

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
July 23, 2007

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, July 23, 2007, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Wayne Budge in the Chair.

Present were:

District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison
District #4 – John Graham MacInnes, Deputy Warden
District #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Lawrence Barron
District #7 – Wayne Budge, Warden

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #8 – Robert MacLellan

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Budge called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval. Sandy Hudson indicated that Grant Burgess, Grant Thornton LLP, and Mark Peck, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, would be switching places on the agenda.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the agenda be approved as amended. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 25, 2007

The minutes of the June 25, 2007, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the June 25, 2007, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

County Website

The CAO and Chairman of the Municipal Community Development Committee will be meeting with Tom Wilson and following this meeting, will meet with Sue Difiore, Helping People With Computers.

Unightly Premises

Sandy Hudson advised that he would be receiving some information on unsightly premises from Lorne MacDowell in the near future.

Kempt Head Road Issue

Keith Bain, MLA, Victoria-The Lakes, will set up a meeting with Department of Transportation officials regarding the Kempt Head Road early next week.

Economic Development

The Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee met with Blaine Gillis, Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency, recently to obtain more information on the possible future direction of development in Victoria County.

A review of Victoria County's strategic plan should be completed and an application is being submitted for funding through the Office of Economic Development. This office will fund 1/3 of the cost of the review and ECBC will be contacted to see if they will also provide funding towards the review.

Sandy Hudson advised that he obtained a copy of the terms of reference for Cape Breton County Economic Development Authority's strategic plan which will be useful as a guideline for our review.

**FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2007 –
MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF VICTORIA**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Grant Burgess, C.A., Grant Thornton LLP Chartered Accountants, who presented the Draft Non-Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 2007.

Mr. Burgess indicated that the statements are in draft form, and when other necessary information becomes available, the consolidated statements will be completed. As a result, he requested that the draft statements presented be returned to him at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Burgess then reviewed the draft financial statements in detail with Council. He reported that the Municipality ended the year with an operating deficit of \$463,726.00, based on a total budget of approximately \$8,300,000.00.

Mr. Burgess indicated that the Public Works operation, comprised of the four water utilities and the solid waste management function, is an extensive operation. The hiring of a Director of Public Works was undertaken in the 2006/07 fiscal year and he recommended that quarterly updates be provided to Council on the public works operations.

The Municipality is aggressively paying down their loans and the possibility of paying over a long term was discussed and may at some point in the future be done through a debenture.

The large deficit was discussed and Mr. Burgess indicated that part of the deficit is related in the decrease in the equalization grant in excess of \$180,000.00.

The cost of street lighting increasing 10% was discussed and Deputy Warden MacInnes questioned where Victoria County fits in relation to other rural municipal units with regard to street lighting costs and percentage increases. Mr. Burgess is to investigate this matter. Street lighting accounts for 2.5% of the municipal budget.

A general discussion took place and Mr. Burgess answered various questions related to the draft financial statements.

Warden Budge extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Burgess for his presentation and he was excused at this time.

RECESS

Warden Budge advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

MARK PECK, MUNICIPAL ADVISOR, SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

Warden Budge extended to courtesy of Council to Mark Peck, Municipal Advisor, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations.

Mr. Peck thanked Council for the invitation to appear and update on Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations initiatives.

The matter of properties that cannot be recommended for sale at tax sale was discussed. Mr. Peck indicated that he would follow up with the departmental solicitor on this topic and report his findings to Sandy Hudson.

The Gas Tax payout to Victoria County is \$1.1 million over five years. It is backend loaded in that lesser amounts are received in the first couple of years, increasing in the last year to \$400,000.00. The process and requirements for this funding were discussed.

Mr. Peck is the Municipal Advisor for the area from Pictou County east, including all of Cape Breton Island. The area includes 17 municipal units and 2 villages. He is an advisor for both Council and administration.

Mr. Peck advised that the Department is now in the 4th year of a five year integrated community sustainability plan. Graham Fisher, the planner for this project, has completed a template and guide for municipalities to complete their plan. Service Nova Scotia plan to do a roll out soon and it will be posted on the government website. Mr. Fisher is available to come to Council to advise on the plan and it was felt it would be beneficial to have him come to a future meeting.

The Debt Affordability Model is one of the programs offered by Service Nova Scotia in concert with the Municipal Finance Corporation. A presentation is also available to Councils on this model.

Mr. Peck updated on the Canada Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program (CNSIP). Final closure reports are being completed. The last payment for the Ingonish Water System has been requisitioned and should be received by the Municipality shortly. As part of the closure process and final inspection will be completed by an engineering student.

Mr. Peck advised that Service Nova Scotia, in conjunction with the Association of Municipal Administrators, is providing training sessions to staff and Councils on the *Municipal Government Act*, HST Workshop and the *Freedom of Information Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPOP)*.

The review process for the CAP assessment has been completed and the document is available on the government website.

Mr. Peck advised that another program that Service Nova Scotia will cost share on is the Municipal Internship Program. This program is cost shared 50% for salary and

benefits and was established to encourage young people to consider a career in municipal government. To date there have been 6 municipal units that have participated in this program and he encouraged the municipality to consider applying for an intern position. The program has worked well in the areas that have participated.

The Municipal Relations Division of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations is divided into 3 sections:

- Grants and Programs Division – Marvin MacDonald is the Director
- Advisory Services Division – Brant Wishart is the Director and there are three municipal advisors – Bob Houlihan, Stephen Feist and Mark Peck
- Finance and Policy Division – Jeff Shute is the Director. This division has one new employee, Paul Wills, who is looking into training sessions on accounting and tangible capital assets.

Mr. Peck indicated that he has worked with the Municipality on the seasonal tourism tax rate matter and has given information to the Finance and Policy Division. They are now reviewing the impact this legislation has had on Victoria County. He will advise when any information is available.

Council expressed an interest in taking part in the training sessions offered and this will be coordinated after the By-Election is held and a new Councillor is sworn in for District #1.

Further discussion took place and Mr. Peck was extended a vote of thanks for the information provided and he was excused at this time.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Councillor Patterson brought up the matter with regard to signage along the roadway, especially in the area around Exit 13. This matter will be discussed with Barb Baillie, Department of Transportation, when they meet next week.

District #2

Councillor MacCuspig presented a road name change request for an unnamed road at Baddeck Inlet. Three families live on this section of road and all have signed the petition. The request will be forwarded on to the Department of Transportation and the Eastern District Planning Commission.

Councillor MacCuspic questioned on whether the new form had been developed for derelict vehicles and the procedure for same. Robert Dauphinee has developed a form and is the contact for the derelict vehicle program.

The topic with unlicensed tourist facilities in the Municipality was discussed. The licensing of tourist facilities is a provincial responsibility.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Tourism regarding the problem with unlicensed tourist facilities in the Municipality and requesting that they investigate this matter. Motion carried.

District #3

Councillor Morrison indicated that the Alderwood Management Board have appointed a new Chair – Councillor Fraser Patterson.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Barron, that Council ratify the appointment of Councillor Fraser Patterson as the new Chair of the Alderwood Management Board. Motion carried.

The topic of the Department of Community Services positions in the Municipality was again discussed and it was felt that a meeting should again be requested to discuss maintaining the present positions.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden John Graham MacInnes, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Community Services again requesting a meeting to discuss Community Services positions with Victoria County. Motion carried.

District #4

Deputy Warden MacInnes brought up the matter of the Dog Controller Position and earlier discussion of having two – one for northern Victoria and one for southern Victoria. The Dog Control By-Law also needs to be updated. He felt that this matter should be resolved as quickly as possible.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that Deputy Warden MacInnes chair a committee of five members to investigate the Dog Control position(s) and by-law for Victoria County. Motion carried.

Councillor Patterson, Warden Budge and Councillor Barron indicated that they would be willing to serve on this Committee. The Committee will meet prior to the next Council Session.

Deputy Warden MacInnes requested Sandy Hudson to update on the initiative currently being investigated regarding commissioning a statue of Alexander Graham and Mabel Bell. Mr. Hudson updated on the activities in this regard thus far and possible avenues for funding.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the Municipality pursue and seek avenues of funding towards the location of a statue of Alexander Graham and Mabel Bell in Baddeck. Motion carried.

District #7

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Patterson, that \$1,000.00 be approved from the District #7 budget for the Northern Victoria Community Centre. Motion carried.

An unsightly property in the Dingwall area was discussed. The property was owned by the late Stephen Muise and the Credit Union either owns or has interest in the property.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that a letter be sent to the Credit Union regarding the Muise property in Dingwall. Motion carried.

District #4

Deputy Warden MacInnes advised that when the Gaelic Road signs were erected in District #4, the sign translated for North River, should have been for North River Bridge.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation requesting that a Gaelic sign for North River Bridge be obtained and erected. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Little Narrows Water Extension

Tenders for the Little Narrows Water System Extensions will be received until 3:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 21, 2007.

Village of Baddeck

The Village of Baddeck plan on using their share of the Gas Tax funds for their water remediation project and the Municipality must approve the expenditure and amend the capital budget to show this project.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Deputy Warden MacInnes, that the Municipality concur with the Village undertaking their water remediation project and amend the capital budget to reflect same. Motion carried.

Road Name Policy

Councillors were provided with a draft road name policy and copies of policies in effect in other municipalities. They are to be reviewed and this will be an agenda item for the August session of Council.

North Shore & District Volunteer Fire Department

A letter was received from the North Shore & District Volunteer Fire Department concerning a dangerous section of roadway at Wreck Cove.

It was moved by Deputy Warden MacInnes, seconded by Councillor Barron, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Transportation, with a copy to Keith Bain, MLA; the District Director and Area Manager of the Department of Transportation, concerning the dangerous section of road at Wreck Cove. Motion carried.

District #1 By-Election

Tomorrow is the deadline for candidates to file papers for the District #1 By-Election. The By-Election will be held on August 18, 2007.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Patterson, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

A. W. (Sandy) Hudson, CAO

Wayne Budge, Warden