

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
August 26, 2013

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, August 26, 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.

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

PRESENTATION OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2013

Courtesy of Council was extended to Grant Burgess, C.A., Grant Thornton LLP Chartered Accountants, who presented the Draft Non-Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 2013.

Mr. Burgess then presented the highlights of the report, as he had previously reviewed the draft financial statements in detail with Council in the Audit Committee. He reported that the Municipality ended the year with an operating surplus of \$27,324.00, based on a total budget of \$11,435,935.00.

Mr. Burgess indicated that the taxes receivables have increased significantly this year. Total taxes receivable are \$2,098,371.00, up from \$1,425,950.00 in 2012. The valuation allowance for uncollected taxes has been \$290,000.00 for the last two years. Work must be undertaken to make collections a priority.

He reviewed the operating fund balance sheet, statement of operations, general capital fund balance sheet, statement of investment in general capital assets and the details of revenue and expenditures. Mr. Burgess also reviewed the capital and operating reserve balance sheets.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the street light cost and why the cost would be less than in previous years. New LED lights are being installed and this may assist with decreasing the cost.

Henry Fuller questioned on the Gas Tax Funding. Mr. Burgess indicated that the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Secretariat administers the gas tax funds and he explained that this funding can only be spent on eligible projects. A portion of the funding received by the Municipality – 15%, goes to the Village of Baddeck. How projects receive approval was discussed and explained.

Mr. Fuller also questioned on the economic development costs in the budget and he was advised that the contract for the Economic Sustainability Officer was not renewed making the costs lower than budgeted. The status of the REN's was discussed.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the draft non-consolidated financial statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 2013, be accepted. Motion carried.

It was indicated that Grant Burgess would be leaving the area and relocating to Alberta and he was extended a thank you for the excellent job he has done for the Municipality over the past ten years.

Mr. Burgess advised that it has been a pleasure to serve the Municipality over the past ten years. They have been interesting years and the staff have been a great bunch to work with and he indicated he has had a lot of fun along the journey. He requested that the copies of the draft statements be returned to him.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JULY 8, 2013

The minutes of the July 8, 2013, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of July 8, 2013, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

REN Update

Warden Morrison advised that he and the CAO met with their counterparts from CBRM and the Municipality of the County of Richmond regarding the REN issue. They are seeking further clarification from the province. The possibility of an election is holding up the process.

It was indicated that April 1, 2014, has been discussed as the possible date for the establishment of the RENS. The former RDA's, CBCEDA and the Strait-Highlands RDA have been disbanded as of the end of July, 2013.

Washabuck Road

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he emailed Paul LeFleche, Deputy Minister of DOTIR, a few weeks ago regarding the Washabuck Road and has had no response.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to Paul LeFleche, Deputy Minister, DOTIR, requesting that he contact Councillor MacNeil with regard to his request concerning the Washabuck Road. Motion carried.

Wind Turbine By-Law

Councillor Grant indicated that John Bain has included the requested changes to the proposed Wind Turbine By-law and will be forwarding the redrafted documents in the near future. Once the documents are reviewed, then the by-law adoption process can begin.

Physician Recruitment

Dr. Diane Calvert-Simms, CEO, CBDHA, and Dr. Rex Dunn, Chief of Staff, will be in attendance at Council on Monday, September 23, 2013, regarding physician recruitment.

Warden Morrison distributed a copy of a letter from an Ontario municipality outlining incentives for physician recruitment to their area. He indicated that the Municipality needs to have a role in recruiting physicians to Victoria County.

NEW BUSINESS

SNSMR – MUNICIPAL ADVISOR

Sandy Hudson advised that Mark Peck, Municipal Advisor, will be assuming responsibility for the Valley/Western Region of the Province, effective September 1, 2013.

Paul Wills will be the new Municipal Advisor for our area. Mr. Wills is a Chartered Accountant with five plus years in municipal advisory services.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that a letter be forwarded to Mark Peck thanking him for his assistance over the past number of years and an invitation be forwarded to Paul Wills to attend a future meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council. Motion carried.

ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL ADMINISTRATORS

The Association of Municipal Administrators will be holding their annual conference at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck, from October 8-11, 2013. The Cape Breton Region is the host for the conference. They are requesting all municipal units in the Cape Breton Region to provide a \$1,000.00 donation to assist with the conference.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the Municipality contribute \$1,000.00 for the Association of Municipal Administrators Fall Conference to be held at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck. Motion carried.

UNSIGHTLY PREMISES

A letter was received from Sean Donovan, Administrator of Dangerous and Unsightly Premises, Eastern District Planning Commission, concerning the property of Isadora Feigin, 12268 Highway 105, Bucklaw.

The garage and mobile home located on this property fall under the dangerous and unsightly premises conditions defined in the *Municipal Government Act*. Both the garage and mobile home give the appearance of being abandoned and an assessment completed by a Certified Building Official indicates that the garage and mobile home should be demolished and disposed of in an appropriate manner.

Mr. Donovan indicated that they are recommending that an Order to Remedy Condition be issued and that the Order be a Demolition and Removal Order issued from Council to the owners instructing that the garage and mobile home be demolished and the service pumps and tanks be removed within thirty (30) days or the Municipality will complete the work and recover the costs through property taxes.

Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that Council proceed to issue the 30 day Order to Remedy Condition on the Isadora Feigin property located at 12668 Highway 105, Bucklaw. Motion carried.

VILLAGE OF BADDECK

Sandy Hudson advised that the Village of Baddeck have identified the Queen Street Sewer Diversion project as a project for approval under the Gas Tax funding. 15% of the Gas Tax Funding received by the Municipality is held in reserve for the Village of Baddeck. The Village are requesting Municipal approval for this project.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Grant, that the Municipality support the Village's proposal for the Queen Street Sewer Diversion project under the Gas Tax funding and this project be added to the County's capital budget. Motion carried.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The call for citizen membership on the Economic Development Committee received six responses. Those interested in serving on the Committee are Rob MacDonald, Amy MacKinnon, Henry Fuller, Brad MacDonald, Alicia Lake and Tracey Campbell.

The names are to be forwarded to the Chairman of the Economic Development Committee, Councillor MacNeil. Three appointments will be made to the Committee from the six applications. Councillor MacNeil will call a meeting in the near future to decide on the appointments.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Grant indicated that he was approached by a resident concerning the Municipality allowing taxes to be paid by credit card. This service costs the Municipality money.

Councillor Grant advised that he was giving notice of motion that at the next meeting of Council he will be bringing forward a motion to eliminate paying municipal property taxes by credit card.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that he was approached concerning the Art Endowment fund the Municipality established some years ago. The amount of and criteria for the fund will be investigated.

Deputy Warden Patterson requested permission to attend the 2nd International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities to be held in Quebec City, from September 9-11, 2013.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that Deputy Warden Patterson be authorized to attend the 2nd International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities in Quebec City. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee brought up a concern with regard to the speed of traffic travelling through Ingonish Beach in the area of the fire department, post office, etc.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to DOTIR requesting that they look at this speed zone in Ingonish Beach for additional signage and whatever can be done to alleviate the concerns. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan requested the first installment of fire department funding for the Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department.

Councillor Buchanan brought forward a request from two organizations in his district which would like to meet with Victoria County Municipal Council and are requesting that Council meet at the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre in late September/early October to accommodate their presentations.

Victoria County Municipal Council will hold an October Council meeting at the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre, Bay St. Lawrence.

Councillor Buchanan questioned whether there was an update from Kevin Hashem on cell phone coverage. A reply has not been received to date.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on when the Green Gym equipment would be arriving. Sandy Hudson advised that he anticipates receiving the equipment in late September/early October.

Councillor Buchanan indicated that he has received concerns regarding wells going dry in the Bay St. Lawrence area. He questioned on the status of the search for a water source. Discussion took place.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the Municipality continue to pursue and follow up on sites for a possible water source in the Bay St. Lawrence area and also continue to pursue water sources for Neil's Harbour. Motion carried.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the status of the contracts for the Water Utility Operators. Sandy Hudson advised that the draft contracts have been received from Solicitor MacDowell and he is working with Bruce Latimer, Strait Engineering, regarding this matter.

Councillor Buchanan requested that appropriate recognition be forwarded to Kilya MacNeil, Bay St. Lawrence, who recently participated in the Canada Summer Games in cycling. She has also participated in past Canada Winter Games in cross-county skiing.

District #4

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to Honourable Maurice Smith, Minister of DOTIR, requesting that the department initiate a feasibility study for the location of a bridge at Englishtown. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis brought up that matter of the number of abandoned cemeteries in his district, and indicated there are a number County wide that are not being cared for. He questioned whether funding could be accessed for a couple of summer students to identify abandoned cemeteries throughout the County. Cemeteries are the historic fabric of our County.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that application be made for funding to hire a couple of students next summer to identify abandoned cemeteries throughout Victoria County. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant presented an email he received from Cabot Trail Motorcycle Retreat who have decided to close their business due to the condition of the West Side Middle River Road. He also indicated that Simpson's Auto Repair have advised that their business is down due to the condition of the road.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Premier advising that the condition of the West Side Middle River Road has caused one business to close and another business to lose business and request that he intercede in this matter and ask the Minister to move this road up on the priority list. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the payment of taxes for the Middle River Community Hall in the amount of \$1,446.00 and the Baddeck Valley Community Hall in the amount of \$588.00 be approved from the District #2 budget. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that 8 ground search and rescue units assisted in the search for the lady that was missing from the Baddeck Cabot Trail Campground last week. It is comforting to have these resources available in times of need and he indicated that he felt appropriate recognition should be forwarded to these groups.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter of appreciation and a monetary donation of \$500.00 be forwarded to each of the 8 ground search and rescue units who participated in the search for the lady missing in Baddeck Inlet last week. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant will provide the names of the organizations that participated in the search.

Councillor Grant also requested that Kevin Hashem be contacted with regard to an update on cell phone coverage.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Department of Natural Resources requesting they enter discussions with the Municipality to obtain Crown land for wind turbine development in the Wreck Cove area. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that he has received a number of complaints concerning the Tim Horton's/Irving area on the TCH 105, Baddeck. This is a very dangerous area and he has discussed same with the RCMP and DOTIR to see what can be done. Enforcing the no parking zone would be of some assistance. Discussion will be held with both these agencies to see what can be done to make this area safer for the travelling public.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that there are a number of suspicious cars travelling throughout his district. The occupants are knocking on doors, looking for unoccupied residences. The possibility of installing cameras at the Barra Strait Bridge and the Portage Road was discussed.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to the RCMP questioning if they could locate cameras on the Barra Strait Bridge and at the Portage Road to assist with possible criminal activity in District #1. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Darren Blunden, DOTIR, requesting additional gravel for the Highland Hill Road. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Royal Canadian Legion in Iona may be coming to the Municipality in the future for financial assistance for projects relating to repairs to the building.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on whether any action had taken place with regard to the safety concerns at the Baddeck Public Library Building. There is funding available until September 30, 2013, to assist with necessary repairs.

Sandy Hudson advised that he forwarded this information on to the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department, owners of the library building, for their action and has not heard anything since the letter was forwarded.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

Warden Morrison advised that the Village of Baddeck have received confirmation from funding partners (ECBC and the Province) for the Kidston Island Lighthouse Project. The Municipality had agreed to provide \$25,000.00 pending funding being received from these partners.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the \$25,000.00 approved for the Kidston Island Lighthouse Project be released. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison advised of a recent fire which destroyed a heritage home on Water Street in Baddeck. The efforts of the local fire departments kept this from becoming a more serious situation.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter of appreciation be forwarded to the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department and the Middle River Volunteer Fire Department for their quick response and ability to control the recent fire on Water Street, Baddeck. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison indicated that the efforts of BABTA and response from Parks Canada have resulted in the Bell Museum remaining open until after Celtic Colours.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to BABTA and Parks Canada extending appreciation on a job well done to facilitate the AG Bell Museum remaining open until after Celtic Colours and hope that this schedule will continue in subsequent years. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison indicated that Louisbourg 300 celebrations have seen an increase of 40% visitation at the Fortress of Louisbourg and the AG Bell Museum have also benefited with a 12% visitation increase.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, to congratulate Parks Canada on a job well done with their Louisbourg 300 celebrations. Motion carried.

The advertisement for the Louisbourg 300 was discussed and it was indicated that it was funded with marketing levy money and that next year more of an emphasis would be placed on the AG Bell Museum. Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Mary Tulle, DCBA, questioning if marketing levy funds were provided for Louisbourg 300 advertising. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

POLICY REVIEW

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a policy on vacation carry over for Non-Union staff be investigated. Motion carried.

RETIREMENT PRESENTATION – DENISE MACKINNON

A ceremony was held in honour of Denise MacKinnon who is leaving her employment with the Municipality to move to Alberta. She has been employed with the Municipality for the past 24 years.

Warden Morrison presented a plaque and gift to Denise and Deputy Warden Patterson presented her with a bouquet of flowers.

Denise indicated that her 24 years of employment with the County have been incredible. She voiced her appreciation to Council for their confidence and indicated she has been treated very well in her time with the Municipality.

Denise introduced her daughters, Angela and Samantha; her mother, Rose MacDonald; and her sister Zina, who were in attendance. She then cut a cake which was enjoyed by all in attendance.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Budge, the meeting adjourned and the retirement celebration continued.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO