

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

ANNUAL SESSION

August 26, 1998

The Annual Session of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Wednesday, August 26, 1998, beginning at 10:00 a.m. with Warden John Graham MacInnes in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 - Gerald Yetman

District #2 - Shane Toms, Deputy Warden

District #3 - Bruce Morrison

District #4 - John Graham MacInnes, Warden

District #5 - Gerald Sampson

District #6 - Lawrence Barron

District #7 - David Donovan

District #8 - Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Brian Trask, CAO

Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

Warden MacInnes called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance to the Annual Session of Council.

AGENDA

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Deputy Warden Toms, to accept the agenda as presented. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Courtesy of Council was extended to Dave Roach, C. A., and John Anderson, C. A., Roach Perry Roach Chartered Accountants, and to Nathan Gorall, Municipal Advisor, Department of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

Mr. Roach presented the financial statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 1998. He reported that the Municipality experienced a surplus from the current year's operations of \$66,090, which resulted in the lowering of the accumulated deficit from \$496,387 at March 31, 1997, to \$430,297 at March 31, 1998.

Page 2, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

A letter of recommendation for 1998/99 was read by John Anderson. The recommendations were as follows:

The deficit must be addressed in a timely manner. A workable plan to retire this deficit is to be developed and it was suggested that the Municipal Advisor be contacted in this regard.

Continuous aggressive collection policies must be implemented for tax collection. This should involve regular communication with taxpayers, consideration of more frequent tax sales, and a review of the rate rolls to identify accounts that may require adjustment.

Proper long term financing has been received, and it is recommended that the various interfund balances be repaid to the fullest extent possible.

Council be aware of the financial situation of the County of Victoria on a continuous basis. By receiving financial information on a regular basis that compares actual results to those budgeted, Council will be able to make better informed decisions and take corrective actions on a timely basis.

Discussion took place on the recommendations. A tax sale is planned for October and there will be a plan implemented with regard to tax collections in the near future. The deficit is being addressed and plans are to eliminate the deficit over a two year period.

Nathan Gorall, Municipal Advisor, commended the Municipality on the surplus achieved this fiscal year and the intent to eliminate the accumulated deficit. He suggested that a letter, along with a realistic plan to eliminate the accumulated deficit, be forwarded to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs and

he felt that same would be looked on favorably.

A general discussion took place and the gentlemen answered questions and concerns addressed by Council.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Deputy Warden Toms, that the external auditors report and financial statements be accepted. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Barron, that Roach Perry Roach Chartered Accountants be appointed our external auditors for another 3 year term. Motion carried.

Page 3, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

Warden MacInnes extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Roach, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Gorall for their representation and the information given.

BREAK

The Warden announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes

DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Warden MacInnes extended the courtesy of Council to the following representatives from the Provincial Department of Community Services:

Keith MacMillan, District Manager

Pat Drohan, Income and Support Specialist

Marian MacDonald, Senior Case Worker - Victoria County.

Mr. MacMillan and Ms. Drohan then proceeded with a presentation on the restructuring that has and is continuing to take place within the Provincial Department of Community Services. Staff of the 52 units municipal units became provincial employees effective April 1, 1998. New computer systems have been installed and the staff have received training on the operation of this system, as well as policy. Also effective April 1, 1998, all municipal general assistance clients migrated to the provincial income assistance (IA) system.

Mr. MacMillan explained in further detail the ongoing plans regarding further restructuring. A lease agreement has not as yet been signed regarding office space for Victoria County, however, it is hoped this will be finalized in the not too distant future.

The concern of a loss of jobs from Victoria County was discussed. Since the April 1, 1998, takeover, one of the positions located in Ingonish (Faye Fricker's position) has been relocated to North Sydney. This has resulted in Faye assuming a temporary position, and Yolanda Aubrecht being laid off. Also the Family Benefit Worker's position (Jamie Briggs position) is being relocated to Cheticamp. Jamie Briggs has been successful in obtaining a position in North Sydney. Concern was expressed that Victoria County was not given the courtesy of being notified of these changes. The lack of communication creates problems. Ms. Drohan explained the rationale behind relocating these positions. Warden MacInnes stated that he was tired of seeing services eroded in rural areas.

Page 4, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

After further discussion, Warden MacInnes thanked the representatives for their report and stated that he would like to see the representatives attend another meeting in future to finish their presentation. They were excused at this time.

LUNCH

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Deputy Warden Toms, to adjourn for lunch until 1:00 p.m.

RECONVENE

Council reconvened at 1:00 p.m. with Councillors from Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 present. Also present were the CAO and Recording Secretary.

SGT. A. A. (HOSS) MACKENZIE, RCMP

Courtesy of Council was extended to Sgt. MacKenzie, Baddeck Detachment, RCMP.

Mr. MacKenzie presented Council with the following statistical report for the area of Victoria County serviced by the Baddeck Detachment (From the County line at Bucklaw on the TCH 105 to the Seal Island Bridge, also covering the Iona Peninsula, St. Ann's Loop to the North River Bridge, and Hunter's Mountain to Lake O'Law).

Sgt. MacKenzie requested that Council give serious consideration to his request for a part-time clerical position. Wagmatcook First Nations have already agreed to cost share ½ of the position. The Municipality is being requested to cost share the remaining ½.

Sgt. MacKenzie was extended a vote of thanks and he requested that he be included on the September agenda.

CHIEF FIRE OFFICERS

Courtesy of Council was extended to Chief Nancy Smith, North Shore & District Volunteer Fire Department, and Chief Charlie Cook, Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department, representatives of the Chief Officers Committee for Victoria County Fire Departments.

Discussion took place with the representatives on the 911 civic numbering system and the problems encountered.

Page 5, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

Brian Trask reported that Winston Musgrave, Zone Controller, Emergency Measures Organization, visited his office yesterday. Victoria County's emergency preparedness plan is less than poor and it something that can no longer be ignored. There is a Basic Emergency Preparedness Course to be held in Antigonish from September 22-24, 1998, and it was felt representatives should attend. Along with Council Members, it was felt that a representatives from the fire departments should also attend.

A meeting will be set up after this seminar with Winston Musgrave, the RCMP and Fire Chiefs to determine how to proceed with regard to emergency measures.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Deputy Warden Toms, that Gerald Sampson, Shane Toms, David Donovan and one representative from the fire service attend the Emergency Preparedness Seminar in Antigonish. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that Gerald Sampson, Shane Toms and David Donovan form the EMO Committee. Motion carried.

Chief Cook indicated that the fire departments are requesting a 20% increase each year for a five year period. Chief Smith advised that more and more is expected from the fire departments and the funding is required to keep the departments operating efficiently.

Warden MacInnes advised that \$500 per department has been included in the proposed budget. Fire Departments are a priority and the total municipal budget for fire protection during the past fiscal year amounted to \$223,700.

After further discussion, the representatives were extended a vote of thanks and excused at this time.

CAPE BRETON-VICTORIA REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

Warden MacInnes extended a vote of thanks to Doug Peach, Director of Finance, and Paul MacLellan, Director of Support Services, for the Cape Breton-Victoria District School Board.

Councillor Sampson questioned on the status of the gymnasium for Boularderie Consolidated School. Mr. Peach read a letter received from the

Page 6, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

Minister of Education dated August 14, 1998, advising that \$1,726,000 in capital funding has been approved for this project. It is anticipated that the design and consultation phase of this project will commence in the fall, with construction to begin in the spring for occupancy in the next school year.

The status of the new schools for northern Victoria was questioned. Mr. MacLellan advised that the government is committed to fast-tracking the new school construction and will be selected a private sector partner in the near future.

Councillor Yetman questioned on the status of the addition to Rankin Memorial School, Iona. The cost estimate received was excessive and Dr. MacNeil will be meeting with the school community to determine how best to proceed. This will be done in the near future.

The maintenance of schools was discussed. Deputy Warden Toms expressed concern on the condition of the upper parking lot at Baddeck School all last year, as well as the condition of the grounds early in the season this year. Mr. MacLellan advised that Baddeck School has a 12 month custodian who is responsible for general maintenance, which includes the school grounds. The upper parking lot is the responsibility of central maintenance and has recently been repaved. A student was contracted to mow the grounds of the Baddeck School this summer.

The status of the School Bus Garages in Victoria County was discussed. There are plans to construct a centralized maintenance facility in Point Edward, however, these plans have not received approval as yet. If this facility becomes a reality, Florence and Coxheath bus garages will move to this site. No decision has been made on the Baddeck Bus Garage. The facility in northern Victoria will remain unaffected. Concern was expressed on any possible loss of employment in Victoria County.

Discussion took place on computer technology and the fact the Victoria County schools never seem to get new computer equipment. The School Board has a Technology Committee and questions in this regard should be directed through Archie MacEachern at 564-8293.

The cleanliness of the Baddeck School is also a concern on staff, parents and students. Whether any steps have been taken to improve the hygiene of the school was questioned. Mr. MacLellan indicated that there is no question there has been problems maintaining cleanliness at the Baddeck School. He indicated it would be the top priority of the Custodial Supervisor when school resumes.

Discussion took place on programs offered in urban schools, that are not offered in rural schools, i.e. band programs. Mr. Peach indicated that these programs were in existence at the time of amalgamation and remained. He indicated inequalities will exist until there are sufficient finances to extend such programs through the Board.

After further discussion, Mr. Peach and Mr. MacLellan were extended a vote of thanks for appearing.

BREAK

The Warden announced that Council would recess for five minutes.

BUDGET

Mr. Trask then presented the proposed budget for 1998/99. He indicated that the estimated revenues and expenditures for the 1998/99 fiscal year total \$5,384,534. The tax levy on this amounts to \$4,455,187. The net taxable assessment for the County is \$314,192,100. This equates to a general tax rate of \$1.42.

The County reported a surplus of \$66,087 for the year ended March 31, 1998. This surplus applied against the accumulated deficit, leave a deficit going into this year of \$430,297. Last year's surplus would have been in excess of \$100,000, however the federal grant-in-lieu decreased by approximately \$50,000.

User fees pertaining to solid waste have been included in the 1998/99 budget. Estimated revenues of \$50,000 has been included in the budget. This program will commence on September 15, 1998.

He presented an overview of some of the items that will have an impact on the municipal tax rate.

The proposed tax rates for 1998/99 are \$2.13 commercial (1.3% increase) and \$1.25 residential (4% increase). Included in the budget is a payment of \$321,375 against the accumulated deficit, leaving a balance of \$108,922, to be picked up in future years.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the 1998/99 budget be approved at the tax rates be set at \$2.13 commercial and \$1.25 residential. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Sampson, that a vote of thanks be

extended to the CAO, Department Heads and Staff for the excellent work done during the past year.
Motion carried.

Brian Trask advised that money has been included in the budget for repairs and maintenance. Scraping and painting of the building is presently underway. The contractors, Lavery Construction, have done an inspection of the Court House roof. 75% of the roof is in bad repair and the shingles should be replaced. The contractors estimate the cost to shingle the roof, labour included, would be in the vicinity of \$12,000.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that Lavery Construction be retained to shingle the Court House roof. Motion carried with Councillors Yetman and Morrison voting against the motion as they felt same should be put on tender.

MINUTES

The minutes of the following meetings were presented for approval.

Victoria County Municipal Council - July 6, 1998

Committee of the Whole - July 20, August 17 and August 24, 1998

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that the minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter from Nova Scotia Economic Development and Tourism regarding funding to organizations in Victoria County under the NS employment Program for students.

Correspondence from the Department of Education and Culture regarding the school capital construction program.

Letter from the Department of Transportation in reply to Council's request regarding the bridge on Fairview Road, asphalt patching in Neil's Harbour/White Point and the brushcutter North of Smokey.

Letter from Department of Transportation advising that an overhead flashing light at Bethune's Corner is not warranted at this time.

Letter from Ken MacAskill, MLA regarding subsidy request for "shuttle service" from Bay St. Lawrence to Sydney.

Request from Bell Bay Golf Development Inc. to meet with Council.

This meeting will be set up as soon as possible.

Letter from Honourable Manning MacDonald, Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, regarding regional development authorities funding.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that this letter be acknowledged and advise that this matter will be discussed at the Regional and Annual UNSM meetings with other municipal units. Motion carried.

Copy of a letter from Honourable Ken MacAskill to the Honourable Francene Cosman, Minister of Community Services, regarding loss of position in Victoria County.

Request from Highland Manor for approval of an amendment in their by-law to allow for 4 non-Council members on their Board of Management.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the amendment to Highland Manor's by-law be approved. Motion carried.

Correspondence from the UNSM regarding federal payments in lieu of taxes.

This matter will be followed up.

OPEN PERIOD/DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Ingonish Waterfront Development Group congratulating them on obtaining funding for Phase 1 of their development and wishing them success. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Barron, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources requesting that a special draw for moose licenses be set up for residents north of Smokey. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Donovan indicated that the brushcutter visited his area, however, did not cut the area requiring same.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Sampson, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation, with a copy to the Minister, questioning on why the brushcutting was not completed in White Point and requesting a 2nd brushcutter be obtained for use in Victoria County alone. Motion carried.

District #5

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the following be approved from the District #5 budget:

Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department - \$150

Big Wave Festival - \$150

Tourist Bureau Rental Space (Joan VanSchiack) - \$200

PeeWee All-Stars - \$200

Cost of two crime watch signs

Motion carried.

District #3

Jim Morrow, Bruce Aikman and Bruce Morrison have developed a pamphlet regarding upcoming solid waste bans and Councillor Morrison indicated the cost to print and mail to all households in Victoria County would be approximately \$900.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that approval be given for the cost of printing and mailing the pamphlet regarding recycling and upcoming waste bans. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Transportation, with a copy to Bruce Fitzner and Charlie MacDonald, advising of Council's dissatisfaction with the response received from Robert Sweet, District Traffic Supervisor, regarding the intersection of the Old Margaree Road, Shore Road and Twining Street, Baddeck, and the fact that the Village Commissioners, RCMP and the Municipality are concerned, not of what has

happened in the past, but what may happen in the future if attention is not given to this intersection. Motion carried.

Page 11, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

It was moved by Councillor Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that based on the recommendation of the external auditors, Council receive quarterly financial reports on the operation of the municipality and the report for the first quarter be received by October 1, 1998. Motion carried.

District #1

Councillor Yetman questioned on the tap for the Little Narrows Water System. Brian Trask will check on this matter.

Councillor Yetman also questioned whether the extension of the Little Narrows Water line to service the three homes was now a closed issue. Tenders were called for this work and the prices received exceed the funding available.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded Councillor Donovan, that the Municipality reapply for funding through the Infrastructure Program for this project. Motion carried.

Councillor Yetman presented a petition signed by 25 residents of the Red Point Road requesting upgrading of the road.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that this petition be forwarded to the Department of Transportation. Motion carried.

Councillor Yetman presented a letter received from Little Narrows Gypsum Company expressing concern over a poorly lit section of road near their site requesting the Municipality's assistance in getting a street light installed in this area.

It was moved by Councillor Yetman, seconded by Councillor Morrison, that this matter be investigated to see what can be done. Motion carried.

Councillor Yetman brought up the topic of conducting a water study in the Ottawa Brook area. This matter is to be left on the table until further investigation is carried out.

District #4

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that \$300 be approved for the South Haven Guild and \$400 for the North Shore Recreation Soccer Program from the District #4

budget. Motion carried.

Page 12, VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, August 26, 1998

Warden MacInnes read a letter received from Don Nicholson, Chairman of the Baddeck & Area Flower Contest, advising that Donald Carmichael was the winner of the Other category in this year's contest for the Court House flowers.

It was moved by Councillor Sampson, seconded by Councillor Yetman, that congratulations be extended to Donald Carmichael from the Council for the excellent work he did with the Court House flower beds this year. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Morrison, the meeting adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

John Graham MacInnes, Warden

B. E. Trask, C.A.O.