

***VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL***

***September 17, 2019***

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, September 17, 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 #5 – Fraser Patterson  
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden  
District #7 – Wayne Budge  
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO  
Alix Redden, CFO  
Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer  
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent was:

District #4 – Merrill MacInnis (Out of Province)

***CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA***

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval. He indicated that Alisha Mombourquette, Grant Thornton LLP, has been moved to the first item on the agenda and Jonathan Martin, EDPC, will move to the second item on the agenda.

**It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved with the noted change.  
Motion carried.**

***PRESENTATION OF CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2019***

Courtesy of Council was extended to Alisha Mombourquette, Grant Thornton LLP, who was in attendance to present the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality of the County of Victoria for the year ended March 31, 2019.

Ms. Mombourquette met prior to Council with the Audit Committee and presented in detail the consolidated, non-consolidated, and Victoria County Water Utility financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2019. She also presented the Report to the Audit Committee for the year ended March 31, 2019.

Ms. Mombourquette presented the Consolidated Financial Statements for the Municipality. These statements include the Municipality, Victoria County Water Utility, Alderwood, Highland Manor and a percentage of the Eastern District Planning Commission.

Ms. Mombourquette presented the Consolidated statement of financial position outlined the financial assets, financial liabilities and the non-financial assets and indicated that the accumulated surplus for the year ended March 31, 2019, was \$13,123,955.

Ms. Mombourquette reported a clean audit report for 2018-19 and indicated that the Municipality is in good shape.

**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, 2019, and the Report to the Audit Committee be accepted. Motion carried.**

**DANGEROUS AND UNSIGHTLY PREMISES**

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Jonathan Martin, Administrator of Dangerous and Unsightly Premises, Eastern District Planning Commission, who was in attendance with regard to a property assessed in the name of Clara and Ronald Keigan located at 50854 Cabot Trail, St. Ann's.

The property has two dwelling units. The Mini Home is in a state of disrepair and gives the appearance of being abandoned. The second building on the property has been worked on and is secure.

A letter was sent to the registered owners of the property and the property was posted on August 28, 2019. The dwelling is in a ruinous and dilapidated condition and is unsightly in relation to neighbouring properties. The dwelling constitutes a hazard to the health and safety of the public.

Mr. Martin presented the Certified Building Official Report and the Administrator recommendation. It is recommended that an “Order to Remedy Condition” be issued and that the Order be a Demolition Order issued from Council to the owners. The Order should state that the dwelling is to be demolished and all debris removed and disposed of in the appropriate manner within 30 days. If the owner fails to comply, the Municipality will complete the same and recover the cost.

**It was moved and seconded that an “Order to Remedy Condition” be issued to Clara and Ronald Keigan, 50854 Cabot Trail, St. Ann’s, for the mini home on the property and that the Order be a Demolition Order issued from Council to the owners giving them thirty (30) days to complete the work or the Municipality will complete the same and recover the costs through property taxes. Motion carried.**

Amanda Burke was introduced to Council. She was recently hired and is working on her Certified Building Official status.

The representatives from the EDPC were excused at this time.

**MLA KEITH BAIN**

Warden Morrison welcomed Keith Bain, MLA, Victoria-The Lakes, to Council.

**ROAD RECLASSIFICATION**

Courtesy of Council was extended to Athol Grant with regard to property located on the Murphy Road at the mouth of the Washabuck River.

There was a 12 lot subdivision approved for this area in 2000 for Regal Tours Atlantic. Murphy Road was classified as a public maintained road at that time.

In 2013, Mr. Grant bought land in that area also with the view to creating a subdivision and was told at that time that Murphy Road was not a public maintained road. The Department of TIR randomly changed the classification.

The classification of public roads is important for development of rural areas in Nova Scotia. Unforeseen changes to classification, with no notification of these changes, will lead to loss of confidence by developers, residents and potential residents. Economic activity will also be affected.

The removal of the “maintained” status of Murphy Road in Washabuck will have a direct economic impact to land owners in the area and to the tax base of Victoria County.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, with copies to the Department of Municipal Affairs, NSFM and MLA, requesting that the “maintained” status of Murphy Road, Washabuck, Victoria County, be reinstated. Motion carried.**

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 26, 2019**

The minutes of the August 26, 2019, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee noted a correction on Page 7, indicating that the motion concerning a “power pole” be erected on Barron Road, Ingonish Harbour, should be a “street light”. He also indicated a change in the discussion of Cape Smokey Holding.

**It was moved and seconded that the August 26, 2019, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved with the noted changes. Motion carried.**

The Committee of the Whole meeting concerning the housing issue should be held in the near future to begin to address this issue.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**CAO REPORT**

The CAO Report was sent to Council for review.

The CAO advised that for the period of August 17 to September 7, 2019, \$2,087.80 was collected at the ReUse Centre. So far to date \$9,332.75 has been collected by all the non-profit organizations who have participated.

Leanne MacEachen indicated that they are also thinking about doing things differently with regard to the recyclables. A call for organizations, similar to the ReUse Centre, will be invited with regard to recyclables.

John Berk, Dog Control, is to complete the 8 remaining of the 10 courses to be able to issue Summary Offence Tickets.

A letter to Cape Smokey Holding Ltd. regarding the Municipality's support for their planned development for Cape Smokey and the surrounding area was discussed.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter of support be sent regarding Cape Smokey Holding Ltd. and their planned development for Cape Smokey and surrounding area indicating that the Municipality is looking at support through water and sewer infrastructure, as well as other initiatives that the Municipality has been asked to participate in. Motion carried.**

**NEW BUSINESS**

The Cape Breton Partnership's update of the economic population growth plan is being undertaken and the launch date is October 2, 2019.

The current Cape Breton Prosperity Framework was approved in 2011.

**TAXATION UPDATE**

Total taxes outstanding as of today are \$2,648,667, compared to \$2,779,819 this time last year, so we are \$131,152 ahead of last year.

Current outstanding is \$28,279 ahead of this time last year. Arrears are continuing to stay over the \$100k mark at \$102,883 ahead of last year.

Also worth mentioning is that this year approximately \$191k more was billed than last year and instead of \$131,152 ahead, when you add the \$191k additional billed, we are \$320k better.

There is a Tax Sale scheduled for Tuesday, September 24, 2019, and there are 11 properties remaining on the sale at present. The sale started with 38 properties. A few of the properties for sale will start with the minimum bid of \$1,000.00.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL ISSUES**

**District #1**

Patching between the church and the Crossroads in Washabuck has to be done. There are a couple of bad holes that need to be repaired.

**District #2**

There are loose boards on the bridges in Big Baddeck and they need to be reinforced as they are a danger to cyclists.

The MacLeod Bridge, Middle River, needs to be properly repaired. The pavement and concrete has been removed and the rebar is showing. It is very dangerous for the vehicles and the signage to slow down is not adequate.

**District #8**

The turn from the Main Road onto the Mountainview Road is difficult as the bushes are obstructing the view. A brush cutter is required in this area and ditching is required from Civic Address 218 onwards as flooding is a problem in this area on Quarry Road in Dingwall.

Councillor MacDonald will be unable to attend the meeting with TIR on Friday. He requested that the Gaelic signage for District #8 be brought up to see why it is taking so long and if TIR reps could come to the area to meet with Councillor MacDonald and their supervisor on the location of the signage.

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #5**

**It was moved and seconded that \$2,500.00 be approved from the District #5 budget for the Ross Ferry Stewardship Society. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that \$2,500.00 be approved from the District #5 budget for the Friends of Big Bras d'Or Hall. Motion carried.**

The loss of phone coverage during in the District #5 area during the recent storm was a concern. There should be contingencies in place.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the CTRC who regulate phone and satellite coverage expressing concern on the loss of services in the rural areas during stormy weather conditions. Motion carried.**

Councillor Patterson indicated that during the first week of transit service, 50+ people utilized the service. The service is off to a good start.

The official launch of Victoria County Transit will take place in the near future and Council will be advised.

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #1**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to NSPI requesting that in the wake of Hurricane Dorian and the length of power outages, more maintenance and tree cutting be carried out in District #1. Motion carried.**

The Cape Breton Highlanders are looking to have Highway 223 between Christmas Island and Jamesville designated as "The Cape Breton Highlanders Memorial Way". Len Boudreau, Past President of the Cape Breton Highlanders, would like to present to Council on this matter and is looking for a letter of support.

The public meeting on the Eastlink tower in Hazeldale will be held tomorrow evening at the Little Narrows Community Centre at 6:30 p.m.

Councillor MacNeil also indicated he received two more calls concerning the water connection fee, bringing the concerns to five in total. This fee has to be looked at during the next water rate study.

**District #2**

Councillor MacLeod brought up a concern with regard to a water station outside of the Baddeck Academy School for children's access. This may be possible under a Healthy Eating and Recreation Grant.

Councillor MacLeod brought forward a concern with regard to the National Geographic ship that visited Baddeck. There was security and no one was allowed access to the wharf beyond the Freight Shed Restaurant.

The Village will be contacted for clarification in this regard.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Sean MacSween and the NSPI staff for their work during Hurricane Dorian. Motion carried.**

The status of the Recreation/Physical Active Living position was questioned. The CAO advised that interviews will be held in the near future.

**District #8**

**It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be approved for the Cabot Education Centre meal assist program and \$500.00 for Pinkalicious from the District #8 budget. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he has received calls from parents with regard to the Guidance Counsellor at Cabot Education Centre. There is no one in the position at present and students are in need of guidance for course selections, bursary and scholarship applications and general guidance. A local teacher is presently taking the required courses, but there is no guarantee that she will be placed in the area.



**It was moved and seconded that a letter be written to the Cape Breton-Victoria Centre for Education expressing concern on the lack of guidance services in the North of Smokey area. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacDonald indicated that neither of the fire departments in his district had generators during the recent storm.

Lyle Donovan, EMC, has been tasked with looking into funding for generators and application can be made for 2020/21 capital funding program through the Municipality. Generators are needed in all areas of the County.

Councillor MacDonald indicated that he is receiving positive feedback from residents on the Victoria County Transit service.

**District #7**

**It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be approved for the Cabot Education Centre meal assist program and \$500.00 for Pinkalicious from the District #7 budget. Motion carried.**

**District #6**

**It was moved and seconded that \$500.00 be approved for the Cabot Education Centre meal assist program and \$500.00 for Pinkalicious from the District #6 budget. Motion carried.**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the issue of the quarry being developed on one of the most iconic scenes in Victoria County on Smokey. This is to be included as an item on the agenda for the Department of TIR on Friday, September 20, 2019.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee brought up the damage to the Ingonish Barrier during the storm. One boat sunk, two other boats received damage and the water was a couple of inches over the barrier. What will happen with the next storm is worrisome and something has to be done.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Environment, Minister of Lands and Forestry, Department of Fisheries and Oceans,**

**Premier and MLA, indicating that their responsibility is to protect the citizens of Nova Scotia and that work be undertaken immediately by the Province to reinforce the barrier beach. Motion carried.**

**District #3**

The increased stress put on our local doctors and hospital staff with additional emergency room closures is a concern. Along with attempting to try to attract doctors, there is also the situation of retaining the doctors we currently have. This is becoming a near crisis situation and must be addressed.

Warden Morrison addressed the issue of how to engage the community and get the message to the NSHA that we are not in the healthcare business and this is their responsibility.

The idea of the Municipality hosting public meetings in both the northern and southern areas of the County which will be hosted by an experienced facilitator was discussed. Warden Morrison will contact the facilitator and bring back the information to Council at the next meeting.

In keeping with healthcare, Warden Morrison advised that the Municipality has a booth in an upcoming Dalhousie Education Weekend in St. Andrew's, New Brunswick, on September 19-20, 2019. None of our local physicians or other medical personnel are available, and Warden Morrison indicated that he could attend to have a presence at the booth. Council agreed that Warden Morrison attend this event.

**MUNICIPALITY'S CREDIT REQUIREMENTS**

At the last meeting of Council, the CAO gave notice of motion regarding the Municipality's credit card requirements.

**It was moved and seconded that the Municipality's credit card requirements be sourced out to RBC and VISA Expense Card(s) with the accumulative total of up to \$50,000.00 with proper internal controls in place be approved. Motion carried.**

**CB REGIONAL HOSPITAL – CANCER PATIENT CARE FUND**

Councillor MacLeod brought up donating to the CB Regional Hospital Foundation fund for life-saving radiation equipment. A Circle of Friends Pancreatic Cancer Fundraiser: “A Night Out with Brenda will be held on November 2, 2019, at the Emera Centre in North Sydney. The goal is to raise funds for a stereotactic body radiation therapy machine.

Donations can be made through district budget funding. Councillor Patterson indicated that he has donated to this cause personally.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councillor Patterson indicated that a Seniors’ Safety Committee was held earlier in September and Kristi Farrier, Seniors’ Safety Coordinator, will not be continuing, but has left us with a good foundation to build upon.

Councillor MacLeod indicated that the Cape Breton Local Immigration Pilot (CBLIP) program is available to help newcomers navigate.

### **POLICY**

#### **Internal Communications Policy**

The draft Internal Communications Policy was provided to Council at the last meeting. Councillor Patterson provided some comments and definitions he felt required more thought.

The CAO indicated they would investigate rewording the policy in some areas, but was hesitant with some of the proposed language.

Councillor MacNeil brought up the water utilities personnel and whether there was a way for Councillors to be aware of staffing issues.

The policy will be investigated and brought to the next Council meeting.

### **NEXT MEETINGS**

The CBU collaboration session will be held at the Inverary Resort on September 18 and 19, 2019.

The Gaelic College is requesting the County to sponsor at table at their November 6, 2019, Harvest Auction. Council agreed to sponsor the table.

Councillors MacLeod and MacNeil, and CAO MacEachen, will attend a session on accessibility training on September 24, 2019, at the Port Hawkesbury Civic Centre.

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, September 30, 2019, beginning at 5:00 p.m. at the Court House, Baddeck.

Keith Bain, MLA, indicated that he will question the Minister of the generator issue and indicated that Council should feel free to contact him on any matters.

The 14 person waiting list for seniors units in Baddeck was brought up. Victoria County has less seniors housing units per capita than other areas in the province. Keith Bain will check on this matter.

**ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:10 p.m.**

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden

