



**Victoria County Municipal Council**  
March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers in Baddeck on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 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 (Via Zoom)

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 Fazekas, IT



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**CALL TO ORDER**

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

Councillor Patterson requested his FCM report be added to the agenda.

Warden Morrison requested an In Camera session be added to the agenda.

***It was moved by Councillor MacNeil and seconded by Councillor MacLeod that the agenda be approved with the noted additions.***

***Motion Carried.***

**VICTORIA COUNTY HOME SUPPORT SERVICES PRESENTATION**

Terry Murray, Jenn Ripley and Janet Simm provided an update on what's been happening the last few months with the Victoria County Home Support Services.

They have a 2 year long term contract with Northwood but are still staffed by locals and still have the local board.

They are very impressed with the value and dedication that Ms. Ripley has provided and they are looking for ways to sustain having Ms. Ripley continue her work and the programs that she has started through that initiation grant funding.

Warden Morrison thanked the ladies for their presentation and opened the floor up to questions.

Councillor Organ asked if the senior's recreation program is only offered in Baddeck and asked if there were any plans for going into the other districts.

Ms. Ripley responded that yes, that is our goal and that the one in Baddeck is just a pilot project right now.

Councillor MacDonald asked if there were staffing issues and asked what the process is for staffing. Councillor MacDonald also commented that there is a shortage of CCA's and wondered if homecare has this same issue.

Ms. Simm said that there is a shortage and we are looking at ways we can improve that. They are currently looking into bringing a course into the area and train more people who can train to be a CCA. It is a type of "earn as you train" program.

Councillor MacLeod asked how many weeks the pilot project will be and will it renew after the term?

Ms. Ripley said it is 12 weeks and indicated that BOLD will be taking it further after the pilot project is completed.



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**CAPE BRETON REGIONAL LIBRARY (CBRL) PRESENTATION**

Lisa Mulak presented an overview of the Baddeck Public Library and presented a needs assessment for future potential funding assistance.

Ms. Mulak mentioned there were a number of areas in the Baddeck Library that needed upgrading and/or improvements. Some of those things include, washroom facilities, shelving, multipurpose furniture, Wi-Fi upgrades, staff work space, lunchroom and storage area, silent study space and an increased community space.

All the councillors thanked Ms. Mulak for her presentation and Warden Morrison emphasized how important the library is to the community and welcomed Ms. Mulak back to Council at another time when costs/requests are known for different projects.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

***It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor Longva that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021, be approved as presented.***

***Motion carried.***

Deputy Warden Dauphinee inquired as to the research into a potential bylaw for placing flyers/posters on power or telephone poles.

CAO MacEachen indicated that she is looking into a Community Standards Bylaw which will include several different things such as noise, and advertising on poles.

CAO MacEachen also commented that NS Power and Aliant do have policies in place stating that putting signage on their poles is prohibited and often have their staff remove any signage they see on the poles.

Deputy Warden requested that the CAO reach out to Aliant and NS Power and ask if our Public Works staff are allowed to remove the signage off the poles for them.

The CAO said that she would contact them and find out. CAO MacEachen also indicated that another way around it is through a land use bylaw. Currently there is one being looked at in the Village through Eastern District Planning and we are using the land use bylaw as part of a regional initiative.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee also commented on a graffiti bylaw and what the progress is on that and asked if there are any dates scheduled for the readings of that potential bylaw. The Deputy Warden is anxious to get this bylaw in place before summer begins as Smokey is a popular target for graffiti.



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CAO MacEachen indicated there are no dates scheduled for readings yet. Enforcement needs to be put in place first before we are able to put that bylaw in place.

Deputy Warden commented that the RCMP have already said they would enforce it if we had it in place and the CAO agreed.

Warden Morrison mentioned the Police Advisory Committee and that there have been some applications that have come in.

CAO MacEachen stated that she received 3 applications. She also stated that it appears the County was not on the Provinces' agency boards and commissions site so the members of the committee were not able to sign up but CAO MacEachen requested that the County be added to the site so the members can sign up. If they are not able to sign up, a member can't be appointed by the Minister.

**CAO REPORT**

***Old Business***

Vaccines - sent out a news release, and advertising on using Victoria County Transit to get to sites. Province says they will reimburse when it's proven there's a need.

Beverly's Hill light- 4-5 weeks for delivery.

Glooscap Caves - contacted UINR, spoke with Lisa Young. They are doing advertising, and clean up. Told them we'd help promote it.

Irving letter sent - waiting on response.

ACAP has a new Executive Director starting May 1. May be able to give guidance on "Trashformers" We'd like a list from Council on Trash "Hotspots".

Graveyards - sent Council an email related to Heritage property graveyards - and funding opportunities for NFP groups for graveyard repairs.

Signage - possibly looking to build this into our Land Use Bylaw... EDCP Initiative.

RCMP PAC - Next step is to get a Bylaw on the advisory board approved, and get a Minister appointed position. In the works.



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***New Business***

***Senior Safety***

Looking to get involved in Trail Development from a Seniors perspective.

Vaccine rollout issues.

***Tourism***

Working on several different initiatives including placemaking and trails. Dan Coffin gave a Trails presentation to council earlier today as trail development is a strategic priority of Council.

***Rec/AL***

Working on Year End Reports

Activities happening for March Break. Working on setting up 2 Wilderness Workshops around the County.

Looking for Ideas from Council on Volunteer awards.

Working on an Outdoor Play Initiative.

Finalizing Rink funding with all rinks that are operating this season.

Working on the Health Promoting Schools Program.

***Finance***

Tax reminders going out.

Finalizing Year end numbers.

Tax Collection strategy initiatives.

***Public Works***

Exploring North Site for New Public Works buildings as a result of the waste management review.

Preparing a letter for an increase in tipping fees to go out.

Interviewing for 2 North positions.

Working on an Asset Management Monitoring System.



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Heavy garbage – doing a cost analysis for twice a year heavy garbage pickup.

Looking to implement Garbage Cleanup days - possibly staff, if ACAP are not partnering.

***Other***

Meeting scheduled with Parks Canada, will discuss Water agreement, Fire Protection.

**TAXATION UPDATE**

Total outstanding is \$997,675.10 which is \$240,844.43 lower than last year's \$1,238,519.53.

Current outstanding is \$490,897.44 which is \$273,100.70 lower than last year's \$763,998.14.

Arrears outstanding are \$506,777.66 which is \$32,256.27 higher than last year's \$474,521.39.

Note:

1. We collected \$80,587.39 in taxes from March 8, 2021 (last council meeting) to today.
2. We sent out 658 Tax Reminders last week for accounts over \$100.
3. There are 8 properties on the tax sale list on March 23, 2021
4. We identified some uncollectable accounts and prepared the list for Council to write off.
5. Tax installment is still open for application. No new application from last council meeting.

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND RENEWAL**

**District 1**

Councillor MacNeil commented that his District has ongoing issues but nothing new to add to the list.

**District 2**

Councillor MacLeod had nothing new to add to the list.

**District 3**

Warden Morrison had nothing new to add to the list.



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**District 4**

Councillor Longva thanked Steve MacDonald for his detailed list of concerns and the progress on each one. Councillor Longva didn't have any new issues to mention but noted that the ongoing ones that are in progress or slated for the spring.

**District 5**

Councillor Patterson requested that the Steels Cross Road be added to the 5 Year Improvement Plan.

**District 6**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee commented that a lot of residents noticed a lot of damage to the shoulders on the new section of the road on top of Smokey. Deputy Warden Dauphinee has been in contact with Steve MacDonald regarding this and he himself has also seen the damage and is hoping to have it fixed as soon as possible.

**District 7**

Councillor Organ has some of the same ongoing issues but will be emailing Steve MacDonald and cc'ing Steff MacLeod so they are added to the DTIR list.

**District 8**

Councillor MacDonald had nothing new to add to the list and agreed with Councillor Longva regarding the work Steve MacDonald did to update the DTIR list.

**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District 1**

Councillor MacNeil expressed frustration over the street lights that are out on the bridge. CAO MacEachen indicated that she will contact Lynk to address this issue again.



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**District 2**

Councillor MacLeod expressed her concerns regarding Bill 4, the proposed Bio-Diversity Bill from the Province. She believes it is micromanagement and is not necessary and it would not be beneficial to private land owners. Councillor MacLeod believes residents need more information and clarification on this issue as well.

***Councillor MacLeod made a motion to send a letter to Minister Porter to ensure there will be some other public consultations and requesting Bill 4 to be just on Crown lands and not privately owned land. Councillor MacLeod is also requesting the Minister or the Ministers staff come to Council to discuss this Bill further before it is passed. Seconded by Councillor MacNeil.***

***Motion Carried.***

Councillor MacLeod mentioned that she had a webinar called the Circle Economy put on by the FCM. CFO Liu also attended the webinar and Councillor MacLeod requested that CFO Liu present the findings from the webinar to Council for further discussion.

***Councillor MacLeod made a motion to have \$1000.00 taken from District 2 budget for the Middle River Fire Dept. Seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.***

***Motion Carried.***

**District 3**

Warden Morrison commented that Council had a Strategic Priorities Trails meeting today, prior to council session and that there were a couple of recommendations that came out of that meeting and made a motion to accept those recommendations.

***Warden Morrison made a motion to accept the recommendations that came out of the strategic priorities meeting. Seconded by Councillor MacLeod.***

***Motion Carried.***

**District 4**

Councillor Longva wanted to send a huge thank you out to Robert Dauphinee, Kelly Brett and their drivers for solving a constituents concern this past week. They were very pleased.

Councillor Longva also wanted to thank CAO MacEachen for her research into funding for graveyards, it was very appreciated.

Councillor Longva had constituents asking for a dog park in Baddeck, so when visitors and locals come to Baddeck their dogs can get exercise and socialize with other dogs. The old race track in Baddeck was mentioned as a possible location.





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Councillor Longva commented that some constituents are worried about the noise pollution from motorized vehicles driving on trails and scaring the wildlife.

Councillor Longva inquired about landed immigrants voter laws. Councillor Longva believes that if they pay taxes here and live here full time then they should be allowed to vote in municipal elections.

CAO MacEachen stated that she would have to check with Elections Nova Scotia and Elections Canada regarding this issue. Municipalities don't create voter laws.

Councillor Longva expressed her frustration in regards to the garbage along the side of the roadways. Councillor Longva suggested more garbage bins around the County.

Warden Morrison indicated that this request would be passed on to the Public Works Department.

**District 5**

Nothing to report in District 5.

**District 6**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee mentioned that he has been in contact with Michael Viva of the Scotchtown Volunteer Fire Department and asked for a Letter of Support for a volunteer first responder's, EMT's and search and rescue burial discount.

***Deputy Warden made the motion to write a letter of support to the Funeral Association of Nova Scotia. Seconded by Councillor Patterson.***

***Motion Carried.***

Deputy Warden Dauphinee requested that CAO MacEachen look into the County taking over the Franey Estates Road. CAO MacEachen gave the Deputy Warden information in regards to that from Eastern District Planning but the Deputy Warden still wasn't clear on it. He thought that there was a similar road in Baddeck area that requested that as well and all that was required was a deposit. Deputy Warden asked the CAO to look up those details/policy so he is able to respond back to the letter from George LeBlanc.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee understands that the County has many roads but if the developer is able and willing to bring up the road to the required standards then he feels the county can and should take over the road as per the economic development/housing strategy.

Deputy Warden requested the CAO have this information provided to him by next council session.



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Deputy Warden Dauphinee expressed his frustration from the letter that the Ingonish Snowmobile Association received from the Province in regards to the Ingonish River Wilderness Area being under review for a protection area. Deputy Warden was under the impression that this issue was resolved back in 2016 when the then Minister of Environment said to the County that this area would be deferred. That is not what the letter to the Ingonish Snowmobile Association was told and the Deputy Warden wants to know why and express that this is delaying funding and trail growth for the Association.

***Deputy Warden Dauphinee made a motion for a letter to be sent to the Minister of Lands and Forest, The Minister of Environment and Climate Change, the Minister of Transportation and to MLA Keith Bain. Seconded by Councillor MacNeil.***

***Motion Carried.***

Deputy Warden also asked CAO MacEachen if there has been any progress with the discussion around what is being done about the Courthouse.

CAO MacEachen indicated that there would be no moving forward with anything until the issue is brought to Council at the next budget meeting.

**District 7**

Councillor Organ commented that some residents are asking about the vaccine coming North of Smokey. Some of the residents cannot travel at all and/or they are housebound due to various health ailments.

Councillor Organ asked that a review of the water disconnection policy be put on the agenda for the next Public Works meeting.

**District 8**

Councillor MacDonald commented on the Covid 19 vaccine clinics and the length of travel that people need to go to get vaccinated. The bus is appreciated but even with that, a bus trip would be daunting for residents aged 80+. Councillor MacDonald has also been working with MLA Keith Bain regarding this issue as well.

CAO MacEachen commented that the information regarding the vaccine and available clinics changes rapidly so there could be clinics set up closer for the residents up north.



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**BYLAW/POLICY REVIEW**

CAO MacEachen indicated that there was a Cost Sharing Bylaw for cost sharing on any capital cost projects that was sent out to Council for the first reading. CAO MacEachen requested each Councillor to read the bylaw over and come back with suggestions.

CAO MacEachen said that we have looked into this before and have starting implementing some aspects of it already. For example, if residents live on the one road we own, and the County has to do any upgrades to that road, the residents would have to share some of the cost of that project.

Another example is with the water utilities, if there are any upgrades or extensions than the cost is covered by the Municipality and the residents that it is benefiting.

CAO MacEachen indicated that there are several different formulas that we could use to apply it. CAO MacEachen stressed the importance for having policies or bylaws in place for things like this. If we don't have them in place then it's more difficult to implement.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee had concerns around the wording of the bylaw. He used the water utility as an example. He said those residents that have access to the water utility but are not using it, then they would still have to pay for any upgrades or extensions. He suggested that this made him nervous because the water utility rates are already getting higher and higher and it seems unfair to an area that they have to pay for any upgrades on top of already higher rates. He believes the residents won't take too kindly to that.

CAO MacEachen said the reasoning behind it is that, that service is always available so you have the ability to hook up to it then you are covered by that so it's your choice not to go on the system then you can opt out of it but it is still available in your area, so you should help cover the costs.

Deputy Warden brought up the plebiscite/petition where people could vote on it but it also said that the County had the right to still decide to do it so he thinks that's still unfair and that the residents still have to be able to have a say in it.

CAO MacEachen said to make note of all the concerns and come back with them at the second reading.

Councillor MacNeil expressed that he had the same concerns. There was an issue with the \$1000.00 hook-up fee a few years ago and there are issues like that, that have to be looked at.

Warden Morrison indicated that there will be a public hearing on this as well, as there are with all new potential bylaws that are up for consideration.



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Councillor Patterson gave a report from the FCM meetings he attended.

**FCM REPORT**

**March 9/21 Committee of the Whole**

- Federal election 2021
- Value of the Gas Tax – use of for disaster mitigation.
- Rural focus on infrastructure, transit and housing.
- Green Municipal Fund – use for retrofits ex public buildings, rinks, etc.

**March 9/21 Atlantic Caucus**

- Federal election readiness
- FCM Membership NS 100%

**March 10/21 FCM Environmental Issues and Sustainable Dev.**

- Recovery through green lens
- Transit (more on that later)
- Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)
- Carbon neutral 2050
- SNR (small nuclear reactors) VSNR Nuclear reactors
- Template for Climate Change Plans

**March 11/21 Rural Forum**

- Federal Broadband Fund – Universal Broadband Fund
- DOF consultation farmers

**March 11/21 FCM Infrastructure**

- Rural and Regional Transit Fund
- Permanent Transit Fund
- Small airports – air traffic control
- Discussion on pipelines.



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Warden Morrison requested a motion be made for an In Camera session to discuss a property issue.

***It was moved by Councillor Organ and seconded by Councillor MacNeil that Council go In Camera.***

***Motion carried.***

***It was moved by Councillor Organ to accept the recommendations made in the In Camera discussion and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.***

***Motion carried.***

**ADJOURN**