

Victoria County Municipal Council

December 14, 2020

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on December 14, 2020 at 5:00pm with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present Were:

District #1- Paul MacNeil
District #2- Perla MacLeod
District #3- Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4- Barbara Longva
District #5- Fraser Patterson
District #6- Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden
District #7- Jackie Organ
District #8- Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Amy Liu, CFO
Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer
Dan Coffin, Tourism and Development Officer
Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder

Warden Morrison began the meeting with a moment of silence for the victims of the tragic car accidents last week. We want to recognize the tragic events that have occurred and give our condolences to the family.

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Morrison called the meeting to order and presented the agenda for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved and presented. Motion Carried.

THEATRE BADDECK PRESENTATION

Hannah Ziss presented to Council via Zoom and welcomed the new Councillors and gave an executive summary of Theatre Baddeck and its projects and contributions over the last few years.

<C:\Users\hmaclean\Desktop\CURRENT\Theatre Baddeck Dec 14 2020 Exec Summary.pdf>

Ms. Ziss went over financial data and funding issues the theatre is currently experiencing. Theatre Baddeck is asking Council for a 2 year commitment of \$10,000 per year.

Council thanked Ms. Ziss for her time and commitment to Theatre Baddeck and acknowledged their fondness for the past productions and how much they were looking forward to future productions.

QUESTIONS

Councillor MacDonald asked if there was any outside funding available other than Victoria County.

Ms. Ziss explained that they receive a small amount from destination Cape Breton, some funding from Arts Nova Scotia, but that is just based on projects and they receive some support through the Summer Jobs Program through the Federal Government.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked how many seats are in the venue.

There are usually 60-80 but now with the pandemic it will be less than that. There will only be 28 seats and that's only if they come in pairs.

Warden Morrison asked Council how they wanted to proceed with this request.

Councillor MacLeod made a motion to refer it to budget.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

CAO MacEachen thanked Ms. Ziss for her presentation and instructed her to fill out the application form that is available on our website.

DR. HARLESS BLACK ROCK LIGHTHOUSE ROAD DISCUSSION

Dr. Harless had a Zoom discussion with Council over concerns regarding the new property owners of the lighthouse property adjacent to his property and to address why there are currently no zoning laws in Victoria County and what could be possibly done about that.

In Dr. Harless' opinion, the owners of the lighthouse property are causing massive destruction and rumor is that they plan to develop an RV park on the property, even though it is a protected heritage property. They are also compromising environmental features on that property and surrounding properties with the amount of trees and shrubs they are removing that could cause further erosion.

Because Victoria County has no zoning bylaws he is concerned and concerned for the future plans of this property. Dr. Harless stressed that he never would have bought a property in Victoria County had he known that there are no laws, by laws or zoning policies in place to protect property owners.

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Dr. Harless has also been in touch with the Provincial Government, Parks Canada and has hired a private attorney to look into this matter.

Dr. Harless wanted the county to be made aware of these issues happening and they may continue to happen if there continues to be a lack of zoning bylaws.

COMMENTS

Councillor Patterson along with Dr. Harless brought this discussion to council to create some awareness and give some urgency to guard against these things in the future.

Councillor Patterson also commented that the province is looking into a municipal planning strategy and made a motion for a letter to be written to the District Planning Commission and the Department of Environment to address this concern.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison commented that Dr. Harless was correct when he commented that Baddeck is the only place in the county that has zoning laws and wanted to add that the province is looking into more regulations. He assured Dr. Harless that council will forward the information on to the Department of Environment and the District Planning Commission for further review.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of November 30, 2020, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

Councillor Longva wanted it noted that she is now aware that DTIR concerns, such as signs are to be noted in DTIR Concerns and not District Concerns.

CAO REPORT

Old Business

Contacted RCMP on a few occasions – just heard from him today and we will get those new reports and the new staff sergeant will be coming to council in the future.

Solar lights - public works is contacting contractors, and having site visits with NSPI - expecting light soon.

Emergency phone - looking to put a pay phone in a location in the D4 area - waiting on Bell's response
Ann Marie has our properties, doing Title Searches - will set up a land/housing meeting once we have those completed.

Victoria County sign - work being done on it to fix the damage to it.

Still pushing the Voyent App for Municipal issues - please encourage all to sign up.

Requested info from Transport Canada regarding flying altitudes – regulates based on safety and not on noise. If there are concerns they can take pics and document and contact transport Canada and the best plan is to work with the helicopter company instead.

Held our Cannabis Committee meeting - a few takeaways

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Councillor Organ asked for an update on a bus stop sign being placed in Neil's Harbour.

CAO MacEachen believed that it was being addressed with the school board.

Made a motion to send a letter to the CBVCE to inquire about why a school bus sign cannot be put in Neil's harbour at the school bus stop.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

Warden contacted the Minister of Justice again today to inform him that he had a constituent willing to be on the Police Advisory Committee and would like to be contacted back regarding this matter.

Councillor Longva commented that the streetlight she requested at 1783 Baddeck Bay Road cannot be installed as she mistook a power pole for a telephone pole.

RECESS

Returned to Council Session at 6:15pm

Clarification was needed about approving a recommendation from the Committee of the Whole Meeting to do a rates study for Victoria County. There was permission granted to staff to proceed with that rates study for the water utility in the County.

New Business

Senior Safety

Newsletter coming out shortly.

Cassandra is having a meeting with PW to set up a session to get Seniors signed up for Voyent. Concerns over scams that are happening here in the County, be in Financial/Emotional/Elder Abuse - need to be aware.

Will be taking Mental Health 1st Aid Training.

Will be working with Dan to put together a section on the new website that is Senior Friendly Businesses.

Transit Punch Passes are now available.

Tourism

Working on a Winter readiness Program- Inverness/VC/ACOA/DCBA Initiative. Could be a 2 Year program

Trails - having conversations with groups around the Island. Need to continue a County wide Trail system/committee

Training initiatives starting to be rolled out for the Winter season

Website - photos tonight should be one of the last steps before we go live.

Getting to know the County, and different departments, initiative

Working on a policy/procedure for usage of our room/Zoom.

Recreation and Active Living

SABDA Time Bank/Newcomers project

Planning a winter staff event to get out and get active

Gender Equity proposal for Ski Cape Smokey project

Looking into an Expressive Arts Workshop to happen around the County

Placemaking/Funding Opportunities, along with SSO Cassandra

Pushing for Year Round Trails, and funding for Year Round Trails

Last Steps on the AL Strategy - should be releasing final draft soon.

Outdoor Seating WrapUp- Placed at almost all the schools around the County, very good uptake on them.

Aging Well Coalition, and StoryTelling Initiative, with SSO

Hike Dec 9/20

Adopt A Family Raised \$1300 - Thanks to ALL!

Food Bank Bin is now in Place - Personal Care Items are greatest need

Weaving Class Initiative

Finance

YTD Info sent out to Council

Weekly deposit reconciliations going to be done on a Go-Forward Basis

Audit Planning happening this week

Public Works

Waste Management Review in final Draft stages

Working with the CBHNP on water system - still in early stages of planning next phase

2 Water Operators are officially DRC's of our systems!

EDO

TIANS files - upwards/additional 45 members taking training that is offered

New investment attraction Tourism based businesses - Baddeck/Cape North

RFP for a Business Case - Paul's District.

4 restaurant Business reviews.

Adventure tourism/MTB - looking to do things over the winter to be Spring Ready.

Working on an Investor package related to the Housing strategy.

Elon Musk system for Broadband could be here sooner rather than later - not sure how this plays into

Development NS plans. Concerns over satellite traffic.

Scheduling Business session roundups.

Other

We are all monitoring Covid wave - will decide daily how we will be progressing - like to stay in the middle of the pack.

We have a motion approved to get a Water Rate Study.

The Courthouse is having a cleanup day this week on December 17, 2020.

Questions

Councillor Organ asked if Dan and Lydia were able to contact Parks Canada to re-open and groom the cross country ski trails in the Black Brook area and Broad Cove Campground.

Dan commented that he was in contact with Parks Canada and they are going to update their winter program, probably not this year but next.

TAXATION UPDATE

Total Outstanding is \$1.77 million. Last year at this time it was \$1.802 million so we are \$29,000 to the good.

Current Outstanding is \$1.14 million which is \$7,000 less than it was last year.

Arrears Outstanding are \$629,000 compared to \$651,000 last year.

CAO MacEachen commented that we are better in both areas but we need to be cautious that it could be an anomaly and that our next couple of years could be a struggle.

CAO indicated that our arrears are still a large amount and the first 30 Day notices have been sent out and final 60 Day notices have also been sent out.

The next tax sale is March 23, 2021. It is yet to be determined if it will be by a tender sale or an in person sale as Covid protocols will be monitored and adhered to.

CAO MacEachen mentioned that the tax installment program is still available and that there have been 2 new applications for that program.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS

District 7

Work is currently being done on the white point road.

District 8

Shoulder erosion needs immediate attention at two locations around the Bay St. Lawrence Road area.

One is at 564 Aspy Bay.

Turn off St Margret's Village Coop store, the material has yet to be placed for the shoulder and still receiving calls in regard to this area.

An area near Morrison's restaurant needs immediate attention there is a pavement drop so gravel is needed in that area.

District 4

Councillor Longva questioned if there are any projects planned for the Big Harbour Road. Getting requests from residents to have the speed limit between Meadow Road and Rooster Hill lowered.

At Plaister Mines, the mailing address is Old Big Harbour Road but there is no sign indicating that so it is causing confusion for emergency services and deliveries. Requested that a sign be placed at Plaister Mines saying, "Old Big Harbour Road".

Murray Road needs to be graded.

District 1

There are 3 culverts through Iona, 1 near the Legion and one at 4349 on the 223 highway that are blocked and need to be looked at.

Erosion on the Grass Cove Road needs to be looked at soon. The pylons are now in the lake.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District 1

The community is going to erect a sign in Little Narrows; this no longer has to be completed by Robert.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod indicated a couple of residents were concerned with the decision of the vaccination and procedures from the Department of Health. Councillor MacLeod wanted to clarify that as we are a Municipal Government, we don't make decisions around vaccines and/or procedures from the Department of Health. These decisions are made provincially by Dr. Strang and federally by the Department of Health.

Councillor MacLeod commented that after the tragic events last week regarding the automobile accident that a letter be sent to the Minister of Transportation regarding the speed limit in the section of TCH 105 / Irving. It is currently 80km and request that it go down to 60km.

Motion made to send a letter for speed limit reduction to the Minister of Transportation. And a copy to the Deputy Minister as well.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

District 3

Warden Morrison wanted to make reference to the Municipal Observer and that the cover photo was of Baddeck and nice to have Victoria County represented that way.

Warden Morrison also thanked Lydia Kerr for her well attended 10km hike.

Warden also wanted to mention that the funding for the waterfront project in Baddeck was made today and wanted to thank council for their efforts with this project as Victoria County is a funding partner on this.

District 4

Constituents in District 4 appreciated the newsletter, especially for those who don't have internet access and requested that post Covid, we hold town hall meetings.

Councillor Longva indicated that residents would like a definition of some words, like broadband, in the next newsletter.

Warden Morrison indicated that the newsletter comes out 3-4 times a year and that it is written by Communications Officer, Jocelyn Bethune.

District 7

Councillor Organ indicated that the Enviro Depot is really cold and out of the 2 heaters, only one is currently working.

Also at the Enviro Depot there is no washroom in the building; and employees have to walk to the nearby fire hall to use the facilities. This is a safety concern for the workers.

Councillor Organ was approached by the Neil's Harbour/New Haven volunteer fire department to bring up concern over the cancellation fundraisers due to Covid. Inquired if the County could look into a one-time fund that can be sent to each fire department to get through this winter to help offset costs due to lack of fundraising money.

Warden Morrison indicated that this issue was brought up at a recent meeting that he attended and Minister McLellan is looking into this and we will follow up.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald wanted to recognize and thank the volunteer efforts that were made with the North Highlands Nordic Ski building. The groomer building is complete and just waiting for power hookup.

Councillor MacDonald also wanted to recognize the efforts made by the Bay St Lawrence Community Centre on their recent food drive that raised over \$7,000 for three local families.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor MacNeil commented that Eileen Cosby was looking to see if we have any updates on our climate change action plan and if so, can it be sent to her.

CAO MacEachen indicated she will look into but she is doubtful there are any updates.

Councillor MacLeod requested that Victoria Transit meet soon.

BY LAWS

CAO MacEachen requested a second reading of the CDDI bylaw.
Motion to approve the second reading.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

CAO MacEachen indicated that we will now have to hold a public hearing on it and will post it when we have a date.

CORRESPONDENCE

CAO MacEachen received a letter from Victoria County Home Support Services related to the Tech Connect Pilot Program. They are requesting that Councillors for Districts 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 8 meet with some of their constituents who are over the age of 55 and have no regular access to a computer or internet to determine if they would be interested in participating in this program. If they are, they can call 902-295-2877 to sign up. Information is also posted on our website and in the Senior Safety Newsletter.

Warden Morrison received a letter from Victoria County Memorial Hospital Charitable Foundation requesting to have two representatives from Council be nominated to sit on the board.

The two nominees selected were Councillor MacNeil and Warden Morrison with Councillor MacLeod serving as an alternate.

Motion to appoint the three nominees.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

CAO MacEachen will notify Theresa Buchannan of the nominees.

Councillor MacLeod made a motion to have a letter sent to Heather MacLean congratulating her on her retirement and to invite her to the January 5th, 2021 council session to thank her for her years of service.

It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison indicated that there will be a staff recognition ceremony at the beginning of the council session on January 5th, 2021.

NEXT MEETING

January 5th, 2021.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:55pm.

Bruce Morrison, Warden
Leanne MacEachen, CAO