

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
March 24, 2014

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 24, 2014, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Athol Grant
District #3 – Bruce Morrison
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Warden Morrison advised that the presentation from the NSPI Resolve Team has been cancelled. Councillor Grant requested an addition to the agenda on the Trans Canada Trail and Deputy Warden Patterson on the Public Transit Business Plan. Warden Morrison also advised that a brief In Camera meeting will be added to the agenda.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the agenda be approved with the noted amendments. Motion carried.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BY-LAW

A public hearing was held prior to Council on the Emergency Management By-Law.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the second (final) reading of the Emergency Management By-Law be approved. Motion carried.

EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS TAX EXEMPTION BY-LAW

A public hearing on the External Organizations Tax Exemption By-Law was held prior to the Council meeting.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Grant, that the second (final) reading of the External Organizations Tax Exemption By-Law be approved. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 10, 2014

The minutes of the March 10, 2014, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of March 10, 2014, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Minister- Economic and Rural Development and Tourism

Whether a meeting had been scheduled yet with the Honourable Michel Samson, Minister of Economic & Rural Development and Tourism, was questioned. The meeting will be scheduled at some time when the House is sitting in Halifax. It is anticipated that we will be advised on short notice of the meeting and it is anticipated that it may be in early May.

BUDGET 2014-15

Sandy Hudson handed out the first draft of the 2014-15 operating budget maintaining the current tax rates. The budget is an approximately \$12 million dollar budget. He indicated that one cent on the commercial tax rate yields \$5,000.00. Dropping the commercial tax rate five cents would be \$25,000.00. One cent on the residential tax rate yields \$50,000.00.

Mr. Hudson requested that Council review the draft and if they have any questions to contact himself or the Director of Finance. The applications received from organizations for funding assistance will be reviewed in mid-April and a more in depth line by line review of the budget will take place at a future meeting.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STATIONS

Correspondence was received from the Nova Scotian Electric Vehicle Highway regarding a proposal for the installation of electric car charging stations at Baddeck and Cape North. The cost to install a charging station is approximately \$4,000.00.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that there is a charging station at the Knotty Pine Cottages in Ingonish Ferry.

Discussion took place on details of the proposal including who would pay for the power, etc.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Grant, that pending further information, Council express their interest in the location of electric car charging stations at both Baddeck and Cape North. Motion carried.

The possibility of having the proponents make a presentation to Council was discussed.

COUNTY JACKETS

Discussion took place on the colour proposed for the County jackets. Council agreed that to accept the staff recommendation regarding the colour for the jackets.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up the condition of the Kempt Head Road. Residents are damaging their cars, missing work, unable to travel to medical appointments as they can't travel on the road, etc.

The condition of the Cabot Trail is a major deterrent to visitors. He also mentioned the condition of the painted lines on the roadways. They are nearly invisible.

The Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal is to be contacted again requesting he meet with Council in the near future.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he has been advised that the replacement ferry scheduled to come to Englishtown, The Scotian, has not been used on a cable for quite some time and will not be operable when it arrives in Englishtown. Work will be required on site to get it ready.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the CAO contact the Director of Marine Services to ensure The Scotian is in perfect operating condition when it arrives in Englishtown. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee also brought up concern with regard to the Roper's Brook Bridge. The surface is to remain a planked surface and this is not acceptable.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, with copies to the Deputy Minister, Gerard Jessome and Stephen MacDonald indicating that the solution proposed for the Roper's Brook Bridge is unacceptable. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan presented a funding request from the Dingwall Recreation Society.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Dingwall Recreation Society's funding request be referred to budget. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the Affordable Housing Committee meet with Alicia Lake to plan and prepare for the public information sessions on affordable housing. Motion carried.

The question was raised as to whether any word has been received on student grant application approvals as yet. It is anticipated that word should be received sometime in April.

John Bain is to be contacted to obtain a map showing County landownership.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis brought up the lack of public washroom facilities throughout Victoria County. He indicated the possibility of locating a comfort station at the former North Shore School property as there is water and sewer available there.

The condition of the former Plaster Picnic Park was discussed. It is in an unsightly condition.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Natural Resources requesting that the former Plaster Picnic Park property be cleaned up. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant requested that the April 28, 2014, session of Victoria County Municipal Council be held at the Middle River Community Hall, Middle River.

Council agreed to the change in venue for the April 28, 2014, meeting and Councillor Grant will make the appropriate arrangements.

Councillor Grant indicated he received an email from a wind developer interested in locating 5 to 6 smaller wind turbines in the Bay St. Lawrence area. He would like to come to Council or meet with the Alternate Energy Committee.

It was felt that a meeting with the Alternate Energy Committee in the northern area of the County would be most appropriate.

Councillor Grant questioned if anything was heard from the Department of Natural Resources or NSPI with regard to the request to meet. Sandy Hudson advised that the MLA is working on this matter. It was felt that arranging a meeting with the Minister responsible would be most appropriate.

Councillor Grant questioned on the status of the Police Advisory Board. The provincial appointee has not been determined. Contact will be made with the Department of Justice to see if the appointment process can be expedited.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil brought up the matter of the roads in his district. He felt that a meeting should be arranged with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal with regard to the road situation in the Municipality.

The Richmond County Literacy Network is holding their annual golf tournament and are requesting sponsorship.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Municipality support the Richmond County Literacy Network golf tournament. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison brought up the matter of the change in job funding programs through Jobs Canada. The change will have a detrimental effect on businesses in Nova Scotia.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister responsible for Jobs Canada expressing concern on the negative impact the change in their programs will have on businesses in Victoria County and Nova Scotia as a whole. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

TRANS CANADA TRAIL

Councillor Grant indicated that he; Tom Wilson and Vince Forrestall have been meeting with regard to possible routes for the Trans Canada Trail through Victoria County.

The Nova Scotia Trails Trans Canada Trail Committee is the champion for the Trans Canada Trail in Nova Scotia and the goal is that there will be full Trail connection coast to coast by 2017. The proposal for Victoria County is connection by mainly water routes.

Councillor Grant indicated that he felt it would be preferable to have land routes and presented three maps outlining possible land connections in Victoria County. He explained the possible routes in detail.

The deadline for funding proposals under this program is June, 2014, and Councillor Grant questioned whether Council would support the idea of submitting a proposal. He indicated that he would like to be given the authority to investigate the feasibility of submitting a proposal by the deadline. He indicated that this would entail meeting with potential partners and hiring someone for a few months to prepare the proposal.

Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Council provide permission in principle to pursue partnerships for additional Trans Canada Trail routes in Victoria County. Motion carried.

VICTORIA COUNTY PUBLIC TRANSIT BUSINESS PLAN

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that a Draft Public Transit Business Plan was forwarded to all Council members for review about a month ago. A copy of the plan is to be submitted to the Province by the end of March in order to receive the approved funding.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Public Transit Business Plan be approved in principle and submitted to the Province by the March 31, 2014, deadline. Motion carried.

IN CAMERA

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, to move In Camera. Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, to return to the regular session of Council. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Grant, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO