

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
January 11, 2016

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 11, 2016, 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. The “We Day” presentation scheduled on the agenda has been cancelled due to illness.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved with the noted change. Motion carried.

DANGEROUS AND UNSIGHTLY PREMISES PUBLIC HEARING

Courtesy of the meeting was extended to Sean Donovan, Eastern District Planning Commission, who was in attendance with regard to property owned by Richard Doucette, 37921 Cabot Trail, Ingonish Beach (copy attached).

The property owner was sent a notice of Proposed Demolition on December 22, 2015.

Mr. Donovan advised the state of the property on the first visit was in a ruinous and dilapidated condition, an allurements to children, and unsightly in relation to neighbouring properties.

He outlined the Certified Building Official Report that recommended the dwelling be removed from the property and disposed of in an appropriate manner.

It also indicated should a decision be made to upgrade the dwelling to the 2010 National Building Code standard, the project is to be overseen by a Certified Engineer.

Since receiving the notice of Proposed Demolition, Mr. Doucette has been in full compliance with the Administrator and has completed all necessary requirements to obtain a building permit to complete the proposed work. The property owner's intentions are to begin work as soon as the building permit is issued.

As a result, Mr. Donovan is recommending that no "Order to Remedy Condition" be issued and that Mr. Doucette be able to begin construction to remedy the dwelling.

Council discussed this matter.

It was moved and seconded to accept the recommendation of the Administrator with regard to the Richard Doucette property at 37921 Cabot Trail, Ingonish Beach, and the work undertaken be completed before the one year expiration of the building permit. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – BUDGET COMMITTEE, NOVEMBER 23, 2015 – VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, DECEMBER 7, 2015 AND JANUARY 4, 2016

The Budget Committee minutes of November 23, 2015, were presented for approval.

Discussion took place on the charitable exempt properties and what should be done with properties going into the next year that haven't applied for the tax exempt status as outlined in the External Organizations Tax Exemption By-Law.

The by-law indicates that application is to be made annually and whether the by-law should be revised to change this section was discussed. The CAO will review the by-law.

Councillors are to be provided with the organizations in their districts so they can investigate the status of the organizations.

The Barra Food Bank's status was discussed and it was recommended in the November 23, 2015, minutes that they be included in the list of properties to receive a grant equal to their taxes.

The Ingonish Development Society has paid their taxes and is seeking a refund for what they paid. The Tax Department will be advised to refund the funds paid.

The North Shore Community Hall has an outstanding tax balance of approximately \$8,000.00. They now get a grant for the current tax year, but it does not address the arrears.

Whether this property was active was questioned and whether it should proceed to Tax Sale was discussed. Council agreed that this property should be put to Tax Sale.

The December 7, 2015, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council were reviewed.

Whether clarification was obtained on the Physical Active Living Survey was questioned. Discussion took place. This survey was completed province-wide and the province covered the cost. A summary of the survey results will be received by the end of March, 2016.

The January 4, 2016, Victoria County Municipal Council minutes were reviewed.

Warden Morrison advised that he and Councillor MacNeil will be meeting with Chief Norman Bernard, Wagmatcook, and a representative from the Department of Justice, on January 18, 2016, with regard to Court services in Wagmatcook.

Councillor Grant questioned whether other municipalities were contacted with regard a tax limit policy. The CAO indicated he contacted the Department of Municipal Affairs and there are policies in effect in some other municipal units in the range of \$300.00 to \$500.00.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality institute a Tax Limit Policy with the lower limit where a Tax Sale is initiated being \$300.00. Motion carried.

Councillor Grant again brought up the matter of hiring our own solicitor and felt this should be given consideration. He also questioned on the various figures provided at the last meeting with regard to taxes outstanding. The CAO explained the figures and advised that the goal assigned to the Tax Office is to reduce the outstanding current balance to \$800,000.00 by March 31, 2016. Council will receive an update at every Council meeting.

Tax reminders were sent out this week to all with tax balances of \$200.00 and over. Approximately 1250 reminders were sent.

A meeting has been scheduled for Monday, January 18, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. Any questions can be provided to staff in advance and will be answered on the 18th.

Whether Stephen MacDonald, Darren Blunden and Pam Eyking would be coming to Council on January 25, 2016, was questioned. The CAO indicated he has not received a reply to date.

It was moved and seconded that the November 23, 2015 Budget Committee minutes, and the December 7, 2015 and January 4, 2016, Victoria County Municipal Council minutes be approved as presented. Motion carried.

RECESS

The Warden announced that Council would recess for ten minutes.

ERIKA SHEA, NEW DAWN ENTERPRISES

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Erika Shea, Director of Communications, New Dawn Enterprises, who was in attendance to make a presentation on New Dawn's CEDIF (Community Economic Development Investment Funds) Program (copy attached).

Ms. Shea provided Council with her background and indicated she has been employed with New Dawn Enterprises for the past six years.

She provided a short history of New Dawn Enterprises. They have a staff of 110+, with an annual operating budget of \$7.5 million. New Dawn has been operating in Cape Breton for the past 39 years. They are governed by a volunteer board of directors, one of which is Alicia Lake. They have raised \$11 million for local investment (CEDIF) and own/manage 240 residential/commercial units.

Ms. Shea explained the CEDIF Program. In 1999, Nova Scotia created the CEDIF program and tax credit to encourage Nova Scotians to invest in their own communities. They can replace or compliment existing investment options. With New Dawn's CEDIF program, 100% of the investment stays locally in Cape Breton. They are RRSP eligible, have no annual management fees, pay 2 – 3% in annual dividends and qualify for a 35% Provincial Income Tax Credit.

Ms. Shea indicated that existing RRSPs with other financial institutions can be transferred without penalty into CEDIF self-directed RRSPs. In doing this, you qualify for the 35% non-refundable tax credit on the full transfer amount.

New Dawn have a Family of CEDIFs – New Dawn Holdings, New Dawn Community Investment and New Dawn Innovation Fund. Each CEDIF is governed by a volunteer board of directors who are assisted by investment committees who organize, research and make investment recommendations.

Ms. Shea outlined the investments in Cape Breton since 2011, one of which is Big Spruce Brewing in Victoria County.

New Dawn's CEDIF campaign will take place in January/February 2016.

The One Nova Scotia "Now or Never" report highlighted the CEDIF program as holding great promise for struggling communities across the Province and urged the government to both consider its expansion and to increase its marketing and, in turn, its uptake.

Ms. Shea that New Dawn CEDIF Investees must be active for-profit businesses based in Cape Breton and listed by the Registry of Joint Stock Companies. They must provide 3 years of financial statements and CRA tax returns. Following approval of a five-year investment, New Dawn CEDIF business must submit annual financial statements for board assessment and pay interest monthly. Further information can be obtained on their website link – http://invest.newdawn.ca/cedif_basics.

New Dawn CEDIF Investors invest for a five year term and must invest a minimum of \$1,000.00 to a maximum of \$15,000.00. The investment period is January-February. They will receive a 35% tax credit in the investment year. In year 5 and additional 20% tax credit will be received and a roll over in year 10 is an additional 10% - a 65% equity tax credit over 15 years. Further information can be obtained at <http://invest.newdawn.ca>.

Ms. Shea outlined the impacts of New Dawn's CEDIF:

- Access to capital for local businesses looking to expand operation or repatriate debt
- Viable investment opportunities for members of the community interested in where their money is invested and/or concerned about local economic development
- Increasingly robust local discourse on self-reliance, local investing and local business/entrepreneurial assets.

Deputy Warden Patterson thanked Ms. Shea for the interesting presentation and indicated it was a good investment option.

The number of people employed by New Dawn was discussed. They are a private home care company also and are involved in a number of different sectors.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the investment in Fireblade Holsteins and he was advised that they are endeavouring to achieve 0% emissions. They are purchasing a bio-digester from Germany for COMFIT approval to use their cow manure to create power to sell to NSPI.

Discussion took place on a new shipping process for live lobster that is being developed where each lobster is located in its own honeycomb. This cuts back on mortality when shipped to the Europe and Asia market. Transportation costs are substantially lower also.

Discussion took place on bringing this presentation to communities and Ms. Shea indicated that she would be interested in coming to any area that requests to provide a similar presentation.

Warden Morrison indicated that Victoria County is home to the most entrepreneurs per capital in the province. He felt it was important to get this word out and felt contact should be made with our new EDO, Nichole Lucas-Richardson.

A question was raised as to whether there was any way of spreading the projects around the island and investment opportunities outside CBRM. The possibility of New Dawn administering a separate CEDIF on behalf of Victoria County was discussed. Ms. Shea indicated that it may be possible for New Dawn to act as a third party administrator for a Victoria County CEDIF.

Alicia Lake advised that along with assisting Big Spruce Brewing, there are Victoria County residents that are employed in companies invested in through New Dawn's CEDIF Program.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Ms. Shea for her presentation.

NOTICE OF MOTION

Councillor Grant gave notice of motion that at the next meeting, he will be bringing forward a motion to request the Tax Department to include warnings on future Tax Sale notice advertisements.

NEW BUSINESS

DIAMOND AGREEMENT – GROUP OF NINE

The CAO advised that the current agreement with Diamond Systems expires on March 31, 2016, and the Group of Nine municipalities wish to enter into a new agreement with Diamond commencing April 1, 2016.

It was moved and seconded to enter a new agreement with regard to the Diamond System. Motion carried.

COMMUNITY GRANTS APPLICATION

Sandy Hudson advised that applications are now available for grants to community organizations. The deadline for application is March 31, 2016.

LITTLE NARROWS WATER

The CAO advised that water has been stolen from a hydrant on the Little Narrows Water System at the John Neil George Road. The hydrant was damaged and the RCMP has been notified.

SEAWALL TRAIL PRESENTATION

A request was received from Ray Fraser, Seawall Trail Society, to present to Council. He will be placed on a future agenda and Councillor Buchanan will be contacted with the date and time.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil again expressed concern on the flooding on the Gillis Point Road. Something has to be done in this area.

This will be included for discussion when the Department of TIR representatives attend Council.

District #2

Councillor Grant brought up the allowance for unused sick time/vacation time in the financial statements.

The Union contract allows for a carryover of vacation days to a maximum of 25 and a payout of sick leave to a maximum of 180 days upon retirement.

He felt that ways should be examined to limit this cost.

Councillor Grant is to be provided with a copy of the collective agreement between the Municipality and CUPE Local 2694.

District #4

Setting up of a webcam in the area of the hydrant on John Neil George Road would assist in identifying the person stealing water from the Little Narrows Water System.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the status of the Fire Services Coordinator and whether Inverness County had replied to have a joint position.

Interviews were completed for a driver and collection helper.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan questioned on the Dingwall Water tank. An inspection of the interior of the tank was good and arrangements will be made to paint the outside of the tank in the spring.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on whether application had been made for PCAP funding for the Bay St. Lawrence/St. Margaret's Village water project.

It was moved and seconded to make application for PCAP funding to assist in identifying a water source for Bay St. Lawrence/St. Margaret's Village. Motion carried with Councillor Grant voting against the motion.

Councillor Buchanan requested that contact be made with Kim Desveaux to come to Council to present on the topic of youth councils.

District #7

Councillor Budge advised that they now have hot water at the Neil's Harbour Enviro-Depot.

District #6

It was moved by Councillor Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be sent to Dave Williams, Department of Environment, requesting that he come to the Ingonish area with maps and information regarding protected areas. Motion carried.

Concern has been expressed in the area with regard to the old RCMP building in Ingonish Beach, and the fact it may be demolished. Mark Eyking, MP, is to be contacted with regard to any ideas for the building.

Warden Morrison indicated he has also received calls of concern about the building and contacted Mr. Eyking's office on Friday past, but has received no reply to date.

District #5

It was moved and seconded that \$1,077.48 be approved from the District #5 budget for the Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department for summer student grant top-up. Motion carried.

Canada Summer Jobs applications are now open until the end of February, 2016.

District #3

Warden Morrison advised that the Ottawa Trip has been moved to March, 2016. Council are to submit their priorities so they can be put on the list of items to be addressed.

POLICIES

Sandy Hudson presented the draft Sexual Harassment and Workplace Harassment – Discrimination Policies which he asked Council to review and they will be adopted at the next meeting if no changes are required.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, January 25, 2016, at 5:00 p.m.

The February dates are February 8 and 22, 2016.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 6:40 p.m.

Sandy Hudson, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden

