against anything and only deal with positives.

Discussion took place on the First Nations communities and it was indicated that the Unimaki Institute of Natural Resources (UNIR) has provided written support to the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Association. The designation will not infringe on native rights.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the fishery representative on the original steering committee and he was advised that Kevin Squires was on the committee. His schedule was too busy to continue on the committee.

Deputy Warden Patterson commented on the fishery which is monitored and mining which has had some bad press in the past that was deserved, but this is not the case any longer. He questioned whether his interpretation from the discussion that the area in question is already a biosphere reserve was correct and that if nothing changes, the designation will be obtained. Dr. MacNeil indicated this was correct.

Warden Morrison questioned whether the unanimous support of the municipalities was required. Dr. MacNeil advised that this support was not needed by UNESCO, but as the designation area is part of all Cape Breton municipalities, they did not want to go ahead without municipal support.

Warden Morrison also questioned on who determines the perimeters of the biosphere reserve designation. He was advised that it is arbitrary in that the watershed area, where the water flows to and from, is the designation area.

Warden Morrison advised that Council will make its decision in a timely manner and advise the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association when a decision has been made.

Dr. MacNeil thanked Council for allowing them to again appear and Warden Morrison in turn expressed Council's appreciation for the presentation.

### **RECESS**

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes

### **CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS PRESENTATION**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Lyle Donovan, Chair of the Victoria County Chief Fire Officers Association, who was in attendance to make a presentation on behalf of Victoria County Fire Departments.

Mr. Donovan indicated that the presentation he would be making is the same presentation he made to Council in 2006. He advised that they are still seeking what they asked for at that time.

Mr. Donovan went through the presentation with Council (copy attached). He indicated at the end of the presentation that the fire departments are requesting an increase in funding from \$0.045/\$100.00 to \$0.12/\$100.

Mr. Donovan indicated that he has heard that the Municipality is considering decreasing the residential tax rate by 2 cents and requested that they retain the same residential tax rate and provide this amount to the fire departments. This would provide each department with an extra \$8,181.00.

Approximately 3 years ago, high angle rescue training was provided to fire department members at a cost of \$400 per person and we now have trained personnel, but no equipment to carry out high angle rescues. He requested that Council give consideration to providing funding for this equipment at a cost of \$4,000 to \$5,000. Two sets of equipment would be required and would be placed at strategic fire departments for access by all fire departments. Discussion took place on an incident that occurred on North Mountain last year where this training was required.

In September, 2003, a request was submitted for communications equipment in the form of satellite phones. Two complete radio communications failures have occurred in the north of Smokey area and satellite phones would ensure contact with fire departments. Mr. Donovan indicated that they are again requesting this communications equipment.

Mr. Donovan also requested Council to form a committee to meet with fire department representatives on a regular quarterly basis.

Fire Department dispatch was also brought up. Right now there are five separate dispatchers who dispatch Victoria County Fire Departments and they would like to have one dispatch for the entire County. The cost of one dispatch is approximately \$26,000.00.

Fire Department's insurance costs were also discussed and the possibility of getting a better rate for departments by purchasing insurance from the same agent. An effort was made sometime ago to do this through the municipal insurer; however, the insurer did not receive the requested information from all fire departments at that time.

Concern was expressed that the fire departments were not covered by Workers Compensation. The County has coverage through a private insurer. This private insurer

does not cover 5 to 6 strains of cancer that Workers Compensation cover and the fire departments are requesting same to be covered.

Mr. Donovan reviewed the *Municipal Government Act* as it pertained to the fire service. All fire departments must register with the Municipality; however, there are no guidelines for fire departments. These registrations should be updated on a regular basis and Mr. Donovan suggested that updated registration forms be part of the annual requirements for funding.

A request is also being made to put the training budget back up to its maximum level and that mileage be paid at the County rate to firefighters traveling for training.

Mr. Donovan indicated that he has heard that the Municipality is considering a 10% increase for the fire service in the 2009/10 budget.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on what would be the most important priority on the list presented to Council and Mr. Donovan indicated that the fire departments need money.

Councillor Donovan indicated that the Chief Fire Officers submit the bills for training to the Municipality and if the mileage rates are included when the bill is submitted these costs will be covered.

Discussion again took place on communications and it was indicated that the cost of satellite phones is approximately \$1,050 per phone. Air time is costly; however, it was indicated that the EMO rate of \$26/month for unlimited use would be available to fire departments.

The dispatch issue was discussed and that fact that there are 5 different agencies dispatching Victoria County Fire Departments. They would like to see one dispatch look after all departments and Canso Dispatch can accommodate this. The cost for all departments would be approximately \$26,000. Departments presently serviced by Canso Dispatch are very pleased with the service. There is a live body on the other end and they send reports on all calls and their system works really well.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that first responders and traffic control services are two areas that fire departments are being requested to provide more frequently. Discussion took place on this matter.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that a regular quarterly meeting with fire department representatives would be beneficial and could be arranged and he put the onus back on the fire departments to prioritize their requests, put them in writing and cost them out prior to coming to Council to meet.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council is prepared to meet with fire department representatives to discuss issues and the remaining financial requests presented would be brought to budget.

**It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the fire department financial requests be referred to budget. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Lyle Donovan for his presentation.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 5 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 16, 2009**

The minutes of the February 16, 2009, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 16, 2009, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Victoria County Website**

An RFP for the development and maintenance of a website for the Municipality has been advertised and submissions will be received until Monday, March 23, 2009, at 2:00 p.m.

**Roy MacDonald**

Roy MacDonald is to meet with the Councillors from the north of Smokey area. To date, a date for the meeting has not been set.

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil brought forward a request for funding for the recreation field at Rankin School of the Narrows at a previous meeting and he indicated that the project has been upgraded to a \$176,000 project and his initial request for funding in the amount of \$18,000 from the Municipality, has been increased to \$25,000.

**It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that this request be forwarded to budget talks. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Little Narrows Water Extension is now up and running and residents seem very pleased. He commended D. W. Matheson & Sons Contracting for a job well done.

**District #4**

Councillor MacInnis expressed concern with regard to the irregularity of solid waste collection in his district. The concern is with both contractors. He was advised that concerns with regard to solid waste collection could be addressed with Robert Dauphinee, Director of Public Works, and his phone number is 295-3144.

**District #7**

Councillor Donovan questioned on whether the change in the water rates could be delayed until after July, 2009. Sandy Hudson advised that the Utility and Review Board will determine when the rates take effect and he does not expect a decision to be received until May, 2009. It is hoped that the meters will be installed before the end of June, so it is anticipated that the rates will not take effect until after that time.

Councillor Donovan brought up the matter of the Municipality providing funding for the cost of the installation of electrical panels for service stations that have or will purchase generators for use in the event of an emergency. This will allow both gas and diesel to be available during an emergency situation.

The cost and the requirements for the installation of such panels were discussed. The service stations who would obtain such funding should be prepared to open during an emergency. An application form is to be drafted for service station operators to submit their requests for funding.

**District #6**

Councillor Dauphinee presented a request from the Theatre on the Hill who will be celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. They hope to hire an individual and host a number of programs throughout the year and are requesting financial assistance from the Municipality in the amount of \$5,000.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Theatre on the Hill request for funding be referred to budget. Motion carried.**

**District #3**

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

**It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that a letter be forwarded to the Silver Dart Centennial Association for a job well done on the February 20-23, 2009, celebrations. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison assumed the Chair.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve**

Warden Morrison questioned whether Council wished to make a decision on the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve tonight or wait until a future meeting to decide. Council decided to make their decision at this meeting.

**It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that Victoria County Municipal Council support for the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve designation application. Motion carried with Councillor Donovan voting against the motion.**

**Planning Advisory Committee**

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that Richard Roberts be appointed to serve on the Planning Advisory Committee. Motion carried.**

**Advisory Committee for EMO**

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the Advisory Committee for EMO be the full Council, with the Warden acting as Chair. Motion carried.**

**Request – Gerald Sampson**

Gerald Sampson was in attendance and indicated that he will be meeting with the Public Service Committee of CBRM on Wednesday, March 4, 2009, at 9:30 a.m. and he had previously requested that a member of Council accompany him when he makes his presentation on tidal energy.

Given the short notice, no Council member was available to attend this meeting.

**Pitu'paq Committee**

**It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that Councillor MacCuspig be appointed to serve on the Pitu'paq Committee, along with Councillor MacNeil. Motion carried.**

**Heritage Advisory Committee**

**It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that Deputy Warden Patterson and Councillors MacInnis and MacCuspig be appointed to serve on the Heritage Advisory Committee. Motion carried.**

**2009-10 Budget**

Sandy Hudson presented a draft budget to Council based on a residential tax rate of \$1.20 – a 2 cent decrease. At the last meeting a draft budget was presented maintaining the present tax rates.

Mr. Hudson clarified a number of budget items with Council and requested that they review the documents and the matter will be addressed at the session of Victoria County Municipal Council to be held on March 23, 2009.

It was indicated at financial requests received to date include:

Smokey Recreational Society	\$68,000.00
Neil's Harbour/New Haven Project	\$55,000.00
Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre	\$20,000.00
Iona Sports Field Project	\$25,000.00
North Highlands Community Museum	\$ 7,500.00
Theatre on the Hill	\$ 5,000.00

as well as the fire department requests

**Speedy Recovery**

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that wishes of good health and a speedy recovery be sent to Warden Morrison's wife, Ruth. Motion carried.**

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacLellan, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Sandy Hudson, CAO**