

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
December 11, 2017

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, December 11, 2017, beginning at 5:10 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, Interim CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. A short In Camera to deal with a financial issue will be held at the conclusion of the agenda.

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

IMMIGRATION PROGRAMS UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Omar Tag El-Din, Program Lead, Atlantic Immigration Pilot; Kailea Pedley, Coordinator, Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP); and Elva Zhou, Coordinator, Cape Breton Connector Program; all from the Cape Breton Partnership.

Mr. El-Din indicated that they were in attendance to provide updates on three (3) immigration initiatives (copy attached). He outlined Nova Scotia population trends and indicated that 1/33 Atlantic Canadians are immigrant, compared to 1.5 for all of Canada. The increase in population is the age 55+, with decline seen in the age 15-54 category. Cape Breton loses 1500 individuals each year. He provided a Stats Canada Environmental Scan for 2017, outlining the number employed in Cape Breton and the annual average change over a 10 year period (2006-2016 -1.4%) and year over year change for 2015-2016 of -3.6%.

Mr. El-Din provided results for immigration strategies indicating that immigration will become the only source of population growth and labour force replacement. The immigrant population is more likely to start their own business and export to countries other than the US. A 1% increase in the number of immigrants to Canada corresponds to an increase in imports/exports. Economic immigrants tend to be healthy professionals between 20-55 who contribute to the tax base and depend less on social assistance and health care than the average Canadian.

The Cape Breton Partnership have three immigration initiatives, the first being the Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership (CBLIP). Kailea Pedley, Coordinator, CBLIP, advised that this program is designed to improve the integration of newcomers, better integrate immigrant needs into local planning and foster welcoming communities. She outlined how this is achieved.

There are 77 Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPS) across Canada and she outlined the typical structure of a LIP.

Ms. Pedley outlined the five steps in the LIP process.

- Establish a partnership council
- Create a terms of reference for the partnership council
- Conduct research and establish a local settlement strategy to be implemented over three years
- Develop an annual action plan to address local priorities
- Report on the implementation of the action plan annually

Ms. Pedley advised that Councillor Perla MacLeod is a member of the CBLIP Council. She outlined what municipalities, Chambers of Commerce and members can do. The second meeting of the advisory committee will be held tomorrow.

The Cape Breton Connector Program is the second immigration initiative. Elva Zhou is the Coordinator of the Connector Program. She outlined that the connectors are the people in the community who know large numbers of people and can bring people together and commit their time. Connectees are the work ready professionals. They must have a post-secondary degree or diploma, a valid work permit, reside in Canada, have sufficient language skills and are ready to work.

The first year goal of this program is to match 50 connectees with 50 connectors. The program outcomes to this point have 32 registered connectees, 5 potential connectees, 27 registered connectors and 5 potential connectors. There have been 13 match meetings and 4 participants have found employment. Ms. Zhou outlined upcoming connector events.

The third immigration initiative is the Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) and Mr. El-Din is the Program Lead for this program. This program is designed to address the unique labour market challenges, better integrate and retain immigrants, retain international graduates and open a pathway to permanent residency. This can be achieved by broadening the range of jobs that grants permanent residency to include NOC C for intermediate-skilled and international graduates, incorporating settlement service organizations in the process and allowing employers to hire permanent foreign workers without doing a Labour Market Impact Assessment.

There are three streams in the AIP - the Atlantic Intermediate Skilled Program, the Atlantic High Skilled Program and the Atlantic International Graduate Program. Mr. El-Din explained the key benefits of the AIP Program and outlined how the program worked. He requested that Council spread the word about the program.

The seasonality of the workforce in Victoria County and whether these programs could apply was discussed. Full-time job offers are done on a case by case basis and work is being done on a retention piece.

Housing is an issue that is ongoing. This is a part of the settlement plan and the workers are to pay for their own housing.

The membership on the CBLIP Council was discussed and it was indicated that there are representatives from throughout Cape Breton, with the majority being from CBRM. This body is the main leadership body that determines the direction of the LIP and develops the strategic plan.

Whether there was a commitment on the part of the connectee to stay in a job was questioned and it was indicated that once permanent residency is achieved, the resident has the right to go where they choose. Immigrants need employment and a life and these are both important aspects in retaining workers.

Further discussion took place and Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the presenters for the information provided.

BRENT PARTLAND

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Brent Partland.

Mr. Partland indicated he was in attendance with regard to the shortage of employees and shortage of places for employees to stay. He is the owner of the Wreck Cove General Store and has difficulty in hiring and retaining staff. He has been investigating building 4 to 6 unit complexes in the area that could be used by staff during the summer employment season and then could be rentable units for winter tourism in the offseason.

Mr. Partland advised that he has spoken to MLA Keith Bain, ACOA, Tourism, etc. in this regard to see what is available and can be done in this regard.

Mr. Partland indicated that he has property and is considering this venture.

The lack of housing is a problem everywhere in the Municipality. Warden Morrison indicated that the Municipality is, in conjunction with Inverness County, looking at hiring Housing Co-ordinator. The lack of affordable housing has been on the radar for some time and the role that County can play in this issue was discussed.

The Economic Development Officer has been requested to do a fall/winter conference on the housing issue.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Mr. Partland.

THEATRE BADDECK

Hannah Ziss entered the meeting by teleconference to update on Theatre Baddeck's meeting with Tom Wilson, Department of Recreation and Tourism.

Ms. Ziss advised that there is \$1,500.00 available funding through the Department of Recreation and Tourism and they have completed the application for this funding. She indicated that they also made application to Tourism Nova Scotia through their digital marketing program.

Discussion took place. With the \$1,500.00 from the Department of Recreation and Tourism budget and \$1,000.00 through district budget funds, there is \$2,500.00 remaining. If the remaining \$2,500.00 is approved, this will provide \$5,000.00 in total that if matched by the Province through their digital marketing program will provide \$10,000.00.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality approve \$2,500.00 for Theatre Baddeck. Motion carried.

The cheque is to be made payable to the Theatre Baddeck Society and the funds will come from the 2017/18 budget.

Ms. Ziss extended a thank you to Council for their support.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 28, 2017

The minutes of the November 28, 2017, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of November 28, 2017, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Summary Offence Tickets

Approval has been received from the Department of Justice for the issuance of Summary Offence Tickets for Dog Control.

Multi-Use Overpass

Warden Morrison and Councillor MacLeod attended a meeting with regard to the multi-use overpass on the TCH 105 west of Baddeck. Tom Wilson, has been designated as the municipal staff administration representative on this project.

Dog Tags

Terry Hogan, Dog Control Officer, now has dog tags for purchase in the northern area of the County.

Agricultural Land

Leanne MacEachen has contacted Chris van den Heuvel with regard to setting up a meeting on the agricultural land issue.

Waste Collection

Council was updated on the rejection sticker for black bags this past week. Eight bags were rejected on the Monday collection route, three on the Thursday route and one on each of the remaining collection days.

Transit

Discussion took place on the transit pilot project. There is provincial money available for a transit pilot and Councillor MacLeod requested that a Transit presentation be arranged for the January, 2018, meeting of Council.

TAXATION UPDATE

Leanne MacEachen advised that at present there is \$1.1 million owing on current and \$960,000.00 on prior years taxes.

Progress is being made. Of 78 accounts identified and contacted by staff, \$60,000.00 has been collected on these accounts.

Ms. MacEachen indicated that she has a draft Tax Arrears Collection Policy that she will send to Council for review and consideration.

Tax sale searches are ongoing and the date for the next Tax Sale will be set in the near future for February/March, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

EFFECTIVE COUNCIL MEETING WORKSHOP

Leanne MacEachen advised that Inverness County is arranging an Effective Council Meeting Workshop in Port Hawkesbury on January 10 and 11, 2018.

It was felt that this would be a worthwhile event for Council to attend. More information will be forwarded to Council as it is received.

GROUP OF NINE – TECH SHARED SERVICE MODEL

The group of nine municipalities that have joined together with regard to a shared services agreement for their accounting system have been approached by the Province to consider acting as the pilot group for developing an online system for tech support shared services.

Leanne MacEachen indicated she attended a meeting today related to this matter. It is hoped that the Province will host this project and as it was the initial meeting, more information is needed.

It was moved and seconded that the Municipality support, in principle, joining the Group of Nine Pilot Project for tech support services and when the financial aspect is known, a final decision will be made. Motion carried.

MARITECT SECURITY

Representatives from Maritect Security toured the Court House building with regard to security issues and will be providing recommendations on what they feel should be done to enhance security in the building.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT MODULE FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

Councillor MacLeod expressed an interest in attending the Financial Management Module for Elected Officials in Halifax on January 11 and 12, 2017. This course is offered through the Association of Municipal Administrators of Nova Scotia.

It was moved and seconded that Councillor MacLeod be authorized to attend the Financial Management training in Halifax and any other Council member interested also be authorized to attend. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil requested information on this training for his consideration.

INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SPECTRUM CONSULTATION

Seaside Wireless Communications provided information on a consultation now underway by the Government of Canada that could have a big impact on the availability of high speed internet in Victoria County.

The consultation runs until January 9, 2018, and concerns who will get access to radio spectrum that is essential to improving internet speeds in rural areas.

Warden Morrison read a letter, drafted by Tom Wilson, Director of Recreation and Tourism, to the Director of Spectrum Regulatory Best Practices, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED), urging this department to consider Victoria County's concerns and comments as they decide on the spectrum allocation for 2018 to 2022 and beyond.

It was moved and seconded that this letter be forwarded to the Director of Spectrum Regulatory Best Practices, Department of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada for their review and consideration. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #2

Councillor MacLeod requested that letter be forwarded to Steve MacDonald, Area Supervisor, TIR, requesting he investigate the bump on the road at 973 Old Margaree Road to see if can be repaired.

Councillor MacLeod also brought up illegal dumping and possibly increasing the fine for littering throughout the County. This matter will be investigated.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he was out at the Baddeck Solid Waste Management Facility and saw that the recycling reuse building is almost complete and ready to open.

He questioned on where the plastics that are recycled on site go. Jocelyn Bethune will be contacted to investigate this matter.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he has been invited to attend the 20th Anniversary of the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture's Conference at the Halifax Convention Centre on February 22-23, 2018.

It was moved and seconded that Councillor MacInnis be authorized to attend the 20th Anniversary of the Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture's Conference. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald indicated that the Bay St. Lawrence Recreational Society has been working on a project to create a multi-purpose pad for year around sporting events. The group is now trying to complete boards to surround the pad for flooding for ice this coming winter. They are requesting assistance.

It was moved and seconded that each Councillor provide \$125.00 from their district budgets, for a total of \$1,000.00, for the Bay St. Lawrence Recreational Society. Motion carried.

District #7

Councillor Budge indicated that illegal dumping is taking place in the area of the tower in Neil's Harbour and he requested that "no dumping" signs be installed in this area.

District #5

Councillor Patterson indicated there are rumors circulating regarding the TIR winter operations at Boularderie. Two staff have retired and it is speculated they will not be replaced and equipment from this location is to be transferred to other jurisdictions.

It was felt that TIR officials should be invited to come to a future Council session in the New Year.

Steve MacDonald, Darren Blundon and Gerard Jessome are to be requested to come to Council in January, 2018.

District #3

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to staff for the Christmas gathering at the Bras d'Or Yacht Club on Saturday past.

Councillor MacLeod requested that a letter be forwarded to the Village regarding the lack of Christmas lighting on Chebucto Street this season.

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter was received from the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Volunteer with regard to financial assistance for a generator.

This subject can be addressed at the capital budget planning day in January, 2018.

VICTORIA COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

The emergency department at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital will be closed for a 24 hour period on Wednesday due to a doctor shortage. This is the first time this has occurred and Council felt that the NSHA should be contacted to express our concern on this issue.

The NSHA will be hosting “Shaping Our System Together” – a conversation on primary health care, on Wednesday, December 13, 2017, at 5:45 p.m. at St. Michael’s Parish Hall, Baddeck. Councillors are encouraged to attend.

IN CAMERA

It was moved and seconded to move to In Camera to deal with a financial issue. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded to return to the regular session of Victoria County Municipal Council. Motion carried.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, Interim CAO

