

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

September 24, 2018

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 24, 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 #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7 – Wayne Budge
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Alix Redden, CFO
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent was:

District #7 – Fraser Patterson (Out of Town)

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.

VOICES OF NAOMHOG

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Rosie MacKenzie who was in attendance to provide information on the “*Voices of the Naomhog*”.

Rosie MacKenzie updated Council on a project taking place on the Baddeck Waterfront. During the months of September and October, 2018, artists and musicians from Nova Scotia, Ireland and Scotland will come together to build two traditional Irish rowing boats called Naomhogs, a 4-person rowing and sailing boat.

Ms. MacKenzie became interested in these boats while living in Ireland. She wanted to bring these traditions to Cape Breton. This project reaches into our cultural past to bring the tradition of boat building, music and dance to Cape Breton. The group of Irish, Scottish, Cape Breton musicians, alongside Mi'kmaw boat builders will stitch together their cultures while creating original music and dance through the building of the Naomhogs.

This music will be featured at the 2018 Celtic Colours International Festival. Celtic Colours has embraced "*Voices of the Naomhog*". The boats will be rowed to the concert halls by the builders. The story of their building and the reuniting of their cultures will be shared through the original music, dance and storytelling that have been created during the project. Along with the two scheduled shows, they have recently been asked to perform at the closing ceremonies of Celtic Colours.

Council then viewed an award-winning documentary entitled *THE CAMINO VOYAGE* that premiered at the Dublin Film Festival in March, 2018.

Ms. MacKenzie indicated that they wanted to document the voyage from Baddeck to the Highland Village in Iona. There will be a cost involved with videography of approximately \$6,000.00. Celtic Colours has approved \$2,000.00 of this cost and they are seeking assistance from the Municipality.

Discussion took place and Ms. MacKenzie answered various questions of Council. Warden Morrison advised that Council would consider the request and make a decision later in the meeting.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Rosie MacKenzie for her presentation.

PRESENTATION OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2018

Courtesy of Council was extended to Alisha Mombourquette and Kim Livingston, Grant Thornton LLP, who were in attendance to present the non-consolidated and consolidated

financial statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria, the Victoria County Water Utility financial statements, and the Audit Report for the year ended March 31, 2018.

Ms. Mombourquette presented the non-consolidated financial statements for the Municipality. The Non-Consolidated Operating Fund Balance Sheet showing assets and liabilities of \$5,168,505.00. Tax receivables are down approximately \$94,000.00 from the previous year.

The Non-Consolidated Statement of Operation was reviewed indicating a zero balance. The Reserve Funds sections were reviewed.

The Victoria County Water Utility Financial Statement was reviewed. The Water Utility ended the year with a surplus of \$16,849.00, but as there is a large accumulated deficit. The deficit at year end was \$2,050,825.00.

The Water Utility owes \$1,559,186.00 to the Municipality. The auditors advised that this balance will need to be repaid and they recommended starting reducing this amount.

The Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria were also provided. These statements include all funds, Alderwood, Highland Manor and 18% of the Eastern District Planning Commission.

Ms. Livingston reported a clean audit report for 2017-2018 and indicated that the Municipality is in good shape with the exception of the Victoria County Water Utility.

The Management Letter was presented and recommendations included the segregation of duties where possible to reduce the Municipality's exposure to fraud and errors, to continue to take steps to collect taxes receivable, and begin the repayment of due from the Victoria County Water Utility.

Ms. Livingston thanked the Municipality's staff and Council for the cooperation and assistance received during the course of the audit.

It was moved and seconded that the Non-Consolidated Financial Statements, the Consolidated Financial Statements and the Victoria County Water Utility Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 2018, be accepted. Motion carried.

STRAIT AREA TRANSIT

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Jessie MacDonald, Director, and John Dowling, Chairman of the Board, Strait Area Transit.

Ms. MacDonald presented on a Victoria County Transit (copy attached). Transit is one of the greatest limiting factors for residents. The province has noted four areas across the province that has no transit service – Victoria County being one.

There are funding opportunities offered through the province annually. CTAP is money that is allocated each year to be used towards operating expenses for transit and ATAP is money provided to transit for capital purchase of new accessible vehicles. ATAP funding will cover 75% of the vehicle purchase.

Victoria County Transit will be a separate entity, but managed by Strait Area Transit to save on administration costs. It is proposed that two drivers be hired to work 30 hours per week. One will be stationed in North of Smokey area and one in Baddeck. Two new accessible vehicles will be purchased and residents will need to call and book travel 24-48 in advance.

The cost to travel anywhere within the Municipality will be \$5.00 one way. Travel outside the Municipality will be charged at a rate of \$5.00 one way plus .55 cents per km travelled.

Ms. MacDonald presented a three year draft operating and capital purchase budget for review. She recommended that if transit is something Council feels is a useful service for the residents, they should talk to Honourable Leo Glavine, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage. He has taken steps in other area of the province to improve transportation.

If Council is interested in pursuing this initiative, Ms. MacDonald felt that a fiscal start date of April 1, 2019, is possible and would allow enough time to have everything in order for transit in Victoria County.

Whether there would be an extra charge for districts with ferries was questioned and Ms. MacDonald indicated there is a budget item for tolls and it could be included. There are logistics that would have to be worked out and it would operate on the dial-a-ride system.

Having the north of Smokey location being in Neil's Harbour, rather than Ingonish, was brought up. This can all be worked out if transit becomes a reality.

The possibilities for utilizing this service were outlined and discussed. Warden Morrison indicated that Council would consider this presentation and contact Honourable Leo Glavine for support.

A thank you was extended to Mr. Dowling and Ms. MacDonald for their presentation.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Carla Arsenault, CEO, Cape Breton Partnership (CBP); Jeremy Martell, Communications Officer, and Patrick Austin, Economic Development Officer, Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network (CBREN).

The CBP unites businesses and communities across Cape Breton to drive the economy forward. It is a private sector led economic development corporation. It provides economic development leadership and supports business growth.

The CBREN was established by the Province through the Department of Municipal Affairs and is administered by the CBP. It encompasses the Municipalities of Inverness, Richmond and Victoria and has recently added three new partners – the First Nations communities of Eskasoni, Membertou and Waycobah. A conversation is underway with the two remaining First Nations communities of Wagmatcook and Potlotek.

The CBREN's primary goals are to support the development and attraction of new businesses and the retention and expansion of existing businesses throughout the region.

Ms. Arsenault outlined Vietnam Economic Strategy Support project and other initiatives:

- The Mentor Connect Program to support local business start-ups
- investincapebreton.com website
- CBLIP – to create a more welcoming environment for newcomers
- Atlantic Immigration Pilot (AIP) – looking to fill labour shortage with newcomers
- Cape Breton Connect Program – for recent graduates and newcomers
- Think Export Now – navigating opportunities worldwide
- Barriers for Women in Entrepreneurship
- Talent Attraction and Recruitment
- Marketing campaign
- Connecting with Students

- Creative Island – innovation hubs and spaces
- Dream Business
- Safety First Cape Breton
- Celebrating Business Success - Elevate Magazine, Investor Summit, Economic Impact Awards and Vital Awards

Patrick Austin provided an economic development update for the Municipality. The fishing industry had a successful season and he outlined on the Broadband initiative to date. The Business NOW initiatives were slow over the summer season, but with the summer over, more requests are coming in, and it is anticipated this program will be busy through the fall and winter. The Victoria County billeting program had some success with 14 placements and hopefully will grow next season.

Other initiatives he is working on include:

- Northern Cape Breton Adventure Development
- Breton Forest Innovation Coop
- Business roundtables
- Succession Planning
- Open Houses – through the fall and winter
- Cannabis legalization
- ACOA applications

October 17, 2018, is the day Cannabis will be legalized. There are no locations that will sell cannabis in Victoria County and Mr. Austin indicated he would send out an email to Council with more details on this topic.

Jeremy Martell updated Council on the CBREN social media initiatives. They have a Facebook page, a monthly CBREN newsletter, the CBREN page on the CBP website and the Nova Scotia REN website.

Upcoming events include the Investor Summit in Ingonish on October 4, 2018; Business Dinner in Dundee on November 22, 2018 and in Inverness County on November 5, 2018; and the Vital Awards at Centre 200 on November 2, 2018.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the delegation for the information provided.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

The minutes of the September 10, 2018, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of September 10, 2018, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison advised that he failed to mention that Councillor Patterson was out of town and our Audit Committee member, Graeme Steele, was unavailable tonight.

OLD BUSINESS

Janet Knox, NSHA, has advised that she would be willing to meet with Council in October. She has been requested to provide a date of her convenience.

The CAO was reminded to send Council the list of exempt properties.

Councillor MacInnis mentioned that Councillors who are volunteering during Celtic Colours should wear their Council blazers.

Warden Morrison advised that he will be out of town from October 5 to 13, 2018.

NEW BUSINESS

Solid Waste Compliance

As it is one year since clear bags became mandatory, a solid waste compliance plan will be introduced on October 1, 2018. There will be a County wide mail out tomorrow indicating that on October 22, 2018, Victoria County Waste Collection facilities and waste collection crews will no longer accept non-compliant waste. Non-compliant bags will be left with a rejection sticker and will not be collected or accepted at our facilities.

Council members that are contacted in this regard are to refer the residents to the Communications Officer.

Strategic Plan

The updating of Victoria County's strategic plan is to be undertaken. Gordon McIntosh has availability in October, 2018, and February, 2019. The CAO will attempt to coordinate his visit with other local municipal units to share his costs.

District #5 Dog Mail-Out

Information on dogs and dog owners responsibilities was mailed to residents in District #5 last week.

Changes to Liquor Control Act

Amendments have been made to the *Liquor Control Act* to remove the requirements to hold plebiscites in communities where sale of alcohol is restricted. These changes are to take effect on January 1, 2019.

The Village of Baddeck is a dry area and it was felt this matter should be referred to the Village of Baddeck.

Strait Area CAO's

The CAO indicated that she recently attended a meeting of Strait Area CAO's and she is working on a CAO template that will be used to report and update Council on what she is doing, as well as the staff under her.

CBC

The CFO was interviewed by Stephen Sutherland and she was commended for the excellent responses to the questions asked.

TAXATION UPDATE

The CAO reported that outstanding taxes are \$2.643 million, down from \$2.915 million at this time last year. This is an improvement of \$270,000.00 overall from last year at this time.

Tax collection is heading in the right direction and the CAO is to extend appreciation to the Tax Department staff for the inroads they have made in tax collection, but this is still a concern and a priority of Council.

The CAO reported on the September 11, 2018, Tax Sale. She indicated she hopes to have 30 properties on the next Tax Sale.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the beaver dam is back on the eastern end of the Barra Glen Road. He also indicated that ditching is required on the Dunn Road as the road is caving in and traffic is down to one lane near a dangerous turn on the road. Patching is also required in the Ottawa Brook/Estmere area.

These items are to be included in a letter to the Department of TIR.

Councillor MacNeil received a message from MLA Bain about contact with a resident from the Red Point Road looking for municipal water. He called the gentlemen back and explained the Council's position with regard to water and water services.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod brought up two issues pertaining to the Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education (CBVRCE).

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Tara Gaskell, Manager of Transportation, Cape Breton-Victoria Regional Centre for Education, regarding school bus signage at 1229 Cabot Trail, Middle River, requesting a study be completed on advanced warning signage and a safe stopping location for the children between the two churches to 1229 Cabot Trail, Middle River. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Tara Gaskell, Manager of Transportation, CBVRCE, regarding denying the bus stopping at the BOLDC Camp,

Baddeck and requesting that they reconsider this decision as this facility is very important to the community. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that one time funding in the amount of \$2,000.00 be approved for the after school program at BOLDC Camp. Motion carried.

District #4

Council has been invited to meet with the Department of TIR officials at the Provincial Building, Baddeck, on Wednesday, October 17, 2018, at 10:00 a.m.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that he will be suggesting to the TIR managers that their whole system is not working and that transportation should be privatized. He indicated that he counted 39 trees lying on the side of the road within a 15 km distance. They have not been removed. A bump on the North Shore has not been repaired and a resident put a sign up to warn the public. The Englishtown Ferry system is gone beyond and it is rumored it will operate for Celtic Colours and then be shut down for another 2 month period.

Councillor MacInnis travelled to PEI this past weekend and marveled at the condition of the highways. There is no litter on the road and in the ditches. He questioned whether cameras could be installed to catch more people littering. There is no cutting being done on the roadsides either.

This is to be included in the items to be addressed with the Department of TIR.

Councillor MacLeod questioned whether the County could undertake a campaign against littering. This is to be forwarded to the Communications Officer.

The erosion of the shoulders along the Bay Road is to be included in the letter to the Department of TIR.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the condition of the barrier that protects Ingonish Harbour. It was breached during a recent storm. This is a provincial issue. The former MLA, Pam Eyking, committed to having the area surveyed and obtaining cost estimates for the repair.

This work was supposedly completed, but no notification or action was undertaken to resolve this issue.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Honourable Lloyd Hines, Minister of TIR, with copies to MLA Keith Bain; Honourable Keith Colwell, Minister of Fisheries; Honourable Iain Rankin, Minister of Lands and Forestry; and Honourable Margaret Miller, Minister of Environment; requesting that immediate action be taken to secure this barrier that protects Ingonish Harbour with armour stone, as if this is not immediately undertaken there is a possibility of severe damage to the commercial fishing fleet, residential homes, the Cabot Trail and the wetlands situated at the end of Ingonish Harbour. Motion carried.

District #7

It was moved and seconded that \$1,000.00 be approved from the District #7 budget for the Ingonish Volunteer Fire Department. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that \$400.00 be approved from the District #7 budget for the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Development Society's Halloween fireworks display. Motion carried.

Councillor Budge indicated that a "No Dumping" sign should be located on the White Point Road where the pulp is being cut. He will show where the sign should be located to the person installing the sign.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he received a complaint from the residents of Fraser Road, Bay St. Lawrence, that brush cutting was not carried out on the road. This is to be included in the letter to TIR.

The bussing situation on the Fraser Road, Bay St. Lawrence, was also brought up. There are approximately 14 children on the road that are now expected to walk in excess of 1.1 km to a bus stop. The bus has travelled this road for the past 20 plus years. There are children on this road with special needs and those who have no transportation to the bus stop. A reason given was the condition of the road.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Paul Oldford, Director of Operations, CBVRCE, asking why the children on the Fraser Road, Bay St. Lawrence, no longer have bus service. Motion carried.

The condition of the Fraser Road can be brought to the meeting with TIR.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that there are concerns with regard to the possible location of a RV part in South Harbour, Dingwall.

John Bain, Director of the Eastern District Planning Commission, can be contacted by the interested parties to see if he would come to the area to host a meeting on zoning and land use.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that the water survey for the Cape North area is a daunting task and is going quite slowly and he feels that Public Works staff should come to the area to complete the study.

The CAO will contact Robert Dauphinee with regards to the water survey.

District #3

It was moved and seconded that \$2,500.00 be approved for the “Voices of the Naomhog” project. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Minister Leo Glavine, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, requesting funding to begin a Victoria County Transit service. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor MacLeod indicated that the BOLDC Camp is currently doing an afterhour’s program and is considering a toddler program in the mornings.

Councillor MacNeil asked that the Victoria County Transit presentation be forwarded to Councillors electronically.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. The CAO advised that she received contact from Bell Aliant with regard to the telephone line on Baddeck Bay. It is presently being worked on.
2. A letter was received from Honourable Leo Glavine, Minister of Communities, Culture and Heritage, advising that the Ingonish Volunteer Fire Department has received 2018-2019 CAAP funding in the amount of \$10,000.00.
3. Correspondence was received from the Chair of the Rural Nova Scotia Healthcare Crisis Working Group with regard to saving our rural health care.

It was moved and seconded that if this is proven to be a legitimate organization, the Municipality join the Group. Motion carried.

CANNABIS COMMITTEE

The CAO indicated that she is a member of a Cannabis Committee. It is comprised of many health professionals and they have decided as a group to follow provincial laws and regulations at this point.

District #3

It was moved and seconded that ta letter be forwarded to Canada Post requesting that they replace, not repair, their parking lot at the Baddeck Post Office. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee requested the CAO to check to see if the cheques were sent to both Cabot School and Pinkalicious from the Districts 6, 7, and 8 budgets.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, on October 15, 2018, at 5:00 p.m. A Committee of the Whole meeting will be held prior to this meeting at 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Three being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

