

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
June 14, 2010

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at St. Andrew's Parish Hall, Neil's Harbour, on Monday, June 14, 2010, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – David Donovan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil (Due to Bereavement)
District #8 – Robert MacLellan (Due to Illness)

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and thanked the ladies responsible for the beautiful supper provided prior to the meeting.

He also thanked Councillor Donovan for the invitation to come to Neil's Harbour to hold Council, welcomed those in attendance, and acknowledged Simon MacGee and Hector Murphy who were in the audience.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was presented for approval. Warden Morrison questioned whether there were any additions or deletions to the agenda.

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

NOVA SCOTIA POWER

Courtesy of Council was extended to Ken Paruch, Regional Customer Service Manager, Nova Scotia Power.

Mr. Paruch thanked Council for the opportunity to appear. Nova Scotia Power representatives are pleased to meet with Councils all over Nova Scotia when invited.

Mr. Paruch then made a presentation to Council outlining facts and figures with regard to Nova Scotia Power (copy attached).

A question was raised on the manpower level in the North of Smokey area and Mr. Paruch advised that a linesman was hired last week and that will result in full staff complement being restored. NSPI is a Utility and Review Board (URB) regulated utility and must abide by the guidelines set by the URB. It was felt that this staff complement was insufficient for the area it covers. The staffing level has been reduced over time and Mr. Paruch indicated that they have a collective agreement in place that they must abide by.

The lack of tree trimming and tree removal on the power lines poses a problem and Mr. Paruch outlined their plans in this regard.

Discussion took place again on staffing and Mr. Paruch indicated it is difficult to attract and retain employees. Whether recruitment could be done in rural areas was questioned. Rural recruits would tend to be more receptive to working in rural areas. It was felt that going to the local schools and promoting training as a linesman would be beneficial. There are three schools in Nova Scotia that provide training for linesmen.

The question as to what happens when one employee from the two man complement goes on vacation was discussed and Mr. Paruch indicated that the position would be backfilled from another area.

Mr. Paruch indicated that this career is not for the weak of heart as linesmen are called into duty in adverse and trying conditions.

The power outage that occurred on May 22, 2010, was discussed. The public relations provided by NSPI during this outage were not adequate. The radio station had one time when the power would be restored, the NSPI website had another time and Councillor Donovan indicated that when he called NSPI he was told his power was restored, when in fact he was still without it. The public want to know the right information. Mr. Paruch explained the situation to Council.

Osborne Burke outlined the significance of a power outage to a commercial business such as Victoria Co-op Fisheries and the problems that arise as a result of same.

There are not many commercial users in the North of Smokey area and he felt that better notification could be provided to the businesses in the area regarding power outages.

The 5 to 20 second power outages that occur were discussed. Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that a neighbour lost a microwave as a result of one of these outages. These momentary losses of power are common and Mr. Paruch explained how and why these outages occur. Homeowners can protect their electronic equipment with adequate surge protection devices.

Councillor MacCuspik indicated that in his job with Waycobah First Nation he has close contact with NSPI staff and indicated that the staff is great. He indicated he thought of this career at one time, but after trying it, he soon realized it was not for him.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the rationale of NSPI's tree clearing in his district. The materials were left on the ground and this is frustrating to see. Mr. Paruch indicated that one of the reasons could be the element of cost management but he advised that if he was advised of the area in question, he would make sure it gets addressed. Councillor MacInnis advised that the area includes from the bottom of Smokey to the Englishtown Ferry.

Warden Morrison questioned on the inventory of street lights that the Municipality pays for. The Municipality has been trying for a number of years to get a listing of all the lights paid for. The cost of street lighting to Victoria County is approximately \$250,000 to \$300,000 annually.

Warden Morrison indicated that he had a light he was considering relocating to an alternate location and when contact was made with NSPI concerning this specific street light and whether it was in fact paid for by the Municipality, the advice given was to remove it and then it would be known if it was a County light. This is not an acceptable response.

Mr. Paruch indicated that there is no easy answer to the street light inventory question. The inventory provided by NSPI was as far back as could be achieved. Mr. Paruch indicated that if there is specific list or question in this regard, he would be happy to investigate and obtain a response.

Further discussion took place on concerns with regard to NSPI.

Councillor MacInnis made a comment that a resident of his area requested that a street light be removed from her residence approximately 1 year ago, and almost a year later, the light has finally been removed.

Warden Morrison advised that the discussion would end at this point and thanked Mr. Paruch for his attendance.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for five minutes.

RMCP UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Corporal Christal Ellis, Ingonish Beach Detachment of the RCMP.

Cpl. Ellis indicated that she moved to the Ingonish Detachment from Alberta in October, 2009. The Ingonish Beach Detachment has a full staff complement at present. One member will be leaving for a week to attend the G-8 Summit. One member at the Baddeck Detachment is currently on paternity leave, although there is a surplus recruitment member who is available to fill in for this position. The Wagmatcook RCMP service has been up and running since the end of May and Sgt. Mike Towle is the officer in charge.

The clerical position at the Baddeck Detachment remains unfilled at present and Shaune Warren from the Ingonish Beach Detachment is presently working 2 days in Baddeck and 3 in her regular position at Ingonish Beach.

Cpl. Ellis indicated that call wise, there are no major issues at present and everything is running smoothly.

Councillor MacInnis thanked Cpl. Ellis for the increased RCMP presence on the North Shore. It has made a definite difference and he questioned whether there was some way to address those who spread litter along the highways.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised of a situation a couple of weeks ago regarding a suspicious vehicle in his district.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he has received many positive comments with regard to the RCMP in his district. He questioned on whether there was any assistance with or any programs that can be accessed for the development of a drop in centre for youth. Cpl. Ellis indicated the centre established at Wagmatcook was funded through the Department of Justice and she would investigate and obtain information on this matter.

Discussion took place on a Curfew By-Law and it is being investigated by the Municipal Solicitor with regard to its legality and enforceability. Cpl. Ellis also

questioned on a Noise By-Law and was advised that there was no such by-law in effect in the Municipality.

Councillor Donovan indicated that the increased patrols in his district are appreciated and he requested that the RCMP monitor the beach parties that will be increasing in his district.

Sandy Hudson brought up the issue of policing in the Cape Breton Highlands National Park. At one time, the National Park paid for two members to police the National Park. He questioned if there were statistics on how much time the RCMP is providing enforcement within the National Park. Cpl. Ellis indicated there were no separate statistics regarding the Park and advised that there were no issues with enforcement and the RCMP have a good rapport with the National Park Wardens.

A question was raised on whether trucks carrying garbage to the solid waste facilities are to be covered and it was indicated they were. Cpl. Ellis indicated that there is a section regarding unsecure loads and this could be utilized by the RCMP if they see such activity occurring.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Cpl. Ellis for her attendance and the information provided.

NORTH VICTORIA SIX PORTS HARBOUR AUTHORITY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Kim Stockley, who along with Osborne Burke, was in attendance to make a presentation on the activities of the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority.

Mr. Burke indicated that the North Victoria Six Harbour Ports Authority is responsible for the day-to-day operations and management of six commercial fishing harbours from Ingonish Ferry to Dingwall.

Ms. Stockley provided a presentation on what the Harbour Authority does; what it has accomplished in the past year; the value of the work completed; and where the Authority plans to go from here (copy attached).

Warden Morrison commended Ms. Stockley for the report and opened the floor to questions.

The unexpected 88 passenger cruise ship visit on Thursday past was discussed and it was indicated that they were accommodated with short notice. The Harbour Authority invoiced \$1,500.00 for this visit and Ms. Stockley indicated that regular cruise ship visits are invoiced \$2,000.00.

Discussion took place on the reality TV production “In Real Life II” that will be filmed at the Ingonish Wharf from June 26-29, 2010. It is estimated that \$12,000 to \$13,000 will be grossed for this project and it will also provide great exposure for the area.

Cruise ship visits were discussed and it was indicated that 10 to 20 visits a year could be accommodated.

Ms. Stockley indicated that of the \$913,000 budget for 2009/2010, 90% went to Cape Breton businesses, of which 29% were North of Smokey businesses/groups and individuals.

Discussion took place on the divestiture of lighthouses in the County and the question was raised as to whether the Harbour Authority is doing anything in this regard. The only lighthouse that applies to the Harbour Authority is located in Neil’s Harbour and there is an active group already in place in Neil’s Harbour that is trying to address this issue. It could be included in the overall harbour development plan that is being completed for Neil’s Harbour that has a focus on integrating the fishery, community and the tourism potential of the site.

The installation of washrooms at the wharves was discussed and it was indicated that this could be something addressed in conjunction with the Cabot Trail Working Association.

Warden Morrison offered a vote of thanks and commended Ms. Stockley and Mr. Burke on the presentation. It appears that the Municipality has made a good investment with the funding provided to the North Victoria Six Ports Harbour Authority.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MAY 10, 2010

The minutes of the May 10, 2010, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of May 10, 2010, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Marketing Levy By-Law

The question was raised as to whether there was a timeline for the adoption of the Marketing Levy By-Law.

Sandy Hudson advised that Lorne MacDowell, Municipal Solicitor, has reviewed the by-law and has some concerns with the content of the document.

VICTORIA COUNTY BUILDING PERMIT FEES BY-LAW

The proposed Victoria County Building Permit Fees By-Law was presented for first reading.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the first reading of the Victoria County Building Permit Fees By-Law be approved. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There was no committee business to report.

NEW BUSINESS

EMO UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Lyle Donovan, Emergency Measures Coordinator for Victoria County, to provide an update on the Bell/Aliant service outage of June 2, 2010.

A written report of the incident was previously provided to Council by email on June 2, 2010 and Mr. Donovan indicated that the situation was handled very well by the County.

A number of issues occurred as a result of the outage, one being the VHF radio system. Mr. Donovan indicated that he would recommend that the County purchase a VHF with a dial up pad for his use at a cost of \$600 to \$700.

There is also a need to have an established Emergency Operations Centre (EOC). At present to Court House is the best location, although it has a number of deficiencies.

The use of amateur radio operators in emergency situations was discussed and the estimated expenses for coordinating same were provided.

Having a Facebook page and a Twitter account where information could be posted was also felt to be a good method of providing information. Mr. Donovan indicated he has spoken to Tom Wilson in this regard.

Overall the situation was handled very well and Mr. Donovan was advised to submit his recommendations in writing and they would be dealt with at a future meeting.

Mr. Donovan was extended a vote of thanks for his report.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #2

Councillor MacCuspig brought up the matter of the section of the Big Baddeck Road that was paved last year. The work was unsatisfactory and the residents of the area are petitioning to have it fixed properly.

The Chief Engineer for the Department of Transportation has recommended that the affected sections of pavement be removed and the entire area be covered with chip seal. This is not acceptable.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that they revisit the proposed remediation action for the section of the Big Baddeck Road and obtain another opinion on a satisfactory repair for the road. Motion carried.

Councillor MacCuspig felt that a policy should be introduced for the hiring of summer students. It was felt that in future years, the student position in the Tax Office should be spread around and the same student not hired more than one year.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a summer student hiring policy be developed for the Municipality. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether the grading of roadside ditches had been completed in other districts. It was completed in Districts 6 and 7 and in all areas it is unacceptable and there should be a better way to do this work.

Councillor MacInnis will contact Steve MacDonald, Acting Area Manager, in this regard.

The brush cutter was in District #4 and did a fine job of cutting brush along the roadsides.

District #7

Councillor Donovan questioned on not accepting cardboard at the Cape North Transfer Station.

Sandy Hudson felt that recyclable materials, such as cardboard, should be brought to the Neil's Harbour Enviro-Depot site.

The former solid waste collector hauled cardboard to the Cape North site and then transferred it to Neil's Harbour from there. Councillor Donovan felt that cardboard should be accepted at the Transfer Station site.

The Keltic Lodge is placing their cardboard in garbage bags instead of taking it to the Enviro-Depot. A letter is to be sent to the Keltic concerning their cardboard disposal.

Sandy Hudson and Robert Dauphinee are to come up with a solution with regard to cardboard in the northern area.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on the status of the investigation by the Municipal Solicitor on the legalities and enforcement of a Curfew By-Law. Sandy Hudson will check with the solicitor on the status of his investigation.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of the shoulders of the road on Smokey and he was advised that this work is being done today.

District #3

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to Jessie Wong on receiving the RICOH Award as the Female Team Athlete of the Year for Nova Scotia. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison brought up the matter of Department of Fisheries and Oceans decision to declare a number of lighthouses in Victoria County as surplus. Included in the list are the Kidston Island and Kidston Island West End lights in his district.

The other lights and lighthouses identified include:

Neil's Harbour
Black Rock and Black Rock Point
Ciboux Island

Little Narrows
St. Paul Island North Point
Gillis Point

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, the a letter be forwarded to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans expressing Council's concern on the divestiture of the lights and lighthouses in Victoria County and request a moratorium on the destruction of these lights, and they be looked at individually with the communities prior to any action taking place. Motion carried.

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up the matter of the Age-Friendly Communities grant from the Department of Seniors. There is \$5,000 available from the Department of Seniors to be matched by the Municipality (can be in-kind). The deadline for application is July 30, 2010.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that Jacqueline Campbell from the Department of Seniors would like to come and speak to a number of people in health care, hospitals, etc. to get an idea of what is available and then make a presentation to Council.

Seniors are the fastest growing population in Nova Scotia and Nova Scotia is now the oldest province in Canada. Victoria County is the oldest County in Nova Scotia.

Deputy Warden Patterson will contact Jacqueline Campbell regarding her appearing at Council.

It was also indicated that Sandy Hudson, CAO, turned 60 yesterday.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Sandy Hudson advised that he is in negotiations with the candidate for the Economic Development Officer (EDO) position. Discussion took place on a contract position of three days per week.

Mr. Hudson indicated that as the EDO position is a Union position, he will have to negotiate with the Union in this regard.

The possibility of making a contract position for a Sustainability Officer was discussed.

Mr. Hudson advised that he should have further information for the June 28, 2010, session of Council.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacCuspic, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO