

***Victoria County Municipal Council***

November 30, 2020

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at Council Chambers, Baddeck on November 30, 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 #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

Absent was:

Fraser Patterson for District #5

**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.**

**CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION**

Carla Arsenault and her team gave an overview of the Cape Breton Partnership and what their role is in promoting Cape Breton Island.

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Ms. Arsenault brought along three other members of her team; Patrick Austin, Economic Development Officer, Erin Flynn, Creative Economy Development Officer and Omar Tag El-Din, Labour Market Development & Immigration.

Each member gave an overview of their role, what they are currently working on and how they can be used as a resource for Councillors.

Their presentation can be found online at [https://capebretonpartnership-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/p/jeremy/EVoq\\_3jNdiNFrNWnD2I58qIB7Tu\\_yXX2a3TGbdn\\_WovpiA?e=eRHmrT](https://capebretonpartnership-my.sharepoint.com/:p:/p/jeremy/EVoq_3jNdiNFrNWnD2I58qIB7Tu_yXX2a3TGbdn_WovpiA?e=eRHmrT)

Along with their presentation they wanted to inform council of three useful websites:

- <https://welcometocapebreton.ca/>

This website is a resource for promoting Cape Breton and anyone looking to move to Cape Breton.

- <https://digitalmainstreet.ca/>

This website is a resource for businesses and provides ideas and resources to help grow their business. This website will be launched in January.

- <https://jobs.capebretonpartnership.com/>

They are also enhancing the job bank. This is Cape Breton's first online job bank for Employers and those looking for work.

The Warden and the Councillors thanked the presenters for their time and the information they shared.

The Warden then opened the floor up for questions.

*Questions*

Deputy Warden asked if the Digital Mainstreet website was just starting.

The website will be launched in a couple of weeks. The presenters asked that if the Councillors know of any businesses that could be added to the site then please let them know.

Councillor MacDonald wanted to ensure that the job board included Victoria County and the presenters confirmed that it did.

Councillor MacNeil asked if it is possible to get an update on projects that are currently going on.

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Some information can be shared and some information is confidential but Mr. Austin encouraged each councillor to reach out to him as he is available to discuss upcoming projects with them individually.

Councillor MacNeil emphasized that he would be interested in discussing Broadband more in depth with Mr. Austin and the Develop NS.

Councillor MacLeod inquired if the job board needed more employers from Victoria County and if so, she would be happy to assist with that.

The Presenters appreciated that and commented that the job board needed more social media attention. It would be helpful if the Councillors promoted to more employers and job seekers.

Councillor Longva asked if the advisory services provided by the Cape Breton Partnership are done at an individual level and not just at a bigger business level. Councillor Longva also inquired about the cost.

The advisory services are free and are not just for bigger business. Mr. Austin is available to discuss options for individuals just starting out as well.

Councillor MacNeil had a follow up question regarding broadband and asked if Councillors could contact Develop Nova Scotia directly about updates and timelines regarding Broadband services.

Ms. Arsenault commented that Develop Nova Scotia are continually in negotiations with the Broadband service providers so they are not able to comment on the specifics but assured Councillor MacNeil that a meeting request would be submitted to them and that Mr. Austin can assist with this matter and make arrangements.

Warden Morrison requested a copy of the presentation and that request has been fulfilled. Victoria County administration staff has a copy of the presentation.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison advised that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the November 18, 2020, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

Deputy Warden requested a change be made regarding emailing Steve MacDonald. It should be noted that for TIR complaints, Councillors can email him directly. Residents should be using the 1800 number.

**It was moved and seconded that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of November 18, 2020, be approved as presented. Motion carried.**

**CAO REPORT**

***Old Business***

The CDDI Bylaw was sent out and would like to have a second reading of that at the next council session on December 14, 2020.

Keep encouraging residents to sign up for the Voyent App for Municipal issues.

Had a Cannabis Check in Meeting on December 2.

Requested information from Transport Canada regarding flying altitudes, still waiting for a response.

Received a report from CFO regarding daycare funding. A copy will be forwarded to Council for review and recommendations.

The new website is still in test mode but it is looking good.

***New Business***

***Rejections***

Rejections numbers could be lower. More education around it for residents might be helpful.

***Tourism***

Attended the Tourism Conference with DCBA. Good web traffic there. It was encouraging for Winter Tourism.

Working on a Winter Readiness Program and looking at partnering with Influencers to tell us what we need. Inverness/VC/ACOA/DCBA Initiative.

Washroom signage project - Partnering with Inverness and working on a Cabot Trail branding.

Develop NS is interested in our Placemaking Project - should be hearing more from them in the future.

Doers and Dreamers booklet refunding operators for advertising for the 2020 season.

***Recreation and Active Living***

Adopt a Family deadline is December 4. Encouraging staff and Councillors to please get involved.

Planning a winter staff event to get out and get active.

Want to acknowledge and thank Bruce Morrison (maintenance), Sean MacSween and Matt Rutledge from Nova Scotia Power for all their dedication and time with the Christmas lights.

Looking into an Expressive Arts Workshop to happen around the County. Lydia is part of a Special Events Task Force - had a meeting to update CAOs on the project. Province looking to update Council.

Lydia is looking into a Seniors Walking Soccer program.

Working on doing more hikes in the coming months and Lydia is exploring a Youth Council project.

***Finance***

Having some difficulties getting into the system to produce financials.

CFO is looking into daycare funding analysis.

Looking into partnering with Dan on a Placemaking project.

***Public Works***

Winter Ready program ongoing.

Lead sampling project happening now - advising participants of their exposure.

Want to extend congratulations to two Water Operators in Dingwall who received their level 1 certification.

***EDO***

Working with Wagmatcook/ACOA on Trail funding options.

Assisting in Visioning session but was postponed due to Covid.

Broadband meeting happening this week with Develop NS.

Working on an Investor package related to the Housing strategy

Mr. Austin is doing site visits around the County, counselling on winter business, and scheduling business session roundups.

***Other***

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

Working with Parks Canada on a water contract for us to take over. Parks has it with their Contract team right now.

Met with Zero Waste Researcher - will be doing bi-weekly meetings. She will be touring sites this week with Jocelyn.

Operations Efficiency Manager has been hired (group of 5 Municipalities) - looking to assess our infrastructure, make the Municipality more efficient.

Priority list check in needs review and update accordingly.

In the process of having an appraisal done for the White Point Subdivision lots. They are to be sold at fair market value. The appraisal for these lots was last done twenty years ago.

***Questions***

Councillor MacNeil inquired if the signage project is just for around the Cabot Trail. The funding came from a Cabot Trail Project Fund so it is only for signs around the trail.

**TAXATION UPDATE**

CAO MacEachen indicated that as of today, November 30, 2020 we have a total outstanding of \$1.9 million compared to \$1.89 million this time last year.

Current outstanding is \$1.27 million compared to \$1.23 million last year.

Arrears are \$639,000 compared to \$667,000 last year. We are doing better in our arrears; we are about \$28,000 to the good.

Total and current outstanding have reduced; arrears have reduced but still a large balance. In response to this we prepared 30 day notice letters and final 60 day letter notices for accounts in arrears.

The last tax sale was by tender and it was held on November 24, 2020. No properties were sold but there were several that were collected on.

The Tax Installment Program is still open and available for any of the tourism operators to apply for. The CAO and CFO are able to assist with applications.

*Questions*

Councillor Organ asked if the tax installment is available for small business as well.

CAO responded that it is for any operators that have been affected by Covid; they need to put their application in.

Councillor MacNeil asked if the County was further behind with the Total Outstanding than we were last year.

CAO responded that the County is not further behind but has more concern for next two years, not as concerned this year.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION CONCERNS**

***District 6***

Deputy Warden Dauphinee commented that he would be discussing the following issues directly with Steve MacDonald

There are still coastal erosions at the Marina. There were several different times that armour stone was supposed to be put in but that is yet to happen.

The whole shoulder is gone at the top of Smokey at the first S turn.

***District 7***

Councillor Organ expressed concern on behalf of the residents in District 7 regarding the erosion at 2060 White Point Road, due to safety concerns; the school bus is no longer permitted to pick up the children on that road. The residents were talking with the TIR throughout and there needs to be cribbing put up but currently there is no funding for that. In the meantime, the residents are requesting that cement barriers and lights go up so the school bus is allowed back down the road.

Councillor Organ is requesting information from Department of Transportation regarding ditching and when it will be done in District 7. There are a few driveways washing out.

***District 8***

Councillor MacDonald is looking for an update regarding Effie's Brook North to Big Interval. It was supposed to be paved many years ago and it hasn't yet. Councillor MacDonald was told there will be some paving in "future years". Would like some clarification on what "future years" mean. Councillor MacDonald is requesting an inquiry with Department of Transportation as to what is the time frame is on this project.

Councillor MacDonald would like to know what the policy is for placing signs on the highway. Who is responsible for doing this? Residents in District 8 called Department of Transportation and their response was to contact your local Councillor for getting signs placed on the highway.

It was Councillor MacDonald's understanding that it was the responsibility of the Province, especially concerning the safety of residents putting up signs themselves on a road way. Councillor MacDonald requests clarification from the Department on this matter.

**District 4**

Councillor Longva wanted the erosion problems on the New Campbellton Road be brought to the attention of Council and to the Department of Transportation. The residents on this road would also like guardrails put up.

**District 2**

Councillor MacLeod wanted it noted in the minutes that the west side of McQuarry road needs gravel.

Councillor MacLeod also shared some clarification to Councillor MacDonald regarding the signs. She was told by Steve MacDonald that the Department of Transportation was not responsible for signs, it was the Districts responsibility so Councillor MacLeod had Public Works put the signs up in her District.

CAO interjected that we do have a permit from the Department to put up signs but CAO MacEachen agreed with Councillor MacDonald that we do need a policy for signage issues and she would address this with the Department.

**District 1**

Councillor MacNeil wanted to mention the ongoing issues he has had in his District for a while. The dangerous shoulder on the road at Hectors Point, huge safety concern. The shoulder of the road is giving away at Gillis Point Road at the bridge at Grass Cove.

There has not been any fall grading done yet.

The Jamesville Gypsum issue is still ongoing. The Department of Transportation said they were going to patch the area but it still hasn't been patched. The patching down through Iona to the post office still has not been done. The Department was also supposed to look at signage in that area as well.

**District 3**

Warden Morrison expressed concern over the water damage at Old Margaree road, its causing very deep shoulders.

The Warden is also still awaiting the status of the ditching that was supposed to be done on Shore Road. He has had no response or update regarding that and in the meantime there is lots of flooding and pooling.

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

***District 1***

Councillor MacNeil is still awaiting response on the bussing issue.

***District 2***

Councillor MacLeod expressed concern over the street light at Beverly's Hill. The light is still not working and the residents are very upset as it is a safety issue. Councillor MacLeod is requesting an update to find out when it can be fixed.

Councillor MacLeod mentioned that the Old Margaree Road is very dark and would like to know if a light can be put there. At one point, Nova Scotia Power said they cannot install a light there as there is no power there. Councillor MacLeod requested a solar light be installed and made a motion to send Keith Bain a letter to have a light installed at Old Margaree Road.

**It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.**

***District 4***

Councillor Longva requests that a new Skir Dhu Road sign be put up as the old one was stolen.

Councillor Longva has also been receiving complaints about an aging, Céad Míle Fáilte sign between the Lobster Galley and the Gaelic College. Councillor Longva requested that this sign be replaced.

Councillor Longva asked for an update regarding the emergency phone she requested at the last council session. CAO MacEachen contacted our EMO and he is contacting the provincial EMO. Our EMO did stress that these phones are extremely expensive but it is still under investigation but possibly have to come up with other solutions such as installing a phone booth.

Councillor Longva requested Victoria County shopping bags for the Wreck Cove General Store. Jocelyn will provide Councillor Longva with this request.

***District 6***

Deputy Warden Dauphinee requested to have a special session to discuss the housing survey and examine the lands database to determine all the land that the County currently owns.

CAO MacEachen and Warden Morrison agreed with Deputy Warden Dauphinee and will arrange meetings to discuss further.

***District 7***

Councillor Organ inquired about having the garbage picked up around the recycling depot. CAO MacEachen said that she will ask Robert Dauphinee about this and get it done.

Councillor Organ expressed concern on behalf of the residents in District 7 that there has not been an RCMP report in a while. The RCMP is required to send in a monthly report and that has not happened for quite some time. Councillor Organ also requested a motion that the RCMP attends one council meeting a month to submit their report.

Councillor Organ provided an update on the school bus stop in Neil's Harbour and that she spoke with Tara Gaskell who suggested the Councillor to go to the RCMP to address the issue. CAO MacEachen said she would look into this issue and also commented on the RCMP report. The department supervisor for the RCMP barracks in Baddeck presented to Council back in September but concurred with Councillor Organ that they have not submitted a monthly report since that time. CAO MacEachen said she would put another request in for this report.

**It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.**

***District 8***

Councillor MacDonald wanted some clarification in regards to a Police Advisory Committee. It was the Councillors understanding that the Municipal Act states that there needs to be one.

CAO MacEachen confirmed with Councillor MacDonald that there should be a Police Advisory Committee and that she has been pushing for one since she started in the role of CAO.

CAO MacEachen went on to explain that you have to have a member of Justice on your committee and she is having difficulty with the Department of Justice in obtaining one. Warden also commented that he also has reached out to the Minister of Justice to inform him that he has someone he can recommend for the role and he too, has not heard back.

Warden assured that he will be following up with this issue.

Councillor MacDonald made a motion for a street light at PID 85172898 in Cape North.

**It was moved and seconded. Motion carried.**

Councillor MacDonald had a resident from St Margaret's Village bring up the issue of the need for year round access to washrooms. The two washrooms that are currently in that area did not open due to Covid.

Councillor MacDonald received a written letter from the resident and wanted to pass it in as correspondence received.

Councillor MacDonald also has a Victoria County sign located at the edge of Big Interval that needs to be replaced and has requested that Public Works take a look at it.

***District 3***

Warden Morrison, on behalf of Council wanted to acknowledge and show appreciation to the staff and NS Power for the great work done with the Christmas lights and the positive reflection this has on the Municipality.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Victoria County Transit***

Councillor MacLeod wanted to inform Council and residents that punch passes for transit are being sold at Stones Pharmacy and Highland Pharmacy.

CAO requested that Councillors submit comments on the CDDI bylaw by next week.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Deputy Warden received two correspondences. One was from local residents requesting a review of the streetlight policy and come back with recommendations.

The second was from Chief Andy Bernard concerning the possibility of a Cape Breton bubble. Deputy Warden informed Council that the Municipality will be following the direction of the Province.

Councillor MacLeod commented that she has received some emails from residents and they do support the bubble but wanted to reiterate that Council cannot make that decision.

**NEXT MEETING**

December 14, 2020.

**ADJOURN**

There being no further business, it was moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 7:05.

Bruce Morrison, Warden  
Leanne MacEachen, CAO