

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
March 28, 2011

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, March 28, 2011, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – David Donovan
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present was:

Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

Sandy Hudson, CAO

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

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

RCMP PRESENTATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to Sgt. Rick Beaton and Sgt. Mike Towle, RCMP.

Sgt. Beaton is Acting District Commander of the Victoria County District and Sgt. Mike Towle is the officer in charge of the Wagmatcook Community Office. Council then provided introductions, indicating the areas they served.

Sgt. Beaton then presented a policing proposal to Council for consideration (copy attached) requesting an additional officer to be assigned to Baddeck.

Sgt. Beaton outlined the policing priorities on a national, provincial and local basis. The total RCMP resources in Nova Scotia were provided. Victoria County is located with the Northeast Nova District of the "H" Division. The costs of the RCMP in Nova Scotia were outlined.

St. Beaton outlined the makeup of the Ingonish and Baddeck Detachments and the Wagmatcook Community Office. It was indicated that service to Wagmatcook is under a Community Tripartite Agreement and Letter of Expectation. The team leader and three constables provide a dedicated service to Wagmatcook excepting emergency calls outside the community.

The service delivery pressures for the RCMP in servicing Victoria County were identified and statistics with regard to case load burden and calls for service were provided. The accuracy of the statistics provided was questioned and discussion took place.

The benefits of an additional officer to Victoria County were explained and the options for consideration and pros and cons were outlined. The cost to Victoria County for an additional officer is \$128,000.00.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the issue of the increase in break and enters in his district in the past couple of years and that if the additional officer would provide an increased police presence in the community, then it could be a good idea.

Councillor MacCuspic questioned on the Police Advisory Board. There had been Council representatives appointed to the Police Advisory Board and a call for expressions of interest from citizens to serve on the Committee did not receive any response. The possibility of trying to establish a Police Advisory Board again was discussed.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of false alarms. He indicated that the fire department in his district is called out to a number of alarm calls and one of the options being considered is charging insurance companies for false alarms. Sgt. Beaton indicated that this is a problem for the RCMP also and a review of this matter provincially was carried out with a view to establishing a policy in this regard. If the policy is enacted, it will apply to Victoria County.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he was of the assumption that RCMP members were on duty 24 hours per day. This is not and has never been the case. There is always a member on call. Sgt. Towle explained that it is the national policy that no member goes out alone, so there is a primary officer on call who determines whether a secondary officer is required.

Councillor Buchanan expressed concern on one of the options presented to redeploy an existing officer within the Victoria County District from Ingonish Beach to Baddeck. He felt this was not an option. In the last year, there have been upwards of 30 arsons in the northern area of the County. If anything, additional officers are required in the northern area. Sgt. Beaton indicated that case load burden indicates that Baddeck members have more files than Ingonish Beach.

Councillor Donovan questioned on traffic control. The traffic service is out of North Sydney and they can cover the entire island, with the exception of the area serviced by the Cape Breton Regional Police Service.

Councillor Donovan also requested clarification on the staff complements in both the Ingonish Beach and Baddeck Detachments. Sgt. Beaton provided this information.

Councillor Donovan also questioned on whether there has been an improvement since the street crime position came into effect in Victoria County. Sgt. Beaton indicated that provincially, the Department of Justice is very happy with the street crime positions. Sgt. Towle indicated the assistance provided by this position to the Wagmatcook Office.

Councillor Donovan brought up the issue of Halloween and fishing disputes in the northern area of the County. A great deal of resources are brought in by the RCMP at Halloween, but there never seems to be anyone charged with offences. This occurs year after year. Also with fishing disputes, RCMP members just stand on the wharf and watch and take no action. Sgt. Beaton indicated that they feel the measures approach is the best in these situations.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on whether there would be any possibility of adding extra officers provincially or federally. This is not an option. Councillor Dauphinee indicated that redeploying a member from Ingonish Beach to Baddeck is not an option.

The armed robbery and two fires that recently occurred in northern Victoria were discussed. Over 68 fires have occurred in the northern area of the County over the last 7 to 8 years and no charges have been laid as a result. Sgt. Beaton indicated that arson is a difficult crime to solve.

Councillor Dauphinee stated that he felt more accurate statistics should be received. The Ingonish Beach statistics should be included before consideration can be given to any requests.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that Victoria County has recently become involved in the Age Friendly Communities initiative and he questioned on whether the

RCMP dealt with any senior fraud in the County. It was indicated that they have not seen any.

Deputy Warden Patterson also brought up the issues of accidents in snowy weather and he questioned whether snow tires should be mandatory in the province, as many accidents occur as a result of having no snow tires.

Whether the RCMP staff complement was at full strength was questioned. Sgt. Towle indicated that they have a full staff complement with one member being on parental leave until May, 2011, and one presently on sick leave.

When the permanent replacement for Staff Sgt. Archie Thompson would be announced was questioned and Sgt. Beaton advised that the replacement should be named within a month.

Warden Morrison questioned on the length of the Wagmatcook policing agreement and he was advised that it was for a two year period and it was indicated that Wagmatcook is set on having the agreement stay as it presently is.

Warden Morrison agreed that there were way to many holes in the statistics provided and Council do not wish to be involved in pitting one area of the County over another, so he would like to see accurate statistics provided before any consideration is given to the request for an additional officer.

Warden Morrison introduced residents from the northern area of the County who were in attendance and gave them the opportunity to question the RCMP on their concerns with regard to RCMP coverage in northern Victoria County. The opportunity was also provided to other audience members to address concerns to the officers in attendance.

Warden Morrison indicated that before consideration would be given to the request, additional information is required. This matter will be forwarded to budget discussions, pending receipt of additional and more accurate statistics. The RCMP will be asked to come back to Council at a later time concerning this matter.

Warden Morrison extended thanks to Sgt. Beaton and Sgt. Towle for their attendance.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

GAELIC COUNCIL OF NOVA SCOTIA

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Caroline Cameron, Coordinator for the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia.

Ms. Cameron presented Council with a Gaelic/English Calendar for the current year and information on Gaelic road signs. She expressed pleasure at having some of the County's constituents in attendance tonight. These individuals are very involved and supportive of Gaelic in Victoria County and of the work of the Gaelic Council.

Ms. Cameron then made a power point presentation on the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia (copy attached).

Ms. Cameron indicated that the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia has been active for over twenty years in advocacy and the awareness-raising that is necessary to build support for Gaelic in Nova Scotia. They support Gaelic language as the platform for the aspects of Gaelic culture that are so important to Nova Scotia society.

Ms. Cameron advised that they are requesting Council for a contribution of anything up to \$1,000.00 to assist with three projects they are undertaking in 2011/2012. She provided Council with an outline on the 2011 Forum, Collaborative Workshops and Strategic Planning.

The 2011 Forum will feature two workshops – making connections in your community and product development - and will take place in Port Hawkesbury on May 28, 2011, and she requested Council to mark this date on their calendar and that hopefully some would be able to attend.

Deputy Warden Patterson questioned on the prevalence of Gaelic speakers in Nova Scotia. Ms. Cameron indicated that we are losing the elderly Gaelic speakers quickly, but it would be easy to find 100 people who are fluent in Gaelic, as well as others who have not used Gaelic in a long time. There are 500 new learners across the province.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on Gaelic in schools and Jessica MacLennan who was in attendance outlined the schools that presently offer Gaelic Language Programs in the province and also advised that there are schools who also offer Gaelic Cultural studies in their curriculum.

Councillor Donovan questioned on where the initiative should come from to get such programs in the schools and he was advised that it was up to the parents to make a start to get these programs offered in schools.

Councillor MacInnis advised that the Gaelic Mod has declined in the past number of years and he questioned whether having a theme of a Clan day, etc. would spark

interest. Ernie MacAulay who was in attendance indicated that this year will be the 75th anniversary of the Gaelic Mod and there will be a Clan Day held in conjunction with the festivities.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that \$1,000.00 be provided to the Gaelic Council of Nova Scotia. Motion carried.

Councillor MacCuspic advised that the Gaelic Culture is what makes Cape Breton unique and it is very worthwhile to promote this culture.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that his district is very fortunate to have the Nova Scotia Highland Village which keeps the Gaelic Culture alive. Also the Gaelic Programs offered at Rankin School of the Narrows are increasing the interest in Gaelic Culture. The Nova Scotia Highland Village now has a new Gaelic interpretive website.

Further discussion took place and Ms. Cameron was extended a vote of thanks for her presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – MARCH 21, 2011

The minutes of the March 21, 2011, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of March 21, 2011, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

There were no Committee Reports received.

POLICY REVIEW

There were no new policies presented for review.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that CBRM have advertised there Heavy Garbage Collection schedule and he felt that Victoria County's should be initiated and completed in the spring this year.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Director of Public Works be directed to initiate a heavy garbage collection for Victoria County to be completed by June 1, 2011. Motion carried.

It was felt that this work should be avoided on the weekend of the Cabot Trail Relay - the last weekend in May.

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up the issue of the provincial dismantling of the UNSM-Provincial Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). On March 22, 2011, the Province announced it was making changes to the MOU with municipalities. Starting in 2012-13, the Province will require municipalities to make contributions to corrections and public housing costs that it had previously agreed to assume and will change the formula by which education cost contributions will be calculated.

The lack of consultation by the Province with regard to this matter, as well as how this action would impact the decision to establish a Municipal Auditor General was discussed. It was felt that the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations should be contacted, as well as the President of the UNSM, to discuss the changes.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations expressing displeasure with regard to the lack of consultation and dismantling of the MOU and requesting that he meet with Victoria County Municipal Council to discuss the changes to the MOU and how they effect the individual municipalities in the Province. Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Warden Morrison make contact with UNSM President, Mayor Billy Joe MacLean, requesting he meet with Council to discuss the UNSM's position with regard to the dismantling of the MOU. Motion carried.

A date for these meetings will be scheduled based on their availability.

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up the matter of the Nova Scotia Planning Directors Association's Annual Spring Conference to be held at the Lord Nelson Hotel, Halifax, from May 4- 6, 2011.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that Councillors interested in attending the Nova Scotia Planning Directors Spring Conference be permitted to do so and register for the conference through Heather MacLean. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the issue of graffiti along the roadsides. He questioned whether a reply was received from the Solicitor with regard to adopting a by-law concerning same.

Councillor Dauphinee felt there should be a "To Do" list developed to enable Council to keep track of actions that have been brought up to ensure that they are followed through.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a "To Do" list be initiated to be reviewed at each Council meeting. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Donovan indicated that he had requested and received approval from Council last year for \$7,000.00 for the demolition of the old legion building in Neil's Harbour if the Neil's Harbour-New Haven Development Association received ownership of the building. To date, the Association has not received ownership of the building and he requested the \$7,000.00 approved be carried over for another year.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the \$7,000.00 approved for the Neil's Harbour-New Haven Development Association for the demolition of the old legion building be carried over for another year. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan brought up the RCMP presentation and felt that a meeting should be held between the Councillors in the northern area of the County and selected citizens and the RCMP to discuss concerns in the area. Councillor Donovan will make contact with the RCMP to set up the meeting.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan indicated he wished to order a street light and would provide the civic address to the municipal office tomorrow.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis questioned on whether the invoice for Cape Breton Catalogue from last year was paid and he was advised it has been paid.

Councillor MacInnis expressed concern with regard to Council's laptop computers and felt that they are unreliable. He has not been able to receive his County email for some time.

District #2

Councillor MacCuspig brought up the petition that was initiated by residents of Big Baddeck concerning the road. Keith Bain, MLA, was to take the petition to the legislature.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to Keith Bain, MLA, supporting the petition and requesting Council be advised on the results of the submission of the petition to the legislature. Motion carried.

The solar street light to be installed at the eastern entrance of the Beverly's Hill Road was discussed. The cost was previously approved.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that permission be given to coordinate, through the Director of Public Works, the resources necessary to have the solar street light installed at the eastern entrance to the Beverly's Hill Road. Motion carried.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil presented an application for financial assistance from the MacKinnon Harbour Survival Association for \$15,000.00 to assist with the dredging of the harbour.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the MacKinnon Harbour Survival Association's funding request be referred to budget. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Coach Sandy Watling and the Baddeck Bantam B hockey team on winning the provincial title. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison re-assumed the Chair.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. A request was received from Public Health Services, Cape Breton District Health Authority, to proclaim April 23-30, 2011, "National Immunization Awareness Week" in Victoria County.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that April 23-20, 2011, be proclaimed "National Immunization Awareness Week" in Victoria County. Motion carried.

2. A letter was received from Gail Boudreau, Secretary, Alderwood Working Council, asking for financial support from the Municipality to erect a garage on the Alderwood property for the residents' budget.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the Alderwood Working Council request be referred to budget talks. Motion carried.

3. A Community Grants Funding Application was received from Wagmatcook First Nation requesting \$20,000.00 to assist with the upgrade of two softball and sports fields for the upcoming 2011 Mi'kmaw Summer Games.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Community Grants Funding Application from Wagmatcook First Nation be referred to budget talks. Motion carried.

4. An application for financial assistance in the amount of \$10,000.00 was received from the Neil's Harbour-New Haven Development Association to enhance their comfort station.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the Neil's Harbour-New Haven Development Association's request for funding be referred to budget talks. Motion carried.

COMPUTERS

The laptop computers used by Council were discussed. There are problems with the computers, but it was felt they should be made to last to the duration of the Council term and then look at purchasing new computers. If Councillor Buchanan's computer is not repaired by the next Council session, a new computer be obtained.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, April 18, 2011, at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO