

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
December 5, 2016

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, December 5, 2016 beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District#1 – Paul MacNeil
District#2 – Perla MacLeod
District#3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District#4 – Merrill MacInnis
District#6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District#8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Heather MacLean, Acting CAO
Zina MacNeil, Recording Secretary
Leanne MacEachen, Director of Finance

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order. Regrets were expressed on behalf of Councillors Budge and Patterson who were unavailable due to illness.

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor MacLeod, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

PRESENTATION-ALEXANDER MACRAE

Councillor MacInnis presented Alexander MacRae with a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of Council, for his contribution on October 17 for performing First Aid and saving a life.

Warden Morrison expressed thanks to Alexander and his family for being in attendance for the presentation.

FOIPOP/COUNCIL DECISION MAKING – EMILY POND/MUNICIPAL ADVISOR

Warden Morrison welcomed our Municipal Advisor Emily Pond to council for two presentations; Freedom of Information and Developing Good Policies and Making Good Decisions.

Now that there is new council it is a great time to familiarize them with the framework on decision making and how the cycle works. Council assumes the responsibility for existing policies which are based on evidence. The issue is identified, then determine the what, from the

why, and then is brought to council. Council analyzes the issue by using staff expertise for solution solving. The staff provides council with options on how the pros and cons and make a recommendation for council to consider. Depending on the issue they will consult on it. Consultation can give valuable perspective and reassurance.

Municipal Affairs can also help with issue analysis. They have information from all across the province. Implementation is usually a job of the county staff. A policy is ideally robust and comprehensive and the decision made by council should be clear with the intent outlined. Performance measurement is to measure the effect of the outcome.

Municipal Affairs can help you develop a policy. Before you start to talk about the new budget you should determine what your goals are beforehand. They are free and good at what they do.

Thanks were expressed on the excellent presentation. There should be policies in place for varying situations so you know how to handle them in advance prior to an issue. If the process is followed in the policy it avoids issues. Depending on the issue also determines if you need public consultation. We need to rely on our confident, capable staff.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

This section increases the accountability of the county. It also increases public input and promotes fairness. They are entitled to access their own information. All municipal records are subject to access rules. Exceptions are limited and specific and you have 30 days to respond. There are also limited fees.

With the duty to assist municipalities must respond, openly, accurately, and completely with delay. Sandy and the municipal staff are responsible for this. We can consider proactively releasing information. We could create a routine release list for access such as policies, audited financials, expense claims. This would make it public to all if appropriate, to encourage open government, saving time. There is no release of personal information unless by law. You should make sure you don't use personal email for work as work related information is open to access. There is a risk related to using your own telephone or personal emails for work, as they become a record.

Councillor MacNeil asked on the supply of county telephones as most councillors use their personal cell phones and their records are part of public record. The other side is the financial cost of providing cells for all councillors.

The computers should be encrypted if you are traveling. Not sure about the rest. Text on an issue should be saved as they are a record as well. A screen shot and save them was recommended. You are required to keep work records.

Leanne mentioned at this point that in records management training if you have one side of a conversation you should have the other as it looks bad if you don't. We should go by the spirit of the request and be as open as possible.

Councillor MacInnis mentioned that in the fishing community privacy is a big part of it. Councillor MacDonald asked Emily if she recommended not using personal devices and she replied that yes it was not recommended. A municipal issued device would be better served.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee commented that the presentation was very interesting, especially on the use of email, when using your personal email. It is all good information to know.

Councillor MacNeil asked how long you have to save the information for example the emails. Leanne replied that there is a formula we have to follow depending on the type of documents.

Warden Morrison commented on the phone issue. Times are changing and have always been an issue but he juggling of two phones is a nuisance as well. The cost of providing cells to everyone is a major issue to consider. It may not be reasonable. The openness of emails, on devices and telephone texts has an expectation of a response back. There is limited risk and comfort level.

Warden Morrison thanked Emily for her presentations.

FINANCIAL UPDATE/DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

Leanne MacEachen was asked to provide an update of the financials to council. Leanne started with an overview of who she is and what she does in her position of Director of Finance for the new council members, as well as the not so new. She is a CPA and a CA. She works a flex week of four days and is reachable anytime. Her role is looking after the internal controls, external and internal reporting, yearend audit and budgeting.

Leanne usually provides quarterly statements via email to council. The year-end audited financial statements are presented to council by external auditors, along with an internal control letter. Currently our external auditors are Grant Thornton. FOIPOP requests from the Province for those letters are now all across.

The income and expenditures statement is provides an overview until the end of October. \$9,440,602 was billed for tax revenue. Grants in lieu of taxes were budgeted at \$711,000. We will be receiving that. Services for other gov't budgeted at \$231,000 and include such things as Meat Cove and village for their taxes. With the sales of services, revenue from own sources, unconditional transfers from other gov't, conditional grants gov't, and conditional transfers from other the total revenue for this year is budgeted at \$12, 142,218. We should be close to a break even. The tax base was set at a break even.

General government services are made up of uncollectable taxes, transit, and debt. Protective services are 1.5 million. Fire protection is \$720,000. This report is for months we are half way through the budget year. Transport services are made up of Ingonish sidewalks, Baddeck, salt purchase and 1.5 km road in town.

Dingwall transfer site biggest expense is the crab shells. We spend thousands of dollars on wood to mix with them to keep down the smell.

Enviro Development includes District Health Authority, Economic Development and CBRen.

Revenue over expenses shows a modest surplus. We billed out all the revenue but it is not all collected. Revenue is reported as it is collected and expenses reported as they occur.

When you are doing the budget remember to keep arm's length from the organizations looking for funding through district grants. The budget for district grants carryover each year with running totals. Leanne provides a weekly grant update so you are aware of what is going where. The organizations receiving funding must be a registered association or society.

There are other grants that the applications have to be in before the end of March or you will have to wait until the following year. These are usually for bigger grants than those applied for under the district budgets.

Council stipends are 2/3 taxable and 1/3 non-taxable. This covers office expenses, and travel within the district. Councillors are provided with a laptop or tablet to be returned at the end of their term. Stipends are payable at the beginning of the month electronically. We would like council input on the advance of stipends.

There is a travel policy but travel should be approved by the Warden in advance. The travel mileage is .48 cents and a per diem a day for meals if they are not provided at the event attended by council. The breakfasts are \$13, lunch \$20, and supper is \$30. The mileage rate is included in the electronic form if submitted that way. Alcohol is not paid for by the county. We would prefer expenses be submitted on a monthly basis but not longer than three months. If it isn't submitted before the end of March for expenses incurred we would like to at least know the amount by that time if you can't get it in prior to that.

Warden Morrison clarified that the Travel Policy was put in place two years ago before any of the events occurred with the province requesting the travel expenses spending information for the past few years. Leanne explained that we had a FOIPOP request to look at council expenses for the past year. We have to provide that information.

Councillor MacDonald thanked Leanne for her presentation, that as a new member of council it was very informative.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the crab that we take at Dingwall site. Leanne explained that they deliver the crab and we bill a small amount for the overtime related to accepting the shells and dealing with the smell and composting process. He wondered if we

looked into dumping it at sea. Leanne would ask Robert Dauphinee if he looked into a barge and dumping it back into ocean.

Councillor MacLeod questioned on the budget procedures. Leanne explained that the budget talks start in February through to May. Any requests for funding have to be in by the end of March or they will not get in the budget year. Council should look at a strategic plan on budgeting so the budget points in the right direction. Look at ideas that should be doing, or could be doing and work towards it.

Councillor MacNeil questioned the education amount in the budget and how that figure was determined. Leanne explained that it is a formula based on the number of students and it is derived from the Province and is a mandatory payment by the Municipalities. PVSC, RCMP and Education are not only driven by our assessment, it is used as part of a formula to determine what our mandatory contribution is for each of these services.

Warden Morrison thanked Leanne for her presentation.

BADDECK TOURISM PROJECT

Iris Kedmi was welcomed by the Warden to provide information on behalf of herself and Alicia Lake who couldn't attend. Iris congratulated the new councillors.

The Baddeck Tourism Program in their 2016/17 strategy identified the profile tourist who is an explorer acquainted with cultural exploration. There is a niche product identified "Chipmunks on Chebucto." We are not asking for money, yet. We presented to the Village in September and they agreed to give them a letter of support for this undertaking. The concept came from Greenville SC, which was a dead town and they used the concept Mice on Main and turned the town around to a hustle and bustle town. We decided to take this idea and twist it for Baddeck.

It is a scavenger hunt for residents and children and tourists. The met with Joan MacInnes and there are 15-16 historical houses on the main street in Baddeck. They would use metal chipmunks hidden on each historical property. They would provide hints about it on a website with information on the buildings history. The person would go on the website and download the hints on where they are. The clue sheets could be available for sale at the VIC centre or by download. The project would be completed in stages or steps.

The intent is to highlight the character of the village create a destination; provide more outdoor activities, more activities for children, families and schools. Teach the history of the area through its built heritage and culture and provide year round activities for residents and tourists. There is also the opportunity for spinoffs in economic development. It will increase the volume of tourists, provide a family destination, and keep the tourists longer.

The project aligns with experiential tourism, naturally active living, Canada 150, Communities in Bloom and tell the AGB story. The spinoffs could be children's books and coloring books, local art and music, theatre, board games, accessories, menu specials,

photography, count the steps for active living, walking tours, school field trips and increase promotion of Victoria County.

The resources needed for this project would be the chipmunks, website, web content, geo-caching and smart phone app.

Iris thanked council for allowing her to present the idea to council and was looking for council support for the idea before they look for funding support.

Warden Morrison expressed comments on the very unique and fun perspective. The idea falls into council's vision for the strategy for the municipality.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacDonald, that council provide a letter of support for the Baddeck Tourism Project. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison asked if Iris would provide Heather with a copy of her presentation.

BREAK/RECESS

APPROVAL MINUTES

The minutes of the November 14, 2016 council meeting were presented for approval. Deputy Warden Dauphinee clarified he wanted his complaint on the graffiti to go further than what was written in the minutes. He wanted the RCMP to be asked about it. Heather would amend that in the minutes.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the minutes from November 14, 2016 be approved with the amendment on the graffiti. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING

No business arising.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS

Councillor MacNeil brought up the Nugent Property and access from the properties above it. Mr. Nugent had a letter from all three property owners in favour of him getting the property. It is between two properties with not a lot of access. He is looking for about half the beach. He asked the CAO and he wasn't sure about it.

The Notice of motion is to not accept the surplus property. We didn't take it over yet and are to let them know if we are interested or not. If we are not interested we have to relinquish our interest in it. Mr. Nugent plans on putting a boathouse on it himself which will put up his taxes

and the county will take in more revenue. The other property owners are still on board with his plan.

It was decided the county should transfer the property as per council's motion to accept the property as it has waterfront access. What about leasing it to him? We have a policy not to release waterfront property. It belongs to DOT with first option to the municipality if we want it if not we can release our interest or retain it. What are council thoughts on this? If we retain it would we be interested in leasing it to him? There are three other access points we don't own.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacLeod that we defer it and ask Mr. Nugent if he is interested in leasing the property if we retain our interest in the property. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil made motion on the Blue Dot Campaign that came up through CEPI.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that we adopt the Blue Dot Campaign. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the Ingonish Beach Barrier, the MLA had mentioned there was funding to apply for this.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a request from council to the MLA, the province, and federal governments, DOT to immediately reconstruct the beach barrier. Motion carried.

The Beach Crossing Road armour stone disappeared again.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that DOT be requested to do an investigation into this and to fix or repair that road. Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacDonald, that \$1500 be approved from his district budget for insurance for Ski Cape Smokey. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacDonald, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee, that a request for his first street light at 479 Bay St. Lawrence Road. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis requested his co-councillors look into community support for the Community Health Board. There hasn't been much support in most communities. There is funding available. They have provide lunches, flu shots. If everyone could pass the word around they need volunteers.

Also Councillor MacInnis commented that the Community Potluck Welcome Suppers are a great thing. He has had his 4th one this year. The people/newcomers really appreciate the community support and he is suggesting his fellow councillors promote it as well.

There is a presentation on Thompsonville and we should attend it if possible. It is Thursday, December 8th at 7:30 pm.

There was also the issue of no salt being put on roads. He himself went for a walk and almost took a tumble. He called despatch and no one answered. It was great when we had local contacts. Now the calls go to a call centre. We should investigate to see what is happening.

Councillor MacLeod reported no issues in her area right now things were very quiet.

Councillor MacNeil complained that the Gillis Pt Road where the washout was fixed you can barely cross it. It needs gravel or something on it at least for the winter. The back roads have not been graded. These two items will be added to the list with the despatch concerns to be looked into.

Warden Morrison thanked the councillors for their participation in the parade.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacNeil, that effective in January that public tenders, council expenses be posted on the county website and that Sandy and Leanne make the changes to the policy to do that. Motion carried.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacLeod, that the CAO contact Gordon MacIntosh and request a meeting with him when he is in the area in January on Asset Strategic Planning. Motion carried.

A list of committees should be sent out to all councillors so they know which committees they are sitting on as our representatives.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Tom Wilson is having a broadband committee meeting on Thursday at 4:00 pm.

The Deputy Minister of Seniors will be in Port Hawkesbury on Thursday also. Larry, Bruce and Fraser are to attend.

RENS will be meeting at 10:00 am on Thursday as well in Port Hawkesbury.

Councillor MacLeod wondered if we had a plan in place if school is cancelled. We need to have a plan for emergency situations. How can we contribute to make sure a plan is in place? It was decided we would table this for now and see if there is a role for us.

It was discussed that we gave a grant for the Baddeck Soccer Field in the amount of \$20,000 for bleachers. They are not done.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacLeod, that a letter be send to the school board and ask them where our money is and the status of the bleachers for the soccer field. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee mentioned he heard Billy Joe speak and he made some good points one was that you should never criticize other people in other levels of government.

Councillor MacInnis made a motion to adjourn at 7:15 pm.