

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
November 9, 2015

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, November 9, 2015, 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 #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)

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

IMMIGRATION PILOT PROJECT/LIFELINE SYRIA UPDATE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Amanda McDougall, Manager, Immigration Partnerships, Cape Breton University and Ian MacNeil, Manager, Prosperity Framework.

Ms. McDougall was in attendance to provide Council with an update on the Rural/Urban Immigration Pilot Project.

Ms. McDougall indicated that there is \$7 million in funding for immigration and settlement services. There is one organization in Nova Scotia – the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS).

ISANS is a leading community organization that welcomes immigrants to Nova Scotia. Working in partnership, they offer services to create opportunities to help immigrants to participate fully in Canadian life. They provide a wide range of services to immigrants, from resettlement, professional programs, counselling and language services, etc.

The YREACH Program was outlined. YREACH is a newly expanded YMCA program that provides information, orientation and settlement support to immigrants and Temporary Foreign Workers and their families who are new to communities across the province of Nova Scotia. YREACH has a mandate to raise awareness about the benefits of immigration in Nova Scotia and to work with local partners to create welcoming communities. Rob Martin is the Immigration Services Worker with the YREACH Program at the YMCA in Sydney.

Ms. McDougall indicated that if all of Cape Breton works together, community by community, and identify where there are gaps and share resources and services throughout the island much can be achieved.

Ms. McDougall advised that the final design of the Municipal Orientation Program document has been completed and there is a general section where each municipality can provide information on their municipality.

The Lifeline Syria Project was outlined. The financial obligation associated with same was outlined, as well as healthcare, education, transportation, counselling, language, workplace readiness and other such services associated with settlement.

Whether the documents would be translated to the appropriate language for those who immigrate here was questioned. Ms. McDougall indicated that they can provide language translation for over 40 countries.

When can the first immigrants be expected was also questioned and it was indicated that they could arrive any time and we have to be ready as soon as possible.

The skill base and demographics of the refugees were discussed. They will also have to be prepared for the climate and this will be done prior to their arrival.

The costs associated with sponsorship were outlined, as were the various funding streams available.

The federal government have announced they will be accepting 25,000 refugees into Canada by year end and it is the federal government that will decide where the refugees are located.

Sponsorship of refugees was discussed and there is no right way or wrong way and no end to the combinations for sponsorship.

The fact that all offices of the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration are centralized in the Halifax area was discussed. It was felt we should advocate to have a representative located in the Cape Breton area.

Ms. McDougall indicated a case could be built for this. CBU has the highest number of international students in the province next to SMU. 83% of the international students at CBU/Marconi want to stay. CBRM are the second largest urban centre in Nova Scotia.

Whether the federal government is ready for the responsibility of 25,000 refugees was discussed. Amanda McDougall indicated that they will be meeting with the two federal MP's, Mark Eyking and Rodger Cuzner, on Thursday, November 12, 2015. They want to make sure in this meeting that Cape Breton gets their fair share of refugees and the supports that go along with same.

An audience member indicated an interest in having his granddaughter immigrate to Canada. He was advised there was a certified immigration consultant at CBU and also made aware of the Nova Scotia Nominee Program.

Ian McNeil outlined that Lifeline Syria Cape Breton represents the desire of many individuals and organizations across Cape Breton to organize a coordinated response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis. He presented a two sheet summary of the Lifeline Syria Cape Breton steering committee, the objectives, activities and action requested (copy attached).

Mr. McNeil is the Chair of Advocacy which is to advocate for increased settlement targets and improved settlement processes for Syrian refugees wishing to come to Canada. He invited Council, community leaders and First Nations to be a part of the island-wide coordinated response.

The number that could be considered for Victoria County and the associated commitments were discussed.

The information of Lifeline Syria can be accessed online at <http://lifelinesyriacapebreton.ca> or on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/lifelinesyriac>.

Mr. McNeil indicated that on November 30, 2015, in Sydney, an immigration consultant will gather all the partners together and present a scenario. This exercise will provide assistance and show our readiness. He requested the Council consider appointing a municipal representative of attend this meeting.

Councillor Grant indicated that there would be a meeting held at 7:00 p.m. on November 11, 2015, at St. Michael's Hall, to gauge local community interest.

Mr. McNeil advised that John Malcom is the head of fundraising and he outlined that an account has been set up at the Credit Union through New Dawn Enterprises. Tax receipts will be issued for donations. Donations can be targeted and earmarked for refugees who come to Victoria County.

Further discussion took place on this matter.

Warden Morrison provided a wrap up of the presentation and indicated that there would be a commitment to local meetings; Council would appoint a representative to Lifeline Syria Cape Breton; they would advocate at the Island-Wide Municipal Conference at the Gaelic College in St. Ann's on November 25-26, 2015. Mr. McNeil will be kept informed as things progress.

Warden Morrison then extended a thank you to Amanda McDougall and Ian McNeil for their presentation.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

LIFELINE SYRIA

It was moved and seconded that Councillor Athol Grant be appointed as the municipal representative on the Lifeline Syria Committee. Motion carried.

Meetings held throughout the County with regard to the refugee issue are to be coordinated through Councillor Grant.

Councillor Grant indicated that there will be a public meeting held at St. Michael's Hall, Baddeck, on November 11, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. to gauge the public interest in sponsoring a Syrian Refugee family in Victoria County.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality sponsor public meetings throughout the County with regard to the Syrian Refugee issue and these meetings be coordinated through Councillor Grant.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – OCTOBER 26, 2015

The minutes of the October 26, 2015, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of October 26, 2015, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

PAYMENTUS

Leanne MacEachen, Director of Finance, indicated that Victoria County is one of two municipal units in the province that accept credit cards for payment of taxes. Others use a third party, such as Paymentus.

The cost of accepting credit card payments in the last fiscal year was \$60,000.00, and this amount is increasing annually. Currently the Municipality is charged 2.2% when accepting credit card payments.

Paymentus is a third party payment processing service provider. Payment by credit card can be done through Paymentus who charge a service charge to the customer making the payment. The service charge is approximately 1.95%. The Municipality receives the full amount owing.

Ms. MacEachen indicated that it is not possible to do this on a trial basis and the contract with Paymentus is usually a five year contract, but it is possible to negotiate a three year contract.

Whether a station could be set up at the Tax Office for taxpayers who want to pay with credit card through Paymentus was questioned. Ms. MacEachen indicated it would be preferable not to. Taxpayers can still pay at the counter with cash, debit or cheque.

Council indicated they would like to see the ability of paying through Paymentus set up at the Tax Office.

It was moved and seconded to enter into a three year contract, if possible, with Paymentus. Motion carried.

EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY

Sandy Hudson advised that more clarity is required on the extended producer responsibility issue before Public Works can provide the answer requested by Council at the last meeting.

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT – NSHA AND MUNICIPALITY

The Memorandum of Agreement between the NSHA and the Municipality with regard to the planning and construction of primary care team office space at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital was signed on behalf of the Municipality and forwarded to the NSHA.

GREEN BINS – COMPOSTING

Sandy Hudson advised that the waste collection trucks are not equipped to handle the large green bins used in some areas.

The small household bins can be purchased locally at a minimal cost.

TAX EXEMPTION PROGRAM

A meeting will be held prior to Council on November 23, 2015, regarding outstanding municipal tax exemption matters.

SCHOOL FUNDING

Council asked for a review of the Recreation Department budget with regard to school funding.

Leanne MacEachen, Director of Finance, explained the decrease in the funding. It was also indicated that district budget funds could be used to assist school teams.

BAY ST. LAWRENCE/ST. MARGARET'S VILLAGE WATER

Sandy Hudson advised that the Municipality's application under the Build Canada Fund for the Bay St. Lawrence/St. Margaret's Village water project was denied mainly because there was no source of water yet identified. Application under this program cannot be made for another 4 year period.

The CAO indicated that he would like to make application for PCAP funding to identify a water source.

It was moved and seconded that application be made in January, 2016, for PCAP funding to identify a water source for the Bay St. Lawrence/St. Margaret's Village area. Motion carried with Councillor Grant casting a dissenting vote.

FAMILY HOME DAYCARE

Lisa Brewster, Cape Breton Family Place Resource Centre, will be invited to Council in December to outline the family home daycare program.

Cheryl MacDonald, who is interested in a day care facility in the northern area of the Council, will be invited to attend this meeting.

MINISTER OF TIR

No meeting has been scheduled as yet with the Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Minister of TIR.

NEW BUSINESS

LITTLE NARROWS SURPLUS PROPERTY

A survey of the surplus land at Yetman Lane, Little Narrows, was presented. There is still public access to the waterfront.

It was moved and seconded to accept the surplus property offer from the Department of TIR. Motion carried.

BUSINESS CAPE BRETON

A request was received from Business Cape Breton for funding towards the operation of their small business development centre. The request is for \$24,807, for the 16 month period from December 1, 2015, to March 31, 2017.

It was moved and seconded that the Business Cape Breton request for funding for their small business development centre be referred to budget. Motion carried.

WHITE POINT PROPERTY

A request was received from Dan Chiasson, on behalf of a client, that the Municipality consider selling property at White Point.

Any sale of real property must be put to tender.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality retain this property and not place it for sale. Motion carried.

ROAD NAME CHANGES

It was moved and seconded that the unnamed private road at Ingonish Beach be named Water Tower Road. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that the unnamed private road at Ingonish Ferry be named Cove Road. Motion carried.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

The annual Municipal Christmas Party will be held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's, on Friday, December 4, 2015.

FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES (FCM)

The Annual FCM Conference will be held in Winnipeg, Manitoba, from June 2-6, 2016. Reservations are now open for hotel accommodations.

Warden Morrison, Councillors MacNeil and Dauphinee expressed an interest in attending. As well, it was thought Deputy Warden Patterson was also interested.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of a speed radar sign which indicates your speed being located in the Ingonish Beach area. This request was made to TIR a couple of years ago.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of TIR requesting that a radar speed sign be located in Ingonish Beach. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the matter of the location of a highway webcam in the North Shore area.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Stephen MacDonald, DTIR, requesting that the department proceed with the location of a highway webcam in North Shore. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Budge extended a thank you to the Public Works Department for their quick action with regard to the water leak in Neil's Harbour.

Councillor Budge also brought up the matter of the wells at Neil's Harbour and the possibility of bringing them into the system.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan brought up a concern with regard to snow removal on the gravel roads this winter season. This work is to be completed by a loader and there are no operators for this machinery.

Also the motor went on one of the two trucks located in Cape North.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister and Area Manager, DTIR, expressing concern on the snow removal on gravel roads in the north of Smokey area this winter season. Motion carried.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the recent mandatory clear bag waste collection and whether there has been an increase in clear bags and weights with regard to garbage sent to Guysborough.

Jocelyn Bethune indicated that there has been a dramatic increase in clear bags. Education is ongoing to ensure residents have the proper information.

Leanne MacEachen indicated that in comparing bills from Guysborough for the month of October, 2014 and October, 2015, the difference is an approximate decrease of \$2,000.00.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis brought up the unsightly condition of the former Plaster Provincial Park on the North Shore. At one time this area was a fishermen's reserve for access to the ocean, but access has been denied.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Acting Minister of DNR, Geoff MacLellan, concerning the condition and denial of access to the former Plaster Picnic Park. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis brought up the matter of the proposed moose native moose hunt in the CBHNP.

Discussion took place on both the native and non-native hunts and the checks and balances associated with both.

The native moose hunt is regulated by the Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR).

It was moved and seconded that Clifford Paul, UINR; Derek Quann, CB Highlands National Park; and Merrill Bustin, DNR, be invited to come to Council with regard to the moose hunt. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that a street light be ordered for installation at 812 Route 312, Englishtown. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor Grant indicated that the bridge located at Rear Humes River Road that leads to the Keppoch Highlands is not useable and the Biosphere Northeast Trails Association (BNTA) is requesting a letter of support from the Municipality for their application for funding through the Off-Highway Vehicle Fund.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality provide a letter of support for the BNTA's application for replacement of the Rear Humes River Road Bridge under the Off Highway Vehicle Fund. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant indicated that he would be hosting a community meeting at the Baddeck Forks Community Hall on November 21, 2015, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon with regard to community development at the local level in his district.

The status of the Economic Development Officer for the Municipality was questioned and the CAO advised that an offer has been made and he expects someone to be in place by Christmas.

Councillor Grant brought up his concern with regard to the taxes paid by the federal government. They do not pay the entire amount that is billed by the County. Bill MacKeough is the contact for the federal government and he felt a meeting should be scheduled with Mr. MacKeough to discuss this issue.

The CAO advised that Pauline Davis, Director of Taxation, is working on this issue.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the grading of the gravel roads in his district has not been completed. He felt a meeting was required with the Minister on this issue

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he would like to also meet with regard to the Englishtown Ferry issue. It is rumored that the ferry will be out for the winter months for repairs that will cost in the multimillions.

It was felt that we should press for a meeting with the Minister as soon as possible. He is now also the Acting Minister of Environment and DNR.

It was moved and seconded that the Warden contact Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Minister of TIR, to meet with Council as soon as possible. Motion carried.

District #8

It was moved and seconded that a street light order be placed for installation of a street light at 29485 Bay St. Lawrence Road, Bay St. Lawrence. Motion carried.

District #3

Both the Baddeck and North of Smokey Christmas parades will take place on November 28, 2015. The Baddeck parade is in the afternoon and the North of Smokey in the evening.

Jocelyn Bethune is to come up with a theme for Councillors dress at the parades.

Warden Morrison indicated that the K147 Baddeck Sea Cadets are in need of instructors and if any Council Member knows of anyone who might be interested, they are to contact Dick Grubb.

Warden Morrison advised of a three day Facilitation Course that is being hosted by New Dawn Enterprises. The cost is \$500.00 per person and any Council member interested in attending was authorized to do so.

Warden Morrison felt that with the recent change in government and the re-election of MP's Eyking and Cuzner, now would be an opportune time to get working on the Cabot Trail upgrade.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to pursue the setup of the Cabot Trail Committee. Motion carried.

Any Council member wishing a room in conjunction with the Island Wide Municipal Conference at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's on November 24 and 25, 2015, are to advise the Municipal Office.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO