

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
April 30, 2012

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, April 30, 2012, 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 – David Donovan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent were:

District #2 – Keith MacCuspic (Out of Town)
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan (Out of Town)

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Deputy Warden Patterson requested that ECBC be added as an agenda item.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the agenda be approved with the noted addition. Motion carried.

Gaelic College Presentation

Courtesy of Council was extended to Rodney MacDonald, Chief Executive Officer, Gaelic College.

Introductions were provided to Mr. MacDonald and he then presented a project proposal and request to Council (copy attached). The value of the project is in excess of \$300,000.00 and includes funding from ECBC, the Province and the College.

The funding being requested from the Municipality is for signage. They are proposing two community identity signs (10" X 17") with a focus on the Gaelic College as part of the community of St. Ann's. The cost of the two signs is \$11,000 each (taxes included) for a total of \$22,000.00. Mr. MacDonald indicated that signage is an important issue with respect to the overall brand and identity of the College.

Mr. MacDonald also provided Council with an outline of the *Feis Colaisde na Gaidhlig* to be held from May 7-13, 2012, as well as the Summer School Program outline.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that it was evident at the March Break Day Camp offered at the Gaelic College that there is renewed excitement and enthusiasm at the College. He indicated that he felt the Gaelic College and Highland Village could work well together.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that the Gaelic College is a critical part of his district and questioned on the 75th anniversary plans. Anna MacDonald has been hired as the Director of Marketing and will coordinate the festivities. An update will be provided at a later date when the schedule is concrete.

Discussion took place on the possibility of the Gaelic College being a year around teaching facility and it was indicated that this could be considered and only if it was financially feasible.

The possibility of rental space for medical purposes at the College was questioned. Mr. MacDonald indicated that if a professional was looking for rental space, they would look at options if space was available.

A question was raised on the sewage treatment plant at the College and it was indicated that the system was upgraded for the College's use only 4 to 5 years ago.

Council expressed its pleasure with the happenings at the Gaelic College. The Municipality has held County meetings, a Christmas Party, and the volunteer awards ceremony at the College and indicated that it is a great place – central to both northern and southern Victoria. The food is excellent, the facilities excellent, and the improvements being made will only enhance the facility.

The CAP site at the facility was discussed and Mr. MacDonald advised that the College provides the space for the CAP site and the CAP site pays to utilize the space.

Warden Morrison indicated that he worked at the College as a student when the Gaelic Mod was a week long event and the crowds that would come to the concerts and

events were phenomenal and he looked forward to seeing the Gaelic College built back to its former status.

The request for funding was discussed and Mr. MacDonald indicated that they would like to see this request considered as soon as possible, as they would like to see the signs erected in the near future.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Municipality approve \$22,000.00 for signage and provide the requested letter of support. Motion carried.

Council indicated that they would like to receive updates on the College and Mr. MacDonald indicated that he would be happy to come to Council annually or as requested.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. MacDonald for his presentation and Mr. MacDonald offered a thank you to Council for their support.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 16, 2012

The Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of April 16, 2012, were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the minutes of the April 16, 2012, session of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Island Vacuum

Sandy Hudson advised that he has not received a reply from the Department of Environment with regard to Island Vacuum.

Tax Exemption

The tax exemption income level was discussed and Sandy Hudson advised that Pauline Davis, Director of Taxation, recommended that the income level be raised from \$20,000 to \$22,000.

Discussion took place and Council felt the income level should be consistent with the provincial income level rates.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Tax Exemption income level be consistent with the provincial income threshold and the Municipality change in accordance with provincial changes in future. Motion carried.

Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal

Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, has been requested to come to Council and was provided May 14 and 28, 2012, as possible dates for him to attend.

Municipal Planning

John Bain, Director, Eastern District Planning Commission, has been invited to Council on May 14, 2012, to outline the steps to expand zoning in the Municipality.

Intelivote – Electronic Voting

Discussion took place on the upcoming Municipal and School Board election. The presentation provided by Intelivote at the last meeting was to be considered and a decision made at this meeting.

Sandy Hudson indicated that he was unsure how the school board part of the election will be handled, as Victoria County's two seats may be under the umbrella of CBRM's returning officer.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the Municipality approve electronic voting for the advance polls and continue with regular paper ballot on Election Day, pending clarification on the school board election issue. Motion carried.

The electronic advance poll will be done over an 8 day period, beginning October 9 and ending on October 16, 2012.

A County-wide enumeration will be completed in May, 2012. Arrangements are now being made to obtain enumerators.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

VICTORIA COUNTY FLAG

Victoria County schools were invited to participate in a flag contest for Victoria County's new flag. Submissions were received from students from three schools – Baddeck Academy, Rankin School of the Narrows and Middle River Consolidated School.

Council has since decided to proceed with a flag based solely on the Victoria County logo.

It was felt that an entry from each of the three schools be selected and an appropriate prize be awarded. The winners were as follows:

Baddeck Academy – Dallas Corbett
Rankin School of the Narrows – Lindsey MacNeil
Middle River Consolidated School – Gregor Messem

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the three student entries and the schools represented each receive \$50 and they be extended a vote of thanks for their participation. Motion carried.

Sandy Hudson then presented the designs, based on the logo, designed by Vibe Creative Group. Council reviewed the designs and the design with a blue background, with the mountains in green and Victoria County in white be approved as the flag design.

Flags will be ordered and a public unveiling of the new flag will take place at a later date.

2012-2013 BUDGET

Sandy Hudson presented an outline of the estimated revenue and expenditures projected for 2011-2012.

He also presented residential and resource assessment figures for 2012 indicating a \$35,036,600 increase over last year – a total residential assessment of \$530,493,100. If the same residential rate is applied (\$1.22) to the 2012 assessment, there will be a \$427,446 increase in residential tax revenue.

Mr. Hudson presented information on the revenue yielded by decreasing the tax rate. For each one cent of reduction in the residential rate, the tax revenue is reduced by \$53,000.00.

Mr. Hudson advised that the commercial assessment in 2012 is virtually the same as it was in 2011, with only a difference of \$1,700. Total commercial assessment for 2012 is \$66,062,100. The current commercial taxation rate is \$2.19 and applying this

rate would yield \$1,446,759 in revenue. Mr. Hudson outlined the effects to the revenue by decreasing this rate.

There are additional sources of revenue aside from taxation revenue. These sources included Gas Tax, Debt Service Charges, Federal and Provincial Grants in Lieu, NSPI and revenue generated by our operations.

Sandy Hudson questioned on how Council wished to proceed with regard to the budget. Discussion took place on the budget.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that budget projections based on a 4 cent decrease in the commercial tax rate and a 2 cent decrease in the residential rate and on maintaining the current residential tax rate be presented to Council. Motion carried.

The list of funding requests received for the 2012-13 budget year was presented and will be reviewed and discussed at the next meeting. The tentative date for a session on the budget was set for Tuesday, May 22, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that he attended a meeting of the Cape Breton Partnership on April 20, 2012, and concern was expressed on possible cuts in funding for ECBC.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Honourable Bernard Valcourt, Minister of State for ACOA, indicating Council's support for ECBC and its staff. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee advised that the Cabot Trail Lion's Club will be hosting their annual golf tournament at Highland Links on July 29, 2012.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the Municipality place a team in the Cabot Trail Lion's Club golf tournament. Motion carried.

Council members interested in playing in the tournament are to advise Councillor Dauphinee.

District #7

Councillor Donovan questioned on the status of the slipway in Ingonish. He was informed that installing barriers at this site would constitute maintaining it, as was required in the agreement with Public Works and Government Services.

Sandy Hudson advised that at the March 26, 2012, meeting of Council, direction was given to advise Public Works and Government Services that the Municipality was not prepared to accept the acquisition on the terms contained in the agreement, which he did.

Councillor Donovan questioned on whether the request to have the bush whacker come to the County was sent to Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and he was advised the request was sent.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to Merrill Bustin, Department of Natural Resources, expressing concern on the condition of the rifle range on the White Point Road. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan questioned whether a reply had been received from the Minister of Fisheries on the owner/operator issue and he was advised a reply has not been received to date.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis brought up a request addressed to Councillor MacCuspic from Elmourne MacKinnon concerning the unavailability of compost from the Baddeck Waste Management Facility because it is not screened or tested.

Sandy Hudson advised that the compost from the Baddeck site will be available in June.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil brought up a concern with regard to the condition of the gravel roads in his district. They are in need of grading.

This request was forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.

Councillor MacNeil also brought up the rumored loss of a snow plow from Victoria County. It was felt a letter should be forwarded to Minister Estabrooks expressing concern on any changes to the snow removal fleet in Victoria County.

Stephen MacDonald, Area Manager, DOT&IR, has been invited to appear before Council and these concerns can be addressed with him at that time also.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison advised that the tender for the Baddeck Water Supply Project has been awarded to Dexter Construction. The tender came in at approximately \$4.5 million dollars and the County has previously agreed to cost share this project to a maximum of \$1.9 million dollars. Dexter was the low tender and their bid fulfilled all the requirements outlined in the tender. The project is to be completed within 1 year.

The next infrastructure priority is Bay St. Lawrence Water.

Warden Morrison indicated that since the closure of the Baddeck Freshmart, he has been approached by residents requesting that the Victoria Farmer's Co-op be requested to extend their hours of operation, especially during the summer months.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that a letter be forwarded to the Victoria Farmer's Co-op requesting that they give consideration to increasing their hours of operation prior to the summer season. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison then returned to the Chair.

CAP SITES

The cutback in federal funding for the CAP sites was discussed.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to Industry Canada stressing the importance of the CAP sites to rural areas and requesting they reconsider their funding. Motion carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Sandy Hudson brought up the matter of the policy for antennae for high speed and whether consideration should be given to rescinding this policy or not. John Bain will be

coming to Council on May 14, 2012, at this matter can be addressed with him at that time.

Sandy Hudson advised that the Minister of Tourism would like to come to Victoria County and tour the northern area of the County on June 1, 2012, provided the Legislature is not sitting at that time.

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he is not in the area on that date and requested that the Minister be requested to an alternate date. If an alternate date is not possible, arrangements will be made to have the Minister tour the area.

STACEY PINEAU

The final report has been received from Stacey Pineau and will be forwarded to Council members electronically for review. Sandy Hudson outlined the go forward steps in regard to the report.

Warden Morrison indicated that Deputy Warden Patterson and Councillor Donovan are to schedule the performance review with the CAO.

BENEFIT POTLUCK SUPPER

A benefit potluck supper will be held for Robert Dauphinee and family at the Indian Brook Fire Hall on Saturday, May 5, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.

HEAVY GARBAGE COLLECTION

The heavy garbage collection will be held commencing on Monday, May 7, 2012. Materials are to be curbside by 7:00 a.m. on that day and will be removed sometime during the week.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, the meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

