

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
February 15, 2010

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, February 15, 2010, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspig
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – David Donovan
District #8 – Robert MacLellan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the agenda be approved as circulated. Motion carried.

BADDECK NURSERY SCHOOL

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Janice Cox, Baddeck Nursery School. Ms. Cox introduced Board Members, Penny Chapman and Ray Pineau, who were in attendance.

Ms. Cox then made a presentation on the Baddeck Nursery School Renovation Project to Council (copy attached), outlining the background, proposed renovations to the Nursery School and the renovation project funding.

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Ms. Cox indicated that the Baddeck Nursery School is seeking support from Council with the Baddeck Nursery School Renovation Project. They are requesting that the Municipality contribute \$25,000.00 over the next two years.

Discussion took place on present and future projected enrollment for the Baddeck Nursery School. Ms. Cox indicated that the location of the Nursery School within Baddeck Academy is a good fit and makes the transition to school much easier.

Ms. Cox indicated that the monies requested from Council will be used completely for the renovation project.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the Baddeck Nursery School's funding request be referred to budget deliberations. Motion carried.

Ms. Cox was extended a vote of thanks for her presentation and left at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 1, 2010

The Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 1, 2010, were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the February 1, 2010, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Trails Nova Scotia

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on who would get in contact with Trails Nova Scotia to appear before Council at a later session. Sandy Hudson will contact Tom Wilson for contact information for this organization and they will be invited to appear at a future meeting.

NSPI Low Income Program

Councillor MacCuspic expressed concern on the income eligibility scale for accessing NSPI's Energy Efficiency Program for Low-Income Homeowners with Electric Heat that Katherine Reed explained at the last meeting. The fact that rural income levels are different than urban levels and how these income levels are established was questioned.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to NSPI expressing concern on the income levels and the differences between urban and rural income levels for accessing the Energy Efficiency Program for Low-Income Homeowners with Electric Heat. Motion carried.

Wind Energy

At the last meeting, it was indicated that there is funding available to municipalities to assist in the preparation of a wind energy development plan. Up to \$50,000.00 is available.

Sandy Hudson indicated he spoke with the Program Coordinator and also Joe O'Connor, CAO, Inverness County, on doing a joint submission for Inverness and Victoria. Mr. Hudson also advised that a consulting firm, CRA would like to assist in preparing a proposal in response to this Expression of Interest on our behalf and to prepare the Wind Energy Development Plan if successful in obtaining funding from the UNSM.

NEW BUSINESS

GULF TRADING

Sandy Hudson provided Council with an update on the status of the Gulf Trading tax accounts. He outlined background correspondence and negotiations that have taken place. He is recommending that we proceed to tax sale with these properties.

Council agreed to continue to proceed to tax sale with the Gulf Trading properties.

VACATION

Sandy Hudson advised that he would be taking the month of April, 2010, as vacation.

MEETING WITH MINISTER JENNEX

Correspondence was received from the Honourable Ramona Jennex, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, advising that as part of the Minister's Tour, she has scheduled March 12, 2010 to meet with Victoria County Council. Mark Peck, Municipal Advisor, will be in contact to work out the details pertaining to the meeting location and time.

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A further letter was received the Minister Jennex concerning the Department's plans to address property mapping in Victoria County.

Both these items are to be included in the discussions when Council meets with the Minister.

Sandy Hudson advised that the Village of Baddeck are looking at extending their boundaries. 2/3's of the property owners in the area must be in favour and Sandy Hudson indicated that Minister Jennex should be requested to have "property owners" changed to "electors".

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Correspondence from Ken Paruch, NSPI, concerning alternative streetlighting systems.
2. Partial inventory of streetlights paid by Victoria County was received from NSPI.

Discussion took place a developing a policy with regard to streetlights. Examples will be obtained from other municipal units.

The inventory was reviewed and appears to be incomplete.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that Nova Scotia Power be requested to provide a more thorough inventory of streetlights in Victoria County. Motion carried.

3. An invitation was received from the Cape Breton Regional Hospital Foundation to attend a reception with the Honourable Peter MacKay on Thursday, February 18, 2010, at 3:00 p.m. in the Cape Breton Hospital Cafeteria.

BIOSPHERE RESERVE MEETING

Councillor MacNeil advised that a meeting on the biosphere reserve will be held in Halifax on February 23, 2010, and he would like permission to attend.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that Councillor MacNeil be authorized to attend the biosphere reserve meeting in Halifax. Motion carried.

The policy with regard to travel and travel allowances has been included in the Councillor's information package. The policy was reviewed.

HEALTH COVERAGE – COUNCILLORS

Any Councillor interested in participating in the health coverage program through the Municipality are asked to contact Sandy Hudson directly, as there are application forms and information necessary to pursue this matter.

