

**VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**  
**January 8, 2018**

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, January 8, 2018, 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, 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.

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

**DESTINATION CAPE BRETON ASSOCIATION**

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Mary Tulle, CEO; and Jo-Lanna Murray, Partnerships Manager; Destination Cape Breton Association, who were in attendance to provide an update (copy attached).

Mary Tulle outlined the formation of Destination Cape Breton Association (DCBA) and the island-wide marketing levy that was established in 2011. DCBA is dedicated to the promotion and enhancement of tourism on Cape Breton Island. The Association adopted the ACOA Tourism Strategy and she outlined their target market.

Tourists are coming to Cape Breton for core experiences and Ms. Tulle outlined how DCBA began to mobilize and build on providing these experiences. She outlined their product development and marketing initiatives. All marketing is directed to the website – [www.cbisland.com](http://www.cbisland.com). Statistics on social media followers were provided.

Ms. Tulle provided information on Golf Cape Breton. This project is funded separately by ACOA with investment from the golf courses. She outlined their marketing and media initiatives and their website – [www.golfcapebreton.com](http://www.golfcapebreton.com).

Events Cape Breton is a project funded separately by ACOA with partner investment. Their focus is on meetings and events, corporate incentive travel and sporting events. Ms. Tulle outlined the small ports initiative and indicated that one of Ocean Expeditions vessels will be home porting in Sydney commencing this year and work will continue with other small lines to visit small ports such as Baddeck.

The Festival and Events project budget was outlined. The budget is \$200,000.00 annually and is supported by ACOA and the four island municipalities and the Town of Port Hawkesbury.

Other initiatives such as Inspiration Village, Natalie MacMaster Partnership, and Greenbridge Celtic Festival were outlined.

Ms. Tulle indicated that the 2017 USA Today Readers' Choice Awards recognized Cape Breton Island in 3 categories:

- Best scenic drive in Canada – The Cabot Trail – Ranked #1
- Best National Park in Canada – Cape Breton Highlands National Park – Ranked #1
- Best cottage region in Canada – The Bras d'Or Lake – Ranked #3

Key performance indicators such as room night sales and sales growth were provided. Cape Breton is ahead of the provincial average for growth in 2017. Room nights sold in Victoria County were up 3.5% in 2015, 18% in 2016 and up 3% to the end of August, 2017.

Ms. Tulle outlined DCBA's plans and initiatives looking at 2018 and various questions were addressed. A video on Cape Breton Island was viewed.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you on behalf of Council to Mary Tulle and Jo-Lanna Murray for the presentation.

### **CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Keith MacDonald, President and CEO, Cape Breton Partnership (CBP), and Patrick Austin, Economic Development Officer for Victoria County, Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CBREN).

Keith MacDonald indicated that the CBP unites businesses and communities across Cape Breton and Mulgrave to drive the economy forward. The mandate to advance the regional strategy – Prosperity Framework – is done through the CBREN.

Mr. MacDonald outlined the staff complement for the CBREN and advised that Laura Jean Grant is currently on leave furthering her education and it is anticipated she will return to her duties. Patrick Austin is the EDO for Victoria County and he indicated that Patrick would provide an update on the CBREN activities in Victoria County.

Warden Morrison indicated that the Economic Development Committee of Council met with both Keith MacDonald and Patrick Austin prior to Council where they were updated in detail.

Mr. Austin indicated that the Municipality identified three key priorities – broadband, housing and employees which he has been working on. The BRE (Business Retention and Expansion) program, operating under the name of BusinessNOW is being introduced throughout the Municipality. To date 5 interviews have taken place and it is hoped that 20 will be completed by the end of March, 2018.

The good news is that there are a number of businesses setting up shop in Victoria County. He is currently working with 15 files for potential new business start-ups.

The Broadband Strategy through the CBREN was outlined. All three municipal units within the REN are pulling together to apply for funding through the federal government, CRTC, province, etc., to increase broadband in the area.

Roundtables will be held in all areas of the County with the focus on 2018. Employment, staff training and the immigration pilot for acquiring staff were discussed.

Housing is an issue throughout the County. There is a lack of both seasonal and full-time housing in the County. This is a detriment to getting and retaining residents.

The cannabis issue and the province's decision to go to a privatized system through the NSLC were discussed. Whether there was opportunity for licenses for micro-producers of cannabis in the area was also addressed.

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot was outlined. If one full-time worker can be obtained through this program, then the remaining family could be employed seasonally.

The cannabis issue was again discussed. As this is new tax revenue for the province, it was felt that lobbying should be done at all levels to see how the new tax will be distributed throughout the province.

Councillor Patterson indicated that at a cannabis session he attended in Port Hawkesbury it was indicated that the province did not consider the cannabis legalization as economic development.

Whether there would be opportunity to get involved in the cannabis edibles market was discussed and this is controlled through federal processing and licensing.

Discussion took place on fibre for high-speed internet. Tom Wilson indicated that high speed cable was brought into Baddeck and Wagmatcook in 2003 through the County Broadband initiative.

Council received copies of the Victoria County Business Overview which is to be reviewed prior to going to print.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Keith MacDonald and Patrick Austin for their presentation.

**PRESENTATION – KEVIN MACKAY**

Warden Morrison recognized Kevin (GeeGee) MacKay who was in attendance and Interim CAO, Leanne MacEachen, presented Mr. MacKay with his 20 year award as an employee of the Municipality of the County of Victoria.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 5 minutes.

**NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY**

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to representatives from the Nova Scotia Health Authority, including:

Mary Lou O'Neill, Executive Director, Operations  
Dr. Warren Wilkes, Executive Director, Medicine  
Rose MacIsaac, Facility Manger, Victoria County Memorial Hospital  
Angela MacArthur, Manager, Integrated Sites  
Greg Boone, Communications and Public Relations

Warden Morrison advised that Council met with representatives from the Nova Scotia Health Authority in December and brought forward concerns and questions to the representatives. They took this information back and agreed to meet with Council in an open forum resulting in tonight's meeting.

The Nova Scotia Health Authority was created on April 1, 2015, as a single organization with four management zones. Victoria County is located in the Eastern zone. The NSHA provides health services to Nova Scotians, some specialized services to Atlantic Canadians, and operates hospitals, health centres and community-based programs across the province.

The NSHA partners with the IWK to plan, act and care as one and has 23,400 employees; 3,107 physicians (2,043 specialists and 1,064 family physicians); 599 plus medical residents; 7,000 plus volunteers; 5,500 plus learners; 41 foundations; 33 auxiliaries and 27 community health boards, throughout the four districts in the province.

The budget of the NSHA is \$1.9 billion. The work of the NSHA was outlined as were the sites. In the Eastern zone there are two regional hospitals (CB Regional Hospital and St. Martha's) and 14 hospitals/community health centres, two of which are Victoria County Memorial Hospital and Buchanan Memorial Hospital.

The number of family doctors in Victoria County was questioned and it was indicated that in Baddeck there are 4 physicians, 2 of which are part-time, so that equates to 3 full-time positions. In Neil's Harbour, there are 3 physicians. The quota for both sites is 4, so there is a shortage of one physician in each location at present.

The NSHA is always recruiting. They take prospective physicians in and show them around various areas to find the best fit. There is flexibility in the recruitment process. Specialists only work in the two regional hospitals in the Eastern Zone, but see patients from throughout the zone.

There is an aging population and it was indicated that there are some doctors with an extra year of education in geriatric skills within the Eastern Zone and specialists in this field can see patients from throughout the zone.

The question of pay scales for physicians and whether they were uniform throughout Victoria County was discussed. There are physicians presently working on fee for service and others with contracts. Salaries are typically consistent with all other rural adjacent counties.

Service is provided in outpatients and office appointments on the same day. Whether there would be positions for couples if they were recruited to an area was questioned. If they are comfortable living in rural areas, schools for their children and other amenities and want to stay and become a part of the community, it is possible.

How recruitment is carried out was explained and Lisa Hardy is the Recruitment Specialist for the zone and does an excellent job of sourcing physicians to visit the area. Site visits are a very important part of the recruitment process. The more that come to an area, the more possibilities exist.

How the Municipality can help in recruitment was questioned. Providing the funding and infrastructure in both areas of the Municipality that the County has provided and getting the people in the communities involved in what the area has to offer is much welcomed.

Recruiting for other positions such as Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, nursing, etc. was questioned and it was indicated that Human Resources take the lead on this recruitment by visiting university career days, taking students on site tours, etc. Incentives offered were also outlined, i.e. money through nursing strategy, monetary incentives for lab personnel, etc.

The next steps were discussed as to how to continue to work together with Council and the community to achieve positive recruitment results.

Physician recruitment is not just a Nova Scotia issue. It is a national issue. The NSHA representatives thanked Council and the public for the interest and commitment to their communities and for the assistance the Municipality has provided to support health and wellness in Victoria County.

Warden Morrison extended Council and the public's appreciation to the representatives for their attendance and suggested that representatives give consideration to hosting town hall type meetings in the County. Physician recruitment is a priority for all of Victoria County communities and residents.

Councillor Patterson advised that in Saturday's issue of the *Chronicle Herald*, there were three letters to the editor from physicians. He suggested that the one Nova Scotia Health Authority is not working and that the government should review the system in place before it is too late.

The impending retirement of physicians north of Smokey was addressed by Deputy Warden Dauphinee. This area needs to recruit more than one physician. Councillor Budge concurred with these comments and said more than one physician must be recruited to the area.

The closure of the emergency room at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital due to lack of physician coverage that has occurred lately was brought up. Councillor MacDonald wondered if the same will soon be occurring in Buchanan Memorial Hospital.

There is a provincial ER strategy and the NSHA is working to fill where they can and develop a roster of possible fill-ins for rural hospital Emergency Rooms.

Incentives were discussed and whether when recruiting does the physician have to commit to a minimum term of services. In some areas where physicians have been provided with medical school tuition assistance, they do have to sign a return of service agreement for a 3 to 5 year term.

The qualifications of physicians from other countries who don't meet the criteria to practice in Nova Scotia were questioned. There are minimum standards to practice in Nova Scotia and doctors are licensed through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia. They set the rules.

Questions were addressed from the public in attendance. Why patients have to visit a doctor for a routine prescription refill and whether a pharmacist could undertake this role was questioned.

Pharmacists cannot prescribe medication. Nurse practitioners may and this service available in community practices can take the load of the physicians.

Whether there was the possibility of having walk-in clinics in an area to take the pressure off and assist with those who do not have doctors was questioned. Urgent care centres are needed to provide primary health care. This may assist with supply and demand.

What we have to attract physicians was questioned and what supports and services should be in place to attract medical personnel was discussed. What are the physicians looking for that may be priority for them that we, the communities can work on?

New doctors are looking for work/life balance. It is important to get residents involved to promote what is great about these areas to live in.

Alberta tried a regionalized approach to health care and it did not work. The question was raised as to how the Nova Scotia Health Authority thinks they can do it different to make the one authority successful.

There is no great answer to this question. Alberta was not the only province that regionalized. The NSHA investigates what works and what doesn't in other areas and over the past three years have travelled to each site within the zone to hear from the public. There has to be a dialogue for things to improve.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the representatives from NSHA for their attendance.

The representatives assured those in attendance that they have heard what has been said and would take the message back for review.

### **PILOT TAXI SERVICE**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee updated on the pilot taxi service that has been operating in his district this fall/winter. The service is free to seniors and others in need who have limited or no access to transportation. The Municipality, through the District #6 budget, have funded the pilot in cooperation with the Cabot Trail Lions Club. There is an existing taxi service in the area – Ingo Cab, which is used for providing this service.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that the uptake on this pilot has been positive and the service has not been abused. It is estimated that 25 to 30 residents are using this service at present and he provided a number of positive comments with regard to the service.

There is funding through Communities, Culture and Heritage and application will be made to the Provincial Department for additional funding to keep the service operating. In the meantime, he would like to keep the service operating and indicated the cost to be approximately \$3,000.00.

**It was moved and seconded that application be made to the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage for funding to keep the taxi service for seniors in District #6 operating. Motion carried.**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that he would like to keep the service operating for the remainder of the winter months and is requesting that he be permitted to use \$1,500.00 from next year's district budget and the Municipality cover the remaining \$1,500.00.

**It was moved and seconded that Deputy Warden Dauphinee be permitted to access 2018/19 district budget funds in the amount of \$1,500.00 and the Municipality fund the remaining cost of \$1,500.00. Motion carried.**

Initiatives that may happen in other areas with regard to transportation services were discussed.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee was congratulated on this initiative and he indicated he would like to see a line item in the budget for transportation services. This can be brought to the January 29, 2018, Budget planning day.

#### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – DECEMBER 11, 2017**

The minutes of the December 11, 2017, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

**It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of December 11, 2017, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

#### **BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES**

##### **K-9 Search and Rescue**

Brent Partland contacted the Interim CAO with regard to funding for his K-9 re-certification this year.

Council approved funding this amount last year through their district budgets for one time only. Funding was not approved for this year.

**Baddeck Fire Department**

The status of the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department's request with regard to transfer of the land and building that houses their trucks, equipment, office and meeting room was questioned.

Leanne MacEachen indicated that an appraiser was retained and this matter is still being investigated.

**Plaster Provincial Park**

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether a reply was received from the Department of Natural Resources with regard to the cleanup of the former Plaster Provincial Park.

A reply has not been received.

**Victoria County Memorial Hospital Parking Lot Upgrade**

The municipal funding for the parking lot upgrade at the Victoria County Memorial Hospital and whether this funding could be extended beyond March 31, 2018, was questioned. The work has begun but will not be completed until after the winter season.

**It was moved and seconded to extend the funding for the Victoria County Memorial Hospital parking lot upgrade until the spring of 2018. Motion carried.**

**TAXATION UPDATE**

As of today, total taxes owing are \$1.948 million, down from \$1.959 million from the same time period last year.

Since the December 11, 2017, Council meeting \$116,000.00 has been collected and the staff continues to work on collections.

Council questioned on the date for the next Tax Sale and a date will be set and provided for the next Council meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**PCAP FUNDING**

Prior to receiving PCAP funding, a motion is required approving the projects.

**It was moved and seconded that the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Water System upgrade which commenced on July, 2016 and completed on November 30, 2017, in the amount of \$128,000.00 be approved. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Water Tower project which began on May 1, 2017, and is in progress and nearing completion in the amount of \$700,000.00 be approved. Motion carried.**

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil brought up the recent power outage.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter of thanks be forwarded to the Nova Scotia Power linemen who worked tirelessly to restore the power and request that maintenance be done around the power lines to prevent further outages and that the power outage map be kept more accurate regarding the power outages. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that EMC Lyle Donovan and Jocelyn Bethune be extended thanks for their assistance in opening the comfort centres in the Municipality during the power outages. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the status of the former Rankin Memorial School property and the small municipal property that was to be granted back to the School Board. Leanne MacEachen will investigate this matter.

A culvert on the Jimmie Gillis Road has collapsed and is a danger to vehicles travelling on the road that are unaware of the collapse. A letter is to be forwarded to the Department of TIR requesting that the culvert be repaired.

Councillor MacNeil advised that the Little Narrows Community Development Association has lost their charitable status for failing to file tax returns since 2011. The Canada Revenue Agency is looking for the property and assets. He has contacted Mark Eyking's office for assistance in this matter and might require a letter of support from the Municipality in the future.

**District #2**

Councillor MacLeod advised that during the power outage last week, the batteries at the Bell sites were not adequately charged.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to Bell asking that the batteries at their stations be charged and tested monthly during the winter season. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacLeod requested that a letter be sent to Department of TIR requesting that the gravel roads in her district be sanded.

Councillor MacLeod requested that a thank you letter be sent to the Baddeck crew of Nova Scotia Power for their work during the storm and power outages last week.

Whether a reply was received from the Village of Baddeck with regard to the lack of lights and wreaths this Christmas season was questioned. Leanne MacEachen will check on this matter.

Councillor MacLeod brought up the possibility of a ban on plastic bags in Victoria County. This matter is to be referred to Robert Dauphinee and Jocelyn Bethune.

It was indicated that a petition has been forwarded to the Victoria Farmers Co-op in this regard by a community group.

#### **District #4**

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether the Municipality ever paid a remittance for the volunteer fire departments to the Fire Services Association of Nova Scotia. Leanne MacEachen will look into this matter.

Councillor MacInnis advised that the last operating fur farm in Victoria County ceased operation today. This industry began in the County in 1903 on the Gairloch Mountain Road, Middle River.

Leanne MacEachen advised that she contacted Chris van den Heuvel regarding the agri-land initiative and someone will be hired to look after this initiative.

#### **District #8**

Councillor MacDonald brought up the issue of the ice buildup on the Mill Hill Road at Money Point. He was advised by Nelson Dixon today that he will assess the situation tomorrow to determine how and when it may be fixed. This concern was addressed a year ago and it was felt it would have been repaired in the spring of 2017.

He requested that TIR be questioned as to why it takes so long to address repair issues such as this within the district.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he received concerns from within his district that the nearest comfort centre was in Neil's Harbour – a distance of 40 to 50 minutes from his area. Whether a centre could be located closer was questioned.

Leanne MacEachen indicated that a debrief of the storm/power outage situation will be carried out shortly with Lyle Donovan, Jocelyn Bethune, the Warden, Deputy Warden and CAO to see how things went and how we can do better.

Whether all Council could attend this debriefing was questioned and it was felt this committee will bring its findings back to Council and matters that may have been missed can be addressed at this time.

Residents are to be prepared for such instances for up to 72 hours.

Councillor MacDonald advised that two residents of his district – Eamonn Dudley-Chubbs and Jade Wilkie have been named to the 2018 Nova Scotia Provincial Wrestling Team.

#### **District #5**

Councillor Patterson indicated that the placement of Councillors' expenses on the County website is not easily accessible.

Leanne MacEachen indicated that there is an initiative underway with regard to the County website and some changes should be seen in the future.

#### **District #3**

There were four locations in Victoria County that set up comfort centres during last week's power outage.

**It was moved and seconded that the four comfort centres receive \$250.00 each from the Municipality for the services provided during the power outage. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that Charlene MacNeil, Charlene's Bayside Restaurant, brought copious amounts of food to the comfort centre in Iona which was greatly appreciated.

After Council on Monday, January 22, 2018, the Council Fire Committee is requested to meet with Darren MacAulay and Andrew Fricker from the Victoria County Chief Officers Committee.

A Nova Scotia Aquaculture meeting will be held in Halifax on January 25, 2018. Warden Morrison or Councillor MacInnis or both will attend this event.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Broadband Committee**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that a Broadband Committee meeting was held earlier today to review the four year plan. Tom Wilson is in consultation with Seaside Communications with regard to upgrades.

One thing that did come up was cell phone coverage, particularly in the North Shore and Iona areas. An initiative was started under the former CAO in this regard with other municipalities. This matter will be investigated.

**TAX ARREARS ARRANGEMENT POLICY**

The draft Tax Arrears Arrangement Policy was forwarded to Council on December 13, 2017, for review.

Council requested that it be sent out again and be on the agenda for the January 22, 2018, Council meeting.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

1. Email from Athol Grant regarding a proposed Arts Council for Victoria County. A meeting will be held in early 2018 to gauge interest and seek advice.
2. The Big Bras d'Or Volunteer Fire Department has submitted an invoice for the location of a dry hydrant at Dalem Lake. The Municipality will cost share the payment of the invoice with CBRM in the amount of \$4,400.00.
3. Correspondence was received from Gwynn Shaw, Alderwood, concerning application for an Age-Friendly Grant 2018. If the project is community planning, written approval is required from the Municipality and she also requested a letter of support for the application.
4. Letter from the UNSM (FNSM) in reply to Council's concern with regard to the name change to the Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities advising that the name change will come into effect.
5. Letter from the NDP Caucus was received and is to be tabled.
6. Invitation to Forestry Hub discussion and Finewood Flooring site tour on Saturday, January 20, 2018, at the Middle River Community Hall at 10:00 a.m.

7. Notice of Raising the Villages meeting at the Whycocomagh Waterfront Centre on Thursday, January 11, 2018 from noon to 3:00 p.m.

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.**

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, Interim CAO