

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

April 19, 1999

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, April 19, 1999, beginning at 5:30 p.m. with Warden John G. MacInnes in the Chair.

Present were:

District #3 - Bruce Morrison

District #4 - John Graham MacInnes, Warden

District #5 - Gerald Sampson, Deputy Warden

District #6 - Lawrence Barron

District #7 - David Donovan

District #8 - Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Brian Trask, CAO

Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #1 - Gerald Yetman

District #2 - Shane Toms

CALL TO ORDER

Warden MacInnes called the meeting to order.

AGENDA

Deputy Warden Sampson requested that Committee Reports be added as a regular item agenda on this

and future agendas.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the agenda be approved with the addition. Motion carried.

VICTORIA COUNTY COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Catherine Ann Fuller, Community Economic Development Officer, Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency.

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Mrs. Fuller explained the purpose of the Victoria County Community Economic Development Committee. The committee is interested in having a strategic plan developed for Victoria County. It was felt that this committee will also provide a better link between Victoria County and the RDA. It is also advantageous in developing better communications with community groups and also improve the economic and social environment in the County by maximizing the opportunities for the communities in the County.

The makeup, as well as the suggested operations of the committee, was explained to Council. The initial meeting was held on March 22, 1999, and the next meeting has been scheduled for May 5, 1999, at the Court House, Baddeck at 7:00 p.m.

Mrs. Fuller advised that application has been submitted to ECBC for cost shared funding for the strategic plan. It is estimated that the total cost of the plan will be \$50,000. ECBC has been asked for one-half and it is also anticipated that \$10,000 will be received from the SPIF Fund from the RDA. This would leave a balance of \$15,000 for the Municipality to fund, however, there is a possibility of funds being obtained from other sources. Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Sampson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the County share of the strategic plan be referred to budget deliberations. Motion carried.

Discussion took place on a funding commitment to the Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that Victoria County commit \$30,000 to the Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency for this fiscal year. Motion carried.

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

EMO COORDINATOR

Councillor Morrison advised that interviews were held earlier today for an Emergency Measures Coordinator for Victoria County. The Interview Committee recommended that Gary Collins be hired for this position.

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It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden Sampson, that Gary Collins be appointed Emergency Measures Coordinator for the Municipality of the County of Victoria. Motion carried.

BADDECK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Brian Trask indicated that he contacted Ian MacIntosh, Cape Breton Regional Library Board, regarding their relationship with the Baddeck Public Library. The Baddeck Public Library came under the Board's jurisdiction in 1968. The Municipality is responsible for the rental costs for the Baddeck Public Library.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the rental costs of \$1,000 be approved for the Baddeck Public Library. Motion carried.

VILLAGE SIDEWALKS

The total bill for the winter maintenance of the Baddeck sidewalks amounted to \$6,500. It was previously agreed that these costs be paid.

GRANT REQUESTS

Discussion took place on grant requests for 1999/2000. Brian Trask advised that there are a number of grants already committed for 1999/2000 - i. e. Buchanan Memorial Hospital - \$50,000, Baddeck Public Library (Old Post Office) - \$5,000, Baddeck Water Treatment - \$5,000 and the 2000 Cabot Trail Relay - \$5,000. A written request has also been received from Ski Cape Smokey.

Brian Trask indicated that he would be contacting Kathleen O Grady, Solicitor, Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs, regarding the legislation for the provision of grants contained in the new *Municipal Government Act*.

It was felt that a special meeting should be held on the grant requests. A meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 27, 1999, beginning at 4:30 p.m.

UNSM REGIONAL MEETING

Brian Trask advised that Port Hawkesbury will be hosting the UNSM Regional Meeting and a tentative

date has been set for May 19, 1999. More information will be provided when received.

MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT ACT

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Copies of the *Municipal Government Act* have been ordered for each member of Council from the Nova Scotia Government Bookstore.

MINUTES

The minutes of the April 12, 1999, Committee of the Whole were presented for approval.

It was moved by Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the motion contained in the April 12, 1999, Committee of the Whole "that the CAO investigate and bring forth a recommendation on a possible bonus for Norma Fletcher and Pauline Davis for their efforts in collecting outstanding taxes" be rescinded. Motion carried.

Brian Trask advised that he spoke with the Solicitor regarding the Building Inspector contract and the status of Walter Brett. There would be no problem with making Paul Burt a permanent employee and Walter Brett would remain an employee of the County, should he ever be able to return to work.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Sampson, seconded by Councillor Barron, that it be recommended to the Rural Cape Breton District Planning Commission that Paul Burt be made a permanent employee. Motion carried.

The Planning Commission are also to be requested to include a policy on the takeover of roads on their next meeting agenda.

The letter requesting that the name of the road from Tena Morrison's bridge to the TCH 105 from New Harris Road to Big Harbour Road was forwarded to the Department of Transportation.

The new signage for the Baddeck Landfill has been ordered. Jim MacLean was contacted regarding the Youth Interns undertaking a cleanup of the roadside from the overpass to the Baddeck Landfill.

Jane Latremouille, Department of Natural Resources, was contacted regarding the White Point Land Exchange and she advised that same should be complete by mid-May, 1999.

Arlene Morrison will be requesting four local contractors to tender on a hookup to the Neil's Harbour/ New Haven Water System.

Brian Trask advised that he contacted Sansom Equipment concerning the generator at the Buchanan Memorial Hospital which is to be turned over to the Municipality.

Councillor Donovan indicated there is a step down transformer located at the hospital and he has requested that all the panels be transferred with the transformer.

A hold will be put on the trailer fabrication until confirmation is received on the equipment.

BREAK

Warden MacInnes advised that Council would break for ten minutes.

CHAIR

Warden MacInnes left at this time and Deputy Warden Sampson assumed the Chair.

CAPE BRETON-VICTORIA REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Courtesy of Council was extended to representatives from the Cape Breton-Victoria District School Board - Archie MacKeigan

Doug Peach

Keith Bain

Councillor Barron questioned on the status of the new school construction for Ingonish. It is rumored that the construction has been moved to a later date. Mr. MacKeigan advised that the School Board at their meeting today, passed a motion reaffirming their dates for construction for all schools within their jurisdiction. He feels all the projects will proceed on schedule. It is anticipated that the construction of the two schools in the northern area will begin in June, 1999, with occupancy in January, 2000.

A letter was received from John Hayes MacNeil, Ed.D., Superintendent, requesting that the Municipality not exercise their option on the Ingonish Consolidated School property, as provided for in Section 8 of the amalgamation agreement. This school site will be the location of the new school.

Discussion took place on this matter. It is very important that the deeds for the property where the new schools are to be located be in hand by May 15, 1999, in order for construction to be on schedule.

The question was raised as to whether the new schools, which will be owned by a private partner, will be taxable. Mr. Peach indicated that as far as he understands, even if the property is owned by a private partner, if it is leased in the name of Her Majesty The Queen, it would be exempt from real property taxation. However, he indicated that there is mention of where Her Majesty The Queen rents property, the owner of the property could be responsible to pay business occupancy taxation and this possibility should be investigated.

Council was advised that demographics are changing and enrollment within the Board is decreasing. 1,700 students have been lost within the past two years. Predictions for the next four years indicate that there will be a further decrease of 3,000 to 3,300 students. This will have a tremendous impact.

Whether there is any anticipated change in the education funding formula was questioned. Mr. Peach indicated that annually the Education Funding Review Committee meet on this matter. Each of the seven school boards within the province have one member on this committee and he has sat as the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board s representative for the past two years. It is difficult to come up with a formula that is equitable to all areas.

At present the pupil/teacher ratio with our Board is 17.2, while the provincial average is 17.3. The enrollment within Victoria County decreased by 40 students this year. The Board loses funding of approximately \$5,000 for each student. The projected primary enrollment in Baddeck Academy in 1999/2000 is 18 students, while Boularderie is 13 students.

The status of the Baddeck Bus Garage was discussed. Mr. Peach advised that since the last meeting with Council nothing has gone forward with regard to a regional location and if anything changes are farther away than they were at that time.

The requested lighting at Baddeck Academy was discussed. Mr. Peach advised that the lighting will be mounted on the school building and face out to the parking area.

Deputy Warden Sampson questioned on the status of the Boularderie Consolidated expansion and was advised that this project will begin in mid-May

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and would be complete for the opening of the school year in September, 1999. No construction will take place at this facility while students are present. The wiring of the new gymnasium for emergency measures purposes was discussed and is something that should be investigated for the two new schools in the northern area of the County.

Councillor Donovan questioned on the status of adequate resource teachers for Cabot High. 20% of the youth at Cabot High have been recommended for resource. Mr. Donovan was advised that this matter is

being referred to budget talks and Keith Bain, School Board Member, will continue to fight for resource positions for Cabot.

Councillor Donovan also expressed concern on the inadequate time students are receiving on computers. There are not enough computers for the students and some are not getting any time on same. He also expressed concern that the School Librarian had to have the students raise funds for a computer for the library. He felt this should be standard in all schools.

Mr. MacKeigan indicated that there are 80 schools within the Board's jurisdiction and there is no where near the budget required to properly outfit these schools when it comes to computer equipment.

Councillor Barron indicated that Cabot High graduates were rated second highest in the province by St. F. X. University.

Whether the School Board would provide assistance for the Sports Field at Cabot High was questioned. Mr. MacKeigan advised that sometimes donations are made to same, however, there is never a significant amount allocated.

The cleanliness of Baddeck Academy was discussed. Mr. Peach indicated that steps were taken to correct the problem and changes were made in personnel and the fact that nothing has been heard on this matter for some time, is a source of encouragement that the problem has been corrected.

Keith Bain indicated that the School Board has requested that the gymnasium floors at Cabot High and Baddeck Academy be replaced. There have been a significant number of injuries that have occurred on the present floors.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the Municipality concur with Dr. MacNeil's request and not exercise their option on the Ingonish Consolidated School property. Motion carried.

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The School Board representatives were extended a vote of thanks and left at this time.

CHIEF OFFICERS COMMITTEE

Courtesy of Council was extended to representatives from the Chief Fire Officers Committee - Keith Bain, Charlie Cook and Gary Stockley.

Mr. Bain advised that the Fire Departments met on Thursday past, April 15, 1999. At that time he was appointed Chairperson, and along with Charlie Cook and Gary Stockley were appointed spokespeople

for the fire departments.

The meeting was held with Brian Trask on April 7, 1999, regarding the requirements of the *Municipal Government Act*. The status of incorporation of all the departments was discussed at that time. It is a requirement that all departments be incorporated and maintain their incorporation on an annual basis.

It was felt to be important that all departments provide the Municipality with a copy of their annual financial statements.

Funding was discussed and the Chief Fire Officers requested that each of the four substations located in the County - Little Narrows, Englishtown, North River and Wreck Cove - receive \$2,000.

It was also agreed at the Chief Fire Officers Meeting that new members be required to have or agree to have a basic fire fighting course within two years of becoming a member. Various alternatives are being considered with regard to providing such training. It was also decided that by January 1, 2000, any new Chiefs or Deputy Chiefs be required to have a minimum of 10 years experience in the fire service or a Level 1 fire fighting course, along with Level 1 fire investigation.

A motion was also passed at this meeting that the County be requested to approve an operating grant of \$33,000 for each fire department to help defray the costs of training, outfitting and operating their departments. Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the funding requests be referred to budget talks for consideration. Motion carried with Councillor Morrison casting a dissenting vote.

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Discussion took place on minimum standards for fire departments. This is something that will have to be defined.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that financial statements be provided by each fire department prior to budget talks for consideration. Motion carried.

Council is to request each department to provide their financial statements.

The Chief Fire Officers Committee also requested that 50% of last year's grant amount be released to each fire department. This is standard policy that when requested, ½ of last year's grant amount be released and this will be done.

A vote of thanks was extended to the gentlemen and they left at this time.

ADJOURN

Due to the lateness of the hour, it was decided to defer the remainder of the agenda items to the next meeting.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the meeting adjourn.

John G. MacInnes, Warden

Brian E. Trask, CAO