



Victoria County Municipal Council
May 17th, 2021

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held via Zoom on May 17th, 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

Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer

Dan Coffin, Tourism and Development 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.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor Organ that the agenda be approved.

Motion Carried.

DOCTOR RECRUITMENT UPDATE – DAVE PARKINSON

Dave Parkinson came to Council this evening to provide updates on doctor recruitment. He placed an emphasis on ensuring the County welcoming the new recruits and making them feel like they could make a home here in our communities.

NSHA had 2.5 positions to be filled and two have been filled 2. One doctor, Eric de Clemente from New Jersey will start in the fall. She has a 5-year return service contract.

Colin Bonar is still 2.5 years out from coming here, he is already looking into buying a property here.

Ed Pilon is an ER doctor from Toronto that could potentially take the .5 position. He will be here in June and staying until almost the end of September. He wants to see what Baddeck is like in the summer before he makes a final decision to move here or not.

Dave assured Council that he will continue to update as needed and thanked the County for their participation and assistance with doctor recruitment and retention.

All Councillors thanked Dave and his team for his great work and providing an update.

CENTRE FOR DISCOVERY AND INNOVATION – CBU PRESIDENT DAVE DINGWALL

In regard to the doctor recruitment update provided by Mr. Parkinson, President Dingwall said if there is anything CBU can do to help with doctor recruitment and retention to please reach out and they would be more than happy to help. This could be done by spouse employment or teaching etc.

President Dingwall gave a presentation on the proposed Centre for Innovation and explained how it will sustain CBU for future generations and drive population growth and the economic health of the entire Island.

President Dingwall Requested a letter of support from Victoria County Council as we move forward with this new centre.



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Warden Morrison thanked President Dingwall for his very informative presentation and opened it up to questions from the Councillors.

Councillor Patterson said congratulations on making strides at the university and making connections to the community. I hope this becomes a reality. It will be a major attraction for them.

Councillor Patterson asked what the retention rate is of students who stay in Cape Breton.

President Dingwall commented that over 80% wish to remain in Cape Breton, but job opportunities are an issue.

There is a lot of interest in health care, so it's tied to that so the more we can do as a community to identify some of these positions the better it would be for retention.

Councillor Organ commented that she sees a lot of students working at the Co-Op Fisheries and its good to see.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said that after seeing the needs that President Dingwall presented, I am on board with this project.

Councillor MacDonald said it was excellent presentation and anything that is going to make our island better and sustain itself I am on board.

Councillor MacNeil said the project is needed. Local establishments benefit from the influx in students as well.

Councillor MacNeil asked if NSCC is a hindrance or an asset to the university.

President Dingwall said NSCC is an asset, their programs with respect, are experiencing a downturn in enrollment because of the decline of population. They have an MOU with NSCC and if President Dingwall gets this Centre, he will be able to include agreements with NSCC. HE commented that there is a great synergy between the two schools, and they will be working together to try and eradicate deficiencies we have here on the island.

Councillor MacLeod said she can now we can see how the building is in bad shape and that there is a great need there for a new Centre.

Councillor Longva thanked President Dingwall and the building is very impressive.

CAO MacEachen mentioned that CFO Liu is a CBU graduate and we are more than pleased with her and we are very much in agreement with this project.

Warden Morrison asked Council for a motion to be made to provide a letter of support for the Centre of Innovation and Discovery.



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It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor Longva to provide a letter of support to Cape Breton University's President Dingwall for the Centre of Innovation and Discovery.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the May 3rd, 2021, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of May 3rd, 2021, be approved as presented.

Motion carried.

CAO REPORT

Old Business

EDO interviews are happening this week.

Zoom call set up with TIR Solar light - being assembled today and will be installed tomorrow.

Letter received from Department of Environment on trail development in Ingonish, meeting set up June 8th.

Warden Morrison asked if there was any update for a meeting with Irving. CAO MacEachen said the new representative for government relations was in the process of moving here and not sure if he could because of the new Covid travel restrictions. She will send another email and await his invitation to meet.

Councillor MacNeil requested Keith Bain be invited to the meeting with TIR at the end of May.

CAO MacEachen let Councillor MacLeod know that the solar light at Beverly's Hill is expected to be installed tomorrow.

CAO MacEachen mentioned the lights on the bridge in District 1 and said that it has been requested through many departments so it is currently being worked on.

Warden Morrison said that the Volunteer awards have been distributed and thanked all the volunteers.



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Councillor Organ asked about the ability to drop off fluorescent lightbulbs to our solid waste sites and asked the CAO for an update. CAO said hazardous household waste collection is in the works to be set up but not up and running yet because Covid stalled this process.

New Business

Senior Safety

Newsletter has been sent out.

Looking to find best way to reach just seniors with the newsletter. Might need a distribution list.

"Coffee with a Cop" program starting. First one will be May 26th at 10am, via Zoom.

Will be attending a Senior Housing Conference.

Working on New Horizon's final grant report. End of that funding.

Slowly finding out some seniors may need some "life coaching".... Looking for avenues. Trying to maneuver the through the gaps.

Rec/AL

Placemaking/Trails

Working on getting Mobi-mats to Parks.

Walk Leader training course.

Working on NS Active Smarter kids program - integrate it into the classroom

Working on MPAL Planning tool.

Updates on the website; funding, applications, etc.

Finance

PACE program is ready for readings.

Working on completing year end entries, and getting ready for audit

Final budget discussion held today.



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Revised tax collection strategy, based on changes in the Department.

Amy is looking into Affordable Housing initiative, with some of her contacts at New Dawn.

Public Works

Heavy garbage is being postponed until the Fall. The RFQ that went out is being stalled.

Water Utilities are currently in good shape, no Covid issues at this time. Staff are following Covid protocols.

Interviews happened last week to replace Recycling Lead.

Still looking to site location for WWTP in Ingonish.

Working on RFQ for courthouse.

Efficiency audit is ongoing - looking for easy wins for updating some of our processes for saving energy.

TAXATION UPDATE

Total outstanding is \$737,000 which is \$252,000 lower than last year.

Current outstanding is \$336,000.

Arrears outstanding are \$400,000.

Both of those areas are in better shape than they were last year. We still have a long way to go, we are working on it but we are headed in the right direction.

We collected \$45,000 tax since May 3rd, 2021 (last council meeting) to today.

We have sent out invites to bid on short term title search services. We have received 3 bids back and are sending them a test title search for comparison before making the final decision. We will be using this service to get us to our next tax sale which is July 20, 2021. This will be a tender tax sale and we will be looking to have a public auction tax sale as soon as the pandemic is over.

Councillor MacLeod asked when the new tax bills will be sent out and CAO MacEachen indicated once we have a motion to set the new tax rate this evening, we will then go forward with start doing the tax bills but we also have to have the rate from the Village of Baddeck because those get printed on our bills so as soon as we get something from the Village, we can do the tax bill run early to mid June.



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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND RENEWAL

District 1

Councillor MacNeil said he was in contact with TIR about 2 holes at the Gypsum Outcrop in Jamesville. They were on site today to assess the problems. He was also in contact with TIR about gravel at the entrance of the John Neil George Road.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod mentioned that the sign on the western entrance on Beverly's Hill is missing and also the level of the road is not good.

Councillor MacLeod also received an email about the lines not being painted yet on the new section of the Cabot Trail in Middle River and also the lines on the new section of Kelly's Mountain.

Councillor MacLeod wanted reflected in the minutes that the issue on 508 Zion road has been reported to TIR and they are looking into it.

District 3

Warden Morrison requested that when the bush cutting equipment is in, that TIR take a look at some of the streets in the Village, in particular; Alexander Drive, MacLeod Street and Harvey Drive, lots grass and small trees starting to grow up on the side of the streets.

District 4

Councilor Longva wanted to thank Steve Mac Donald and crews for all the work they are getting done now that the gravel roads are drying up and spring has sprung the repair work has started. She has been hearing that the grader is out and roads are being repaired.

Councillor Longva had more inquiries about the streetlight on the highway across from the Bay Road exit to Baddeck and she has contacted TIR and it had already been reported to their electrical contractor and it is scheduled. TIR said they will follow up by the end of the week.

District 5

Councillor Patterson said the road on the Southside of Bouladerie was graveled and graded. Councillor Patterson also mentioned that he, Steve MacDonald and Joey Parker each received an electronic thank you card.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee also commented that the gravel roads are in bad shape.

District 7

Councillor Organ asked if the grader is still around the area and if not, when will it be in the area.



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District 8

Councillor MacDonald said a resident has called in regard to a burnt motor vehicle that is located on the Capstick Road and would like to have it removed and/or has inquired who is responsible for removal, the vehicle has been there for some time. Councillor MacDonald said that he would even use some of his district budget to get the car removed. It is a concern for safety of local youth around this area.

Councillor MacDonald corresponded with TIR (Steve) and they said it is the responsibility of the RCMP but they are unable to track the owner down.

Councillor MacDonald thanked TIR for work that has been completed in the area on various concerns from the TIR list and Councillor MacDonald thinks that the grading of roads is complete.

Councillor MacDonald said the intersection at Dingwall Road and Cape North had another near miss again last week and would like the minutes to reflect that this is a yearly concern that needs to be addressed.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District 1

Councillor MacNeil said that it being that 2021 is the 150th Anniversary of the inception of the Cape Breton Highlanders which originated in Victoria County in 1871. I make a motion that a letter be sent to TIR minister to designate Route 223 as The Cape Breton Highlanders Memorial Way and he has been assured this would not affect civic addresses.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that a letter be sent to the Department of Transportation to request to designate Route 223 as The Cape Breton Highlanders Memorial Way.

Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil also mentioned that residents are asking about the washroom in Baddeck not being opened and he told them it is contingent on the Welcome Center being open.

Councillor MacNeil said that the littering is getting worse and requested to look into a By-law. There were people out picking up garbage in the area and someone threw out litter right next to them.

CAO MacEachen said we are working on drafting new bylaws that will address littering. CAO also mentioned that we will be working with BABTA on a pilot project to extend the hours at the public washroom in Baddeck.

District 2



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Councillor MacLeod mentioned that June is Pride Month and requested to have the Pride Flag raised like and ask staff for some ideas as to how to celebrate it this year.

Councillor MacLeod said that May 10 - 16 was Nurses Week and asked if we can have an appreciation week for workers and provide coffees from Tim Hortons and Robin's in the North.

CAO MacEachen commented that last year we gave to Tim Hortons and Robins an amount for coffee for the health workers, but it tied up their drive thru lineups but said we can come up with something else, possibly a donation.

Councillor MacLeod also wanted to recognize that today is International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia.

Councillor MacLeod mentioned that there are still bags available for anyone wanting to do a community clean up.

District 3

Warden Morrison wanted to remind people that this social lockdown is a legislative protocol and to please have patience with our Public Works sites, but we will be following these provincial protocols.

District 4

Councillor Longva thanked all the people cleaning up their communities and the Volunteers who received their awards.

Councillor Longva asked when a bylaw is ready for the 3rd and Public Hearing is there somewhere constituents can access the bylaw so they can read it before the day of the Public Hearing.

CAO MacEachen commented that all that information will be up on our website.

Councillor Longva said that she has received several complaints about the dump being closed, people are concerned that it will lead to illegal dumping.

District 5

Councillor Patterson got a couple of calls from residents from Black Rock Road. There was a person who moved and put his heavy garbage at the end of his road to be picked up because he thought there would be heavy garbage pickup but now it is cancelled. The residents want to know how it can be picked up now since the person has moved away and the new owners cannot move here yet as they are from Ontario.

CAO MacEachen indicated she may have already heard about this but requested Councillor Patterson send her the information so she could take a look at it.



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Councillor Patterson said FibreOp installation is being completed and people are happy with the new service.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee is receiving complaints about the dump being closed and asked if we could open for a couple of days a week or something?

CAO MacEachen understands the frustrations, but we are shut down to protect our staff and the public, so we are not opening in the foreseeable future for residential drop-offs. This latest wave created a social lockdown, and some residents treat going to the dump like a social time and this is scaring some of the staff.

District 7

Councillor Organ asked when the dump and recycling depot are going to reopen, and why is heavy pick up cancelled when it is still happening in other counties.

Councillor Organ said she still has garbage bags and gloves available for anyone interested.

CAO indicated we are encouraging curbside pickup.

CAO MacEachen indicated she received a message online from one of our staff members and they said that we do have the capability to take fluorescent bulbs at our sites. When the sites reopen, residents can drop off their household hazardous waste as mentioned prior in this meeting.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald has had several calls on heavy garbage postponement and locals are asking for reasons of cancelation, as dumping has already been noted in areas of the District and is only to become worse namely, the Dingwall Quarry. Residents do not see how covid is responsible for this.

Councillor MacDonald had a question about no littering signs and if they could get some and can we approach the province to increase the fine for littering.

CAO MacEachen said TIR have the signs and said that currently it is a TIR issue but as Councillor MacNeil requested earlier with having a “no littering bylaw” put in place; CAO MacEachen is unsure if we can be more specific than the Provincial one but that she would do her homework on it.

Councillor MacDonald asked if groups that are doing the roadside cleanups are permitted to put the bags at the side of the road for Public Works to pick up.

CAO MacEachen said she would contact Public Works to see if they are willing to pick them up, she is pretty sure they would be but will contact them to confirm.



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Councillor MacDonald also has had residents mention that they did not receive their census request information, namely the area in Dingwall (Capstick Manor). There are 7 or 8 residents living there. The local distributor was aware of the area but was instructed to not supply this location.

They are inquiring as to why they were left out and Councillor MacDonald requested we inquire on their behalf to Service Canada. Councillor MacDonald has called but wait time was well over 45 minutes.

CAO MacEachen said she can do some research and see what she can find out.

MOTIONS

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil and seconded by Councillor MacLeod to approve the minutes from the following meetings; Washroom Discussion, Bylaw Overview and Budget.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacLeod to confirm the approved tax rates of \$1.22 for residential and \$2.12 for commercial.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Longva and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to approve the 2021 – 2022 Budget as presented this afternoon.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor MacNeil to approve the revised appointments for Building Inspector Amanda Esterbrooks and alternate Andre Samson and alternate Development Officer, Lee-Anne Martin, for the Eastern District Planning Commission.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor Longva to approve the recommendations to raise the deed transfer tax from 1.0% to 1.5%.

Motion carried.



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BYLAW/POLICY REVIEW

Two new bylaws were presented for first and second readings; they were the first reading of the Local Improvement Bylaw and the second reading of the Community Standards Bylaw.

Local Improvement:

CAO MacEachen requested a first reading of the Local Improvement Bylaw and a second reading of the Community Standards Bylaw and asked for a first reading of the PACE Program.

Councillor Patterson had the following concerns with the proposed Local Improvement Bylaw:

- Not in favour of “User Pay”, believes what’s good for one, is good for all.
- Requested the wording be changed to “may” instead of “shall” in section 2.
- Considerations for exemptions to be made for low income.

Warden Morrison requested Councillor Patterson send his suggestions to the CAO and Councillor Patterson agreed and proceeded to put it to a motion to approve the first reading of the Local Improvement Bylaw.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor MacNeil to approve the first reading of the Local Improvement Bylaw.

Motion carried.

Councillor Patterson was contrary minded, Councillor Patterson is not in favour.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacLeod to approve the first reading of the PACE bylaw.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to approve the second reading of the Community Standards Bylaw.

Motion carried.



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PROCLAMATIONS

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day, which will be happening in June. Warden Morrison will make this proclamation at next council on May 31, 2021.

CORRESPONDENCE

Catherine Hart with Engage NS wanted to come to Council, but Council was fully booked today with two presentations. She wanted to invite everyone to a Nova Scotia Quality of Life Initiative regional gathering for Strait Area Western Cape Breton on June 3rd from 6pm-7:30pm.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Carmela Ann Murphy said, a big thank you to Jackie and Larry for getting the Murphy Road sign replaced.

Keith Bain said in response to Councillor MacDonald's no littering signs, I will contact Steve as well to see what the policy is. Also, in response to Councillor Longva's comment about the intersection lights, I will also contact Bernie Murphy.

Next Council Meeting is May 31, 2021.

ADJOURN

The Municipality of the County of Victoria County council session was adjourned at 7:22pm.