NORTH HIGHLANDS COMMUNITY MUSEUM

A letter was received from Rob MacDonald, Chairman of the North Highlands Community Organization, requesting a \$12,000.00 operating grant for 2010 and \$20,000.00 in capital assistance from the gas tax funds for energy efficiency renovations of their Culture Centre.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that the North Highlands Community Organization's funding requests be referred to budget. Motion carried.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the Economic Development Strategy received in early January, 2010, should be reviewed and he suggested it be referred to the Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee.

A meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Community Development Committee will be held on March 3, 2010, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that the deadline for provincial volunteer submissions is March 4, 2010. This information is not available on the website, nor is the information pertaining to the Victoria County Volunteer Recognition. Sandy Hudson will contact Tom Wilson with regard to the provincial volunteer program and the municipal program, the criteria and eligibility and provide Council with the information he receives.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the Federal Student Grant applications are now being accepted until February 28, 2010. These grants are fully funded.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he is receiving requests to have a curfew established in his district. He questioned on how to go about establishing a curfew. It could be done through a by-law and investigation will be done with other municipal units to see if there are such by-laws in effect in other jurisdictions.

District #7

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that \$1,000.00 be awarded to both the Ingonish Volunteer Fire Department and the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Volunteer Fire Department from the District #7 budget. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan questioned on whether anyone had been contacted with regard to the ICSP and the fisheries component. To date, no one has been contacted.

Councillor Donovan indicated that in speaking to Greg Organ, Chairman of the Chief Fire Officers Committee, the fire departments wish to have a study done on the fire departments in Victoria County. He indicated that this would be a worthwhile project for the Municipality and would tell us if our money is being spent wisely. This would also include insurance coverage for departments. Whether it would cover such items as first responders, etc. was questioned.

Terry Redden's name was mentioned as a person who does studies such as this for fire departments. It was felt that it should be tendered out if it proceeds, as it would not be wise to go with one price.

The UNSM is also considering doing a study on rural fire protection and this is something that the Municipality may be able to piggyback with and if not, then consideration could be given to tendering for a study.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the CAO investigate incorporating a study of Victoria County Fire Departments in conjunction with the UNSM initiative , and if not possible, then the Municipality hire a consultant to do a study of Fire Departments in Victoria County including equipment, insurance, first responders and other issues. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan gave notice of motion that at a future meeting he would be requesting that the Municipality set aside \$100,000.00 annually to assist with the purchase of fire trucks for Victoria County Fire Departments to be done on a rotating basis with the departments.

It was felt it would be beneficial to complete the study before approving this motion and Councillor Donovan agreed to delay the motion until a study report in completed.

District #2

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that they investigate lowering the speed limit on the Cabot Trail on the stretch of highway that includes the two churches and two intersections in Middle River. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis expressed concern on being informed that the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department are selling a truck outside Victoria County. He felt that first option should be given to Victoria County Fire Departments.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal concerning the elimination of the controlled access designation on the TCH 105 between Exits 8 and Exit 13. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that the brush cutter come to Victoria County and give preference to the Skir Dhu to Barrachois area, District #4. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the County policy with regard to municipal property. There is an property in Little River owned by the Municipality and there could be a possible interest in developing this property. Discussion took place and Sandy Hudson will research the *Municipal Government Act* in this regard.

Councillor MacInnis also expressed concern on the Seal Island Lighthouse. The land leading to the lighthouse is disappearing and he felt this significant land mark should be protected. It is owned by Acadia University.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to Acadia University concerning the condition of the Seal Island Lighthouse property and request that they protect this area. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Alexandre Bilodeau on being the first Canadian to win an Olympic Gold Medal on Canadian soil. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor MacCuspic mentioned that he was also contacted by an individual concerning no access on the controlled access highway designation between Exits 8 and 13.

District #3

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Billy Joe MacLean on recently receiving the “Honourable” designation from Lieutenant Governor Francis. Motion carried.

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson updated Council on the recent population forum he, Warden Morrison and Sandy Hudson attended in Wolfville. The final report should be available in a couple of weeks.

IN CAMERA

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, to move In Camera. Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, to come out of In Camera and return to regular session.

UNION GRIEVANCE

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacLellan, to support the Chief Administrative Officer’s decision on the Union Grievance. Motion carried.

COMMITTEES

Until further information and decisions are made with regard to Committee function, it was decided that the Tourism and Broadband Committees scheduled for this week be postponed. Tom Wilson is to be notified on the cancellations and the Committee Chairman will discuss this matter further with Mr. Wilson.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, March 1, 2010, at 5:00 p.m. Councillors are requested to come at 4:00 p.m. to discuss policy matters.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacCuspik, the meeting adjourned.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO