

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
April 12, 2016

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, April 12, 2016, 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. He advised that the striped bass presentation has been cancelled for this evening. Deputy Warden Patterson requested that a UNSM update be included on the agenda.

Warden Morrison advised that he would be leaving the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

The bridge by the Bay Pond below the Bell Museum is scheduled for replacement, with work to be done this summer season. The affect this would have on the tourist industry was discussed.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Honourable Geoff MacLellan, Minister of TIR, indicating Council's agreement with the bridge replacement, but requesting that it be done during the off-season instead of the busy summer tourist season. Motion carried.

PAN CAPE BRETON FOOD HUB

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Jim Mustard and Alicia Lake, representing the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub.

Councillor Mustard indicated that the idea of the Food Hub came about at the initial Municipal Island-wide Conference at the Gaelic College a few years ago. In 2014, all municipalities in Cape Breton signed an MOU supporting the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub pilot program. The vision was a healthy economy that supports a growing diversity of producers on the land and the sea on Cape Breton.

Alicia Lake, Coordinator of the Pan Cape Breton Food Hub, then provided a presentation on the first year of operation of the Food Hub. They incorporated as a Co-op and had 50 households and 10 restaurants registered as consumer members. Twenty-six food producers, with a wide variety of products, registered as producer members. The sales for the initial year were over \$43,770.00, resulting in \$35,963.00 being distributed to the local food producers. She outlined the operations in year one.

Ms. Lake indicated that from a consumer perspective, the total spent over a 15 week period was \$35,570, an average weekly spending of \$59.21. 90% of the consumers had an increase in local food spending.

From the restaurant perspective in year 1, there were 8 restaurants involved in 10 locations. The total spend was \$10,200.00.

From the producer perspective over the period of 15 weeks, \$35,963.00 was put in the hands of the producers. Ms. Lake indicated that two of the producers have advised they will be quitting their off-farm job as a result of the money made and will be focusing on their food production.

Ms. Lake outlined the other outcomes such as festivals, farm and food shows, workshops, chef competition and newsletters. The logo for the Food Hub was presented and is a symbol of Cape Breton Island in a green circle.

The significance of the Food Hub is that it strengthens connections, increasing profits and growing relationships, by building community.

The plans for 2016 and beyond were outlined. There is hopes to expand consumers, depots, producers and add an additional number of weeks. They need funding, staffing, planning and software to expand.

The Cape Breton Food Hub Co-operative is requesting \$4,920.00 from each of the five municipal units in Cape Breton.

Councillor Mustard indicated that the 2 year pilot was from November 2014 to November 2016. The results of the pilot will be used to develop a 5 year business plan. They will engage funding partners for support of the Business Plan in April, 2017. Partnership funding is required to bridge the Coordinator position from November, 2016 to April 1, 2017.

Councillor Mustard also outlined to idea of developing a land bank, available to the producers and designated to agriculture.

It was moved and seconded that the PAN Cape Breton Food Hub request for \$4,920.00 be referred to budget. Motion carried.

The total number of producers was questioned and it was indicated that at present it is fewer than 30. Victoria Co-op Fisheries is the largest producer. Producers set their wholesale price and the total price is adjusted from their set price.

The use of the logo was questioned. Community suppers which feature a local product as the main component of the meal can use the logo. At present the Telegraph House, Bite House Restaurant and Cruising Cuisine Food Truck all purchase local products.

Councillor MacInnis question on whether it was possible to make a connection with producers of lobster and crab. This information should be forwarded to the Food Hub.

The Pan Cape Breton Food Hub will be on the agenda of the upcoming UNSM Spring conference in Wolfville. It is a great example of municipalities working together.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Jim Mustard and Alicia Lake for their presentation.

BIOSPHERE NORTHEAST TRAILS ASSOCIATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to Jonathan Saul, President, Biosphere Northeast Trails Association (BNTA).

The Biosphere Northeast Trails Association was incorporated in June, 2014, under the *Nova Scotia Societies Act* and is presently moving forward on the proposed back country hiking trail located within Humes River Wilderness Area in southern Victoria County.

BNTA's first project is the creation of a trail network from Wagmatcook through the Humes River Wilderness Area. This year they will concentrate of the eastern end of this network. The total length proposed this year is approximately 11 km.

For the first couple of kilometres, it will follow an old public road and will be a multi-use trail. Signage will indicate where the multi-use ends and the hiking trail begins. The public road is a K-class road, provincially-owned but not maintained. There are two bridges which DTIR will not repair and one of the bridges is estimated to be \$40,000.00 to replace. This area is one of two ways to access the Keppoch Highlands.

Dave Williams, Department of Environment, will be walking the trail to identify any endangered species, lichens, etc. A map outlining the entire proposed trail was presented.

Mr. Saul indicated that this trail will have cell phone coverage for the entire trail area. The 11 kilometre project anticipated for this year has been designed by Garnet McLaughlin, Cobequid Trail Consulting, and is a \$179,000.00 project. He outlined the anticipated funding for the project and the request to the Municipality for \$10,000.00.

Discussion took place and it is anticipated that this trail will contribute to the economic and social life of Cape Breton people and could become a destination trail for visitors to the Island.

Mr. Saul indicated that he understood their funding request was referred to budget and a recommendation had been made to provide \$7,500.00.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Saul for the presentation.

RECESS

The Warden announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes and Deputy Warden Patterson would be assuming to Chair following recess.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES - MARCH 7, 2016

The minutes of the March 7, 2016, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of March 7, 2016, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Ingonish Barrier Beach

Councillor Dauphinee brought up the Ingonish Barrier Beach. The federal government has divested itself of the Harbour wharf and is not responsible for the beach.

Work was undertaken in this area about 10 years ago, but it is in need of repair.

Councillor Grant indicated that he surveyed this property in 1979 as a Crown Land surveyor.

It was moved and seconded to contact Honourable Lloyd Hines, Minister of Natural Resources with regard to the Ingonish Barrier Beach and the Wilderness Area in Ingonish. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated he saw Minister Hines recently and he extended his best wishes to Victoria County at that time.

Budget Committee

The Budget Committee minutes of March 14, 2016, were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the March 14, 2016, Budget Committee minutes be approved. Motion carried.

Legal Services Tender

Councillor Grant gave notice of motion at the last meeting with regard to a legal service tender.

It was moved and seconded that the County of Victoria issue a tender for legal services based on a “per parcel fee” for review and opinion on suitability of properties for Tax Sale and an hourly fee for all general legal services.

Councillor Grant and Councillor MacInnis voted in favour of the motion.

Councillors MacNeil, Budge, Dauphinee, Buchanan and Deputy Warden Patterson voted against the motion.

Motion defeated.

NEW BUSINESS

It was moved and seconded to provide a letter to the LFA27 Management Board in support of their application to ACOA for funding. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

It was moved and seconded that \$230 be approved from the District #6 budget for hole sponsorship in the Cabot Trail Lions Club golf tournament and the Municipality sponsor a team in this tournament at a cost of \$500.00. Motion carried.

Councillor Dauphinee updated Council on the problems encountered by the Ingonish Volunteer Fire Department in trying to purchase a new vehicle. The financial institutions contacted will not approve a loan without the County guaranteeing the loan.

A guarantee can be provided, but Ministerial approval is required. Whether a policy could be adopted regarding this loan guarantee was discussed.

It was moved and seconded that research be done on adopting a policy for loan guarantees for volunteer fire departments. Motion carried.

District #7

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Cabot High School congratulating them on the success of their basketball programs this year, both boys and girls. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan expressed concern regarding the lack of ditching, especially on the Blaze Road in his district, as the school bus is not currently travelling this road.

He requested that DTIR be contacted to question on their plans for ditching this construction season.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the status of the electric car charging stations in Victoria County. A station was installed at Peter MacAulay's Service Station, but the program is no longer in effect. The one that was to be installed in the Cape North area was not.

There is an electric car charging station at the Knotty Pines Cottages in Ingonish.

The importance of the location of a highway webcam on the North Shore was discussed. Contract is to be made with Pam Eyking, MLA, to pursue this matter.

Councillor MacInnis advised that Scott MacKinnon is now certified to teach vehicle extraction, high angle rescue and Level 1 firefighting training. It was also indicated that he has his driver training certification.

Bruce Hatcher and Ray Briand will be invited to a future meeting to present on the striped bass issue.

Councillor MacInnis expressed his regrets in not being able to attend the Volunteer Awards ceremonies in St. Ann's as he has a previous commitment. He indicated he attended the provincial volunteer ceremonies in Halifax, and they were quite impressive.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil brought up the water situation in his district. A public meeting was held last week on the bulk sale of water.

Gerry Isenor has come up with the figure of \$10.70 per cubic meter for bulk water sales for the Utility. Mr. Isenor is presently undertaking a Water Rate Study for the Victoria County Water Utility, but an interim rate for bulk water sales can be requested prior to the completion of the study.

It was moved and seconded that a request be submitted to the NSUARB for approval of a bulk water rate for the Victoria County Water Utility. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that \$1,500.00 be approved from the District #1 budget for the Washabuck Community Centre for last year's student grant top up. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on when the heavy garbage collection would be undertaken this year. The target date for the pickup is the first week of June.

He requested that the pickup in the Iona area not coincide with the World Oceans Day which will take place in his district.

Councillor MacNeil expressed concern with regard to the lack of maintenance on the gravel roads in his district.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Gerard Jessome, District Director, DTIR, with a copy to the Minister, with regard to the lack of maintenance on gravel roads in District #1. Motion carried.

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson presented an update on the UNSM Board.

- Breakfast with five provincial Ministers, leaders of the NDP and Conservative parties, and MLAs
- Department of Business Internet Strategy – quandary as to whether look at existing upgrade as opposed to areas where there is no basic internet service.
- Infrastructure Program – status is unknown
- NSPI Vegetation Management Program update – 70 to 80% of power outages are caused by trees falling on power lines. They will be undertaking a program to clean vegetation around lines and should finish Victoria County in 2016.
- Capped assessment – There is agreement to have an All Party Working Committee to examine the weaknesses and strengths/winners and losers.
- Forestry Workshop in Pictou – Athol Grant and Sandy Hudson will be attending

DESTINATION CAPE BRETON ASSOCIATION

\$66,000.00 in core funding has been cut from Destination Cape Breton Association by the Province.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Tourism expressing opposition on the elimination of core funding to Destination Cape Breton Association. Motion carried.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL

It was indicated that the section of Cabot Trail along the North Shore will be paved this construction season.

The status of the construction in the Ingonish Ferry area was questioned and it was indicated that there has been a redesign finalized and the work is to be done in the near future.

DISTRICT #4

The status of a Fire Services Coordinator position was discussed.

The province is presently undertaking a review of the Fire Service in Nova Scotia and the report is expected within the next few months. It was felt that we should wait to see the report before moving forward in this regard.

ADJOURN

It was moved and seconded that the meeting adjourn at 6:55 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO