

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
January 25, 2016

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 25, 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. Deputy Warden Patterson requested that a UNSM Board Report be added to the agenda.

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

REN UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Keith MacDonald, President and CEO, Cape Breton Partnership, who was in attendance to provide an update on the Regional Enterprises Network (REN).

Mr. MacDonald indicated that there are six (6) REN jurisdictions in the Province of which REN6 is Cape Breton. This includes all of Cape Breton, with the exception of the Town of Port Hawkesbury, which is a part of the Strait-Eastern REN5.

REN is about business – how to attract new, grow existing and create new business. Mr. MacDonald outlined three REN documents – Regional Development Authority Review Panel Report; REN Start-Up Guide; and the Guide of Developing a Regional Economic Development Strategy.

The core activities of the REN are:

1. RENs will develop, implement, and monitor a regional economic development strategy that is reflective of provincial and regional (participating municipal and First Nation band councils) economic development priorities.
2. RENs will cultivate close working relationships with the business community and work with key partners to support the development and attraction of new businesses, and to retain and expand existing businesses.
3. RENs will inform partners and stakeholders about local business-climate conditions as well as regional challenges and opportunities.

Mr. MacDonald advised that the Cape Breton Prosperity Framework is the regional economic development strategy for REN6. REN6 is moving forward with the Cape Breton Partnership and Business Cape Breton as their delivering agencies.

The makeup and functions of the REN Liaison and Oversight Committee (LOC) were outlined. Warden Morrison is the Chair of the LOC for REN6.

- Strategic input to Board of Directors – Providing advice and input to the Board of Directors to develop its Regional Economic Development Strategy;
- Accountability for outcomes – Ensuring that the Board of Directors achieves the goals it establishes in the Regional Strategy;
- Financial Accountability – Ensuring that the REN has excellent financial management;
- Self-Governance – Ensuring that it follows and publishes its own rules of governance;
- Communication – Ensuring excellent communication, feedback and strong linkages with the Board of Directors.

The Board of Directors for REN6 is made up for four members of the Board of Directors of Business Cape Breton and four members of the Board of the Cape Breton Partnership. Each municipality has two Board Members. Brad MacDonald is the Chair of the REN6 Board of Directors. The main functions of the Board are:

- Regional Economic Development Strategy – Overseeing the development and implementation of the regional economic development strategy;
- Building Relationships – Ensuring excellent communication and sound working relationships with the Liaison and Oversight Committee, and other partners and stakeholders;
- Performance Management – Understanding how activities and services align with the mandate and objectives of the regional economic development strategy, and ensuring that there are procedures in place to monitor, measure, review, and improve REN performance outcomes;

- Strong Financial Stewardship – Stewarding the financial health of the organization by ensuring that strong financial management skills and appropriate accountability measures are in place;
- Governance and Policy Development – Ensuring the existence of a sound governance framework, including all the policies, practices, and procedures that define the decision-making process and delineate the roles and responsibilities of the Board and the CEO;
- Managing the CEO – Ensuring that there is a process in place to hire, manage and evaluate the CEO;
- Executive Limitations – The board prescribes the boundaries of prudence and ethics within which the CEO makes decisions about the means by which to achieve the objectives.

Victoria County's Economic Development Officer, Nicole Lucas-Richardson, is an employee of the Cape Breton Partnership.

Discussion took place and Council indicated it was good to see the REN up and operating. Getting to this point was a long and arduous process.

The inclusion of First Nations in the REN was discussed. Wagmatcook would come under Victoria County and an action plan is being developed that will advance the relationship with Wagmatcook.

Nicole Lucas-Richardson will be presenting an action plan to Council that is goal oriented. It will be a high level action plan that will outline four to five actions that will be accomplished this year.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison thanked Mr. MacDonald for his presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – JANUARY 11, 2016

The minutes of the January 11, 2016, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of January 11, 2016, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

External Organizations Tax Exemption By-Law

The CAO indicated he reviewed the External Organizations Tax Exemption By-Law and there is nothing in the by-law regarding applying annually for the tax exemption. Discussion took place.

It was moved and seconded that the External Organizations Tax Exemption By-Law remain as is and a Review Committee be appointed to review the list of organizations every two years. Motion carried.

Tax Limit Policy

Sandy Hudson advised that he inquired, but has not received, any samples of a Tax Limit Policy.

A motion was passed at the previous meeting that a tax limit policy be established that properties of \$300.00 or less not be put to Tax Sale until the taxes outstanding go over \$300.00.

TAX SALE

Councillor Grant presented samples of waivers included in Tax Sale notices in CBRM, Inverness County and HRM. The one he is recommending that Council adopt is HRM's.

It states that "They make no representations or warranties to any purchaser regarding the fitness, geographical or environmental suitability of the land(s) offered for sale for any particular use and does not certify the legal title, legal description or boundaries and the lands offered for sale are being so on an "AS IS" basis only. Tax sales do not in all circumstances clear up defects in title. A tax deed conveys only the interest of the assessed owner, whatever that interest may be. If you are intending to clear up defects in the title of your property by way of a Tax Sale, you are advised to obtain a legal opinion as to whether or not this can be done. Property taxes: The purchaser will be responsible for all property taxes beginning the day of the sale. The treasurer has not made any determination as to whether a survey is or is not required."

It was moved and seconded that on all future Tax Sale advertisements for Victoria County, the same waiver notice as used by HRM be included in the notice. Motion carried.

The Municipality will continue to do title searches and have the solicitor involved and do their due diligence.

NEW BUSINESS

Sandy Hudson advised that he received correspondence from Bernie White, Municipal Elections Officer, advising that under the *Municipal Elections Act* a Returning Officer for the October, 2016, Municipal and School Board Election must be appointed by March 15, 2016.

The CAO indicated he has done elections in the past and would be willing to do another election, but felt it would be beneficial to train another individual. Council will think about this matter and approve at a future meeting.

VICTORIA COUNTY PRESENTATION

Warden Morrison, with the assistance of Jocelyn Bethune, developed a presentation for Victoria County, which he will present at an upcoming meeting of the St. Ann's Bay Development Association (copy attached).

Warden Morrison quickly went through the presentation and felt that in future, if any Council members are asked to do a presentation, this would be available for use. An additional slide on water utilities is still to be included in the presentation.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County presentation be approved for Council use. Motion carried.

Jocelyn Bethune will provide a copy to all Council.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that World Oceans Day will again take place in his district on the first week of June and he requested the Municipality to provide a letter of support as a partner for this event and for the use of the County logo in the advertisements.

It was moved and seconded that a letter of support as a partner for World Oceans Day be sent to Central Cape Breton Community Ventures Inc. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that an informal meeting was held recently on Broadband and he felt it was time to put together an official committee as the province is looking at upgrading the infrastructure.

This Committee will be appointed at the next meeting.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that Little Narrows Gypsum has been giving layoff notices to their employees. This is not good news and the long term consequences are not known at present.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis advised that representatives of the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal have scheduled a meeting with Councillors on Thursday, January 28, 2016, at 1:00 p.m. at the Indian Brook Fire Hall.

Councillor MacInnis was questioned by a resident as to the funding provided to Destination Cape Breton Association (DCBA) by the Municipality. \$10,000.00 is provided for product development and the Municipality collects marketing levy funds on behalf of DCBA.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan questioned whether Nicole Lucas-Richardson has scheduled any round table meetings in any districts as yet. Some have been held and she will be in contact with each Councillor to schedule one in each district.

The status of the four vacant Nova Scotia Housing homes in District #8 was questioned. Steve Hines, Nova Scotia Housing, is to be contacted for an update.

Representatives from the North Victoria Community Centre wish to make a presentation at a future Council meeting. This will be arranged.

Councillor Buchanan requested that the status of the street light order for 3160 Bay St. Lawrence Road be investigated with NSPI.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on issues with regard to the Cape North Transfer Station. The CAO will follow up on this matter.

UNSM BOARD REPORT

Deputy Warden Patterson has recently been elected to the UNSM Board of Directors and brought Council up to date on the January 22, 2016, meeting (copy attached).

Issues discussed included:

Accessibility
Caucus Structure
CAP Update
Fire Services Study
Advocacy
UNSM Appointments and Events

An email received today also indicated that as UNSM President Claire Dethridge is still in hospital and unable to act for some time, Mayor Cecil Clarke has been appointed as the President for the immediate future.

Warden Morrison and Council congratulated Deputy Warden Patterson on his appointment to the UNSM Board.

District #3

Warden Morrison advised that the “Ride for Dad” snowmobile event will again take place in the Baddeck area. The Municipality was a gold sponsor in the amount of \$1,000.00 last year and the same is requested again this year. This year it is a two day event. Last year this event had the most participants (200) and raised the most money for the cause.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality be a gold sponsor in the amount of \$1,000.00 for the “Ride for Dad” snowmobile event. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison advised that in keeping with physician recruitment, a resident physician is coming to the Victoria County Memorial Hospital for one month and the costs for accommodation for this resident were discussed.

It was moved and seconded that up to \$1,250.00 be approved for housing for the resident physician for a one month period. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison indicated that Councillors would be meeting with the Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Minister of TIR, in his office in Halifax, tomorrow at 10:30 a.m.

POLICY

The Sexual Harassment and Workplace Discrimination – Harassment policies were previously presented to Council for review and consideration.

It was moved and seconded that the Sexual Harassment Policy and the Workplace Discrimination – Harassment Policy be adopted. Motion carried.

SYRIAN REFUGEE UPDATE

Councillor Grant indicated that a silent auction fundraising event for “Baddeck To Syria” will be held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann’s, on February 5, 2016.

A family will be arriving to the Marion Bridge area tomorrow and a number will be coming to the northside area shortly. The families are beginning to arrive in Cape Breton and hopefully, to Victoria County before too long.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO