

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**October 26, 2015**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, October 26, 2015, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

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

Also present was:

Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #2 – Athol Grant (Out of Town)  
Sandy Hudson, CAO (Death in Family)

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY – PUBLIC HEALTH AND PRIMARY CARE**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Kathy Bell, Director of Primary Health Care, and Sheila Sears, Director of Public Health, Nova Scotia Health Authority.

Council had previously forwarded a letter concerning the status of the public health nurse position in Baddeck.

The individual currently in the position is in a term position that expires on October 30, 2015. The person who is permanently posted to this position is coming back to fill the position. Council was advised that the person in the term position has another position within the Nova Scotia Health Authority.

There are two permanent public health nurse positions within the County – the Baddeck position and one in the Neil’s Harbour area. These positions will remain.

The issues under public health include municipal alcohol, the baby initiative, nutrition, smoking, etc. The Youth Health Centre nurse position that works within the four schools south of Smokey is to be filled. The staff complement of physicians, nurse practitioner, dieticians, long term care and community were outlined. The current disease burdens, population, services, etc. will be looked at in a go forward basis.

Deputy Warden Patterson questioned whether the public health nurse still provides home visits for newborns. Babies born are screened at the hospital. Many do not need information from public health, but families that struggle and require social supports are identified early and can receive frequent visits for up to three years.

One third of the families of newborns in the area qualify for extra visits. Anyone wishing a visit from the public health nurse can call and will receive a visit. They also provide assistance and follow-up to nursing mothers if needed.

The Municipal Alcohol Project was discussed. This is a partnership between municipalities, NSHA, Health and Wellness and the UNSM. The purpose is to determine ways in which municipalities, and partnering organizations can bring change to the context of alcohol use and its related harms.

Warden Morrison indicated that the municipality has not to date worked on this project and felt that maybe it was time to do so. Ms. Bell indicated that Mental Health and Addictions would be happy to meet and work with the Municipality in this regard.

Ms. Bell indicated that she sees the Municipality as the eyes and ears on the ground that can provide advice on how to move forward on issues and provide information on what could be worked on within the County.

The mental health services in the County are felt to be lacking and need to be investigated. Charlene Murphy, the Regional Manager for Mental Health, would be available to come to meet with Council.

There is a mental health position in the Victoria County Memorial Hospital catchment area that remains unfilled. There is difficulty in recruiting to this position.

Physician recruitment is of utmost importance and changes are being undertaken to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital to make primary care team office space that should assist with recruitment. Kathy Bell indicated she sits on this Committee.

Food safety and security is another issue. There are interesting things happening in regard to food. The high food basket cost in rural Nova Scotia is a concern and data is presently being gathered on food bank usage and food basket costs in the area.

Both Ms. Bell and Ms. Sears indicated their willingness to work on health related matters within their position's mandate.

Warden Morrison requested that when undertaking future collective agreements, some method be considered on preference for the hiring of local staff – ones that live and want to stay in the community. Sometimes positions in rural areas are like a rotating door and for consistency and credibility, if possible, it is in the best interest to have some mechanism for hiring locally.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Kathy Bell and Sheila Sears for their attendance and the information provided.

### **PAYMENTUS**

Council was advised that the cost of accepting tax payments by credit card amounts to \$60,000.00 plus annually and these costs are increasing every year.

Very few municipalities in the province accept credit cards for property tax payments. A number use Paymentus, a third party payment processing service provider.

Payment by credit card can be done through Paymentus. The Municipality will receive the entire amount of the tax payment and Paymentus will keep the service charge fee charged to the customer making the payment. The service charge fee is approximately 2 to 3% of the payment.

Discussion took place. Council was advised that going with this service would free up staff time, as a great deal of time is spent taking credit card information over the phone and processing these payments.

Whether this could be done on a trial basis and whether there was a contract involved was questioned.

**It was moved and seconded that the Municipality approve proceeding with Paymentus in principle pending clarification on whether there could be a trial period or if there is a contract involved. Motion carried.**

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 21, 2015**

The minutes of the September 21, 2015, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved and seconded that the September 21, 2015, minutes be approved. Motion carried.**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Extended Producer Responsibility Workshop**

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he, Warden Morrison and the CAO, attended a Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Workshop in Truro last week.

EPR is an environmental protection strategy to decrease the environmental impact of a product, by making the product manufacturer responsible for the life-cycle of the product, especially for the recycling and final disposal.

Deputy Warden Patterson felt that everyone was not sold on the information provided at this session. A number of issues remained unclear, as to whether there would be a central recycling facility or the impact it would have on rural facilities.

Discussion took place on this matter.

**It was moved and seconded that this matter be referred to Public Works staff to recommend to Council within a one month period. Motion carried.**

**IMMIGRATION PILOT PROJECT**

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that he attended an Immigration Summit in Halifax earlier today. There were approximately 200 in attendance and the federal government is being asked to eliminate the ceiling for Nova Scotia. There was a Cape Breton booth on Immigration there. Discussion took place on business succession planning and matching up prospective purchasers. Temporary foreign workers were discussed.

Deputy Warden Patterson questioned on the status of the investment readiness information through the Cape Breton Partnership. This information should be available for the Municipality's use as an outline on what we have to offer and attract immigrants to our area.

Warden Morrison indicated that this information could be obtained from the Cape Breton Partnership.

An update on the Immigration Pilot Project through CBU was mentioned.

**It was moved and seconded that Keith Brown and Amanda McDougall, CBU, be invited to come to Council to update on the Rural-Urban Immigration Pilot Project. Motion carried.**

**MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT – NSHA AND MUNICIPALITY**

The Memorandum of Agreement between the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA) and the Municipality of the County of Victoria to jointly undertake the planning and construction of primary care team office space at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital to for the purpose of facilitating physician recruitment was presented.

The Municipality previously agreed to provide funds in the amount of \$200,000.00 to NSHA for the project, in installments of \$100,000.00 over a two year period.

Eileen Woodford explained the renovations that would be completed to the middle wing of the Victoria County Memorial Hospital. This is seen as a temporary fix and the long term goal is an expansion to the hospital.

The lack of office space at the hospital has been a deterrent in attracting new physicians to the area.

It is anticipated that this work will be completed in a timely manner. The assessment quote was issued last week for this project.

**It was moved and seconded that the Warden and CAO be authorized to sign the Memorandum of Agreement with the NSHA. Motion carried.**

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that since the clear bag waste collection came into effect, he has received a number of calls with regard to providing green bins for compost.

Jocelyn Bethune indicated that household compost containers cost approximately \$10.00 and a link can be placed on the Victoria County website as to where these containers are available for purchase.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the matter of the taxes for the Little Narrows Community Development Association. He requested that a copy of the letter forwarded to the organization regarding tax exemption be forwarded to him.

Whether an application would be considered was questioned. There are some organizations in other areas of the County who have also not applied as yet.

An updated list of tax exempt properties is to be provided and reviewed by the Committee prior to Council.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that some of the gravel roads in his district were graded and others not. He also expressed concern with regard to the issue of the Washabuck Bridge and the hole in the Gillis Point Road at Maskell's Harbour. These items are to be forwarded to Darren Blunden, Area Manager, TIR.

**District #4**

Celtic Colours recently completed another successful festival. A letter of congratulations is to be forwarded to Celtic Colours.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he noticed that Carabin's busses were used as the transportation this year and he questioned why the school busses were not used as they were last year.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Celtic Colours questioning on why the school board busses were not used for the shuttle service this year. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that letters of congratulations be forwarded to Carolyn MacAskill and Amanda Morrison, Above and Beyond Home Care Services, for receiving the Innovation Award, and Penny Steele, Colouratura Fine Art Gallery, for receiving the Arts and Cultural Achievement Award, at the recent 2015 Women in Business Conference and Gala. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether a meeting would be held with the Welcome Centre operators at the Baddeck VIC and he was advised that BABTA would be hosting a meeting and inviting Councillors to attend. Council will be advised when the meeting is arranged.

Councillor MacInnis expressed concern on the lack of regulation and enforcement with regard to Mi'kmaq Moose Hunt. He has seen some disturbing instances in his area, as well as heard of others in other districts.

Councillor Buchanan indicated that a protest is planned for 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, October 31, 2015, at the Park entrances at Big Intervale and Pleasant Bay regarding the planned Mi'kmaq moose hunt inside the CBHNP next month.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Unima'ki Institute of Natural Resources in Eskasoni requesting a meeting on the native moose hunt issue. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that a street light order be placed for installation of a street light at 4862 Trans-Canada Highway 105, South Haven. Motion carried.**

**District #8**

Councillor Buchanan brought up the matter of the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre tax exemption.

This will be included in the tax exemption meeting.

The school funding in the Recreation Department budget has been decreased and it was felt this decrease should be reviewed. The schools need the established funding for their sports programs.

This school funding is to be revisited and a recommendation and update is to be available for the next meeting.

Councillor Buchanan requested if a reply has been received to Council's concern with regard to the Bay St. Lawrence water project not receiving funding under the Build Canada Fund.

This matter will be investigated.

Councillor Buchanan again indicated that a protest to the proposed Mi'kmaq moose hunt scheduled in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park next month will be held on October 31, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. at the park entrance at Big Intervale.

Councillor Buchanan thanked Jocelyn Bethune for the article she wrote in conjunction to the meeting he, Councillor MacNeil and Councillor MacInnis attended in Wagmatcook recently.

**District #7**

Councillor Budge requested that \$400.00 be provided from the District #7 budget for the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Development Association to assist with the cost of fireworks.

Councillor Budge thanked Council that after 3 years there is now cold water at the Neil's Harbour Enviro-Depot. The hot water is to come.

**District #6**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Mark Eyking, MP – Sydney-Victoria, on his recent election victory. Motion carried.**

Councillor Dauphinee brought up concern with regard to the traffic lights on the Cabot Trail by Knotty Pines Cottages. This work must be completed before winter or no one will be able to navigate the hill.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of TIR and Pam Eyking stressing the importance on having the necessary work done on the roadway by the Knotty Pines Cottages prior to the winter season. Motion carried.**

It was indicated that stop lights have been installed to complete work on the bridge by Buchanan Memorial Hospital.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on the status of the Economic Development Officer position for Victoria County.

Warden Morrison indicated that interviews were conducted and it is anticipated that something should be heard in this regard this week.

### **District #3**

Warden Morrison brought up the matter of the non-access highway designation between Exits 8 and 9 and the pilot project requested to access the highway.

It was felt that a meeting should be requested with the Minister of TIR to address this issue and other issues addressed – including the ferry fee issue, and the concerns addressed by Councillors MacNeil and Dauphinee regarding roads in their districts.

Attempts will be made to arrange a meeting with the Minister during the UNSM Conference next week.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that Strait Area Transit will officially launch their bus service between Baddeck and Whycomagh on Wednesday, October 28, 2015, at 3:00 p.m. The bus will be at Needs Convenience on that day and Councillors who are available are asked to ride the route that day.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

A letter was received from Cheryl MacDonald concerning a child care facility for preschool children in the north of Smokey area. She is researching two different solutions – a licensed daycare in one of the north of Smokey communities and a child care facility within the school environment. She is requesting any guidance or assistance in this regard.

Warden Morrison indicated that he and Councillor Grant recently met with a representative of the Family Resource Centre recently regarding family home daycare facilities and they have been requested to come to Council to present on this concept.



Ms. MacDonald's correspondence is to be acknowledged and she is to be invited to attend Council for the family home daycare presentation to see if it fits within her vision for daycare in the north of Smokey area. She will be notified further when the meeting is scheduled.

**District #6**

Councillor Dauphinee brought up concern on the food provided for Council meetings. There is nothing provided that he can/will eat.

Warden Morrison indicated that Councillor Dauphinee can get his supper elsewhere and be compensated for same.

Councillor Dauphinee also requested that the County truck and trailer be available for the North of Smokey Christmas Parade on November 28, 2015.

**NEXT COUNCIL MEETING**

The Council meeting set for October 29, 2015, has been cancelled and the next meeting of Council will be held on November 9, 2015, at 5:00 p.m. at the Court House.

A meeting of Cape Breton Municipalities will be held at the Gaelic College on November 25 and 26, 2015. More information will be made available at a later date.

Dan Christmas, Senior Advisor at Membertou, is proposing a joint meeting of Cape Breton Municipalities and First Nations next year.

**It was moved and seconded that the proposal for a joint meeting of First Nations and Municipalities be approved in principle. Motion carried.**

It was agreed to \$125.00 for each of the eight district budgets for a donation of \$1,000.00 to Feed Nova Scotia.

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Sandy Hudson, CAO**