

***VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL***

***November 26, 2019***

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Tuesday, November 26, 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  
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.

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

***REGULATORY MODERNIZATION AND REFORM IN NOVA SCOTIA***

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Emily Pond, Director of Regulatory Reform and Partnership, and Amanda Mombourquette, Executive Director, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, who were in attendance to present on regulatory modernization and reform in Nova Scotia (copy attached).

The mandate of this office is to reduce barriers to doing business. The Premier's Charter indicates that regulation should not be a first resort and if enacted, should be the lightest touch, be based on compelling cost-benefit analysis, a transparent and consultative process and be in alignment within the Atlantic Region.

Emily Pond indicated that the legislation refers to the Charter and established the Office and its role. An annual report is to be provided by June 30 of each year and a review of the office takes place after three years and the Act expires after 5 years. She indicated that she was pleased to inform that the Office was renewed in October, 2019.

Emily Pond advised that measurement, service and inter-governmental are the three areas to reduce barriers to doing business and she outlined each one.

By the end of 2020, the new target is to reduce undue burden to business by \$10 million dollars, expand target to save citizens time on administrative burden by 50,000 hours and lead and coordinate a cross-government clean-up of redundant or outdated regulations.

Ms. Pond advised that improving service to business is done through the Business Navigation Team. They have served over 4,000 start-ups since launched in 2017 and have a consistent 10/10 rating for satisfaction and helpfulness.

Working with other governments nationally, regionally and municipally has been achieved to date with HRM, but they are expanding the regulatory reform partnership with all Cape Breton municipalities with the Cape Breton Pilot project. The goal of this project is to align specific business regulations to make operation and expansion easier for Island businesses.

Six stakeholder engagement sessions were held in conjunction with the Cape Breton Partnership and Strait Area Chamber of Commerce. Regulatory pain points were identified at these sessions and with input, a work plan has been developed to address some of the most pressing concerns. The focus areas of the work plan include:

- Red tape reduction priority actions
- Strengthening government to government collaboration
- Improving service to business
- Measurement and Assessment
- Communication and reporting

Emily Pond indicated that she would like to come back in the spring to provide Council with an update on the new initiatives.

Amanda Mombourquette, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, advised that both the Chamber of Commerce and Cape Breton Partnership have worked on this pilot project and she indicated that it is the tangible little things that will add up to make Nova Scotia the modern place it needs to be. We have to be open for business and at present, this is not the case.

She outlined that from an economic development perspective, she is excited to be part of the differentiator in Cape Breton and is ready for what will be accomplished.

Council indicated that any changes to the hurdles encountered by small business would be welcome and a Land Use Plan will be a critical document moving forward. Coastal protection is also a concern at present.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Emily Pond and Amanda Mombourquette for their attendance and presentation to Council and indicated that Council would welcome them back in the spring to provide an update.

#### **STRAIT AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

Amanda Mombourquette, Executive Director, Strait Area Chamber of Commerce, remained in attendance to update on the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce and the Strait of Canso Port Development update.

Ms. Mombourquette indicated that the mission of the Strait Area Chamber of Commerce is to promote, improve and protect trade and commerce; and in doing so ensure that the Strait Area is one of the best regions in which to invest, live, work and conduct business. She outlined the benefits of membership in this organization and advised that there are 380 members at present and it is growing. In fact, it has doubled its membership in the last four years.

The Strait Area Chamber of Commerce is not government funded, enabling them to be more responsive to the needs of business. They provide access to training opportunities, networking sessions, discounts to members, visibility, credibility and advocacy. She indicated that membership from Victoria County and Victoria County businesses is welcome.

Ms. Mombourquette updated on the Strait of Canso Development. She provided background information from the first meeting of Mayors and Wardens Committee in December, 2016, to the issuance and awarding of an RFP for Investment Readiness to Group ATN, m5 Group of Companies, in the fall of 2019.

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Discussion took place on the excitement for what may be possible for the Strait Region and the benefits of becoming a member. There is no other Chamber of Commerce in rural Cape Breton and the cost for membership is \$65.00 per year. This gives businesses a voice that they would not have otherwise.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council would have a discussion on membership and he thanked Ms. Mombourquette for the information provided.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 15 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES – NOVEMBER 4, 2019**

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

**It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of November 4, 2019, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**OLD BUSINESS**

There was no old business to address.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Leanne MacEachen advised that there will be a change to curbside collection over the holidays. Collection on Thursday, December 26, 2019, will be changed to Saturday, December 28, 2019.

The facilitated health care sessions were held and a follow up meeting will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. A meeting will be scheduled in the northern area at a later date.

An update on the public washrooms was provided. The Wreck Cove location will be winterized and will go ahead with water and septic and the Cape North location is still on hold.

The Christmas Staff/Council party will be held at the Gaelic College, St. Ann's on Saturday, November 30, 2019.

Union negotiations are scheduled for December 4 and 5, 2019.

A couple of inquiries have been received on septic system lending and the CAO questioned whether Council would consider amending the Water Lending By-Law to include septic also.

A staffing update was provided. Greg McLennan has been hired as a Heavy Equipment Operator for a three-month term. Lydia Kerr has been appointed as the Recreation/Active Living Coordinator and will commence her duties on December 2, 2019. A full-time Public Works Technician, Solid Waste Collection Driver and 2 two month term casual positions at the Enviro-Depot are currently being advertised.

**TAXATION UPDATE**

Total taxes outstanding as of today are \$1.954 million compared to \$2.026 million this time last year. We are ahead \$72,000.00 from last year.

Current outstanding is \$1.2 million and arrears are currently at \$668,000.00.

The next Tax Sale is scheduled for December 10, 2019, and the CAO advised that she is proud of the work being done on tax collection.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE RENEWAL CONCERNS**

**District #1**

Councillor MacNeil indicated that there is still fall grading to be completed in his district, as only one road was graded.

Only one hole was patched in Washabuck and some of the worst holes have been overlooked.

There is a bad hole on the shoulder of the road between Jamesville and MacKinnon Harbour.

**District #8**

Councillor MacDonald indicated that at civic address 29681 Cabot Trail, next to Shore Road in Dingwall, there is visible pavement erosion and no shoulder and vehicles are hitting this. Repairs are required prior to winter.

Councillor MacDonald would like an up to date review of the speed zones in District #8 from Effie's Brook coming out of the CBHNP. He also requested a copy of the speed zone policy utilized by the Department of TIR.

Councillor MacDonald also requested a response from TIR's Bernie Murphy in regard to the intersection of Cape North and Dingwall, as well as Effie's Brook intersection which was requested three years ago and concern with regard to Fraser Road, Bay St. Lawrence.

**District #3**

Warden Morrison indicated that there is a depression in the road on Victoria Street, Baddeck that requires TIR attention.

The Warden also wished to acknowledge the speed limit signs that have been erected in the area of Tim Horton's/Irving, west of Baddeck. The speed zone has been lowered to 80 km/hr. He also requested that the speed zone be extended to include the western side of the Cabot Trail Motel.

**District #2**

Councillor MacLeod advised that the speed limit for work currently being completed on MacLeod Bridge is 60 km/hr. and the school zone is 80 km/hr. She would like the speed zones the same.

**It was moved and seconded that all Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal concerns be forwarded to Steve MacDonald, Regional Manager, TIR, for consideration. Motion carried.**

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District #5**

Councillor Patterson wished to pass on thanks to Council for the assistance provided to the Friends of Big Bras d'Or Hall and the Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department.

The Friends of Big Bras d'Or Hall recently did kitchen renovations in the amount of \$40,000.00 and the Ross Ferry Volunteer Fire Department installed a new generator, ramp and 2 new accessible doors.

**District #8**

Councillor MacDonald requested a letter of support from Council to the Department of TIR to have the Dingwall Road added to their 5-year Highway Paving Plan. To date all traffic counts have been completed in this area and homes and businesses have been documented.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of TIR requesting that Dingwall Road be included in their 5-year plan for paving and copies of this letter be sent to Peter Hackett, Chief Engineer; Keith Bain, MLA; and Jaime Battiste, MP. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacDonald indicated that there are two fiberglass containers at the Dingwall Transfer Station that a local oyster cultivator wishes to obtain. There is no reuse centre in this area that items such as these can be placed in for a donation to a charity.

It was felt that an Expression of Interest can be posted on the County website for anyone who may be interested in acquiring these containers.

**It was moved and seconded that an Expression of Interest be placed on the County website for two 4 X 4 X 8 fiberglass containers located as is, where is, at the Dingwall Transfer Station for a donation to a local charity. The EOI is to be received by Friday, November 29, 2019, by 4:30 p.m. Motion carried.**

If more than one person is interested in these containers, the submissions will be drawn by lot. The successful applicant must remove from the site.

Councillor MacDonald again brought up the matter of a lack of a Guidance Counsellor in the north of Smokey area.

**It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Minister of Education expressing concern on the lack of guidance services in the north of Smokey area. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that \$1,500.00 be approved from the District #8 budget as follows:**

- **\$500.00 for the Friends of the Veterans**
- **\$500.00 for the North Highlands Elementary for the purchase of an AED**
- **\$500.00 for the Family Resource Centre Programs in Bay St. Lawrence and Cape North.**

**Motion carried.**

**District #2**

Councillor MacLeod indicated that Baddeck Academy is implementing a “caring closet” at the school and she would like the Municipality to make a onetime contribution of \$1,500.00 towards this initiative.

She felt that the AED for North Highlands Elementary should also be covered by the Municipality.

**It was moved and seconded to rescind the motion for funding from the District #8 budget in the amount of \$500.00 for the AED for North Highlands Elementary. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that \$1,500.00 be approved from the Baddeck Academy Caring Closet and \$1,500.00 for the AED for North Highlands Elementary School from the County budget. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded to provide \$100.00 from the District #2 budget for Victoria county Creates for their face painting services during the Christmas parade. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacLeod offered congratulations to staff, former Councillor Athol Grant and Council of the Municipality for receiving the award for the Re-Use Building at the Baddeck Solid Waste Facility.

**District #1**

**It was moved and seconded that Lynk Electric be contacted to repair the lights on the Barra Strait Bridge. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacNeil brought up the issue of the Little Narrows water bills and the double billing that occurred. This has since been corrected and an announcement advising of the billing issue will be going out shortly.

**District #3**

**It was moved and seconded that the Village of Baddeck be contacted to have the street lights out in the Village repaired. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Holly MacInnis on receiving the Bernie Lawlor Memorial Coach of the Month award for October from Hockey Nova Scotia. Motion carried.**

**It was moved and seconded that \$2,000.00 be approved from the District #3 budget for the Victoria County Trails Federation. Motion carried.**

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Councillor Patterson indicated that a Seniors' Safety Advisory Committee meeting was held this afternoon. Cassandra Yonder, Seniors' Safety Coordinator, updated on plans for the program.

Meetings are required for Victoria County Transit, Broadband and Asset Management.

The next meeting of Council will be held at 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, December 10, 2019, and an Asset Management Meeting will be held prior to Council at 4:00 p.m.

A Committee of the Whole meeting will be scheduled for Thursday, December 12, 2019, and Broadband and Transit will be held beginning at 4:00 p.m.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Warden Morrison advised that Stephen Kerr's correspondence was forwarded to Council regarding status of strategic planning and a capital planning policy.

Mr. Kerr would like a recap of what has been accomplished from the 2000 and 2009 Strategic Plans and also the status of the Land Use Planning and Municipal Planning Strategy for

Baddeck & Area. He also felt that the aging infrastructure within the Village should be addressed.

Warden Morrison indicated that Council is now having strategic planning sessions and developing strategic priority charts on a regular basis that provide Council with a roadmap.

Minimum planning standards are now a requirement for all municipalities and coastal protection is an issue. Accessibility issues are also being discussed and implemented across the province.

After further discussion, Mr. Kerr was advised that Council hears what he is saying and will provide him with copies of the documents of concern and the status of same.

### **JANUARY MEETINGS**

Keith Bain has requested a meeting with Council in the New Year and Council would also like to meet with our new MP, Jaime Battiste.

Whether they could meet at the same time was questioned and will be investigated.

Helping Nature Heal Inc. offered a workshop on coastal protection and will be going around the provinces with these sessions. The cost is \$5,000.00 for 50 participants and the possibility of having one of these sessions in early 2020 was discussed.

An expression of sympathy will be forwarded to Senator Dan Christmas on the recent passing of his wife.

### **ADJOURN**

**There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:30 p.m.**

**Bruce Morrison, Warden**

**Leanne MacEachen, CAO**

