

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
January 21, 2013

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 21, 2013, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Athol Grant
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. He noted that Jessica Farrell, Strait Area Transit, has cancelled her presentation due to illness.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the agenda be presented with the noted change. Motion carried.

AMBROSE WHITE, SUPERINTENDENT, CBVRSB

Courtesy of Council was extended to Ambrose White, Superintendent, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board (CBVRSB).

Mr. White indicated that he was happy to appear before Council again and advised he had a brief presentation on the CBVRSB's Strategic Plan 2012 and Business Plan for 2012-2013 (copy attached).

Mr. White presented a document entitled "Looking Inward" which deals with facilities. This document will be brought to the Board tonight for review and taken to the February 4, 2013, Board meeting for discussion. Once this document is approved by the Board, it will be presented to stakeholders. Mr. White indicated that as the Municipality is a stakeholder, he would like to return in the spring to make a presentation on the document.

Mr. White outlined the four critical issues contained in the Strategic Plan 2012 – governance; pathways to success; integrated curriculum/instruction; and demographics. He outlined how each of the four critical issues would be dealt with moving forward.

Mr. White advised that demographics impacts all areas of the Board work and is directly linked to funding thereby creating fiscal pressures. Every year the enrollment is declining and Mr. White outlined that the Board has attempted to respond in a positive manner. The Board has initiated an Adult High School Program and has attracted 114 international students through the Nova Scotia International Student Program (NSISP). He indicated that they are working with CBU on this initiative as CBU has the largest international student population of any university – 30%. They are looking at the possibility of attracting students earlier at the high school level before coming to CBU for university studies.

The Business Plan for 2012-2013 was outlined. The business plan contains two goals:

- To prepare students for the 21st century by providing highly skilled staff and integrated curriculum
- To provide safe, healthy and equitable learning and working environments for all staff and students

Mr. White provided the priorities for each of the goals.

Mr. White then updated Council on the Baddeck Academy project. In talking to Paul Oldford today, he indicated that everything is on schedule and the money for the next phase of the project is in place.

The Baddeck School Advisory Committee have requested that the new soccer field at Baddeck Academy be named in memory of Steve MacDermid. This has been approved at the staff level and will be brought to the management level tonight and brought to the Board meeting next week. He anticipates this request will be granted and commended the School Advisory Committee on this action.

A greater emphasis is being placed on Co-op and Skills Trades training and Mr. White indicated that these programs will hopefully be introduced to Victoria County High Schools in the future.

Mr. White indicated that a request was received from the Principal of Middle River School for resource help and this request was granted after Christmas.

Warden Morrison thanked Mr. White for the update and indicated that he would open the meeting to questions from Council.

Councillor Buchanan indicated that on talking to a friend from Inverness County, he was advised that Dalbrae and Inverness Academy offer scaffolding courses, food handling courses, etc. and he questioned why such courses could not be available in our schools.

Mr. White indicated that they are presently working on introducing skills training in CBVRSB schools and he would follow up on this matter. He indicated that if the Strait Regional School Board can offer this training, so can the CBVRSB.

Councillor Budge indicated that the incoming enrollment in the elementary schools north of Smokey for the upcoming year is 4 in one school and 8 in another. As notification has to be provided to the P3 schools in 2015 if the CBVRSB wish to lease these schools beyond 2020, Councillor Budge questioned whether there has been any thought or plans to putting one facility for all students north of Smokey.

The possibility of making Cabot High a P-12 school could be considered and Mr. White indicated that they would have to go out to the community to get feedback of such action. This is a difficult sell but there would be advantages to having all students in one location in terms of staffing and programming. At the end of the day, this would be a Board decision.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up concern with regard to the Cape Smokey Elementary School and the communication issue. They are no longer permitting messages be sent home to parents and volunteers are not permitted to recruit players in the school. Volunteers feel they have no freedom to go to the schools and there is not a good feeling within the community with regard to the school policies.

Mr. White indicated that this is not a Board policy. There is nothing to prevent this communication and Mr. White indicated he would follow up on this matter. Volunteers are getting harder to come by so they should be appreciated for the services they provide.

Deputy Warden Patterson provided an update to Mr. White on the recent meeting of the five Councils on Cape Breton Island. There are common issues among all municipalities. Deputy Warden Patterson pointed to an recent article in MacLean's Magazine that encourages students to go to University. This is some time a dead end street and the skills trade programs should be promoted more as they are a good thing. The skills trade programs that would be offered at the high school level would be a starting point to go on to NSCC.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that many 4 year university graduates then go on to take a trade at NSCC. The O2 Program (Options and Opportunities) was discussed.

Nova Scotia Community College courses are less than one-half the cost of university and are of shorter duration.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of accessibility to schools. The former North Shore School, which has since been torn down, could have been an excellent facility for community use, but it was only accessible to teachers, children, bus drivers and custodians. Mr. White indicated that it is often administration that dictates the use of schools. The Board has no policy that the doors shut at 3:00 p.m. and he felt the doors should be open for community use of the facilities.

Discussion took place on barrier free accessibility of school buildings. This is an expensive item, but one that has been a priority for schools to make them accessible to all students.

In terms of de-population, Mr. White indicated that he hopes it is levelling off at this point. The Board is constantly projecting future school population.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that trades courses in the fishery and agriculture would also be of great potential to be initiated at the high school level.

Councillor Grant questioned on the P3 schools. There are 7 such schools across the Board, with two in Victoria County – Cape Smokey Elementary and North Highlands Elementary. They are owned by The Ashford Group and leased by the Board for a period of 20 years. Notice has to be provided by 2015 if the Board wishes to renew the lease. The schools will be occupied until 2020.

Discussion took place on attracting international students and the process followed through the Nova Scotia International Student Program (NSISP).

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the P-12 school system works well in his area, as the older kids do look out for the younger ones.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on whether the vacant school at Iona could be used as a Trades Program school. Mr. White felt the Board would not re-open this building. Letters have been sent to the government for funding to tear down this building. Mr. White indicated that the custodian of the new school in Iona checks on the building regularly to see that it is secure. There is an alarm on the building and some heat and insurance is maintained on the building. Mr. White felt that when new schools are being built, there should be money included in the budget for the demolition of the old school.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the bussing of students. In particular, he mentioned of a situation on the Barra Glen Road. Mr. White indicated that there are instances on isolated roads, where it is more cost effective to pay the parents to bus their children than it is to put a bus on the road. It is ultimately the responsibility of the School Board to ensure the children get to school.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the best way to proceed to get access to the school and gym after school hours. This can be achieved through the School Advisory Committee and Administration.

Councillor Buchanan questioned Mr. White on sports related issues. Councillor Buchanan coaches two girls basketball teams and with the new fair play rule he has to carry 15 players on his teams. The second team has nine players and he wished to draw from the Grade 6 classes at the elementary level, which has been done in the past. This year he was not permitted to do this. Mr. White indicated that there may be NSSAF rules that apply in this case, but he would look into this matter.

Councillor Buchanan also indicated that he has a girls' volleyball team that has been fundraising for some time to go to Cuba to participate in a volleyball clinic. Six girls had committed to attending, but one has dropped out. As a result he has been advised that the five remaining are not permitted to go, as you need six to play. The group have 16 games set and the money to go, but have been advised by Charles Shepherd, they cannot attend. Councillor Buchanan indicated that Mr. Shepherd has not responded to the email forwarded to him on this matter. Mr. White advised he would do a follow up on this matter.

Warden Morrison brought up the matter of accessibility to schools. For some reason, there are barriers to using the school facilities after hours. Mr. White suggested that Council write a letter in regard to accessing school buildings and he would talk with the Victoria County principals on this matter and provide an update at a later date.

Warden Morrison also mentioned that in Baddeck Academy, as there are so many teachers travelling in from outside the area, there is not much staff involvement in extra-curricular activities. There is no sense of obligation to get involved. Mr. White indicated that when he started his teaching career, he was not only expected to teach, but to coach sports teams also. It is a different world today and there is a reliance on volunteers to fill this void. He indicated he still encourages young teachers to get involved in the schools.

