

Victoria County Municipal Council

January 19, 2021

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at Council Chambers, Baddeck on January 19, 2021 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
Dan Coffin, Tourism and Development Officer
Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer
Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder
Garrett Fazekus, IT

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.

RCMP DISTRICT COMMANDER INTRODUCTION

The new RCMP District Commander for Baddeck, Josh Wiese came to council to introduce himself to the Councillors and CAO.

The Warden called on each district to address any issues related to security to the District Commander.

District 1

Councillor MacNeil indicated that the main issues were an increase in summer home break-ins during the spring and fall. He requested a camera on the bridge to help limit the amount of break-ins.

District Commander Wiese commented that installing a camera would be a privacy act issue, if the RCMP owned it and installed it. If the County owns it, it may mean something different. He indicated that he could possibly raise patrols and campaign to residents about how to better secure their own properties.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod brought up the issue of the sale of cannabis (it is being sold at the NSLC) near the school and asked if there could be more patrol so the kids can see more of a police presence.

Councillor MacLeod also requested more patrols out in Big Baddeck at lunch time because lots of kids who are on their lunch break drive around there and speed is an issue.

Councillor MacLeod also asked the RCMP to monitor and stop the trucks from parking on the side of the road at the Irving/Tim's on Hwy 105 in Baddeck.

District 4

Councillor Longva also commented that there are also properties in her district getting broken into and some arson.

District 5

Councillor Patterson commented that break-ins in his district were a huge concern as well and asked if there any educational programs for home owners you can give them to better secure their homes.

District Commander Wiese responded that there is nothing formal but that he would bring it to his Constables to do community outreach regarding this. The District Commander said that because of Covid-19 there can't be a town hall meeting but suggested that there could be more innovative ways to educate residents.

Councillor Patterson asked if the emergency alerts could be updated more frequently.

District Commander Wiese iterated that the emergency alerts are an upper end discussion with the province that is ongoing right now. He doesn't necessarily have a lot of control as to how/when they go out. He commented that the alerts also create a lot of RCMP interruptions that are not necessarily related to the alert.

Councillor Patterson thanked the District Commander and understands that it is a work in progress.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee would like to see an increase in patrols in his area as speed is a major issue.

The Deputy Warden also brought the issue of graffiti up and asked if there was anything the RCMP could do or suggest doing to deter this, for example any charges that can be laid.

District Commander Wiese commented that the only charge that could be potentially laid is mischief but that would be a harder charge to press. The District Commander said it would have to involve the Crown and TIR.

District 7

Councillor Organ expressed concern over the lack of police presence in the early morning hours between 1-4am and requested that patrols occur during those hours as well.

There is also concern over cars passing the school bus so more patrols during school hours would be helpful.

High school students from Cabot High School are coming into Neil's Harbour for lunch and more occupants in the car than there legally should be, so more patrols in the area could possibly help deter this.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald asked for an explanation of the emergency alert system and what the criteria is in issuing one.

Commander Wiese commented that the Municipality has no responsibility to issue alerts criminally, it is the provinces responsibility. It is an operational decision and it is up to RCMP senior management as to when an alert is sent. It is ever evolving and depends on what the case is. Due to the recent events in Nova Scotia, the alert system is being seriously looked at and it is very fluid. Multiple people have to make this decision together.

Councillor MacDonald also mentioned that youth focus groups were looking for more leadership from RCMP members in the schools. There are some heavy drugs that are coming into the schools and we don't see a lot of patrols in our area.

District Commander Wiese commented that, that area is huge and we have limited amount of members that can patrol. It all has to do with funding/man hours.

As for youth engagement within the schools, because of Covid 19 that can't really happen right now, especially because we engage with so many people so we aren't really welcome in a lot of bubbles. We do need to get creative to try and overcome some of these engagement issues.

CAO MacEachen suggested that District Commander Wiese and Cassandra Yonder, our Senior Safety Officer should work together as part of her strategy and would like to set up a meet and greet with them.

District 3

Warden Morrison asked for more speed checks and parking violations issued at the Irving garage on Hwy 105.

Warden Morrison also requested a staff breakdown from each detachment.

District Commander Wiese gave the following breakdown:

Ingonish Beach Detachment is fully staffed with 5 officers.

Baddeck Detachment is short one person. They have 3 constables, the local team leader position is vacant; however a new supervisor, Travis MacDonald from St. Peters has been selected and is in the process of finalizing the transfer here.

Wagmatcook Detachment is fully staffed.

Councillor MacNeil asked how many officers were in Wagmatcook.

Currently there are 4 officers,

Baddeck Detachment has 4 officers plus District Commander Wiese, plus a School Safety Resource Officer.

Councillor MacNeil asked if they are able to use Wagmatcook officers if need be. If there is a critical incident we can use them but they are meant to be in Wagmatcook

Warden Morrison commented that we don't have a police advisory committee because we haven't received an Appointment from the Province of Nova Scotia; we have had the request in for about 10 years. We have just recently had a person come forward that is interested in sitting on the police advisory committee and has to go through an approval process with the government and we are waiting for that process to be completed.

Warden Morrison asked and encouraged the District Commander to keep coming to council on a quarterly basis to provide updates and address any County concerns.

Deputy Warden asked how a Councillor could contact the District Commander.

Victoria County Municipal Council, January 19, 2021

District Commander Wiese said that if it is a file you are directly involved in contact the investigating officer. If it is anything policy related, send it to CAO MacEachen and she will contact him as she has a direct line to him.

Warden Morrison thanked the District Commander for his time and extended an invitation to council whenever he wanted to come.

Commander Wiese responded that whenever Council needed him to come in to reach out and he would be there. There is no limit as to the amount of times he can come to Council.

RECESS

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the January 5th, 2021, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of January 5th, 2021, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

CAO REPORT

Old Business

RCMP District Commander has been to Council - he will be in regular contact with me.
Solar lights - reflective stickers have gone up, still waiting on quote for Beverly's Hill
TIR is working on lights on Iona Bridge
Still pushing the Voyent App for Municipal issues - please encourage all to sign up.

Councillor Organ asked about the bus stop sign in Neil's Harbour. And CAO MacEachen advised that TIR will be looking into it.

CAO mentioned that the heater has been replaced at the New Haven Depot.

New Business

Senior Safety

Seniors without walls updating - contacting the province about the grant
Will be having a quarterly meeting soon

Tourism

Baddeck Visioning session - working on a sample recording to get started
Placemaking- Dan will be setting up meetings with Councillors, then regional groups
Lydia and Dan working on training related to Placemaking
Winterization RFP being worked on
Website - looking to do a soft launch within days
LAE programming - Developing a Website - 20 applicants for 12 spots - looking to do a 2nd

Rec/AL

Middle Head hike on Thursday - 12 registered so far
Youth Wilderness workshop needs a location to take place
Full Moon Hike happening at the Inverary
Vaping Resources shared with the schools
Staff event is lining up scheduled for February 23, 2021.
Couple of leads on who is a playground inspector - will look to train, if they don't work
Cape North walking track on track to open in February
Working on Volunteer Recognition for the past year - will be discussed w Council in Feb

Finance

Budget day Feb 22 - booked for the day
Looking into Cash Handling SOP's
Tax Collection KPI's - looking to meet benchmarks/thresholds

Public Works

NH Treatment Plant RFP ready to go- need to inform residents of financing plan
GHD will be ready to come to Council early February on Waste Management review
New ramp being built on building - accessible ramp gone for next couple of weeks

EDO

MTB Plan - 3 interested parties
Setting up Business planning sessions for the spring
3 leads on Investment attraction - District 3, District 8, District 4
8 Action plans for businesses - 1 in each district
3 Business reviews – District 1, District 6, District 3

OTHER

New Haven House is being looked at for renovations by Buchanan Memorial Hospital Foundation - will keep you updated on status

Tonnages - proposed tip fees - sent you the spreadsheet

TAXATION UPDATE

Total outstanding is \$1.464 million, \$42,000 lower than last year.

Current outstanding is \$863,000, \$85,000 lower than last year.

Arrears \$601,000, \$43,000 higher than last year.

752 accounts are in a prepaid position, which is great. We encourage everyone to set up prepay.

891 accounts that only owe for 2020 taxes.

900 accounts are in arrears.

Warden Morrison asked if the accounts owing for 2020 are for the full amount or various.

CAO MacEachen said it is various amounts.

There have been 1,036 tax reminder notices that went out in the mail this week.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS

District 1

Erosion of the bank from the ditching that was done on the Barra Glen Road for the gravel road project that was just completed. Quite a bit of the bank and trees fell into the ditch. Should be warranty work to fix. It was only completed 3 weeks ago.

There is still erosion at Grass Cove.

Thank You for completing a temporary fix to the shoulder issues in Estmere and at Hectors Point.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod provided an update at 2926 Cabot Trail. A construction company damaged part of the pavement to the entrance at 2926 Cabot Trail. The company was notified by TIR and they are waiting for the company to come fix it when weather permits.

District 4

There are terrible potholes on Stewart Road. They are so bad that parcel delivery has stopped. The bad pothole situation is an issue for most gravel roads in the district.

Victoria County Municipal Council, January 19, 2021

Councillor Longva discussed these issues with Stephen MacDonald and he responded that they grade roads 3 times a year; Councillor Longva commented that we need to have it done more frequently.

The Erosion on Murray Road needs to be looked at immediately; soon there won't be a road.

Residents at 1327 Bay Road requested a hidden driveway sign, east of the property or before the turn.

The streetlight close to the Clucking Hen is always on day and night.

Councillor Longva requested a hidden driveway sign by the Englishtown turnoff where there was a recent fatality.

Residents are also requesting a weather camera for top of Smokey.

District 5

Councillor Patterson commented that the upper part of the Kempt Head Road (past the Matheson Road) work that was just done already has potholes in it.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee commented that Rocky Point Road is in really bad shape.

District 7

Councillor Organ said the following TIR issues have not been addressed: The potholes that need to be filled at the bottom of Oceanview Drive, the driveway at Highland Manor and the area South Harbour is not yet fixed.

Councillor Organ had a request for a weather camera for further up the North Shore.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald expressed frustration over the lack of progress on any of his districts issues over the last few months. There are also days that go by that residents don't see the sand truck in Meat Cove. Councillor MacDonald questioned the policy around road sanding.

Councillor MacDonald said that calls are being made and tickets are being created with TIR but nothing is being done.

District 3

Warden Morrison commented again on the flooding on the bottom of Fownes Drive because of the lack of ditching. Warden Morrison made a motion to send a letter to the area supervisor to address concerns that have not been addressed and to provide an update as when they might be.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to Stephen MacDonald to address TIR concerns not being addressed.

Motion carried.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District 1

Councillor MacNeil commented that he is noticing a lot of garbage in the area and would like to look into getting a few “No Littering” signs. Councillor MacNeil also suggested possibly having students pick up the garbage around the county this summer.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod made a motion to send a letter to Irving Oil, asking that they reassess the traffic flow at the Irving station on Highway 105 near Exit 8 at Baddeck.

Councillor MacLeod stated that Irving wrote to Council in 2018 stating that a traffic flow and site layout had been identified to be changed. Some of these changes have yet to be made. In light of the fatal accident there last month, Councillor MacLeod requests that they re-evaluate the changes made there previously and reassess the traffic flow on this site and update Council.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to Irving in regards to a traffic flow assessment.

Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod also made a motion to send a letter to invite Nova Scotia Power to come to council to give us the plan for the year and any update in tree clearing

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to NS Power inviting them to Council.

Motion carried.

District 3

Warden Morrison, on behalf of Council, expressed sympathies to Councillor MacDonald and his family.

Victoria County Municipal Council, January 19, 2021

Warden Morrison thanked Scott MacAulay for extending an invitation to Council to tour the new building at the Inverary; a few members of Council had a tour of the new building today.

District 4

Councillor Longva made a motion for a streetlight at 1859 Baddeck Bay Road.

It was moved and seconded that a request for a streetlight be installed at 1859 Baddeck Bay Road.

Motion carried.

Councillor Longva said that SABDA sent correspondence to the County in regards to public washrooms and they have not received any correspondence back.

Councillor Longva also mentioned that residents were questioning why the provincial parks close early, in many cases, before the end of October. There are residents and tourists who would still enjoy using the parks until the winter weather sets in.

Councillor Longva made a motion to send a letter to the province to request the parks to stay open until the snow flies.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to the province to address early park closures.

Motion carried.

Councillor Longva and Councillor Patterson commented on the CDDI bylaw.

CAO MacEachen gave the following explanation regarding the CDDI bylaw:

This is not a tax break; it is for any new developments that could be happening on a go forward basis.

It is a Victoria County bylaw. It is for commercial development and you have to be in a commercial district to be able to get it. To be considered a commercial district, you have to have water and sewer so currently the only place in Victoria County that qualifies for that is Baddeck.

To qualify for this bylaw, the business has to increase their property value by at least \$100,000. Their property value has to increase, they have to do development and if it is less than \$100,000 they will get a tax rebate for 5 years, if they do over \$100,000 they will get a tax rebate for 10 years and it gets phased in. It is to encourage development.

Victoria County Municipal Council, January 19, 2021

CAO MacEachen reminded Council that they all have a copy of the bylaw and that it is has gone through 2 readings. She encouraged Council to read it again as there will be a public hearing on it on February 2nd.

CAO MacEachen also addressed the question about the public washrooms. We had a meeting with BABTA who operate the County washrooms and explained that we have an MOU with BABTA; they operate under BABTA's hours of operation and under their direction. They didn't feel that they had the ability to stay open this year so if SABDA has an issue with that, they should contact BABTA.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked whether or not the washroom could be moved to another location that could keep it open.

CAO MacEachen explained that they are all portable, we are also not paying the whole cost to have them cleaned. We are currently in the process of entering into agreements with other ones we have. Ideally the County would drop it off to the site, we donate the capital of actually providing the washroom but it is the responsibility of the business to look after it. If this is not possible, then the County will put in a proposal that we are open to discussing the operations of them, but ideally it will be the location of where they are, that is responsible for their upkeep and supplies.

Deputy Warden understood that but questioned why we were doing it for some locations and not all.

The CAO explained that we have 2 in operation right now and 1 we share the cost, the other one we don't, we don't pay for anything.

The Deputy Warden then asked if there was a way to reach out to other locations that might be interested in having a washroom.

The CAO agreed and explained that the County is in a 5 year agreement right now, and then we are open to discussing other locations.

Councillor Organ asked for clarification on cleaning supplies and who pays for them at the washrooms.

CAO MacEachen explained that the County pays for some of the supplies at some of the County owned washrooms. For example, the County paid for a washroom to be built in Baddeck but the County has an agreement with BABTA that they would cover some of the supplies and for some of the labour related to the washroom. The County doesn't pay for any of the supplies or operations for the washroom at the Gaelic College.; however, we paid the capital to have the building put there. For the washrooms that the County owns, we are open to hearing suggestions on operating them. CAO MacEachen iterated that our goal is for the County to put the washroom at a location and then that location takes care of them after that.

Councillor Organ asked that if there is a place on the North Shore for the washroom, do the people have to pay for it and the County will just place it there.

CAO MacEachen said that it all depends on if the business/organization is able to support it themselves that would ideal. The County is also signing into agreements with these MOU's that the County is willing to help out, we are willing to do it at this point but it doesn't mean that we are always going to do it.

Victoria County Municipal Council, January 19, 2021

Councillor Organ mentioned the washroom at the comfort station in New Haven and if they ever asked the County for assistance.

CAO MacEachen indicated that the County does not own this washroom and that the County had a washroom grant that was offered to them this year and they took advantage of that and received funding.

Councillor Longva asked if we could hire one person to go around to all the washrooms to clean them and CAO MacEachen suggested that it be brought up at the budget meeting if that is what Council wants to do.

District 5

Councillor Patterson talked to local management with Bell Aliant in regards to Fiber Op and they are ready to hook up about 400 residents.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee made a motion to have \$500 taken from his budget to go to Cape Smokey Elementary Home and School for hot lunch for students.

It was moved and seconded that \$500 be taken out of District 6 budget.

Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee made a motion for a letter to be sent to the UARB regarding the recent 5 cent raise to assist wholesalers and to request that rural service stations receive some assistance as well.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to UARB requesting local retailer assistance.

Motion carried.

District 7

Councillor Organ had calls from residents regarding the following concerns; a land issue at White Point Road area, continuing care issue and public low rental housing. Councillor Organ contacted the Warden and the CAO in regards to these issues.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald has been contacted by many concerned citizens with regard to lack of Mental Health services in the area.

Councillor MacDonald made a motion that a letter be sent to NSHA in regards to what mental health services are available to Victoria County.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to NSHA to address the lack of mental health support in Victoria County.

Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Victoria County Transit (VCT) Committee had a meeting today and Councillor MacLeod made a motion to send a letter to approach Strait Area Transit (SAT) to continue to carry out the operations of VCT through SAT, effective April 1 for the upcoming fiscal year.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to SAT to provide operational support services to VCT.

Motion carried.

Age Friendly Committee met today and Councillor Patterson made a motion to add Cassandra Yonder, Lydia Kerr, Jennifer Ripley and Darlene MacInnis to the committee.

It was moved and seconded that Cassandra Yonder, Lydia Kerr, Jennifer Ripley and Darlene MacInnis be added to the Age Friendly Committee.

Motion carried.

Councillor Patterson explained that the committee went through the plan and will make revisions to the plan and keep everyone updated.

CORRESPONDENCE

Victoria County Municipal Council, January 19, 2021

Warden Morrison acknowledged that we received correspondence from NS Power that they have also sent out province wide.

Received a letter back from the CBVRCE regarding the bus stop signage at 95 New Haven Road. Susan Kelley stated that they have forwarded this issue on to TIR.

Received another letter back from the CBVRCE regarding the bussing and road classification issue and Susan Kelley commented that our concerns were forwarded on to the Provincial Committee.

Received a letter back from Minister Lohnes-Croft regarding the cemetery washouts and she forwarded our concerns off to John Cormier, Coordinator, Special Places and he is to get in contact with us regarding them.

Received a letter from Stephen MacDonald concerning the shoulder repairs in District 1 and the letter confirmed that the road work has been completed.

Correspondence was also received from Stats Can in regards to updating their database this year and they are looking to the County to show support for this Census initiative and recommendations.

It was moved and seconded that Council adopt the StatsCan Census recommendations.

Motion carried.

NEXT MEETING

February 2nd and third reading of the CDDI bylaw at this time.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 6:56.

Bruce Morrison, Warden
Leanne MacEachen, CAO