

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
September 12, 2017

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, September 12, 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 #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, Acting CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. Additions to the agenda include presentations by Jim Mustard, Raising the Villages; Athol Grant, Syria to Baddeck; and an In Camera meeting.

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

PRESENTATION OF THE CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF THE COUNTY OF VICTORIA FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2017

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Kim Livingston and Alisha Mombourquette, Grant Thornton LLP, who were in attendance to present the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 2017.

Ms. Livingston and Ms. Mombourquette met with the Audit Committee prior to Council where an in-depth review of the Consolidated Financial Statements was provided.

Ms. Livingston then provided Council with the Independent Auditor's report and outlined the consolidated statement of financial position showing a net debt of \$20,265,107.00 and an

accumulated surplus of \$10,188,696.00. She also reviewed the consolidated statement of cash flows.

The Consolidated Statements include the Municipality, Alderwood, Highland Manor, a portion of the Eastern District Planning Commission and the Victoria County Water Utility.

Discussion took place and as Council had brought forward questions earlier in the Audit Committee, nothing further was questioned.

It was moved and seconded to accept the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 2017. Motion carried.

Ms. Livingston and Ms. Mombourquette were excused at this time.

JIM MUSTARD, RAISING THE VILLAGES

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Jim Mustard, who was in attendance to provide a brief update on Raising the Villages.

Mr. Mustard brought forward information on welcoming our youngest citizens by hosting a gathering to introduce, welcome and celebrate them. He indicated that creating welcoming communities for all residents, especially the young citizens, is important.

On Saturday, October 21, 2017, the Raising the Villages team with the Municipality's help and support, are planning a two-hour celebration in areas of the Municipality, to bring everyone together. An alternate date can be October 28, 2017.

The welcoming our youngest citizen celebrations are made possible due to funding received from local municipalities, Wagmatcook First Nation, Canada 150 Fund and the United Way of Cape Breton.

Mr. Mustard presented a draft agenda, information on how the Municipality can help, what is needed and a celebration checklist.

Council will consider celebrations in various areas of the County.

FIRE SERVICES PRESENTATION – SHAWN ANDREWS

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Shawn Andrews, Director of Fire, Emergency, and IT Services, Municipality of the District of Guysborough.

Mr. Andrews was in attendance to present on fire services within the Municipality of the District of Guysborough (copy attached).

A number of representatives from Victoria County Volunteer Fire Departments were also in attendance.

Mr. Andrews indicated that the fire departments in Municipality of the District of Guysborough were facing a dwindling and aging population, out migration of youth, small tax bases, member burnout and lack of training.

In 2003, a group of volunteer fire department members approached the Municipality for assistance. At that time a Fire Service Review Steering Committee was established that was tasked with a terms of reference to cover a number of issues. This led to the creation of a position in October, 2005, which was filled by Mr. Andrews.

A plan was developed and a firm hired to review both municipal and fire department recommendations. The fire departments were kept updated throughout the process and this was beneficial. Seeing results and positive change led them to buy-in to the process.

Actions as a result of the report, led to an updated funding formula, an apparatus purchase program, purchase of capital equipment and hose testing. To date, three departmental amalgamations have taken place, new apparatus has been purchased under the funding program, more hose was purchased, and updated breathing air compressors have been purchased. Also better record keeping is being completed. There are mutual/automatic aid agreements in place and a grant program initiated.

The apparatus funding program and grant programs were explained. Economic growth strategies have been implemented to address the dwindling population and out migration of youth. All departments have gotten new members because of the larger focus on fire. The increased funding has decreased or eliminated the need for fundraising. With less fundraising, there is more time for training and more members are now willing to take training.

The average age of department membership in Guysborough was questioned and Mr. Andrews indicated that prior the initiatives undertaken the average age was 55+, but now the membership age average is in the low 40's. It was also indicated that 4 of the 9 fire departments have medical first responders.

Training was discussed and Fire School courses are offered every winter. The tax credit for fire fighters was discussed and Mr. Andrews indicated that this is seen as a value add.

The tax base of the Municipality of the District of Guysborough was discussed. The fire rate has always been included as a separate rate on the tax bill as an area rate.

Mr. Andrews indicated that he is the liaison with the fire chiefs and they meet on a quarterly basis and he provides an update to Council on a monthly basis.

The number of calls for Guysborough Fire Departments was questioned and Mr. Andrews indicated they ranged from 70 to 80 annually for some departments, to as low and 10 to 12 per year for others. Membership in the fire departments ranges from a low of 20 to a high of 43. There are 262 volunteer firefighters through the Municipality of the District of Guysborough.

Mr. Andrews indicated that an advantage of his position is it takes the burden of the fire chiefs. A tender for insurance for all departments saved \$20,000.00 and the coverage received was beyond what the departments had before.

Further questions were addressed and Mr. Andrews indicated that in his position of Director of Fire, Emergency and IT Services, 50% of his time is spent on fire related functions.

It was felt that the Chief Officers Committee should meet to discuss the fire department issues and then they could be brought forward to Council. This could be the beginning of the process.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Andrews for his presentation.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

SYRIA TO BADDECK

Courtesy of Council was extended to Athol Grant who was in attendance with regard to the Syria to Baddeck project.

The Syria to Baddeck group has been working on sponsoring a refugee family from Syria for the past two years. The funding and necessary household items have been collected, and numerous family support committees have been established.

Mr. Grant indicated that the family has been identified and are now living in temporary accommodations in Jordan. The family of six consists of two parents and four children. A picture of the family was handed around. The family have relatives already living in Nova Scotia.

An application to sponsor the family was submitted to the Canadian Government in June, 2016. The application was approved and now the official review of the applicants is to be conducted. As of this date, the family has not been contacted by the Canadian Government to begin the review of the family eligibility.

The Syria to Baddeck Committee is very frustrated with the lack of response from the Canadian Government and is asking the Municipality's assistance in the form of a letter.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality support the work of the Syria to Baddeck group in their efforts to bring a Syrian family to the County and believe that immigration is important to Nova Scotia and request the Canadian Government through the Federal Minister of Immigration, Provincial Minister of Immigration and Mark Eyking, MP, to expedite the review of the sponsorship application of the Syria to Baddeck group. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 14, 2017

The minutes of the August 14, 2017, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of August 14, 2017, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Age-Friendly Plan

Councillor Patterson indicated that the Minister of Seniors will be in Baddeck on Saturday, September 23, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. to launch the Age-Friendly Plan for the Municipality.

UNSM Resolutions

Councillor Patterson reported on the UNSM Resolutions meeting that he and Councillors Budge and MacDonald attended on September 7, 2017, and their plans to introduce three to five well researched resolutions from a number of possible topics at the UNSM AGM in November.

NEW BUSINESS

DEED TRANSFER TAX

Councillor MacNeil indicated he was contacted by a resident regarding the Municipality giving consideration to elimination of the Deed Transfer Tax on the purchase of farms within the Municipality in order to encourage investment in this sector.

This will be investigated.

DOG CONTROL BY-LAW

The Dog By-Law proposed enforcement policy was sent to Council in June, 2017, for review. The policy provides the framework for Municipal By-Law enforcement and sets out the role and responsibilities of the Municipal By-Law Enforcement Officer (Dog Control Officer).

It was moved and seconded that Dog Control By-Law Enforcement Policy be approved. Motion carried.

The schedule of offences and the cost of associated fines were brought up. The proposed summary offence ticket fine is \$237.50.

It was moved and seconded that the Summary Offence Ticket fine be \$237.50. Motion carried.

The contract with the SPCA to provide short term coverage in the Boularderie area will be signed and with the approval of the policy and SOT fee, our Dog Control Officers can take the appropriate training through the Department of Justice to become peace officers who can issue Summary Offence Tickets.

RIGHT TO KNOW WEEK

It was moved and seconded that September 25 to October 1, 2017, be proclaimed “Right to Know Week” in the Municipality of the County of Victoria. Motion carried.

BLUE DOT

An inquiry was received from Paul Strome with regard to the status of Victoria County’s declaration. This declaration was forwarded to Jocelyn Bethune for review and revision.

GARDENS OF GRACE

Leanne MacEachen advised that on October 15, 2017, the Municipality will leave their lights on in recognition of International Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day.

CLEAR BAGS

Council was advised that on October 16, 2017, black bags will no longer be collected at curbside or accepted at the disposal sites. An education campaign informing residents has been initiated. Residents will be further advised.

Councillor Patterson indicated that a number of residents in his district get their mail at the post office in Bras d’Or and do not receive information flyers from the Municipality. This can be corrected by bringing the flyers directly to the post office in Bras d’Or.

The percentage of black bags still evident at curbside was discussed. Council indicated they would like to see a rough percentage of the number in the individual districts.

Hospitals and EHS stations still use black bags and it was indicated that communication and education should be undertaken to change this.

An advertisement will be placed in *The Victoria Standard* with regard to black bags.

FESTIVILLE BADDECK

Warden Morrison indicated in speaking with the organizers of the Festiville Baddeck, they have found the administrative part of the Festiville to be difficult and want to address Council on the issues they are having. They are to be invited to Council to see what they are requesting.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that he received an email from Jim Mustard with regard to Growing a Healthy Forest Economy. A meeting was held on August 31, 2017, with 11 people in attendance. Patrick Austin, EDO, was in attendance. Discussion was held with regard to the Finewood Flooring site which has a kiln and a large amount of storage space for sale. Whether this site could be used for a pilot project was discussed and will be further investigated.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that they would like more municipal representation at these meetings in the future.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod brought up the condition of the Uisge Ban Trail. There is a lack of maintenance to the trail and the bridges are in bad repair.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the Department of Natural Resources with regard to necessary improvements on the Uisge Ban Trail. Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod expressed an interest in registering for the Certificate in Local Government through Dalhousie University's College of Continuing Education. She was authorized to register for the program.

District #4

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations and best wishes be sent to Joe O'Connor on his retirement as CAO from the Municipality of the County of Inverness. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis questioned where to best hold community meetings for residents in the New Harris area now that this area is in District #4. Councillor Patterson indicated that the contact for the Boularderie School is Angela Simms.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald questioned whether a response was received from the CAO of Inverness County regarding Meat Cove. This will be investigated.

The status of the Bay St. Lawrence Water Supply Project was questioned and more information will be obtained for the next meeting.

Councillor MacDonald indicated he received inquiries about the water extension to Cape North.

Councillor MacDonald brought up the intersections at the Bay St. Lawrence Co-op and the Cape North/Dingwall. Both areas need to have brush cut as the visibility in these areas is poor. A letter will be sent to the Department of TIR in this regard.

District #7

Councillor Budge indicated he felt a meeting with Minister Hines should be held as soon as possible as he felt the UNSM Conference is too far away.

It was moved and seconded that contact will be made with Minister Hines, Department of TIR, to arrange a meeting prior to October 15, 2017. Motion carried.

District #6

It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be approved from each of the District #6, #7 and #8 budgets for *Pinkalicious*, a local non-profit group that raises money to assist residents dealing with cancer. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be approved from each of the District #6, #7 and #8 budgets for the Cabot High Food Program. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that \$1,000.00 be approved from the District #6 budget for the Cabot Trail Lions Club to assist with a trial transportation service for seniors in District #6. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee requested that a letter be sent to John Bain, Director, EDPC, requesting that a community meeting be held in District #6 regarding zoning.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that the 4-year Broadband Plan was forwarded to Council, but was not approved as yet.

It was moved and seconded that the 4-year Broadband Plan be approved. Motion carried.

District #5

The status of the SPCA coverage of the Boularderie area was questioned. The contract has been drafted and should be in place in the near future.

Councillor Patterson congratulated Deputy Warden Dauphinee on the Cabot Trail Lions Club initiative regarding transport for seniors. The outcome of this initiative will be watched closely as a possible solution for other districts also.

District #3

The status of the parking lot improvements at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital was again brought up.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Darrell MacKinnon, Project Manager, NSHA, with a copy for Rose Surette, Facility Manager, VCMH, requesting an update on the status of the tender for the parking lot upgrade and indicating that if the work is not completed prior to the winter season, the project be delayed until the spring of 2018. Motion carried.

Lisa Hardy, Physician Recruitment Consultant, NSHA, was contacted and provided with two dates to come to meet with Council. As of this time, a date has not been confirmed.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Mary Lou O'Neil, Executive Director, Eastern Zone, NSHA, formally expressing disappointment with the inability to arrange a meeting with the Physician Recruitment Consultant with regard to the doctor shortages in the Municipality of the County of Victoria. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Age-Friendly Communities Committee

Councillor Patterson, Chair of the Age-Friendly Communities Committee advised that the Minister of Seniors will be coming to the Municipality on Saturday, September 23, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. to launch the Age-Friendly Communities Plan for Victoria County.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Age-Friendly Communities Plan be accepted in its final draft form. Motion carried.

CEPI

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the CEPI Committee is presently reviewing its Terms of Reference and he will provide an update after their next meeting.

IN CAMERA

It was moved and seconded to move In Camera. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded to come out of In Camera and return to the regular session.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, September 25, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, Acting CAO