Mr. White was questioned if there was a school within the Board that is used to its potential on a daily basis. He indicated that Breton Education Centre, New Waterford, is used both day and night until at least 11:00 p.m. and the janitorial staff come in at 6:00 a.m. to ensure the school is ready for the day.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. White for the information provided and he was excused at this time.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 7, 2013

The minutes of the January 7, 2013, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the January 7, 2013, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Strait Area Transit

The Age-Friendly Communities Advisory Committee is to contact Jessica Farrell, Strait Area Transit, regarding a presentation to the Committee. The Committee can provide a report to Council.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Age-Friendly Communities Advisory Committee meet with Jessica Farrell, Strait Area Transit, and provide a report to Council following the meeting. Motion carried.

Water Utility Rate Study Review

Whether the CAO had reviewed the Victoria County Water Utility Rate Study concerning the billing of owners for rental properties was questioned. Mr. Hudson will review and advise at the next meeting.

DOTIR

Sandy Hudson contacted Steve MacDonald, Area Manager, DOTIR, concerning the condition of the roadways to date this winter season and is waiting for a reply. Mr. MacDonald has agreed to come to Council in March, 2013.

Unightly Premises

Sandy Hudson advised that a public hearing on two unsightly premises within the County has been scheduled for 4:30 p.m. on Monday, February 11, 2013, prior to the regular Council session.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a public hearing on the Herbert Gregory and Colin MacDonald unsightly premises be held on Monday, February 11, 2013, at 4:30 p.m. Motion carried.

Nothing further has been heard on the status of the Wreck Cove unsightly premises.

EHS

A reply has not been received concerning the ambulance coverage in the Ingonish area as yet.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he received a request for the installation of a street light at the entrance to MacLeod's Point Road from the Trans Canada Highway. There are three homes on this road and there is a pole there that the light can be installed on.

The allocation of street lights per district was discussed. Two lights are granted per district per year.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a street light be ordered for the entrance of MacLeod's Point Road, Bucklaw, off the TCH 105, from next year's street light allocation. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he wants the Gillis Point Road to Washabuck to be a DOTIR priority for repair. He is receiving emails and phone calls about the condition of the road. He also advised that DOTIR are concerned about their equipment when plowing this particular roadway. School bus service has ceased on this road. It is an emergency situation.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Budge, advising that as the condition of the Gillis Point Road to Washabuck is now an emergency situation, we request the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal to place the restoration of this road at the top of their priority list. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant indicated that the West Side Middle River Road is in bad shape also. He also advised that he would like to see a street light located at the intersection of the Old Margaree Road and the Big Baddeck Road. There is no existing pole at this location.

The Street Lighting Policy is to be reviewed to determine what it says in regard to the location of street lights.

Councillor Grant advised that he spoke with Kenton Morrison who is very knowledgeable with regard to alternate energy (in particular wind turbines) and suggested that he should be added to the Alternate Energy Committee.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Kenton Morrison be appointed to serve on the Alternate Energy Committee. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that a meeting has been scheduled for tomorrow evening at 7:00 p.m. at the Court House to determine the interest in establishing a daycare in the Baddeck area. All are welcome to attend.

Councillor Grant will be hosting a community meeting at the Middle River Community Centre on Tuesday, February 12, 2013. Topics of discussion at this meeting include:

- Community Policing with Staff Sgt. Craig Yorke in attendance
- Green Gyms
- Wind Turbines
- Community forests
- Roger Brook Report on the Cabot Trail
- And any other topics that arise

Councillor Budge indicated that there have been three meetings on the Cabot Trail and a conference will be held within the next month at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's, regarding the Cabot Trail.

Councillor Grant advised that he has contacted the EDPC regarding mapping and would like to explore Crown land in his District for potential economic development projects.

Councillor Grant advised that he is still pursuing the Retire Cape Breton website and local portal sites in conjunction with same. Donna MacDonald, VCCAPS, has agreed to assist and he should have further information for Council in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

Councillor Grant indicated that he is also going to try creating a blog.

The light for the Big Baddeck Road intersection will be pursued further with both NSPI and DOTIR.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that there are no plans for additional paving of the Cabot Trail in the DOTIR's 5 year plan for highway construction. A commitment was made regarding this paving project. DOTIR are to be contacted to update their plan.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal concerning the Cabot Trail paving not being included in the 5-year DOTIR plan. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis updated Council on a street light matter that he had followed up on with the NSPI Resolve Team. After several attempts, he spoke with a very helpful individual and there now appears to be a solution to his request. The name of the person who assisted him

is Milo Paruch and he can be reached at 902-574-0094 should any other Council member require his assistance.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on whether the CAO had checked with CBRM and other municipal units with regard to tax exemption for community halls. This matter will be investigated further.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the status of the project to cut pulp at the former North Shore School site. Sandy Hudson advised that this property was offered to DNR as a possible area for a Park to replace Plaster Picnic Park and he is awaiting a reply from DNR before anything further is done.

The 75th Anniversary of the Gaelic College will be celebrated from June 30-July 6, 2013. There is a budget of \$200,000.00 for the anniversary celebrations and Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of possible Council gold sponsorship of this celebration. Gold sponsorship is the \$25,000 to \$50,000 level.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, to refer this matter to budget for discussion on Gold Level sponsorship for the Gaelic College's 75th Anniversary celebrations. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the Inverness County funding for the Bay St. Lawrence Fire Department for providing service to Meat Cove, Inverness County.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Budge, that a request be forwarded to Inverness County to release the funding for Bay St. Lawrence Fire Department's coverage in Meat Cove, Inverness County. Motion carried.

The Dingwall Recreation Park Society are in the process of incorporating and are looking to obtain the use of the former Dingwall School property owned by the Municipality. They would like to lease the property. The CAO will check on the proper procedure with regard to same with the Solicitor.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on when the RFP would go out for the remaining four districts to obtain the Green Gyms.

An RFP for organizations interested in obtaining Green Gyms for Districts #2, #3, #5 and #8 will be advertised.

Councillor Buchanan queried Councillor Grant if a reply had ever been received from Kevin Hashem with regard to cell phone coverage. Councillor Grant indicated that he will be

in contact with Mr. Hashem prior to hosting his community meeting and will advise of his findings.

District #7

Councillor Budge questioned on the status of the Bobcat for the Neil's Harbour Enviro-Depot. The machine was sent for repairs and they are unsure at this time if it can be repaired or requires replacement.

Councillor Budge advised that the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Fire Department's sewer system is located at the back of their building and is too far from the Enviro-Depot for it to be connected. He suggested that a holding tank be obtained that could be pumped out periodically. At the same time water and a washroom should be installed at the Enviro-Depot.

Councillor Budge will be provided with an update to these requests at the February 11, 2013, Council meeting.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that he is receiving more and more Council related calls on his personal cell phone and questioned if other Councillors are in the same position. As phones are provided to staff members such as solid waste personnel, EMO, Physical Active Living and Recreation, he felt that consideration should be given to providing Councillors with cell phones.

The CAO will obtain costs on the purchase of cell phones and it will be considered in next year's budget.

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up an article in the recent issue of *Solid Waste Recycling* that outlined that there are companies that do design equipment for handling wood waste products.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that Jocelyn Bethune is in the process of doing a Communications Plan for the Age-Friendly Communities Advisory Committee. Ms. Bethune has just about completed the plan, but requires a few more hours to finish same. One hundred hours was approved for this project. There is money in the Age-Friendly budget to cover the costs.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Municipality continue to engage Jocelyn Bethune to carry out the work for the Age-Friendly Communities Advisory Committee. Motion carried.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson took the Chair.

Councillor Dauphinee declared a conflict of interest as he is a Parks Canada employee and he left the meeting at this time.

Warden Morrison indicated that there are proposed increases in the annual golf fees at the Highland Links Golf Course. Presently the fee is \$908.70 and it is proposed that it increase to \$1932.00.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Chip Bird, Field Superintendent, Parks Canada, expressing concern on the proposed increases in the season golf passes at Highland Links Golf Course and questioning if there will be a lower rate for seniors. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee re-entered the meeting at this time and Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

POLICY REVIEW

Sandy Hudson presented Council with copies of the draft Land Use By-law concerning the Regulation of Wind Turbine Development, along with comments received from Genivar pertaining to this document.

There are changes required to the by-law document and it was decided to refer this information to the Alternate Energy Committee for their review and recommendation to Council.

The Alternate Energy Committee will be meeting with Krystal Therien, COMFIT Administrator, on February 15, 2013 and the document can be reviewed with her at this time.

Sandy Hudson questioned whether Council have had the opportunity to review the sample Procurement Policy.

This is to be included as an agenda item at the next meeting.

MINING ASSOCIATION OF NOVA SCOTIA

Correspondence was received from Shawn Kirby, Executive Director of the Mining Association of Nova Scotia, concerning fuel tax fairness with regard to the mining industry.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Municipality provide a letter of support for the Mining Association of Nova Scotia in their request for fuel tax rebate fairness. Motion carried.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM APPLICATIONS

The federal Canada Summer Jobs Program will be accepting applications from February 1 to February 28, 2013.

CAPE BRETON ISLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Dolena Matheson's term on the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority Board has expired. She is eligible for re-appointment for another term.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that upon confirmation from Dolena Matheson that she is willing to serve another term, she be re-appointed as Victoria County's representative on the Cape Breton Island Housing Authority Board. Motion carried.

KEITH BAIN, MLA

Keith Bain, MLA, wishes to meet with Council. It was decided that he meet with Council prior to a future Council meeting. He will be provided with dates and the meeting will be arranged accordingly.

CLIMATE CHANGE REPORT

Sandy Hudson advised that a Climate Change Report has to be approved and a draft submitted to the Province by September, 2013, with the final report due by December 31, 2013. He advised that he has spoken with other area municipalities with regard to doing a joint plan.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a Request for Proposals be issued for developing a Climate Change Report for all area municipalities, with the exception of Richmond County who have already begun the process. Motion carried.

LED LIGHTS

Sandy Hudson advised that the LED light requirements have to be addressed and he felt that this matter could also be looked at with the group of area municipalities.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the matter of LED lighting be discussed with other area municipalities. Motion carried.

HUMAN RESOURCE ISSUES

Sandy Hudson advised that there are a number of Human Resource issues that need to be addressed such as job descriptions, request for leave forms, personnel file contents, etc. The

possibility of joining with other municipalities to hire a Human Resources Officer on a contract position for one year was discussed.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the CAO be authorized to pursue the hiring of a Human Resources person in cooperation with 3 or 4 other municipal units for a period of one year on a contract basis. Motion carried.

2013-2104 BUDGET

Sandy Hudson advised that it will soon be time to begin budget planning for 2013-2014 and he questioned Council if they anticipated any change to the tax rates.

Some Council members felt the rate should be decreased and others felt we should hold the tax rates.

Council requested that the CAO bring forward a draft budget holding the existing rates and any changes to the budget can be made after that time.

IN CAMERA

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that Council move In Camera. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant declared a conflict of interest and left the meeting at this time.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, to return to the regular session of Council. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant re-entered the meeting at this time.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, February 11, 2013. A public hearing on the unsightly premises matters will be held at 4:30 p.m. prior to Council at 5:00 p.m.

Staff Sgt. Craig Yorke, RCMP, will be in attendance, as well as Jim Foulds from the Bras d'Or Lake Biosphere Reserve Association.

SURPLUS PROPERTY – GRASS COVE, VICTORIA COUNTY

The federal government have declared a property at Grass Cove as surplus to their needs and are offering the property to the Municipality.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Municipality express their interest in acquiring the federal government surplus property at Grass Cove, Victoria County. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

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

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO

