

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
September 26, 2011

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 26, 2011, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden 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
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil (Due to Illness)

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 Donovan, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

MARK PECK, MUNICIPAL ADVISOR, SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS

Courtesy of Council was extended to Mark Peck, Municipal Advisor, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR).

Warden Morrison welcomed Mr. Peck to Victoria County. Mr. Peck presented a session on the *Municipal Government Act* to newly elected Councillors earlier today and indicated that Councillor Buchanan attended the session, along with representatives from Inverness County and the Town of Mulgrave.

Mr. Peck indicated that the recent report from the Ombudsman's Office on municipal loan guarantees is a document that should be reviewed by Council. It outlines the authority Councils have in this regard. There are three recommendations contained in the report that Mr. Peck indicated that staff at Service Nova Scotia will be paying particular attention to:

- The Municipal Services Division of SNSMR will work closer on the role of the auditor and keep apprised of issues before they become an issue
- Increase role in offering training to administration, staff and Council
- Pay more attention of the municipal financial statements

He indicated that Victoria County is on the right track and he commended the County on this and indicated that they continue on this path.

Mr. Peck outlined the authority contained in the *Municipal Government Act* that allows municipalities to guarantee borrowing. All guarantees for borrowing must be approved by the Minister of SNSMR.

A session on the *Municipal Government Act* can be provided to Councils as a refresher and it was felt this would be beneficial to all. Mr. Peck indicated that he is available at any time to discuss municipal issues.

Mr. Peck indicated that Graham Fisher has drafted a template – Climate Change Action Plan that can be used with regard to gas tax funding.

Mr. Peck updated on the Bridgetown situation and the assistance being offered to this town by SNSMR and advised that the Town of Canso is going through the dissolution process and the UARB hearing on this matter will be held from December 5-9, 2011. The Town has filed in excess of 15 required reports with the UARB.

The fall conference of the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia will be held at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck, from October 18-21, 2011, and the Annual Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities conference will be held at the Westin Nova Scotian, Halifax, from November 1-4, 2011.

Mr. Peck outlined the Finn Report which outlines municipal land use planning in New Brunswick and PEI and indicated this might also be of interest to review.

Municipal Advisors from the 4 Atlantic Provinces have been meeting the past few years and Mr. Peck indicated that he just returned from a meeting in Newfoundland on Friday past. These sessions are very informative and beneficial to all involved.

Where the reports mentioned in his presentation could be obtained was questioned and Mr. Peck indicated he would email the link to the municipal office for distribution to Council.

Regular meetings between Cape Breton municipalities was discussed and felt it would be beneficial to meet on a more regular basis.

The COMFIT program and the requirements for municipalities to invest was discussed and questioned.

Council extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Peck for his comments and presentation and he was excused at this time.

RDA ASSESSMENT

Courtesy of Council was extended to Nona MacDermid, Economic Development Sustainability Officer, who was in attendance to discuss her previously distributed report on her Regional Development Authority (RDA) assessment (copy attached).

Prior to discussion on the RDA Assessment, Ms. MacDermid outlined a planned session on Business Training and Business Succession Planning that is being targeted to take place on November 16, 2011, at the Inverary Resort. This session will be marketed to business owners from across Cape Breton Island.

Ms. MacDermid also advised that she is in the preliminary stages of planning a Fisheries Conference to be held in the fall. This will be a day long event dealing with the concerns and opportunities with regard to the fisheries.

Discussion took place on the RDA assessment. In terms of overall opportunity, it is clear that decisions are required on how to proceed with regard to economic development. The Municipality cannot achieve as many positive outcomes on their own as can be achieved by working as part of an RDA system.

Ms. MacDermid advised that she, as one person, cannot deliver an engaging, effective and comprehensive economic development service. Major funding agencies are moving in a direction where funding can only be accessed through RDAs with effective leadership teams. The current situation with regard to economic development in Victoria is high risk because there are no guarantees that Ms. MacDermid will be here in the future, no one has been identified to replace her if she was no longer available and recruiting a new Economic Sustainability Officer would leave another gap in service. She indicated that she felt the Municipality would benefit immensely from becoming part on the RDA community in Nova Scotia.

Ms. MacDermid provided an overview of the options available to the Municipality and provided recommended next steps to Council for consideration. Her recommendations included selecting the most promising option and approving that she pursue a formal plan on how the Municipality would achieve the best option.

A general discussion took place on the report and Council felt that the appropriate action was to look into joining an RDA. RDA's have matured and developed since the Municipality was last a member of one and it was felt that it was time for the Municipality to set the path to reestablish with an RDA.

It was felt that the first step would be for Nona MacDermid to sit down with the RDAs to get a clear understanding of what is required to join an RDA. This will begin the process and decisions can be made following this meeting. Council indicated that this is a priority item for them.

Ms. MacDermid is to present a timetable and plan as soon as possible with a target date for joining an RDA being April 1, 2012, the beginning of the next fiscal year. The costs associated with same would be included in the 2012/2013 budget.

Ms. MacDermid was extended a vote of thanks.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 5 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 12, 2011

The minutes of the September 12, 2011, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of September 12, 2011, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Fire Departments

Councillor MacInnis indicated that a meeting of the fire departments scheduled since May, 2011, was held recently with a very poor attendance. The situation with regard to the communications equipment was discussed and fire departments have been advised to submit their paid invoices to the Municipality for reimbursement.

Letter – Minister Paris

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on whether the letter had been forwarded to Minister Percy Paris, Tourism, with regard to the meeting on the Keltic Lodge and Ski Cape Smokey. The letter was forwarded requesting a meeting in the early fall, but no reply has been received as yet.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #2

Councillor MacCuspic questioned whether other Council members were experiencing problems with their laptops. It was the consensus of many that they were.

The possibility of purchasing I Pad's for Councillors was discussed or whether there was other technology that would be easier to use.

It was moved by Councilor MacCuspic, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the CAO investigate pricing for alternatives to the present laptops used by Council. Motion carried.

Councillor MacCuspic advised that Pitupaq will be hosting *Planning to Change – A Conference on Climate and Infrastructure in Cape Breton*. This day long session will be held at the Wagmatcook Culture & Heritage Centre on Friday, October 14, 2011, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Any Council members wishing to attend are to contact the municipal office and they will be registered.

Councillor MacCuspic indicated that he and Warden Morrison recently met with an engineer and property owners on the Shore Road, Baddeck, concerning hooking in to the Village's sewer system. If feasible, the connection to the sewer would be cost shared by the residents on the Shore Road. A site visit is scheduled for October 11, 2011. Permission of the Village is required before this matter is pursued farther.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the Shore Road Sewer Extension be added to the municipal infrastructure list. Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis brought up the sewage disposal (Island Vacuum) site on the South Ridge Road, Dingwall. He questioned on the feasibility of the County having a site.

The South Ridge Road site is monitored by the Department of the Environment and Sandy Hudson advised that he would be meeting with a representative from that Department next week. It was felt that the representative should be requested to bring copies of previous inspection reports to this meeting.

Councillor MacInnis reported on an unsightly premise in his district which he would like referred to the Eastern District Planning Commission for inspection.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the “Right Some Good” festival congratulating them on a successful festival. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan indicated that he received positive comments on the new Victoria County welcome signs and was questioned on signs for the other entrances to the Municipality. Smaller signs are planned for the remaining entrances to the Municipality.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on Halloween security for his district. He has been receiving calls regarding same and was advised this has been done in the past and to provide names to Sandy Hudson.

Councillor Buchanan requested that a street light be ordered for location at 706 Dingwall Road, Dingwall. The pole is marked with orange tape.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the status of the Physical Active Living Strategy for the Municipality. Sandy Hudson advised that a meeting of the Senior Management Committee was held earlier today and it is anticipated that the Strategy will be up and running by July, 2012.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on whether there was an update on the status of the water system for Bay St. Lawrence/St. Margaret’s Village and the extension for Cape North. Sandy Hudson advised that there is no update at this time.

District #7

Councillor Donovan requested that a street light be ordered to be located between 690 and 700 New Haven Road. The pole is marked.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Jason LeBlanc and Keith Moore,

Coastal Waters Restaurant, Ingonish, on being featured on the Food Networks, “You Gotta Eat Here” television show. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee requested that a street light be ordered to be located at 53 Roper Road, Ingonish. The pole is marked with tape.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on whether there was an update on the takeover of subdivision roads. Conflicting advice had been received on this matter. Warden Morrison updated Council on what he was advised in this regard.

District #1

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that \$1,750.00 be approved from the District #1 budget for the Royal Canadian Legion, Iona, to assist with the plaque on the cenotaph. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison indicated that at the last meeting, prices were to be obtained for paving of Alexander Drive. This road was taken over by the Municipality in 1996 and there are now 17 homes on the drive with an assessed value of over \$4 million dollars. Money was included in the budget for this roadway.

Three prices were received:

Ocean Paving - \$36,000 plus tax

Stan’s Paving - \$56,500 plus tax

Dexters - \$47,879

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that Ocean Paving be awarded the paving of Alexander Drive, Baddeck, at a cost of \$36,000 plus tax. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

SEASONAL TOURIST BUSINESS TAX

A reply was received from the Honourable John MacDonell, Minister of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, to Council's request that the Seasonal Tourist Business Tax Designation be changed from mandatory to optional.

He indicated that staff at Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations reviewed the program and while they appreciate Council's concerns, based on the review, they are not able to support a change in the current policy and legislation as it would create an unequal playing field for seasonal tourist businesses across the province.

The former Minister of SNSMR had indicated this would policy and legislation would be changed. Victoria County is the most affected Municipality in the province.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacCuspig, that a letter be forwarded to Minister MacDonell, with a copy of the UNSM, advising of the of the previous Minister's commitment on this matter and request that he come to Council to discuss this matter further. Motion carried.

2011-2012 MUNICIPAL BUDGET

Sandy Hudson presented the 2011-2012 municipal budget to Council. A formal motion approving the budget is required.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the 2011-2012 municipal budget be approved. Motion carried.

CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP

The Annual Meeting of the Cape Breton Partnership will be held at the Keltic Lodge on October 6, 2011. Registration is \$75 and any Council member wishing to attend should contact the municipal office to be registered.

District #4

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Natural Resources concerning the unsightly state of the former Plaster Picnic Park, North Shore. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacCuspig, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, the meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO