

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

February 25, 2019

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, February 25, 2019, 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 #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent was:

District #7 – Wayne Budge

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.

KRISTI FARRIER, SENIORS SAFETY OFFICER

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Kristi Farrier, Seniors Safety Officer.

Kristi Farrier thanked Council for the opportunity to take on the role of Seniors Safety Officer. She provided background information on her previous employment roles. She moved to Middle River four years ago.

Ms. Farrier provided a snapshot of what she sees the program to entail. It will focus on education and awareness, elder abuse, health and safety and crime prevention. She anticipates holding a number of information sessions and identified a number of resources to draw upon.

Councillor Patterson indicated that he first heard about Seniors Safety Officers at the 2009 UNSM Conference. Municipalities were not eligible to apply for funding until this past year. The Municipality has also been working on transit for the past 10 years and it is finally looking that it is also moving forward. There is a lot going on already throughout the County that can be utilized in developing the Seniors Safety Program.

All Council welcomed Kristi and indicated that if there is anything they can do to assist, feel free to contact them.

There is a Seniors Safety Conference held on May 15-16, 2019, in Bridgewater and she has already made contact to attend the conference.

Council provided information on some of the seniors' functions that take place within their districts already. Ms. Farrier has already made contact with a number of people and has arranged a meeting with Michelle MacPhee, Seniors Safety Officer in the Municipality of the County of Richmond, on March 5, 2019.

Council wished her well on her new duties and expressed their interest in seeing this program develop.

ONE OCEAN EXPEDITION PRESENTATION

Courtesy of Council was extended to Andrew Prossin, Managing Director, OneOcean Expeditions; Pamela Duynstee, OneOcean Expeditions; and Mark Bettens, Executive Assistant, Mayor's Office, CBRM.

Mr. Prossin, a Cape Breton native, indicated that OneOcean Expeditions is a Canadian expedition cruise company offering unique, personalized and natural experiences. Its

destinations are Antarctica, the Canadian Arctic and East Coast, and the Norwegian Arctic, central and south.

OneOcean Expeditions core values are education, exploration, science, socioeconomic development and travel. Mr. Prossin summarized the regulatory challenges encountered with the *Coasting Trade Act* and outlined proposed solutions to these challenges.

Mr. Prossin indicated that the opportunities for Canada include economic benefits, recognizing Canadian Arctic sovereignty and expansion of research studies. He outlined the Arctic Gateway opportunities and estimated and potential economic impacts for cruise tourism. The OneOcean vessels include the *Akademik Ioffe*, the *Akademik Sergey Vavilov*, and the *Resolute*.

The *Resolute* can fit under the Seal Island Bridge and he would like to see this vessel become a regular visitor to the Baddeck area. This ship has the facilities of a passenger ship and can accommodate 150 passengers.

Mr. Prossin indicated that there is a thriving market for Cape Breton and all the Maritimes for the small ships. Iqaluit to Cape Breton is only 50 miles further than to St. John's, Newfoundland, and Cape Breton would be a natural gateway to the Arctic.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that there is also the Port of Iona who is presently trying to build a marine science and research facility in the area.

The christening of the *Resolute* was done in Sydney. Some of the Councillors attended this event.

The demographics of the passengers who travel on the OneOcean ships were outlined. These travelers want an authentic expedition.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that Ingonish has been visited on two occasions and the economic benefit was visible from these visits.

Mr. Prossin indicated that at some point in time he will be seeking support from the Municipality. At present he has received support from CBRM, TIANs, and CBU but does not have a strategy composed as yet. It was indicated that Mayor Clarke, CBRM, brought this issue

before the Atlantic Mayors Conference in the fall. The Town of Pictou is also interested. The First Nations communities will also be contacted.

Warden Morrison indicated that the Municipality is interested in the transition in tourism which led to a conversation at the christening of the *Resolute*. He advised that the Municipality is open to working cooperatively with OneOcean and will await their guidance as to when and why.

It was moved and seconded to provide support in principle to OneOcean Expeditions. Motion carried.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to the delegation for the presentation and they were excused at this time.

STRAIT AREA TRANSIT PRESENTATION

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Chloe Donatelli, Common Good Solutions, who was in attendance to present on Strait Area Transit's Victoria County expansion (copy attached).

Common Good Solutions and Take Note Graphic Design are the consultants for the transit expansion program for Victoria County. The enterprise team is comprised of Councillors Perla MacLeod and Fraser Patterson, Councillor John Dowling, Inverness County, and Jessie MacDonald, Strait Area Transit.

It is hoped that the launch of Victoria County Transit will be by the summer of 2019. The project has been supported by the Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage.

Ms. Donatelli outlined the project plan which consists of:

- Building messaging and branding
- Content creation
- Launch marketing plan and community outreach
- Defining governance and structure
- Service launch

As part of the community outreach, they are looking to host community meetings in all 8 districts of the County from April 8 – 21, 2019. Transportation will be provided and information about alternate sessions in case of winter or scheduling conflicts will be provided.

Councillors are asked to suggest a date, time and location for a session in their district. They are also requested to assist with meeting promotion to residents and partners and to attend the meeting.

Common Good Solutions will confirm all meeting logistics and create all promotional materials. They will plan and facilitate community sessions and report back on feedback.

Ms. Donatelli indicated she would connect with the Councillors by email this week and by March 8, 2019, it is hoped that the community engagement plan will be set. The final information will be available for distribution to the residents and partners by March 22, 2019 and the community engagement meetings will take place County-wide during the period April 8 – 21, 2019.

Ms. Donatelli provided contact information for both herself and Jessie MacDonald, SAT.

Councillors felt that the proposed new service, in the format suggested, will be welcome throughout Victoria County. They offered their full support moving forward.

Jessie MacDonald, SAT, is to be commended for all the work she has done to get to this point.

Warden Morrison indicated that it is a great thing to see something exciting for the County and extended a thank you to Ms. Donatelli for her presentation.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – FEBRUARY 4, 2019

The minutes of the February 4, 2019, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Councillor MacLeod indicated that the street light order she placed at the last meeting should be 1473 West Side Middle River Road, not Cabot Trail as indicated.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of February 4, 2019, be approved with the noted correction. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Ingonish Barrier Beach

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that work has been completed on the Ingonish Barrier Beach and it should help for the remainder of the winter.

Mining Association of Nova Scotia

At the last meeting, a letter was received from the Mining Association of Nova Scotia requesting support for their Minerals Play Fairway Project.

Councillors expressed the pros and cons of mining in the Municipality.

It was moved and seconded that the correspondence be tabled and Sean Kirby, Executive Director of the Mining Association of Nova Scotia, be invited to Council to provide a brief presentation on the Minerals Play Fairway project. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

Wet/Dry Districts

Leanne MacEachen advised that as of January 1, 2019, all areas in the Province are wet, unless the Council votes them to be dry. A plebiscite is no longer required.

Waste Collection Compliance Update

The CAO provided an update on the waste collection compliance program. During the period from February 4 to February 22, 2019, a total of 28 bags were rejected – 11 during the week of February 4-8; 8 during the week of February 11-15; and 9 during the past week of February 18-22, 2019.

Traffic Counts

Correspondence was received from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal asking if the Municipality wants to make application for traffic counts.

It was moved and seconded that traffic counts are a provincial matter and a letter be forwarded to the Minister of TIR questioning on why it has changed. Motion carried.

Budget

The CAO emailed year to date budget projections to Council and advised that she is hoping to have a budgeting day on March 7, 2019. She will provide confirmation at a later date.

She indicated that we now have the capability to have Zoom teleconference meetings. The legalities and formulating a policy to use this option within the County is to be investigated.

TAXATION UPDATE

Leanne MacEachen indicated that tax collection is proceeding in the right direction. Total owing is \$1.515 million – \$836,000 in current and \$679,000 in arrears. This is a decrease of \$193,000.00 since the last Council meeting.

A Tax Sale is scheduled for March 26, 2019, at 2:00 p.m. in the Court Room, Court House, Baddeck.

One change this year is that HST will now be charged on Tax Sale resource and commercial properties.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

Councillor MacNeil thanked the Public Works/Water Utility staff who worked diligently on Friday and Saturday past to identify and repair the problem at the Little Narrows Water Utility.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod brought up the topic of scholarships. \$500 municipal scholarships are provided to Cabot, Rankin and Baddeck schools. Many County residents attend Memorial High in Sydney Mines and some go to Sydney Academy and Riverview.

Consideration will be given and a decision made at next Council.

Councillor MacLeod questioned on whether a reply was received from the CBVRCE for the advanced warning sign and a safe stopping location for the children at 1229 Cabot Trail, Middle River. A reply has not been received to date.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis read a postcard from Terry Murray who is presently visiting Tasmania. She advised that there is no snow and every community visited has public washrooms.

The status of the washrooms around the Cabot Trail was discussed. The CAO advised that they are presently exploring other options and are pricing compostable washrooms.

District #8

It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be approved from the District #8 budget for the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre for the upgrades to their water system. Motion carried.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he attended a meeting of the Buchanan Memorial Hospital Foundation regarding a response to the NSHA's questions.

It was moved and seconded that Buchanan Memorial Hospital Foundation be provided with a letter of support for their initiative. Motion carried.

District #6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee extended a thank you to Councillor Patterson for his efforts on a transit system and a Seniors Safety Officer for Victoria County which are now becoming a reality.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the situation at Buchanan Memorial Hospital and the fact that residents are unaware of what is being done behind the scenes with regard to Council support for the hospitals in Victoria County. It was recommended that the residents also contact the NSHA on their concerns.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that there are Lunch and Learn sessions attended by upwards of 60 to 80 residents. He indicated he wanted to pursue the County sponsoring one of the sessions. He will investigate and bring to Council.

District #5

Councillor Patterson brought forward a concern from the Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department regarding Bell Aliant service. Deputy Warden Dauphinee and Councillor MacNeil, Broadband Committee members, will look into this.

It was moved and seconded that \$1,000.00 be approved for the Friends of the Big Bras d'Or Hall; \$750.00 for the Old School House Rug Hookers; and \$3,000.00 for the Boularderie Island Connected Society; from the District #5 budget. Motion carried.

Councillor Patterson brought up the condition of the Kempt Head Road. A resident recently hit a pothole disabling his vehicle. TIR sent a claim form, but honouring it is another issue. Plows cannot adequately plow a road in that condition. This road is advertised as a part of the Bras d'Or Lake Scenic Drive. The situation is very frustrating.

District #3

Baddeck is getting one kilometer of paving. A portion of some streets in the Village will be completed.

Warden Morrison indicated that a Public Meeting will be held at the Baddeck Community Centre on Thursday, February 28, 2019, at 7:00 p.m. on the multi-purpose trail. The bridge is to arrive for placement sometime in March.

Warden Morrison indicated that he attended some of the Scottie's Tournament of Hearts events at Centre 200 and it was by all accounts, a phenomenal success.

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be sent to the Scottie's Tournament of Hearts Organizing Committee on hosting the successful national curling event. Motion carried.

2019 is the 100th anniversary of the hydrofoil and a group from the Alexander Graham Bell Foundation will be hosting ticketed events in September, 2019, which can be purchased and provided to area school students. The Foundation is requesting funding from the Municipality in the amount of \$3,500.00.

It was moved and seconded that \$3,500.00 be approved for the Alexander Graham Bell Foundation. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Broadband Committee

Councillor MacNeil updated on the Broadband Committee. He indicated that the revised MOU will be provided on Thursday or Friday of this week and will be reviewed as soon as possible.

It was moved and seconded that Greg Weir be added as a member of the Broadband Committee. Motion carried.

CEPI

Councillor MacNeil updated on a recent CEPI meeting he attended regarding protection around the lake and advised that he will have further information after the CEPI Management Meeting on March 17, 2019.

BY-LAW UPDATE

The CAO advised that they are currently working on a Water Supply Lending By-Law which will be reviewed and brought to a later meeting for first reading.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES SESSION

Warden Morrison thanked all who attended the Strategic Priorities Session with Gordon McIntosh. It was a good session and priorities have been updated.

NEXT MEETINGS

The next meetings of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on March 11 and March 25, 2019.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:15 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

