



Victoria County Municipal Council

May 7, 2018

A meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck on Monday, May 7, 2018 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

Staff:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Jocelyn Bethune, Recorder

Absent:

District #5 Fraser Patterson

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order. He requested that the order of the presentations be changed so that the Biosphere Trails Association could present first, followed by the NS Health Authority and Port Hawkesbury Paper.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved with these changes.

Motion carried.

BIOSPHERE TRAILS ASSOCIATION

The Warden extended the courtesy of council to Jonathon Saul, a member of the Biosphere Trails Association.

Mr. Saul detailed the hopes this association had at its beginnings 4 years ago as they prepared to create a 1.5-kilometer trail through protected lands of Humes River Wilderness Area to a waterfall near Wagmatcook. The process was a multi-staged system for non-profits to identify and engage all stakeholders. The committee crafted a proposal, applied for grants and encountered multi-levels of bureaucracy. Because parts of the proposed trail were on an unmaintained road, the group was unable to get a commitment from the Transportation Department to repair two bridges and maintain the road leading to the trail. The DOE would not approve the project without the Transportation Department's support.

The group opted to change their approach and built a temporary bridge, but because the plans changed, DOE informed them they must re-apply and begin the 14-stage system, bumping the trail creation to 2020. Mr. Saul expressed frustration that an all-volunteer group, spent more time on paperwork than it did in the woods developing the trail. The process is so onerous and prohibitive that the group is suffering burnout. The organization decided to return \$10,000 cheque from the Municipality as they cannot complete the task for which it was given. Warden Morrison mentioned that at present, Victoria County has 39% of protected land in the province, making it one of the highest in the province.

Mr. Saul presented the cheque to CAO MacEachen.

Warden Morrison thanked the group for their candor and honesty and asked how the council can help.

Member Athol Grant asked council to request a meeting with Department of Environment minister Iain Rankin to meet with the group to not just hear their frustrations and concerns, but to create a system that works for all stakeholders, including volunteers.

The Warden thanked the group for their presentation.

It was moved and seconded that Council contact the Minister and request a meeting to discuss the onerous process placed on volunteers trying to build trails in protected areas.

Motion carried.

NSHA – BADDECK LAB UPDATE

Representative of the Nova Scotia Health Authority appeared at the request of council to address concerns that the Baddeck lab was closing. Appearing before council were:
Rose MacIsaac, facilities manager at the Victoria County memorial Hospital, Baddeck
Anita Parsons, Manager of Rural Facilities and Meredith Forrest-Parks, Director of Pathology & Laboratory Medicine for the Eastern Zone, NSHA. Ms. Forrest-Parks spoke on behalf of the group.

Ms. Forrest-Parks assured council that the Baddeck hospital lab is full staffed and this will continue; however, how the service is delivered may change. The Provincial program of Pathology is exploring contingency plans, specifically Point of Care Testing (POCT) which is a

machine which can conduct some of the typical blood tests and can be operated by a variety of medical personnel including registered nurses, licenced practical nurses, lab technologists and pharmacists. Feedback from physicians was favourable and many felt that the quick turn-around for results improved patient care. The POCT machines are viewed as a solution to rural facilities difficulty in recruiting lab techs to rural areas.

The Warden opened the floor to questions from council members.

Councillor Dauphinee asked if the machines are already in use in the NSHA and how reliable the POCT machines are.

Ms. Forrest-Parks said the machines are already in use and the results are comparable to lab results.

Councillor MacDonald asked if recruitment remains an option if the machines are available.

Ms. MacIsaac responded the health Authority is always recruiting.

Councillor MacLeod asked why no new recruits were placed in Baddeck.

Ms. Forrest-Parks explained many grads prefer to stay in Halifax or go to other urban areas.

Councillor MacNeil mentioned that not having a fully-operation lab may be a deterrent to recruiting doctors.

The Warden agreed and mentioned funds that the municipality has provided to the Baddeck hospital to improve their facilities in hopes of assisting the recruitment process.

The Warden opened the floor to questions from the gallery. There were a number of questions regarding lab results accuracy, the POCT machines, recruitment and level of services.

The Warden thanked the guests for their time and thanked the gallery for their questions.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that council would recess for 10 minutes.

PORT HAWKESBURY PAPER

The Warden welcomed Port Hawkesbury Paper representatives Andrew Fedora and Fonsie Farrell.

Mr. Fedora detailed Port Hawkesbury Paper's Crown Land management process. He explained that of the Crown land on Cape Breton Island, 48% is land where PHP is unable to operate due to protection, buffer zones for wildlife, steep slopes and old growth forests. Another 39% is restricted due to wildlife wintering areas, watershed areas and species at risk areas, leaving 13% as potential cutting areas.

He described the standards and certifications required for clear cuts and the silviculture operations conducted by PHP.

Council asked questions regarding affluent, contractor qualifications and PHP operations in Victoria County.

The Warden opened the floor for questions from the gallery and a number of questions from the public were asked and answered.

The Warden thanked the men for their presentation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the April 23, 2018 meeting of the Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of the April 23, 2018 council session be approved as presented. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- Land exchange Buchanan Memorial – CAO has been in touch with the administrator; further discussion required.
- Letter to TIR regarding fire department personnel having local supervisors cell phone numbers. In process.
- Windmill cheque – just received. Announcement is in the works.
- Numbers to be provided for Communications Officer for bags for Iona community clean up.

NEW BUSINESS

- The Victoria County ReUse Centre opened on April 21. The CAO asked councillors to send their top 2 non-profits so a selection can be made to see where the monies raised from the first few weeks will go.
- May is Gaelic Month in Nova Scotia. Victoria County has made the following proclamation:

“Recognizing Gaels’ presence through their language and culture as part of Nova Scotia’s rich diversity, Gaelic Nova Scotia Month is a month-long initiative that includes ceilidhs (visits), storytelling gatherings, workshops, presentations and talks on the many social and economic impacts Gaelic language and cultural express make in Nova Scotia Society.

The month is celebrated by Nova Scotia Gaels, those who have Gaelic origins, Gaelic language learners, those involved in Gaelic cultural expression and those who simply feel a connection to the language and culture of the Gaels in the province.”

- A letter was requested to be sent to the NS health Authority expressing displeasure that Nova Scotia did not send recruiters to a session in New Brunswick and was the only province to not send recruiters to a national meeting of rural doctors in Newfoundland & Labrador in April.
- Heavy Garbage Collection crews wrapped up their first week with positive comments from residents and council.
- CAO will be on an FCM panel looking at Fiscal Challenges in Rural Communities when the national organization meets in Halifax, May 31 – June 2.

TAXATION UPDATE

The CAO indicated that currently \$1.27 million in taxes is outstanding, compared with \$1.491 million this time last year. Overall, tax is down \$158,000 over last year; \$38,000 collected since last council session. This is lower than usual owing to a number of employees off over the past 2 weeks. Tax department employees will be visiting Inverness County this week to see how their system works.

NOTICE OF MOTIONS - none

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee inquired whether the DOE is hosting public consultations into coastal erosion. If so, he requested a visit to Ingonish.

Councillor Dauphinee commended the organizers of NS Hiking Summit, to be held May 10-12 in Ingonish. It is one of the largest held in the province, has 250 registrants and more than 60 on the wait list. Victoria County is a platinum sponsor.

Councillor Dauphinee requested a letter be written to Gerard Jessome regarding the lookoff at the top of Smokey. It needs to be maintained as it is a place where trucks stop and check their brakes. He also mentioned a number of areas had shoulders washed out. These should be addressed as the Cabot Trail Relay Race is approaching at the end of the month. The letter will include road concerns from all districts.

District #7

Councillor Budge identified required maintenance on White Point Road, as well as the White Point access road.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald presented a petition from the residents of Cape North requesting that a water line extension be provided by the municipality.

Motion: It was moved and seconded that the council accept the petition as presented on behalf of the residents of Cape North.

Motion carried.

Councillor MacDonald mentioned that the Public Works department is hosting a public information session in Cape North on Tuesday, May 15 at 6 pm at the Cabot Fire Hall, Cape North.

Councillor MacDonald discussed how crab shells disposed of at the Dingwall Transfer Station has continued to be an issue for residents who live nearby. He questioned why council has allowed this to occur and asked whether it is costing the county money to try to mitigate the smell. The CAO replied that it costs a lot and the county has tried a variety of options to keep the smell down. It is becoming cost prohibitive. Discussion took place as to whether the municipality can choose to not accept the shells and whether there are alternative options.

Motion: It was moved and seconded that the CAO speak with the management of Victoria Highland Fisheries about ceasing to accept their crab shell waste at our facilities.

Motion carried.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis reminded councillors that the Health Authority surveys and boxes should be collected from their communities and returned to the Courthouse for collection by the Health Authority.

Councillor MacInnis said he had been contacted by a group in St. Ann's Bay that would like to see single use plastic shopping bags banned. They would like to meet with Councillor MacLeod and the Communications Officer as well. Councillor MacLeod will arrange to meet with them.

Councillor MacInnis discussed garbage left at the North Gut Provincial Park and wondered if the municipality could provide a garbage container. It was suggested that in other places, local groups took charge of providing the containers and making sure they were emptied and county crews could then collect them. The CAO will follow up with the Director of Public Works.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod mentioned that residents had contacted her wondering if garbage bins in the village of Baddeck could be left out over the four seasons (not just during the tourist season). The CAO will speak with the Baddeck Village Commission.

Councillor MacLeod requested that a letter be sent to the NS Health Authority supervisor of the NSHA presenters to ensure the county plays an active role in any recruitment at the Baddeck hospital.

Motion: It was moved and seconded that the NSHA be made aware that the Municipality of Victoria County does not want to see job losses or service reductions at the Victoria Memorial Hospital in Baddeck and that the council will work with the health authority in any recruitment efforts.

Motion carried.

Councillor Macleod requested that the road from Middle River to Margaree be added to the area road concerns for TIR and that a copy be sent to Inverness County as well.

Councillor MacLeod commended the organizers of a giant flea market and yard sale at the Victoria Highlands arena in Baddeck recently. All proceeds went to the Baddeck Fire Department and the rink. She questioned where the leftover items were taken. They were delivered to the new ReUse Centre at the Baddeck Transfer Station.

Councillor MacLeod requested that information about a Welcoming Immigrants meeting hosted by CBREN and the Cape Breton Partnership be put on the victoriacounty.com website.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil inquired about the process for derelict vehicles.

He commended the NS Highland Village for organizing a dinner at the Iona legion that raised \$5100 for the Cancer Centre at the CB Regional Hospital.

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be sent to the NS Highland Village.

Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil asked that the following issues/locations be added to the Road issues letter to TIR:

- Gillis Point Road patching job appears to be incomplete.
- A culvert is plugged across from the beach at Little Narrows. This is causing deep water to pool on the road; guard rails are also required at this location.
- A guard rail on highway 105 in St. Patrick's Channel needs repair.
- There remains a 2.4 kilometer stretch on Gillis Point Road that has not been paved.

District #3

Councillor Morrison asked that a culvert collapse on Big Harbour Road be added to the Road issues letter for TIR.

Councillor Morrison mentioned a Business Awareness Dinner hosted by the CBREN and Cape Breton Partnership at the Keltic Lodge on May 17.

Councillor Morrison, with Councillor MacLeod met with residents concerned about the traffic and unsafe set up at the Irving station on Highway 105 outside Baddeck. The municipality will be hosting a public meeting on May 29 and will be inviting Irving, provincial government officials, the RCMP and other stakeholders. The county has been asking the province for solutions to the problems there since 2003 and are concerned about fatalities at that location.

Motion: It was moved and seconded that TIR be contacted regarding the following concerns:

- **TIR ensure the pull off at the top of Smokey is not removed for safety reasons**
- **Washed out shoulders be addressed before the Cabot Trail Relay Race later this month**
- **Condition of White Point Road and White Point access road be addressed**
- **Unfinished patching job on Gillis Point Road**
- **Plugged culvert and guard rail required near Little Narrows beach**
- **2.4 kms of road still to be paved on Gillis Point Road**
- **Guard rail repair required in St. Patricks' Channel**
- **Condition of road between Middle River & Margaree**
- **Collapsed culvert on Big Harbour Road**

Motion carried.

Bylaw Review – none

Correspondence – done.

Resident Terry Murray noted the Baddeck Hospital Auxiliary will host their annual Luncheon/Health Expo at the Baddeck Community Centre on Friday May 11.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Victoria County Municipal council will take place on Monday May 28, 2018 at 5 pm.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:50 pm.

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden