

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
April 28, 2014

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Middle River Community Hall, Middle River, on Monday, April 28, 2014, 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.

Approval of the April 24, 2014, Committee of the Whole minutes and the addition of Anna deMello to present on a Breastfeeding Policy for Victoria County are to be added to the agenda.

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

Warden Morrison expressed Council's pleasure on coming to Middle River this evening and welcomed those in attendance to Council.

BREASTFEEDING POLICY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Anna deMello, Health Promotion Coordinator, Cape Breton District Health Authority, who was in attendance concerning a Breastfeeding Policy for the Municipality of the County of Victoria.

Ms. deMello presented the proposed policy (copy attached) to Council for their consideration.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the Municipality support and adopt the Breast Feeding Policy for the Municipality of the County of Victoria. Motion carried.

INTRODUCTIONS

Warden Morrison requested that Council members introduce themselves and the districts they serve to the audience present.

ELECTRIC CAR STATION PRESENTATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to David Stevenson, Nova Scotia Electric Highway Services, who was in attendance to make a presentation on Energy and Transportation – Renewable Energy and Electric Vehicles (EVs) “Wind to Wheels” (copy attached).

Mr. Stevenson indicated that he and David Swan have partnered on this project. Nova Scotia is a net importer of energy since the NS Oil Refinery closed. They now import gasoline and diesel. Nova Scotia has great wind and tidal resources and the COMFIT program promotes local renewable energy.

Mr. Stevenson indicated that we can afford electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure in Nova Scotia. He outlined the three “E’s” to grow renewable energy and EVs – Emission Reductions, Economic Growth and Emotional Commitment.

Mr. Stevenson updated on what is being done in Nova Scotia for EV’s. He indicated that NSPI supported a *ShareReady* initiative by bringing in 10 Nissan Leafs to test effects. These vehicles are in use by Avis, Encanex, Port of Halifax, Eastlink, DHSE, NSPI, Saint Mary’s University, CBCL and Wilsons.

Mr. Stevenson outlined the infrastructure for charging EV batteries, the community charging station network of 40+, the efforts to bring more EVs to Nova Scotia and improving the long distance for EV travel.

The building of an AC charging station network began in 2013 and Mr. Stevenson showed a map indicating proposed sites for 2014. Three sites are being proposed for Victoria County – Cape North/Dingwall, the Gaelic College and Baddeck.

Mr. Stevenson indicated that his firm made application under the Nova Scotia Moves Program for 12 charging stations. These stations are being offered to municipalities in the province. The stations will be provided and the cost to the municipality will be the cost of an electrician to install the stations, approximately \$1,000.00 to \$1,200.00.

Mr. Stevenson was questioned on the travelling range for these vehicles. He indicated that the car he uses travels about 120 km before charging. The 2014 models get 25% more mileage. It takes 2 hours to charge a vehicle on the AC charger. It was felt that the rising price of gas and diesel will make such vehicles more attractive. The cost charged to the customer for the charging would be up to the owner. There is no set charge.

The cost to buy an EV was questioned and Mr. Stevenson advised that the vehicle he uses – Nissan Leaf, is more than \$40,000.00. The warranty was questioned and he advised that since they obtained this vehicle three years ago, they have not had anything done. The odometer reading on the vehicle is slightly over 37,000 km.

Whether the EV station at the Knotty Pines, Ingonish Ferry, has been used was questioned and Council was advised that this station was installed late in the fall, so this season would be the first season of use of the charging station.

The location of the three stations proposed in Victoria County seems appropriate. Mr. Stevenson indicated he would provide the stations and the owners would work with an electrician to install locally. Power usage was questioned and it was indicated that the stations draw 3 to 6 amps at a time.

The safety of EVs was questioned and there are no issues. Further discussion took place.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the matter of EV charging stations be deferred to budget discussions. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Stevenson for his presentation and indicated Council would be in touch after the budget discussions.

WORKPLACE WELLNESS POLICY

Courtesy of Council was extended to Vince Forrestall, Physical Activity Strategy Coordinator, who was in attendance to make a presentation of a Workplace Wellness Policy for Victoria County (copy attached).

Mr. Forrestall indicated that the original strategy lacked policy and a Victoria County Workplace Wellness Policy has been drafted for review and approval.

Mr. Forrestall went through his presentation and indicated that the Workplace Wellness Action Plan is an evidence-based approach for a healthier, active and productive workforce. The Municipality's Workplace Wellness Action Plan fits in nicely with the approved Naturally Active Victoria County Physical Activity Strategy.

The goals and objectives contained in the strategy with regard to policy were reviewed. The makeup of the Victoria County Workplace Wellness Committee was provided.

The Workplace Wellness Policy shall apply to all employees of Victoria County and shall be administered by the Workplace Wellness Committee. The policy aims to increase the overall health levels of the employees and improved quality of life. The Committee's mandate is to establish the strategic direction and make sure it meets the goals, objectives and values.

The vision is to work towards creating a workplace that allows and encourages employees to reach and maintain their optimal level of health and the mission for this vision was explained.

Mr. Forrestall further reviewed the objectives, benefits and steps taken to wellness success in the workplace. Participation in the Municipality's Wellness Program is strictly voluntary and fully confidential (i.e. health risk assessments). The incentives for participating in the Workplace Wellness Program were outlined. The policy guidelines and supportive budget were reviewed.

Mr. Forrestall explained the workplace challenges that have been undertaken to date and indicated they are ongoing.

The Victoria County Workplace Wellness Policy was submitted for Council's approval.

Council congratulated Mr. Forrestall on promoting and participating in active living events throughout the County. The Physical Active Living Department is a great asset for the County.

Mr. Forrestall was commended for the work he has undertaken on obtaining access to schools in the County.

Discussion took place on wellness in the workplace and that it is not just for employees. Council, too, should set a good example for the employees.

Mr. Forrestall indicated he will soon complete three years with the Municipality and thanked Council for their continued support.

The Cape Breton Island Wide Summit on Physical Active Living will be held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's, on June 5-6, 2014, and Council were asked to participate in this event if available.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Forrestall for his presentation.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for five minutes.

MIDDLE RIVER COMMUNITY HALL PRESENTATION

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to David Peterson, Chairman of the Board of Directors, Middle River Recreation Association.

He welcomed Council on behalf of the Community Hall and made a presentation to Council on the Middle River Hall (copy attached). The Middle River Hall is a place where memories are made.

The hall is a multi-use facility used by community members, groups, and the larger community for a variety of functions. It is run by a Board of volunteers who oversee the rental and users, maintain the building, and promote its uses.

Mr. Peterson outlined the current users of the facility. In order to maintain the hall and keep it vibrant, the Board also hosts many events.

The winter of 2013-14 was one of the hardest winters in many years and was a difficult one for many residents. The Hall Committee would like to implement an emergency plan, with the Hall being the centre for support.

Currently Middle River Hall is identified as a Comfort Zone. The facility can provide a place for people to warm up, get a hot cup of tea or small meal and meet with others. The bathrooms are not wheelchair accessible. The Hall Committee would like to upgrade to a shelter facility, where residents could stay overnight, have a hot shower, meals and maintain residents in times of a disaster.

In order to facilitate this status, the Hall is in need of new windows, electrical upgrades, accessible washrooms with shower and other minor repairs.

Mr. Peterson concluded by indicating the hall is more than a building. An application for financial assistance was submitted to Council for consideration prior to the April 1, 2014 deadline.

Deputy Warden Patterson questioned on whether the hall was wired for a generator and Mr. Peterson indicated that they were for a small generator, but a larger one would be required for a shelter function.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the EMO's 72 hour preparedness is not reasonable for rural areas.

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Councillor Dauphinee questioned whether the Hall Committee had made application to ECBC for funding and Mr. Peterson indicated that they are in the process of applying to ECBC.

Councillor Grant questioned whether the Middle River Volunteer Fire Department would have a larger generator. Mr. Peterson indicated that the fire department have two generators.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you, on behalf of Council, to Mr. Peterson for his presentation.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - APRIL 24, 2014

The April 24, 2014, Committee of the Whole minutes were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Grant, that the Committee of the Whole minutes of April 24, 2014, and the recommendations to budget be approved as presented. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION – MIDDLE RIVER RECREATION ASSOCIATION

Councillor Grant presented a cheque for \$15,000.00 to the Middle River Recreation Association from the Municipality.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – APRIL 7, 2014

The minutes of the April 7, 2014, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the April 7, 2014, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Englishtown Ferry

The status of the Englishtown Ferry was questioned. Sandy Hudson advised that he spoke with John Majchrowicz and he indicated that the Scotian was undergoing sea trials and once completed, it would be brought to the area and put in place when the harbour and offshore is clear of ice.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he was advised that work must be undertaken on the tunnels in the cement ramps as they are broken on both sides. The Scotian is still in dry dock in

Pictou. He was informed that it is hoped to have everything ready and the ferry in service by the end of the week.

Transit Program

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the feasibility of a transit system be included for consideration in the operating budget. There will be another meeting held on the budget prior to the next Council meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Meetings with Ministers

Sandy Hudson advised that the House of Assembly will be in session soon and he anticipates that the meetings with the Ministers of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and Economic Development and Tourism will be held relatively soon thereafter with little notice.

Heavy Garbage Collection

A tender has been issued for the heavy garbage collection. It is anticipated that the collection will begin the week on June 9, 2014, and be completed by June 21, 2014.

Financial Condition Index Meeting

A workshop on the Financial Condition Index will be held at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre, Port Hawkesbury, on Wednesday, May 7, 2014, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Meeting – CBU

Warden Morrison indicated he received an email today from Dr. David Wheeler, President, CBU, concerning a meeting on a possible new creative/cultural strategy for Cape Breton Island. It is anticipated that Minister Lisa Raitt and Annette Verschuren will be in attendance.

The meeting will be held at CBU on May 12, 2014, from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. and a representation of 5 to 6 people from Victoria County is requested.

The Council meeting scheduled for that day will be delayed until Tuesday, May 13, 2014. Council members wishing to attend are to advise the Municipal Office as soon as possible.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that a street light be approved for installation across from 29 Highland Street, Ingonish. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan indicated that he has groups in Cape North and Bay St. Lawrence that want to undertake a community cleanup. He would like to obtain gloves and garbage bags.

It was indicated that the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal will supply garbage bags and gloves, and if not, the County will provide the supplies.

Councillor Buchanan advised that the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre (BSLCC) would like to lease the old school bus garage property for a basketball court for the area youth. The property is owned by the Municipality. The BSLCC would include this property in their insurance coverage.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre request be forwarded to the Solicitor to draft the lease for the property. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Budge indicated that repairs were undertaken at the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Water System last week. He was advised that there is no backup plan for the system. The fish plant and its 100 plus workers are dependent on this system and there should be a contingency plan in place.

The gentleman who did the repairs indicated he would send a report on the shortcomings of the system and advise on what would be required to have a contingency in place.

District #4

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Bill Conall on receiving the Stephen Leacock Memorial Medal for Humor. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that the recent winter saw some residents of his district spend in excess of \$1,000.00 for snow removal from driveways and roofs. This is a hardship for older residents on fixed incomes. He suggested that consideration be given during budget talks to allocating district funding to provide assistance to residents in need.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he and his family recently visited the Doryman in Cheticamp. It was an enjoyable afternoon of entertainment and he felt such events should also be available in Victoria County. He suggested that in March/April of next year, each Council member coordinate a function in their district for the mental well-being of the residents. They could be named County Ceilidhs.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the Grandona Legion in Iona have weekly Friday night suppers and entertainment.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he has heard that the Post Office in Iona will have a reduction in their hours of operation by five hours per week.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Grant, that a letter be forwarded to Canada Post opposing the reduction in the hours of operation at the Iona Post Office. Motion carried.

The Gills Point/Washabuck Road was voted the worst road in Atlantic Canada in the recent CAA poll. When a meeting is held with the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, the importance of having something done on this road as soon as possible should be stressed to the Province.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that at the recent Bras d'Or Lakes Stewardship Society meeting, Joe Janega, a Port Hawkesbury Town Councillor and Engineer, expressed concern on the condition of the railway through District #1 and up to Port Hawkesbury. Councillor Grant will speak further on this issue.

District #2

Councillor Grant further updated on the concern expressed by Joe Janega on the railway from Port Hawkesbury to Sydney. The girders on the railway bridge at Grant Narrows are rusted and the condition of the infrastructure underneath the water is questionable. Mr. Janega fears there is going to be an accident and this could be a serious situation.

Mr. Janega is to be invited to a meeting of Council in June or July to discuss this issue.

Councillor Grant indicated that a new bridge is slated for the Middle River at Nyanza in this year's TIR budget. Whether it is a complete replacement or major repair is unknown at this time. Councillor Grant indicated he would like to see a sidewalk installed on the bridge.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the CAO contact the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal requesting that a sidewalk be installed on the Middle River Bridge. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant brought up concerns with regard to the wood harvesting being done by Port Hawkesbury Paper in the Highlands and the potential shortage of firewood. Cutting is presently taking place off the Highland Road and brush is being left on the ground that could pose a concern with regard to fire. He indicated it would be good to be provided with an update and suggested that both Port Hawkesbury Paper and the Department of Natural Resources be invited to Council to explain what is being undertaken with regard to wood harvesting.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that representatives from Port Hawkesbury Paper and the Department of Natural Resources be requested to come to a future meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that he facilitated a Trails Meeting last week with 20 to 25 people attending. Those in attendance were enthusiastic and it was decided to set up a Trails Association which will meet and decide on how to proceed.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan questioned whether anything was received on Canada Summer Jobs application approval. Approval has been received for one Heritage Asset Identifier for 10 weeks and Sandy Hudson indicated that he thought one more approval would be forthcoming.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson took the Chair.

Warden Morrison advised that there will be a meeting held on Saturday, May 3, 2014, on how climate change will affect Baddeck. The meeting will begin on the waterfront at 1:00 p.m. and a gathering will take place at 2:00 p.m. at the Baddeck Library to review the results of a collaborative project between Baddeck Academy, Cape Breton Regional Library, Ecology Action Centre and the NS College of Art and Design.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Municipality of the County of Richmond congratulating them on their recently approved \$6 million dollar Tourism Strategy. Motion carried.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the “Workplace Wellness Policy” be approved for Victoria County. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison brought up the issue with regard to a resident's call to Bell Aliant. The resident called and when not satisfied with the information received, asked to speak to the Manager. The resident was advised that it was not their policy and if not happy, hang up and call again and see if the next representative could be more helpful. This is not acceptable.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that the CAO contact Kevin Hashem, Regional Manager, Bell Aliant, expressing concern on the unsatisfactory treatment received when calling Bell Aliant for assistance. Motion carried.

The phone outage last year in an incident where a line was pulled down in Big Harbour was discussed. This affected phones, debit machines, etc. and forced businesses to close during the outage. At the time Bell Aliant was contacted to see if there was another way the phone supply could have been restored sooner.

Sandy Hudson advised that they do have a system in place now that will prevent this from happening again.

Warden Morrison brought up the Investment Readiness Session held last week. It was a worthwhile experience that is ongoing and he expressed the appreciation of both Council and the consultant for the work done and cooperation received.

Warden Morrison advised that we are waiting for a reply from the Province with regard to the cell phone coverage project for Middle River and Bay St. Lawrence.

Warden Morrison returned to the Chair.

ADJOURN

There being no further business on motion of Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, the meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO