

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**January 9, 2017**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 9, 2017, 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 #7 – Wayne Budge  
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO  
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

Absent was:

District #5 – Fraser Patterson (Due to Illness)

**CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. The animal control issue presentation has been cancelled for this evening.

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

**LITTLE NARROWS GYPSUM**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Byron MacMillan, Manager, Little Narrows Gypsum, to provide an update on the current status of Little Narrows Gypsum.

Mr. MacMillan indicated that in January 2016, a decision was made not to ship rock in 2016. At that time, 230,000 to 500,000 tons were being shipped, down from a high of 1.5 million tons in 2005. All supervisors and diesel mechanics were retained and a number of employees were laid off at that time.

In May 2016, a voluntary separation package was offered, with 21 employees remaining on staff.

In October 2016, after an in-depth analysis, it was determined that the current volume did not justify capital investment. 13 of the 21 employees were given notice and a separation package was provided. There are now 8 employees remaining on staff.

Application has been made to the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Mineral Resources Branch, to put the plant under a 10 year care and maintenance program. All power remains connected on the site and the 8 employees provide security, maintenance and access to the site.

A draft Preliminary Reclamation Report must be submitted to DNR by March 31, 2017, and there will be a period of negotiation after that time. There will be government bonding in place to reclaim the plant site.

Mr. MacMillan was extended a thank you for the tour of the site earlier today.

A question was raised as to the reasons the volumes are down. Mr. MacMillan advised that the decline in the housing industry in the east coast of the US and synthetic gypsum are the two main reasons for the decline.

Mr. MacMillan advised that most of their product was used for the manufacture of cement and wallboard. The wallboard part of the business is gone and their Portland cement business has been decreased by about 50% of what it was. Keeping the business open was not viable.

The assets currently on site at LNG were discussed as to whether there was a leasing possibility if the community wants to use same. Potential interest and alternate use were also mentioned.

LNG started as Victoria Gypsum in 1934 and was purchased by USG in 1954. They were the largest supplier of gypsum in the world at one point.

A question was raised on security/safety issues and Mr. MacMillan indicated that the 8 remaining employees fulfil these concerns.

Reclamation of the site was discussed as to what it would look like. Mr. MacMillan reviewed the slides indicating same. Managing the water is considered to be the biggest problem at the site.

The status of the wharf was questioned. The piles on the dock are 1934 piles and the existing piles have been sleeved. The first initial capital investment would have to be the dock if anything were to change.

Warden Morrison indicated that he and Councillor MacNeil attended “The Spirit of the Lake Speaks” conference recently where Mr. MacMillan presented on LNG and they thought the tour and presentation would be fitting for Council and he again thanked Mr. MacMillan for the site tour and his presentation to Council.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 9, 2016**

The minutes of the December 5, 2016, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Councillor MacLeod indicated that her comments under Committee Reports should say “if school is cancelled, not if a bus is cancelled”. The appropriate change will be made.

**It was moved and seconded that the December 5, 2016, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved with the noted correction. Motion carried.**

**BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

**Ingonish Barrier Beach**

A letter was forwarded to the federal Minister of Public Works, with copies to Pam Eyking, MLA, and Mark Eyking, MP, with regard to the Ingonish Barrier Beach. This letter should also be forwarded to Minister of Fisheries.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated he was informed by Pam Eyking’s office, that the area has been surveyed.

**Canada 150**

A price was obtained from Henderson Manufacturing with regard to the Canada 150 benches. The price per bench is \$1,680 plus HST. Whether there are any funding programs through the federal government of offset some on the cost of the benches was discussed.

**It was moved and seconded that the Canada 150 bench matter be referred to the CAO to delegate staff to investigate federal funding programs for the purchase of Canada 150 benches for the Municipality. Motion carried.**

**OUTSTANDING TAX ACCOUNT**

Sandy Hudson presented an outstanding tax account matter in Bay St. Lawrence. The trailer on this account was removed 15 years ago, and the individual assessed does not own the property on which the trailer was located. There is an outstanding tax balance of \$5,624.00 which is to be written off.

**It was moved and seconded that \$5,624.00 be written off the outstanding tax account and the CAO contact PVSC to have the account removed from the assessment roll. Motion carried.**

**Council Expenses/Procurement Policy**

At the last Council meeting, a motion was passed that effective January, 2017, public tenders and Council expenses be posted on the County website and the CAO and Director of Finance make changes to the policy as required.

The CAO indicated that they are presently working on an update to the procurement policy. He brought up the matter of the payment of Council stipends and that at times, stipends are paid in advance. Payment is usually made on a monthly basis. There is nothing in the *Municipal Government Act* with regard to a schedule for paying stipends. Direction is required from Council on how the stipend is to be paid.

The iPads and computers issued to Councillors are municipal property and the information contained on these devices is open to FOIPOP regulations. Also there should be a policy on when devices are purchased, i. e. not close to end of Council term, etc.

The posting of Council expenses on the website monthly was also discussed. At present expenses can be submitted on a monthly up to quarterly basis.

Website posting of the requested information will be undertaken as soon as possible.

**REN6**

Warden Morrison presented the new REN6 Inter-Municipal Agreement. CBRM withdrew membership and the document has been redrafted removing CBRM and making necessary changes. REN6 will continue with membership from the Municipalities of Inverness, Richmond and Victoria.

Each of the three municipalities has approved \$100,000.00 and the province has committed to match these funds - \$300,000.00, for a total of \$600,000.00.

The possibility of First Nations joining REN6 was discussed. Whether they would be one partner or five different partners is unknown.

**It was moved and seconded that the new REN6 Inter-Municipal Agreement be approved. Motion carried.**

**VICTORIA COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL**

The Municipality entered into an agreement with the Victoria County Memorial Hospital with regards to upgrades to the hospital to accommodate additional physicians. The amount approved was \$200,000.00 over a two year period.

One new doctor has set up practice and it is hoped that an additional physician will be retained in the near future. Dr. Genge and Dr. Chow will be relocating their offices to the hospital.

The renovations have been completed and there remains a balance of \$91,034.00 that the hospital would like to redirect into parking lot expansion. Council will receive a tour of the renovations to the hospital in February.

**It was moved and seconded that approval be given to release the balance remaining from the \$200,000.00 (\$91,034.00) previously approved for the Victoria County Memorial Hospital to assist with their parking lot expansion. Motion carried.**

#### **TOURISM STRATEGY UPDATE**

Tom Wilson provided an update on the status of the Tourism Strategy for Victoria County.

Eight companies bid on the tender for the three-year Tourism Strategy, 2017-2019. The successful company was Group ATN Consulting Inc. with a tender price of \$19,982.00. ACOA committed to 50% funding, \$10,000.00 in late November.

Group ATN met with the Project Steering Committee in early December. Interviews are currently taking place with key partners and stakeholders. Public meetings will be held in six tourism regions with tourism operators and local tourist associations in late January, 2017. A schedule of the meetings will be sent out once confirmed.

#### **TAX SALE**

The next Tax Sale has been scheduled for Tuesday, January 17, 2017, at 2:00 p.m. at the Court House, Baddeck.

#### **DISTRICT CONCERNS**

##### **District #6**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee questioned whether a reply had been received from the Department of Housing with regard to housing programs and access to funding.

A reply has not been received to date from Stephen Hines, Department of Housing or from Joan McKeough, Cape Breton Island Housing Authority.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that the roads through the North Shore were terrible and contact was made with the MLA and Stephen MacDonald. When he travelled through this area yesterday, the roads were plowed and well maintained.

Council had regular quarterly meetings with Department of TIR representatives and one has not been held in some time. It was felt that a meeting should be arranged and Councillor MacNeil indicated that Darren Blunden be contacted to attend with regard to his district.

The changes made to the telephone system at TIR were questioned as to who and how to contact staff locally.

### **District #8**

Councillor MacDonald brought up the matter of the old school bus garage at Bay St. Lawrence. The ownership of this property is in question.

The Solicitor was provided with correspondence from Paul Oldford, CBVRS, which he is currently reviewing.

Councillor MacDonald brought up the December 16, 2016, snow storm in his area. Power was out for upwards of 20 hours and there was no fuel in the area for snow removal equipment. This created serious concern for emergency situations.

Another concern is an issue with regard to the road shoulder at the bottom of Capstick Road. The shoulder is completely gone and is a danger.

Another resident on the Money Point Road (Mill Hill) is unable to access her driveway. Boards have been placed across the culvert to allow access.

Councillor MacDonald also outlined that residents of Dingwall are interested in starting a petition to have the Dingwall Road repaved. There is a form for submitting petitions to the province which can be investigated. Councillor MacNeil indicated that he had a copy of the form which he would forward on.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he received a number of calls concerning the sanding/salting of the Meat Cove Road, and the roadway past the Cape North Transfer Station.

All these items are things to be brought up with Department of TIR officials when a meeting is arranged. The CAO will contact TIR concerning the possibility of setting up two

meetings, one for the north area and one for southern Victoria. If this is not possible, setting up one meeting for the entire County will be requested.

**District #4**

Councillor MacInnis indicated that for Canada 150, he felt that all Councillors should investigate the assets they have in their districts at present. This could be compiled and be an asset to future generations in terms of the County in 2017. It would be up to the Councillors to undertake this project.

**It was moved and seconded that each district Councillor gather a list of the present district assets and the CAO have someone on staff compile the information received by July 1, 2017 – Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> Birthday. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacInnis brought up the St. Ann’s Bay Development Association (SABDA) letter concerning a mobility strategy project.

Discussion took place. The Municipality tried transit but due to lack of ridership, it was decided to withdraw from Strait Area Transit. If the communities wanted to take the lead on this initiative, Council will meet and listen to their business plan.

**It was moved and seconded to table the SABDA letter and indicate if they wish to undertake a survey on this issue, Council would be willing to meet to discuss same. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he recently travelled to the US where he drove over 2,500 km. The difference in the highway system in Canada and the US is unbelievable. The US roads are well maintained and a pleasure to travel on. This is another issue to address with the Department of TIR officials.

**District #2**

Councillor MacLeod brought up the concern with regard to traffic at the Irving/Tim Horton’s on the TCH 105. Trucks are parked illegally in no parking areas and she questioned how many tickets the RCMP actually issue.

Sandy Hudson advised that a new Staff Sgt. has been assigned to the Victoria County District and will be on the job in the near future.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Baddeck Detachment, RCMP, questioning on the number to tickets issued in the last year for trucks illegally parked at the Irving/Tim Hortons. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacLeod brought for an issue with regard to the plowing of the Big Baddeck Road. At present this road is plowed starting at the south and going west. As the residents and school bus has to access this road in the morning, it was felt it would be better to change the route to starting in the west and travelling south. This matter will be addressed with the Department of TIR.

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he has forwarded the petition form for submission to Department of TIR to Council via email.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the Nugent property matter. Mr. Nugent wants the opportunity to purchase this property. At the last meeting, the possibility of leasing the property was discussed and Sandy Hudson outlined the Municipality's authority with regard to leasing contained in the *Municipal Government Act*.

Discussion took place on this matter as to how to proceed.

**It was moved and seconded that the Municipality relinquish interest in the Yetman Lane, Little Narrows, surplus property. Motion carried.**

The CAO will advise the province that the Municipality is no longer interested in acquiring this property.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he recently found out that snow removal operations on the Washabuck Road and dirt roads in his district have be contracted out. The work is being done on a timelier basis and he is not receiving as many complaints.

The condition of the Gillis Point Road was discussed. There is a hole in the middle of the road and nothing has been done to repair same.

These topics can also be on the list for the meeting with Department of TIR officials.

The ferry pass issue was brought up. There is nothing posted on the TIR website about ferry passes. They must be paid by cash, cheque or money order. VISA or debit is not accepted. The license holder is required to verify the vehicle using the auxiliary pass. A ferry pass is \$240.00, plus \$42.50 for each auxiliary pass (maximum of 2). This matter can also be addressed with Department of TIR officials.

**District #3**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee assumed the Chair.



**It was moved and seconded that a street light order be approved for installation of a street light at 60 Shore Road, Baddeck. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison again brought forward the issue of an access across the TCH 105 for snowmobiles. This matter has been discussed with TIR for over two years now and a decision has not been made. Winter tourism in Victoria County is being promoted and snowmobiling is a large part of winter tourism.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Ministers of TIR and Tourism, with a copy to the MLA, expressing Council's concern with regard to the delay of the decision for snowmobile access across the TCH 105 near Baddeck and request that they grant access as soon as possible. Motion carried.**

Warden Morrison indicated that the annual island-wide municipal summit will be hosted by the Town of Port Hawkesbury this year, possibly in March or April. This meeting is held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on Cape Breton Day on Parliament Hill and was advised there were no plans for this at present.

#### **SOLID WASTE COMMITTEE**

A meeting of the Solid Waste Committee will be held prior to Council, at 4:00 p.m., on Monday, January 23, 2017.

#### **WATER RATE STUDY**

Sandy Hudson advised that Gerry Isenor is nearing completion of the Water Rate Study and will meet with Council in late February/early March.

#### **ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 6:30 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Sandy Hudson, CAO**

