

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
July 7, 2014

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, July 7, 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

Warden Morrison presented the agenda for approval and indicated that the order of the presentations from Pam Eyking, MLA, and Chris Prentice, Transit Business Plan, have been switched to accommodate Pam Eyking's schedule.

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

125th ANNIVERSARY OF THE COURT HOUSE

Tom Wilson then presented Council with a photo presentation on the 125th Anniversary celebrations of the Court House that took place on June 20, 2014.

PAM EYKING, MLA

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Pam Eyking, MLA.

Mrs. Eyking thanked Council for the opportunity to appear and indicated that since her election as MLA for Victoria-The Lakes, she has been travelling the riding and some of the major issues she has heard include health care, roads, and cell phone coverage.

Mrs. Eyking indicated she understood a proposal was submitted to the Minister on July 3, 2014, with regard to cell phone coverage in Bay St. Lawrence and Middle River and is now being given consideration.

Health care, especially in the northern area of the County, is a concern and Mrs. Eyking indicated she met with the Minister of Health in Halifax and he will be travelling to the area later this month to tour the area with her.

Honourable Mark Furey, Minister of Municipal Affairs, is committed to touring the province. Four issues before Municipal Affairs are the fiscal review, Town's Task force, the UNSM/AMA Tax Cap Review and the UNSM resolutions review.

Mrs. Eyking indicated that she was here to facilitate and would take any issues/concerns Council may have back to the respective Ministers.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that in his district the most important issue is the roads. The Gillis Point Road is one of the worst roads in the Province and he would like to know where this road fits on the Department of TIR list. One of the possibilities for this road was to revert it to a gravel road and Councillor MacNeil expressed his concern as the gravel roads presently in his district are not being adequately maintained.

Mrs. Eyking indicated that she did not know the status of this road in the overall plan, but indicated she was not pushing for it to revert to a gravel road. She would like the upgrading of this road to be a level and one-half above a gravel road. She indicated that TIR are currently undertaking some ditch clearing and maintenance in this area.

Councillor MacNeil also indicated that the amount of maintenance equipment for this district has decreased in the last few years and adequate grading of roads in his district is not being done.

Councillor Grant requested that Mrs. Eyking bring the condition of the West Side Middle River Road to the appropriate people and push to have work done on this road.

Councillor Grant indicated that a meeting has been scheduled with the Minister of DNR on July 23, 2014, to talk about access to Crown Land for trails, wind turbines at Wreck Cove and property to extend our waste management facility at Baddeck. He requested Mrs. Eyking to assist in speeding up these requests to acquire Crown Land.

Councillor Grant also expressed concern about the serious erosion issues on the Middle River and asked that Mrs. Eyking assist with this issue also.

Councillor Grant also brought up the matter of a business in his district that would like to expand and is requesting assistance and asked that she assist in this initiative also.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the Englishtown Ferry and the fact that more than 25 years ago a bridge was promised for this area. He expressed concern with the ferry service at Englishtown. It is the busiest ferry in the Province and provides the most inconsistent service. The service is unacceptable for the residents and for tourism and has been the biggest deterrent to our County. No community consultation took place when the ferry was located at its current location.

Councillor MacInnis indicated he has spoken to the former Minister and would like an opportunity to share these concerns with the current Minister of TIR. He requested Mrs. Eyking's assistance in setting up a meeting.

Councillor MacInnis felt it was also time to consider privatizing road work. The lack of road maintenance is a concern throughout the County. The shoulders of the road are in deplorable condition and are to the point they are a danger.

Mrs. Eyking indicated she shared the concern with regard to the shoulders of the road. She travelled to Meat Cove last week and took photos of the shoulders of the road at a number of locations.

Councillor Buchanan brought up the maintenance budget for TIR north of Smokey. Nelson Dixon, Supervisor, has had his budget cut 40% and it is insufficient to do the work that is necessary. His budget is significantly lower than the other two supervisors in the County.

Councillor Buchanan indicated it was good to hear that a proposal on cell phone coverage in Middle River and Bay St. Lawrence was submitted on July 3, 2014, and is being given consideration.

Councillor Budge advised that he has heard that the proposed paving from Neil's Harbour north will not happen this year and he questioned Mrs. Eyking if this is true.

Mrs. Eyking advised that the paving on the list for this area is a 1.8 km section west of White Point.

Councillor Budge indicated that when the Deputy Minister of TIR came to the Municipality on March 5, 2014, he indicated a 6.2 km section from Neil's Harbour would be done. Councillor Budge also expressed concern on the condition of the crib work at the Post Office in Neil's Harbour. Something needs to be done in that area.

Councillor Dauphinee concurred with Councillor MacInnis' comments with regard to the Englishtown Ferry. This service has a big impact on the Ingonish area and is a major deterrent to tourism in this area. He indicated that meetings have been requested with the Ministers of both Tourism and TIR and it is not acceptable as to how long we have to wait for these meetings.

Mrs. Eyking will do what she can to arrange these meetings as soon as possible.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the condition of the Cabot Trail. He mentioned the money put into restoring the Bluenose. The Bluenose does not attract tourists to Nova Scotia. Most come to see the Cabot Trail.

The viewscapes on the Cabot Trail require work, as does the roadway and guardrailing. Councillor Dauphinee indicated it is time to get serious about the Cabot Trail.

Residents would also like to see the look off at the top of Smokey made into a proper look off and the area be paved.

Mrs. Eyking indicated she will attempt to set up the meeting as soon as possible with the Minister of Tourism with regard to the Keltic Lodge and Cabot Trail and with the Minister of TIR regarding the Cabot Trail and condition of the roads in Victoria County.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated he recently returned from Prince Edward Island and the roads there are in good shape. If something is not done to the problem roads in Victoria County in the near future, they will be beyond repair. He felt that the government should consider the options of borrowing money to fix the roads or installing tolls to pay for the roads. Most calls he receives from constituents are concerning the roads and this is similar with other Council members. Every year the maintenance budgets are decreasing and it is time for the government to sit down and decide if they are serious about doing something about the roads.

Councillor Buchanan brought up the Salmon River Bridge and the absence of lines on the roads north of Smokey.

Mrs. Eyking indicated that her number one priority is roads. She keeps this topic at the forefront of her discussions at all times and will continue to do so.

About six to eight months ago a letter was forwarded to the Cape Breton District Health Authority with regard to staffing at Buchanan Memorial Hospital and a reply has not been received to date. Mrs. Eyking was requested to follow up on this matter with the Minister of Health.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council met with medical personnel in the last month and Committees have been established with regard to health care and physician recruitment in both areas of the County. He felt it would be beneficial to discuss this matter with the Minister when he visits Victoria County on July 18, 2014, with Mrs. Eyking.

Warden Morrison also invited Mrs. Eyking to attend the meeting with the Minister of DNR on July 23, 2014, in Halifax.

Mrs. Eyking suggested that Council forward her a written request with regard to a meeting with the Minister of TIR and she will do what she can to get this meeting scheduled sooner than later.

The lack of a provincial Active Transportation Policy has been a deterrent in getting work done with regard to Victoria County's Active Transportation Plan. The Department of TIR is unable to give go ahead for certain projects because the lack of provincial policy.

Mrs. Eyking was requested to bring the matter of an active transportation policy for the Province forward for consideration.

Mrs. Eyking indicated she would take all the comments and issues addressed at tonight's meeting to the appropriate Ministers and requested a copy of the minutes be forwarded to her when completed.

Warden Morrison thanked Pam Eyking for her attendance and presented her and her assistant with complimentary Victoria County golf shirts.

Mrs. Eyking thanked Council for providing her the opportunity to appear and indicated she would bring Council's concerns forward.

OUTDOOR SMOKE FREE PLACES

Courtesy of Council was extended to Kelly Cull, Manager of Government and Partner Relations, Canadian Cancer Society, and Anna deMello, Health Promotion Coordinator, Cape Breton District Health Authority, who were in attendance to make a presentation on Outdoor Smoke Free Places.

Ms. Cull indicated that tobacco control is not done. She outlined the work that has been done such as banning tobacco power walls in stores, tobacco tax, prohibiting smoking in indoor spaces and in cars with children, and increased graphic advertising and health warnings. There is more to be done.

Ms. Cull indicated that innovative ways are being developed to reach people, especially the youth, with regard to the dangers of smoking. 85% of cancer is directly related to tobacco. In Nova Scotia, over 1700 people die each year from smoking related illness. An additional 200 die from being exposed to second-hand smoke. Over \$170 million is spent annually treating tobacco related diseases. 25% of Nova Scotia's population smoke and 1 in 10 youth smoke. This statistic is even higher in Cape Breton where 2.5 in 10 youth smoke.

Victoria County has been a leader in tobacco control, passing their Non-Smoking By-Law in 2002. More work has to be done to make outdoor spaces smoke-free also. Smoking,

even if it is outside, puts everyone at risk. Creating smoke-free outdoor spaces protects people, especially children, from second-hand smoke.

Ms. deMello indicated that one of the priorities in Victoria County's strategic plan is eco-tourism that focuses on healthy active living for tourists in the outdoors and smoke-free outdoor spaces would be in line with this vision.

Other municipal units in the Province who have adopted smoke-free outdoor spaces were outlined. The benefits of smoke-free spaces include:

- Sends the right message to our communities, particularly youth
- Limits exposure to the hazards of second hand smoke
- De-normalizes smoking, particularly for youth
- Supports citizens who are trying to quit
- Protects the environment and wildlife from toxic litter

Ms. deMello provided Council with pictures of outdoor spaces within the County that would benefit from having an outdoor smoke-free spaces policy.

The risks of doing nothing were outlined. The recommendation outlined is that staff be directed to review current policy options and best practices for Smoke-Free Public Outdoor Spaces and report back to Council with options for consideration.

The question was raised as to whether a smoke-free outdoor spaces requirement could be included under our community grants funding policy. This could be done and would capture a number of organizations.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that staff be directed to review current policy options and best practices for Smoke-Free Public Outdoor Spaces and report back to Council with options for consideration. Motion carried.

A member of the audience indicated she participated in the community cleanup in Baddeck recently and could not believe all the cigarette butt litter on the ground. She also indicated that she was an oncology nurse for a number of years and saw first-hand the effects of cigarette smoke and thinks establishing an outdoor smoke free places policy would be welcome for Victoria County.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the ladies for their presentation and they were excused at this time.

TRANSIT BUSINESS PLAN

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Chris Prentice, IBI Group, who was in attendance to make a presentation of the Transit Business Plan.

Warden Morrison welcomed Mr. Prentice and he in turn expressed his pleasure on again appearing before Council.

Mr. Prentice then provided his presentation (copy attached), which included what IBI did in completing the business plan. He outlined the existing transit resources in the County and provided Council with conclusions from the consultations that took place.

Mr. Prentice indicated that the key users of a transit system would be seniors and disabled persons. The primary trip purposes would be medical, shopping, work and education. The primary travel patterns and key destinations would be from North of Smokey to Baddeck and Sydney and various destinations between Ingonish and north. The trip frequency would infrequent for medical purposes; daily/weekly for shopping; daily for work and education; and weekly/monthly for social purposes.

A number of case studies and peer reviews were conducted during the course of the development of the business plan and Mr. Prentice outlined what was learned. He provided statistics on transit demand/potential use and outlined the key considerations. He advised that a formal transit service is not feasible for Victoria County. A need/area-specific, locally-based transit solution is what is recommended.

Mr. Prentice concluded that some form of transportation service is needed; however, a formal fixed route, scheduled service is not realistic. The most appropriate service is a demand-based program using existing resources. He recommended starting small and gradually augmenting the service as demand warrants and resources permit.

The Municipality should be the lead agency and act as the “Transportation Coordinator” and develop the ride-sharing model, monitor its success and develop additional transportation resources as required. It could implement a program to support and encourage the use of the local taxi services.

Mr. Prentice outlined future option considerations and indicated that the next steps for the consultant should include:

- Consult with stakeholders
- Explain approach and program for meeting the transportation needs of County residents – collaborative, share information, resources and communicate
- Build support and awareness of the program
- Receive feedback/suggestions
- Confirm back to County on action and implementation plan.

The County should establish a Transportation Coordinator position and initiate the program.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the liability insurance issue and how this affects the use of vehicles, such as the Alderwood bus, was discussed.

Deputy Warden Patterson thanked Mr. Prentice for the overview and requested that he come back when further details are received from the consultation. He agreed with Mr. Prentice that the County should start small. If something is tried and proves unsuccessful, then it can be dealt with. There should be some way to judge the success of the program.

Councillor MacNeil questioned whether this Coordinator position would be a dedicated or shared position. Mr. Prentice indicated that initially, to set up and get the program up and running, it should be full-time. Overtime, when the program is up and running, then it could be less time. He suggested the position be a contract position. The person should be outgoing, resourceful, self-motivated and not require a lot of supervision.

Councillor Grant questioned on the government money being received for a service in the Cheticamp area. Mr. Prentice outlined the CTAP and ATAP program and indicated they apply to a more formal transit process. The CTAP deals with per capita funding for a formal service and the ATAP is for funding towards the purchase of vehicles.

Mr. Prentice indicated that he is in the area until Wednesday and has scheduled meetings over the next couple of days and would be compiling the information received. He will report back to Council at a future meeting.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Prentice for his update on the Transit Business Plan.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Warden Morrison welcomed Leanne MacLellan, Director of Finance, who was in attendance to provide a financial update to Council.

Mrs. MacLellan presented Council with the first quarter balance sheet and the general fund statement of revenue and expenditures from April 1 – June 30, 2014.

Mrs. MacLellan indicated that she plans to provide Council with quarterly financial updates and advised that Grant Thornton, External Auditors, would be presenting the non-consolidated financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2014, at Council on July 21, 2014. They will return in September, 2014, to present the consolidated statements.

Mrs. MacLellan then reviewed the two documents with Council, outlining the revenue and expenditures to date. She indicated that one document ties in with the other and this is the way she would be presenting on a quarterly basis.

She also indicated that she would be bringing forward some recommendations with regard to finances in the future.

Discussion took place on the financial update and Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Leanne MacLellan for the update.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JUNE 23, 2014

The minutes of the June 23, 2014, session of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Councillor MacInnis indicated a correction to the minutes on the last page. The next meeting should be July 7, 2014, not July 21, 2014, as indicated.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of June 23, 2014, be approved with the noted correction. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Soccer Field – Rankin School of the Narrows

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he was not in attendance at the last meeting when the CBVRSB representatives were in attendance. He brought up the damage to the fencing at the soccer field at the Rankin School of the Narrows.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Budge, that a letter be forwarded to the CBVRSB requesting that they undertake repairs to the fencing at the Rankin School of the Narrows soccer field. Motion carried.

Boularderie School

Deputy Warden Patterson brought up the status of the Boularderie School which was included in the list of options presented by the CBVSB for possible closure at the meeting. After this was announced in the media, it was clarified that this matter was referred to another committee and is not on the list for closure.

NEW BUSINESS

ELECTORAL BOUNDARY REVIEW

Sandy Hudson, CAO, presented his final report on the Electoral Boundary Review to Council. Section 369 (1) of the *Municipal Government Act* requires that every 8 years, a study of the number and boundaries of the polling districts in the Municipality, their fairness and reasonableness, and the number of Councillors be undertaken. This document is to be reviewed over the next couple of months prior to it being submitted to the UARB for a decision.

It was moved by Councillor Budge, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, to accept the CAO's report on the Electoral Boundary Review. Motion carried.

The document will be placed on the website and the public will still have an opportunity to provide comments. Councillor Grant will also place the document on the ourbaddeck.com site.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Letter from Inverness County on the proposed expansion of the Margaree Airport.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Deputy Warden Patterson, that the Municipality endorse the proposal for the expansion of the Margaree Airport. Motion carried.

2. Letter from the Department of Environment advising that the deadline to respond to the proposed changes with regard to waste management/recycling is extended to September 30, 2014.
3. A request was received from Scotian Windfields to have an informal meeting with Council with regard to their proposed wind turbine project in Victoria County.

This meeting will be arranged the same day the meeting is held with regard to Emergency Measures.

REN UPDATE

Warden Morrison presented a quick update on the status of the REN (Regional Enterprise Network).

He indicated that the REN is close to being developed. The administrative structure has been set up. An Oversight Committee of the 3 Wardens, 1 Mayor, 4 CAO's and 2 provincial representatives has been established. The REN 6 Business Cape Breton will contain 2 business representatives from the four municipalities. A funding agreement will be instituted with the Cape Breton Partnership and the Cape Breton Small Business Centre.

The final draft will be submitted to the province shortly and the other three municipal units are in agreement.

A motion was passed at a previous Council meeting to hire an Economic Development Officer for the County. With the formation of the REN, it was questioned if this was the most appropriate option, or should we use the services of the Cape Breton Small Business Centre.

It was felt that hiring our own would be too long a process and has been unsuccessful in the past. It was indicated that in the REN set up, economic development office staff will be available for each individual municipality and each will have their own dedicated service.

Warden Morrison outlined the options and discussion took place. The \$70,000.00 the Municipality will invest in the REN is matched by the Province.

It was felt that the expectation would be to have a dedicated person for Victoria County under the current staff of the Small Business Development Centre and if not current, additional staff be hired. We should be clear on what our expectation is under this setup.

Warden Morrison indicated he would draft a note to clarify the Council's position and forward it to Council for review, prior to meeting on the REN next week.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil brought up the matter of the taxes for the Iona Food Bank.

A grant equal to the taxes can be provided as done with other community organizations.

The Rankin School property owned by the County has been appraised by an independent appraiser. The property should be declared surplus and the CBVRSB be approached to purchase same at fair market appraisal value.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the County-owned Rankin School, Iona property be declared surplus. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant advised that the Biosphere North East Trails Association is now a legal society.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor Budge, that the letter to be forwarded to DNR regarding the wilderness area designations be forwarded to the Department of Environment also. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant questioned on funding from Inverness County for services provided in the Meat Cove area.

Sandy Hudson advised that he has discussed this matter with Joe O'Connor, CAO, Inverness County, but no amount has been determined as yet.

It was moved by Councillor Grant, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a street light order be placed for installation at 8819 Highway 105, Baddeck Inlet (Polytech Products). Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis requested that a street light repair request be forwarded to NSPI for a street light at 278 Rooster Hill Road, St. Ann's, and the status of the request for a new light at Wreck Cove be investigated.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan questioned whether a cost had been obtained for bringing the Dingwall Water line to the top of the hill at Cape North.

The CAO advised that a price has not been obtained as yet. He anticipates that infrastructure funding will not actually be available for projects for the next few years.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on how Jocelyn Bethune was proceeding with the clear bag initiative.

Mrs. Bethune, who was in attendance, indicated that she is in the process of putting a strategy together and they are on schedule to move forward for a clear bag collection this fall. She indicated that she will gladly go to any events happening throughout the County to explain the clear bag and recycling initiatives.

Councillor Buchanan advised that the 32nd Annual Crab Fest and Fishing Derby will be held on July 20, 2014, in Bay St. Lawrence.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee questioned on whether a loan could be received under fire department funding to assist with the replacement of a roof.

Sandy Hudson advised that a maximum of \$10,000.00 is available. The loan is to be repaid over a three year period.

District #3

Warden Morrison requested that a street light be removed from 516 Chebucto Street and advised of the response he received from NSPI.

He also requested that a light be installed at 520 Chebucto Street. The relocation from 516 to 520 Chebucto would be the best scenario if possible.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, July 21, 2014. The external auditors will be presenting the non-consolidated financial statements for the Municipality for the year ended March 31, 2014.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO