



Victoria County Municipal Council
October 4, 2021

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at Council Chambers in Baddeck on October 4th, 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

Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder

Jocelyn Bethune, Communications

Erica Holgate, EDO

Garrett Fazekas, IT

3 Members of the Public were in attendance:

Terry Murray

Kirsten Kidd

Stewart Walden



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Warden Morrison welcomed everyone and acknowledged that this meeting is being held in Unama'ki, One of seven traditional districts of Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaw People.

CALL TO ORDER

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

Deputy Warden Dauphinee requested an in Camera session at the end to discuss some real estate issues.

Councillor Patterson requested to give an FCM report.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil and seconded by Councillor Organ that the agenda be approved with the above noted changes.

Motion Carried.

NOVA SCOTIA HEALTH AUTHORITY (NSHA) MADONNA MACDONALD, VP HEALTH SERVICES, ANGELA MACARTHUR, DIRECTOR OF INTEGRATED HEALTH FOR RURAL SITES/EASTERN ZONE, BRETT MACDOUGALL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS, Dr. DON OBREIN

Christine Hines sent her regrets for not being able to attend the meeting.

Madonna began the discussion and introduced her team. The highlights of the discussion were:

- Challenges across the province; doctor recruitment, ER closures. Focused significant resources to covid over the last 18 months.
- Major vacancies, toughest time we have had being flexible, proactive and responsive to this emerging disease that is constantly changing. Dealing with psychological challenges with staff as well because of the pressures over the last 18 months.
- Prior to covid there were human resource challenges and those challenges continue.
- Covid testing has switched symptomatic testing to relieve some of the strains on our staff.
- There is a plan for triggering numbers to activate plans quickly. Fine line not to limit our services and give access to our services.
- They continue to meet weekly, trying to provide information for adjustments. Ongoing effort for us.
- Trying to obtain as much services as possible they have seen the effects of limiting services and having people not use the system so they are coming in sicker and that is worrisome.
- Lab services have been affected as well along with our waiting rooms and booking systems.



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- Buchanan Memorial have 60 staff.
- Victoria County Memorial has 90 staff.
- Buchanan Memorial have challenges with nursing shortages. Long term leaves and absences.
- We have added incentives to permanent and part time physicians, 10k signing bonus, 5k assistance with moving.
- Travel nurse coming in January.
- Rural locum program for nursing, kind of our own travel nurse program, we pay their travel in. 162 hours they get an extra bonus, haven't been as successful as we would like.
- Travel nurse is also coming in October for 6 weeks.
- We have hired over 20 casual paramedics in the eastern zone.
- At Victoria Memorial Hospital there are still have challenges with leave of absences. We have a younger workforce so more maternity leaves. Our younger nurses move around a bit more than the older nurses.
- Lab services: the MLT is moving and another one is coming in December at Buchanan. Physical therapist also retired and the position is still opened.
- Challenged at Victoria Memorial in lab services, one is still waiting to be fully licensed. DI service have been added to, from 1-2 and expanded hours.
- Victoria Memorial have an extra RN on nights and days and an extra 4 hours for clerical support to help the nursing staff after 4pm.
- Point of care added to both sites, can do labs after hours and emergency lab results.
- There has been Emergency department closures at Victoria Memorial.
- At Victoria Memorial we are seeing more and more, doctor and nursing shortages.
- We only have 2 full time doctors that work in the ER.
- Dedicated to leaving these sites open.
- Had one closure at Buchanan this weekend. This has been the only closure so far at this site.
- There are some potential doctor shortages coming. There were 3.5 docs, one of them has gone off on an LOA, one is going on an LOA and one is retiring so we will only have a .5 working after December.
- We have locum coverage there until Christmas and then again in January for 3 months but they won't provide ER care.
- It's a work in progress, we get updates daily.
- We have also asked EHS to come to the table as well to see how we can work together to provide services to the community.
- At Buchanan they are working with the physician teams and nursing teams and looking at care models to work in ER. We had an opportunity to hire a nurse practitioner.
- Emergency room coverage is most urgent.
- Dr. Don Obrien joined late but addressed the doctor retention, shortage, and recruitment. He is the medical director the eastern zone. He has met with almost every doctor in the zone.



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Warden thanked the presenters and opened the floor up to questions. Warden said we are aware of the challenges and can appreciate them.

Questions:

District 1:

Is there allotment for regions, should it be higher in rural areas? Are you looking at having that grow, to possibly 6 or 5.5. doctors and also with nurses as well?

Don: what service is expected, how many hours will the ER be open, I think we look at the site individually and try to recruit to that level based on the needs of that site. We are finding it very difficult to recruit.

Angela said we have changed Buchanan and Baddeck, we have added an extra RN for nights.

Madonna said one of the things we have seen over the last 10 years, in particular with the family doctors, there was no quality of work/life balance and doctors want that work/life balance.

District 2:

Closures at Baddeck hospital was 3 weeks, heard it will be walk in clinics only and that is bad. We are having major problems with people from CBRM coming here and staying here and there are not enough beds. We have been trying to get doctors here for the last 5 years and haven't had any luck what are you going to do about these closures? What is the plan for residents from CBRM?

Madonna said we cannot tell people that they are not allowed to come to a hospital if they are not from the area, its against the law. We know that Baddeck needs an ER department, and we are working with the doctors here to come up with a sustainable plan.

Councillor MacLeod asked if they could send CBRM nurses to help Baddeck?

Angela said a lot of the extra nurses have been centralized to the Regional but there are several nurses that come to Baddeck to help.

Brett said hopefully late fall, early winter we are hoping to have a plan for North Sydney hospital so it might help the pressures at the Baddeck hospital. It won't solve all issues but should help with access.

District 4:

We have a dire shortage of doctors, there is a young woman from my district who lives in Germany and her husband is a doctor but the province won't let him in. He would have been allowed to go into NB as long as he was sponsored by a hospital. Medical Canada approves this plan but Nova Scotia still won't accept it.

He found an opening in Antigonish but they said he would have to go to Halifax because he had to do 20% of his time doing research at Dalhousie as part of the requirement for the program.



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Don said that process is very complicated. We rely on our medical boards to ensure applicants meet a certain level. They need to ensure they have all the qualifications, and the paperwork is submitted properly.

A lot of the issues come down to paperwork, but we have to trust our board to make these decisions. Halifax is considered the centre for teaching; we don't have the resources to act as a supervisor in the smaller areas.

District 8:

Years of Service, monetary incentives, is it based on certain years?

Angela said the positions that have incentives would be anyone that would take a permanent full time position at Buchanan. We would take experienced nurses first but it doesn't mean a new grad wouldn't get that incentive if they get that posting.

Councillor MacDonald said using the advanced paramedics to help the nurses is great, but units far north are being stretched, how can you expect EHS to deal with the long travel times from north to the Regional.

Angela said she completely agrees and that is why we have asked EHS to come to the table.

District 7:

It is a scary situation that we are living in now, especially now that Victoria County is an aging population so can you provide me with a continuing care supervisor please?

Madonna said that would be Susan and Michelle and she will get the contact info for Councillor Organ.

District 6:

Housing is a major issue. If doctors and nurses don't have a place to live, we can offer them any amount of money we want but if they don't have a place to live they won't come. Is NSHA willing to by land to put up housing?

Madonna said this is definitely on our radar. We don't have a funding envelope to purchase housing, but we have seen lots of participation and partnerships with local counties and municipalities, including Victoria County.

District 5:

The closing of the emergency department in North Sydney put major pressures on the hospital in Baddeck.

District 3:



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We have huge concerns here in our community, I can't stress enough to have conversations within the community. Please have town hall meetings, open it to the residents, you can do it virtually.

Madonna said most definitely. We will be spending more time in Victoria County to find solutions together.

Warden Morrison said we need better communication from NSHA.

District 1:

Did you look at recruiting an ER doctor?

Madonna said for a sustainable workforce, 2 doctors are not enough, 4 is ideal.

Don said we need 4 doctors here ideally, we need at least one more at the Baddeck hospital.

The doctors at Baddeck asked them to please open the ER at other hospitals, they can continue to work here and take care of the patients in this area here but you need to open the other ER's.

District 4

Do you have a contact that I can forward my previous concern onto? Is there a shortage of technicians as well?

Angela said yes there are shortages.

Brett said there is a high rate of no shows for lab appointments as well. With the pandemic they are trying to catch up and manage the wait lists. We are working on improving those waitlists.

Don said he would provide contact info to Councillor Longva.

District 6:

5-6 weeks to see a doctor in Neil's Harbour right now.

How are doctors paid, can they get paid per visit?

Don said that it is an ongoing issue, the more rural areas they prefer a salary. Sometimes there is hybrid model, but it is up to the doctor and bring that up in negotiations.

Angela said we have regular meetings set up to discuss these back logs and wait lists as well.

Warden Morrison said I know there is a master plan for the sites in Cape Breton so could you send us a copy or provide an insight as to what these sites will look like in the future. I want to be aware and involved in this.

Madonna said that redevelopment team can come and meet with council on this. Brett agreed and said we can get that to you.



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Warden Morrison asked for confirmation that ER's will be a priority and stay open and Madonna said yes.

Warden asked about the mobile testing units, when exposures have occurred can we get those units sent into the area?

Brett said there are a number of factors that decide when these mobile units are deployed.

Warden Morrison requested Councillors to send a list of concerns that were not able to be addressed this evening to Steff and she will compile a list and send it to the NSHA team to discuss and come back to council with answers and updates.

RECESS

Warden Morrison called for a 15-minute recess at 6:29pm.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the September 20th, 2021, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacLeod that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of September 20th, 2021, be approved.

Motion carried.

CAO REPORT

Old Business

ICI Promotion happening, in conjunction with Roadshow - more info to come.

Tax Exemptions have been processed - will be an application process for next year.

Heavy Garbage is in full swing

Set up meeting with TIR? Quarterly?

Councillor Longva asked for an update on the Plaister Mines Road. CAO said it is now the responsibility of the residents to put the application into the Province.

Councillor Longva said they sent it in, CAO asked Steff to send the motion to Councillor Longva.



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New Business

Senior Safety

Cyber Seniors - partnering with schools.

Rick Hansen training.

VCT - looking into numbers, and Fare Assistance.

Going to Present at VC Health Board.

Working on VC Quarterly Newsletter.

New Moon Stories initiative.

Rec/AL

Step Challenge ending - went well.

Working with schools and Smokey on a Gender Equity Promo.

Looking at building a Rec Volunteer base.

Health Promoting Schools Initiative.

Working on the Healthy Alcohol Coalition.

Dalem Lake walk going well - Thursdays, 9 am.

Mental Health 1st Aid - BSL Oct 14/15 - might be 2 spots still available.

Finance

Working on Y/E.

Fire Services Committee having a meeting.

Tax Exemption Bylaw changes.

Public Works

Tipping fees bills will be starting Sept 30

ICI Tag Program will be starting Nov 1

Building condition assessment of Courthouse is happening

Water Rate Study is happening NH WTP is progressing - expecting a December completion

Security fencing to be tendered for water reservoirs



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Next PW Meeting will discuss water receivables, and lead sampling

Tourism

Working with DCBA - Tourism Solutions, Year of Music Initiative

BABTA Website upgrades.

Cabot Trail Food Truck Rally - Oct 23/24.

Working with Cabot Trail Working Group.

Placemaking has completed for this year - will receive a report on findings.

Crowdis Mtn Snowmobile club - working with them.

Updating the Trail Route.

Working with non-profit Community Groups on Needs assessment.

Traveling Roadshow:

Admin staff will travel around to the different districts to hear concerns and answer any questions residents might have. More information will be coming out.

Councillor Patterson commended the PW staff collecting heavy garbage. A resident suggested developing a system to take black garbage bags but levy a fee on the homeowner. Councillor Patterson asked where do they end up if we don't take them? Can we have a discussion about that at the next PW meeting.

CAO responded that we can add that to the agenda for the PW meeting. CAO also wanted to give a lot of credit to PW staff because they all pull together at heavy garbage collection time.

Councillor MacLeod inquired about the fare assistance program. Councillor MacLeod said she would also provide the closing date for interviews for the driver up north for VCT.

Councillor Organ asked CAO if anyone has been hired as a driver for VCT north of Smokey. Councillor MacLeod said, no, not yet but still taking applications.

Deputy Warden wanted to thank Jeffrey Gwynn trucking with heavy garbage up north as well.

Warden asked for an update on the study for the Municipal Building. CAO said nothing yet but should have an update by next council session.



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TAXATION UPDATE

We've reached the point where the due date for this year and for last year have both passed, so we are now comparing like to like.

As of today, we have \$2,341,171 total outstanding, compared to \$2,751,709 this time last year for a total difference of \$410,537 ahead!

Current outstanding is ahead of last year by \$154,744 with \$1,831,219 in current as of today vs. \$1,985,963 in current this time last year.

Arrears also ahead by \$255,793 better than last year with \$509,952 in arrears outstanding for this year vs. \$765,746 this time last year.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

District 1

Councillor MacNeil had the following PW concerns:

- Same as last meeting: Have been in contact with the Steve MacDonald and OS Mark Green on the issues. They say they are looking into addressing them.
- Request last year that a reduced speed limit sign be put at the Post office in Iona to 50km. Dangerous area tricky turn that has cars on the wrong side of the road. To follow up with Steve MacDonald.
- Also wondering if we could write a letter to Public Works to have a crosswalk and appropriate signage installed at Rankin School of the Narrows.

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil and seconded by Councillor MacLeod that a letter be written to the Department of Public Works to have a crosswalk and appropriate signage installed at Rankin School of the Narrows.

Motion carried.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod requested a letter to MLA Bain about 2629 Cabot Trail, they made damage to someone's driveway, they are still waiting for the Dept of PW to fix it.



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District 3

Warden Morrison had the same concerns from last meeting. Ongoing issues that haven't been addressed.

District 4

Councillor Longva had the same concerns as last time. The brush cutter really needs to be brought in to District 4.

Councillor Longva said that the old cables at the Englishtown ferry are being left there. They need to be cleaned up whoever is responsible.

It was moved by Councillor Longva and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that a letter be written to the Department of Public Works to have the old ferry cables removed.

Motion carried.

District 5

Councillor Patterson had nothing to report.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee had no Department of PW concerns to report at this time. There is asphalt missing at the turn at Cape Smokey and Steve said it will be repaired tomorrow.

District 7

Councillor Organ said she is still waiting on a resolution for the bus turning situation in White Point. She has sent email to Steve and spoke to the School Board.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald had the following PW concerns:

- PW concerns same list as submitted at prior council meetings with no action to date.



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- There are utility poles leaning and are ready to collapse due to a road washout and phone wires are 3 feet from the ground at the roadway to Dexter's gravel pit (Money point from Bay Road Valley side). Many people access the Kauzman trail hike on this section.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District 1

Councillor MacNeil had the following district concerns:

- Still no work on the street lights on the Barra Strait Bridge in Iona
- Also follow up on Streetlight on the South Cove/Birch Point Road Causeway
- Any answer from Develop NS on Broadband Update?

CAO responded said there has been no answers and Carla with CB Partnership is trying to set up a meeting with them as well.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod asked to meet about the bottle cap program. CAO said yes we will.

District 3

Warden Morrison requested \$1500 to be taken from his district budget for Waterfront Baddeck Committee to fund Sea Level/climate Change Assessment on Kidston Island.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacLeod that \$1500 to be taken from District 3 budget for the Waterfront Baddeck Committee to fund Sea Level/climate Change Assessment on Kidston Island.

Motion carried.

Warden Morrison mentioned the meeting with NSHA tonight and if there are any additional comments or questions to please forward to Steff so she can compile a list to send to them.

Warden Morrison said we are going to adopt minimum planning standards. We currently only have zoning limits in Baddeck so Warden Morrison requested the CAO to enter into conversation with the Village to look at the bylaw. We have outgrown our responsibility. Land use and planning to be relooked at for the Village



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It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacLeod that CAO MacEachen enter into zoning bylaw conversations with the Village.

Motion carried.

CAO MacEachen mentioned that she will start discussion with with District Planning first and then move onto the Village.

Councillor MacLeod asked if the CAO has had any replies from EHS? CAO said no, but she will try again.

District 4

Councillor Longva thanked PW for heavy garbage pickup. They did a fantastic job.

Councillor Longva mentioned the rink the County of Inverness has 5 rinks and we only have 1 and it is falling apart. Other infrastructure in town here is failing apart so can we make one big multiuse building?

Councillor Longva also said she was a supporter of the roadshow idea.

District 5

Councillor Patterson requested a streetlight at 161 Steeles Cross Road, pole is marked.

District 6

Deputy Warden said that the sign at the Smokey picnic area fell down and requested a new one to be installed that includes a bathroom signal as most of the travelling public do not know there is a bathroom at this location.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor Longva a letter be sent to Department of Natural Resources and Renewables requesting a new sign.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor Organ to send a certificate to Ida Jackson for her 100th birthday on October 10th.

Motion carried.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacNeil to send a letter of congratulations to Jaime Batiste on his recent re-election.

Motion carried.



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District 7

Councillor Organ said she has received a call about camping in a clearing on the White Point Road. The fire department is concerned with campfires and people are using the area to dump garbage.

Councillor Organ has made two calls to Department of Natural Resources and they said it is crown land so they are allowed to camp but if there is illegal dumping they can call the 1800 number to report it.

It was moved by Councillor Organ and seconded by Councillor Longva for a streetlight to be installed at 35618 Cabot Trail.

Motion carried.

Councillor Organ withdrew her donation to the Lions Club as they are no longer having a fundraiser.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald requested \$500 from his budget for Friends of the Veterans, a group that have organized and are going to maintain local Cenotaphs and Remembrance Day services within District 8.

Councillor MacDonald said that the CCA's program will face a shortage as some are not vaccinated so are not able to work. Could there be a letter sent to Future Works? Nova Scotia works? to see if they can hold a program to hire/train CCA's

CAO said possibly it can be held somewhere north, CAO will look into this again as she did last year as well so she will follow up with this.

It was moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Organ that a letter be sent to Future Works regarding the CCA program.

Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Councillor Patterson said one of the rural forums discussed the RCMP and suggested we should be on the look out for budget increases.



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MEETINGS

Councillor Macleod wants to meet with the board for VCT on zoom.

Warden held up a poster to help celebrate Mi k'maq history month and said there are three here that different districts can take and put up.

Councillor Longva said the writers festival was a huge success.

Questions from the public:

Stuart Walden asked about Phase 5 and said it is unclear to him what you can and can't do. Celtic Colours is happening, its streaming but we still want to put a live show on. We are unclear on the covid rules and unsure of what we can and cannot do. Do we need wrist bands, do we need record everyone at the door, can you help me bring it to the NSHA for what you recommend?

CAO MacEachen said phase 5 is a little confusing and suggested Stuart email the provincial site regarding "ask covid". Give them all your questions, that is probably the best bet.

Warden also said to contact your local MLA as well and they can put you in touch with the Dept as well.

COUNCIL MEETING

Next Council meeting is October 18th, 2021.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Councillor MacDonald to adjourn.

The Municipality of the County of Victoria County council session was adjourned at 7:55pm.