

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**September 9, 2013**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 9, 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  
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis  
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee  
District #7 – Wayne Budge  
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO  
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden (Out of Town at Age-Friendly Conference)

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

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

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 26, 2013**

The minutes of the August 26, 2013, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of August 26, 2013, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Unsightly Premises**

Whether an update was received on the unsightly premises matters was questioned. John Bain is on vacation until next week and an update will requested on his return.

**Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department**

Councillor Buchanan questioned whether the first installment of the fire department funding had been forwarded to the Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department. Sandy Hudson will check on this matter.

**RCMP**

Councillor MacNeil questioned whether the RCMP had been contacted with regard to installation of cameras at the Barra Strait Bridge and at the Portage Road in District #1. Sandy Hudson will make contact in this regard.

**Age-Friendly Conference**

It was indicated that Deputy Warden Patterson is out of town attending the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities in Quebec City.

**NOTICE OF MOTIONS**

**Elimination of Option to Pay Municipal Property Taxes by Credit Card**

Councillor Grant brought up the matter of the eliminating the option to pay municipal property taxes by credit card.

For the months of July and August, 2013, the Municipality lost \$36,887 in revenue to credit card fees. The total cost for 2013 will be approximately \$50,000.00.

There are only a couple of municipalities in the province that allow property taxes and fees to be paid by credit card.

The benefits for allowing credit card payment appear to be convenience for the property owner and the fact that the County has the money and does not have to worry about the cheque not clearing.

Credit card payment has been allowed in Victoria County for many years. Maybe at the time the practice started, convenience was more of an issue. Now with banks accepting property tax payments and bank and internet money transfers a common practice, the convenience issue is not so important.

The benefit of the County having its money immediately is muted when we realize that the County charges 10% interest on unpaid taxes. The County will get its tax money eventually with interest. Any business person in the County would say allowing credit card payment in our situation makes no sense.

The ordinary taxpayer who does not have a “premium” credit card (with air mile points) is in the end paying for those benefits because the County has to increase the tax rate to cover the credit card loss.

\$50,000.00 per year (and increasing about 15% per year) is an amount our County cannot afford.

**It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, to eliminate the option to pay municipal property taxes by credit card as outlined.**

**Those voting in favour of the motion were Councillors Grant and MacInnis.**

**Those voting against the motion were Councillors MacNeil, Buchanan, Budge, Dauphinee and Warden Morrison.**

**Motion defeated.**

### **DISTRICT CONCERNS**

#### **District #6**

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that the Cabot Trail has just been named one of the top 10 roadways in the world. He expressed concern on the condition of the roadway.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a letter be forwarded to Patrick Sullivan, CEO, Nova Scotia Tourism Agency, and the Department of Tourism concerning the condition of the Cabot Trail and request that they consider funding to improve the condition and appearance of the Cabot Trail. Motion carried.**

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the issue concerning the reliability of the phone landlines in his district. The wait time when calling Bell Aliant to report issues was also discussed.

**It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Bell Aliant and the CRTC complaining on the condition and reliability of the phone service in the Ingonish area and also expressing concern on the wait times when trying to contact Bell Aliant for service and repair. Motion carried.**

**District #7**

**It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that Deputy Warden Fraser Patterson, Chairman of the Alderwood Management Board, be appointed to the Highland Manor Board and the by-laws of both Highland Manor and Alderwood be amended to allow that in future the Chairman of each Board serve as a member of the other Board also. Motion carried.**

Councillor Budge questioned on whether there was any movement on land for the Enviro-Depot at Neil's Harbour.

Sandy Hudson advised that Bruce Latimer, Strait Engineering, is drawing up plans for the building and this will determine the footprint required and from there the costs can be determined. It will be built on County owned property.

**District #8**

Councillor Buchanan indicated that there have been a few accidents recently with moose and he indicated that additional "moose signs" should be erected in the area from Englishtown to Bay St. Lawrence.

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to DOTIR and Parks Canada requesting that at least 12 additional moose signs be erected in the area from Englishtown to Bay St. Lawrence. Motion carried.**

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that a letter be forwarded to DOTIR requesting that brush be cut along the roadsides in the area from Englishtown to Bay St. Lawrence. Motion carried.**

Discussion took place on the North of Smokey Safer Communities Committee. Funding has been received from the Department of Justice in the amount of \$13,000.00 to assist with initiatives to address the crime in the North Highland Region. Both Victoria and Inverness Counties have been requested to commit to this initiative by contributing \$6,000.00 per year for a three year period.

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Municipality approve \$6,000.00 per year for a three year period for the North of Smokey Safer Communities Committee. Motion carried.**

A conference call will be held tomorrow morning with Janet Bickerton on this matter.

Councillor Buchanan indicated that one of our Solid Waste Truck Operators had to take a vacation day recently as there was no spare helper available to travel with him. This matter is to be investigated through Robert Dauphinee.

Councillor Buchanan requested a copy of the Dingwall Recreation Society lease with the Municipality.

**District #4**

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether he could let the fishing communities know of Art Drysdale, Economic Development Fisheries, presentation to Council in November, 2013.

Council is open to the public and the public may be notified.

Councillor MacInnis requested permission to attend the AGM of the Lobster Council of Canada to be held in Moncton, New Brunswick, on October 8, 2013.

**It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that Councillor MacInnis be authorized to attend the AGM of the Lobster Council of Canada. Motion carried.**

**District #2**

Councillor Grant brought up the letter received from the Honourable Charlie Parker, Minister of Natural Resources, concerning the conveyance of Crown land in the Wreck Cove area to the Municipality for the purpose of creating a wind turbine development.

Councillor Grant felt that someone knowledgeable in wind turbine development should be contacted to develop criteria and identify best location in the area before advising DNR the property we would like to acquire.

**It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the CAO be instructed to obtain costs from three companies on planning, overriding conditions and preferred location for wind turbine development in the rear area of Wreck Cove. Motion carried.**

When the update of the Wind Turbine By-Law is received from John Bain, Eastern District Planning Commission, a meeting will be scheduled to review to document and if acceptable, then proceed with the by-law approval process.

Councillor Grant will be hosting a Community Meeting at the Baddeck Valley Community Hall, Baddeck Forks, during the week of October 20, 2013. Representatives from the Baddeck Solid Waste Management Facility and Department of Environment will be invited

to attend this meeting. An additional agenda item will be community trails and the options for additional hiking trails in the area.

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Central Cape Breton Community Ventures received notice yesterday of funding from ECBC. \$10,000.00 was approved by the Municipality pending this funding being received from ECBC. Upon written confirmation, the funding will be released.

**It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that \$1,000.00 be approved from the District #1 budget for the Iona Volunteer Fire Department to assist with the purchase of a new fire truck. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacNeil again brought up a concern with regard to a Little Narrows Water System customer's bill. There is one individual in the household and his consumption is more than that of a family. A new water meter has been installed, but there still appears to be a problem. The inside plumbing of the home and whether there could be a leak was questioned. Sandy Hudson will ensure that this matter is further investigated.

**District #3**

Warden Morrison requested that Councillor Buchanan assume to Chair.

Warden Morrison advised that the two marinas in the Baddeck area – Cape Breton Boat Yard and Baddeck Marine, have expressed concern on the tariff to be enforced on foreign vessels wintering in Canada. This tariff has been in effect, but never enforced. The Canadian Border Service Association has plans to enforce this tariff – 15% of the value of the boat. This will have a detrimental effect on the local marinas if the foreign vessels are removed.

**It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Budge, that a letter be forwarded to the Canadian Border Services Association, the Prime Minister and Honourable Peter MacKay in support of our local businesses, asking for clarification on the 15% tariff on foreign vessels wintering in Canada and further requesting that the tariff not be enforced. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison advised that a couple of months ago application was made through the Nova Scotia Moves Program for funding. Nova Scotia Moves is a grant program that seeks to support collaborative, innovative, locally based solutions to sustainable transportation challenges facing communities in Nova Scotia.

It was recently announced that Victoria County received a grant of \$15,000 to create an Active Transportation Plan, as well as construction of various pieces of Active Transportation

infrastructure. Warden Morrison advised that since this approval announcement, an additional \$40,000.00 has been approved for a total of \$55,000.00 in funding from the province.

In addition, he indicated that \$5,000.00 has been approved by Health and Wellness and a request has been made to the Village of Baddeck for \$5,000.00. The Municipality's required contribution to this project is \$22,500.00.

**It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Municipality approve \$22,500.00 as their contribution to the Nova Scotia Moves project to create an Active Transportation Plan for Victoria County. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **CONDITION OF TRAILS**

The condition of the North River Trail was discussed, as well as the Cape Smokey Trail. These trails have been neglected and are in need of repair.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Grant, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Environment and the Department of Natural Resources expressing concern on the condition of the North River and Cape Smokey Trails. Motion carried.**

#### **NEXTGEN PROPOSAL**

Sandy Hudson brought forward the NextGen Proposal - Creating an Island of Choice: Young Talent Attraction Strategy. NextGen is focused on providing advanced opportunities for young people aged 16-40 to be actively involved in business, public service, and community development leadership roles.

NextGen is undertaking a comprehensive strategic study and consultation with a goal to attract Cape Breton's next generation of talent. They are requesting \$1,500.00 from the Municipality to assist with this strategy. The total project cost is \$132,500.00 and the other funding partners were outlined.

**It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that \$1,500.00 be approved for the NextGen project. Motion carried.**

#### **POLICE ADVISORY BOARD**

Sandy Hudson advised that the only applicant for membership on the Police Advisory Board from the south of Smokey area is Wayne Crawford.

**It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that Wayne Crawford be appointed to the Victoria County Police Advisory Board. Motion carried.**

Kevin Chaisson is to member from the North of Smokey area.

A replacement member from Council is also required for the South of Smokey area. Former Councillor Keith MacCuspig was a member from Council. Councillor Larry Dauphinee is the Council member for the northern area of the County.

**It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that Councillor Grant be appointed as a member of the Police Advisory Board. Motion carried.**

The appointment of a provincial representative to the Police Advisory Board is also required.

### **PVSC WORKSHOP**

The PVSC Workshop scheduled for the Silver Dart Lodge, Baddeck, has been cancelled.

### **DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

Sandy Hudson advised that he will be contacting Jim Davis to work in the Finance Office in the interim until a permanent replacement is hired. He will be requested to work three days per week.

Mr. Davis is also a member of the Interview Committee for the Director of Finance position, along with Mark Peck, Municipal Advisor, and the CAO.

Sandy Hudson advised that 17 candidates have made application for the position and a meeting of the Interview Committee has been scheduled for next week to begin the hiring process.

### **WATER RATE STUDY**

The status of the Water Rate Study for the Victoria County Water Utility was discussed. The study has been prepared by G. A. Isenor Consulting Ltd, in association with W. H. Gates Utility Consultants Ltd.

Gerry Isenor will be contacted to review the study and it will forwarded to Council for approval and submission to the UARB.



**CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION DEBRIS**

Sandy Hudson advised that a long term solution for the construction and demolition materials at both sites in the County is required. The Department of Environment will no longer allow these materials to be stockpiled.

Application has been made to DNR to acquire additional land at the Baddeck Waste Management Facility. The possibility of developing a C & D cell for the burying of these materials or having these materials chipped were discussed. The costs associated were also discussed.

Sandy Hudson and Robert Dauphinee are to come to Council with a recommendation for the handling of this material.

**WATER ADMINISTRATION AUTHORITY**

Sandy Hudson indicated that he asked Strait Engineering to oversee the water operators and operations for a period of one year. They will ensure that proper testing, compliance and maintenance records are followed and also monitor the continuing problem with water loss. The contractors' duties will not change. They will just be supervised by Strait Engineering for this year period.

Strait Engineering cost will be \$2,500.00 per month, for a total of \$30,000.00 for this one year period.

**EMO**

Sandy Hudson advised that he would like to set up a meeting with Lyle Donovan, EMC, and Council concerning the responsibilities with regard to Emergency Measures.

This meeting will be arranged and Council will be advised.

**EDUCATION OFFICER**

Sandy Hudson indicated that part of the requirement for receiving RRFB funding is an education component. He felt that there are now a number of issues coming forward and it is time to advertise for an Education Officer to deal with mainly public works issues, but also other issues.

The Education position is to be a contract position and will be advertised in the near future.

**AUDIT COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Budge, to accept the recommendations of the Audit Committee to extend the Tax Office term position to March 31, 2014; to contact Anne Marie MacNeil to discuss title searching through Pickup MacDowell; and that the Director of Taxation institute an aggressive approach for the collection of tax arrears. Motion carried.**

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Budge, the meeting adjourned at 6:15 p.m.**

**Sandy Hudson, CAO**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

