



Victoria County Municipal Council
December 15th, 2021

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at Council Chambers in Baddeck on December 15th, 2021, at 1:30pm 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

Allan Bragg, Interim CFO

Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder

Dan Coffin, Tourism Officer

Absent: District #5- Fraser Patterson

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.



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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 MacNeil and seconded by Councillor Longva that the agenda be approved.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Longva excused herself from the presentation due to a conflict of interest.

EASTERN DISTRICT PLANNING PRESENTATION – JONATHAN MARTIN

Mr. Martin presented two premises that are dangerous and unsightly.

The first premise is at 763 Highway 312, Englishtown, NS. PID 85024370.

- Complaint was received in 2019.
- Owner recently inherited property, was settling legal ownership.
- Covid-19 pandemic prevented him from coming into province.
- Property continues to deteriorate.

Pictures of the property were presented and the official building report was given;

- Cottage is deteriorated and settling
- Roof is damaged and sagging in the centre of the low slope portion.
- Chimney is deteriorated and cracking. Some bricks missing
- Shed at rear is significantly damaged and settled, open to the elements.
- Recommend the buildings be demolished.

Mr. Martin went over the administrator recommendations which included;

- The dwelling is severely neglected and dilapidated.
- The dwelling meets the *Municipal Government Act* definition as “dangerous and unsightly”.
- It is therefore our recommendation that an “Order to Remedy Condition” be issued and that the Order be a Demolition Order issued from Council to the owners.



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- The Order should state to the owners that the dwelling is to be demolished and all debris be removed and disposed of in the appropriate manner within thirty (30) days.
- If the property owner fails to comply the Municipality will complete the same and recover the costs.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the property at 763 Highway 312, Englishtown, NS be demolished.

Motion Carried.

The second premise is at 47778 Cabot Trail, Tarbot, NS. PID 85041416.

- Complaint was received in November 2021
- Unable to contact an owner or interested party.
- Only listed address or contact information on record is the property itself.
- Property was posted Dec 1 with notice of the date and time of this meeting.

Pictures of the property were presented and the official building report was given;

- Home appears neglected and dilapidated.
- Roof is damaged and leaking in several places.
- Building is open and accessible.
- Woodshed at rear of building also deteriorated, partially collapsed.
- Recommend the buildings be demolished.

Mr. Martin went over the administrator recommendations which included;

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- The dwelling meets the *Municipal Government Act* definition as “dangerous and unsightly”.
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It was moved by Councillor Organ and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that the property at 47778 Cabot Trail, Tarbot, NS be demolished.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of the November 29th, 2021, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor MacDonald that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of November 29th, 2021, be approved.

Motion carried.

CAO REPORT

Old Business

Working with Lester Tingley on the land survey in Ingonish. Mr. Tingley said the property doesn't look like it looks like on Property Online. Originally it was believed to be about 80 acres up there but we are not sure if this is the case.

Engagement sessions for the rink over this last week.

Tax sale was December 14th, 2021.

Audited statements are ready and need a motion to approve the statements.



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New Business

Tourism

Reconnected to the regional tourism groups, talked about what the groups are looking for.

BABTA AGM is coming up.

Ingonish is looking for a long-term strategy.

Destination CB is hearing a lot of discussion on the labour shortages, they want to align with efforts from CB Partnership with what they did with the Housing Study.

Winter Market Readiness Assessment RFPs are out and consultant will be hired next week.

Trails: snowmobile clubs assessed the damage and we had them prioritize the damage. Right now trails out of Baddeck are cut off, this is a problem since some hotels stayed open to accommodate the extra travelers.

Ongoing work for the completion of phase 1 of trail development at the waste management facility

General discussions with trail groups about their upcoming projects.

ARIA RFP closes Wednesday, Nov 15th.

Rec/AL

Meeting with Schools Plus.

Accessibility survey to be sent off to the Jennifer Keeping center at CBU, possibly having a spot on our website for this.

Need an update on the Dingwall space and still waiting on a solar light quote.

Healthy Alcohol Policy coalition with the province, looking to finalize the mission statement.

Reschedule the babysitting course.

Waiting on confirmation from Hike NS to promote the winter guided hikes.

Engagement session at the rink went well on Sunday (the 12th).

Need to price out some items for rebuilding the community garden.



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Senior Safety

ACTing Collectively has gone to the next level.

More one on one calls, what seniors want is to talk.

Seniors Care Grant, getting lots of call on this, especially for snow removal.

Thoughts and prayers for the missing senior in Middle River.

Public Works

Water: 33 feet, gaining 5 to 6 feet a day, slow process, we have to do filter back washes. Need a min of 45 feet for pressure.

Data Call: Divert NS is taking it over from the Province.

Province is looking into making retailers responsible for the EPR, bare the cost for their packaging, this may affect how we collect from businesses in the future.

Household hazardous waste, couldn't do it this summer. There is a lot that is dropped off and abandoned, wanting to look into our own HHW depot. GFL is coming to pick up this waste tomorrow.

Generators for the water supply sites. Neil's Harbour will have a built in one there and Lynk electric will give Kelly quotes for the other sites.

Finance

CAO needs an approval for audit reports.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor Organ to accept the final audited financial statements as presented.

Motion carried.

EDO

Engagement sessions are going well, and a report will be submitted following these sessions.

Housing survey is through the edit phase and potentially may release it next week.

Had a meeting with HART, round 2. Next week there is a meeting.

A lot of business plans coming in, combination of new businesses and existing businesses.

The CB Partnership are doing business breakfasts and potentially coming here in January.



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New training through the Partnership about manufacturing training.

Looking to push the TIANS initiatives back out again.

Other

The Provincial EMO is looking to do a regional EMO exercise around the island. They were looking for ideas for it and CAO MacEachen mentioned that we are actually in an EMO situation right now with all the flooding so there will be a debriefing on that.

Year 2022 is the UARB's year for a boundary review.

On December 2, 2021, the Village voted to stay as Village and not dissolve.

Washroom EOI was evaluated, and those successful businesses will be contacted in January about that.

Need a motion to have \$50,000 to come from the gas tax transfer of funds to go to three different groups for trail emergency repairs;

Crowdis Mountain Snowmobile Club 30k

Cabot Snowmobile Club 15k

St Ann's Bay Recreational Trail Society 5k

Councillor MacDonald asked if these groups have received money from the County prior to this. CAO said yes they have but these funds are related to emergency repairs.

Deputy Warden asked if North Highland Nordic has been contacted. Dan said we haven't reached out since the flood but is confident that if they needed assistance they would reach out.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacLeod to distribute 50k from gas tax transfer funds for emergency funding to fix the trails, these funds will only be used if disaster relief funding is not granted from the Province.

Motion carried.

Councillor MacDonald asked about the washroom funding and who was selected and the CAO said we are going to fund 4 of the 6 received.

RECESS

Warden Morrison decided not to take a recess.



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TAXATION UPDATE

CAO MacEachen welcomed Allan Bragg to the finance team.

As of today there is \$1.285 million outstanding. Of that, \$852,000 is current and \$431,000 is arrears. Compared to this time last year, there was \$1,067,000 total outstanding so we are \$386,000 to the good overall in our total.

Of the \$1,067,000 of last years number, \$1,067,000 was current so are \$214,000 better in our current compared to last years number.

In arrears there is \$603,000 outstanding that means we are \$171,000 better in arrears that last year.

Tender tax sale closed yesterday and 4 of the 6 properties listed were sold. The next property sale will be in January.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Warden Morrison mentioned that there was a meeting this morning with the provincial Department of Public Works and asked if any of the councillors wanted to add or repeat.

District 1

Councillor MacNeil discussed the damage from the recent rainstorm and mentioned the upcoming snow removal renewed contract for a local contractor for the gravel roads.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod discussed the following concerns at the Public Works meeting prior to Council;

- Gold Brook Bridge
- West Side Middle River
- West Side Big Baddeck - Rocking Horse Ranch
- The bridge in the Manse in Big Baddeck, inspectors will be checking it out and it is on the list.
- Zion road is reported in the area after the bridge towards the hill.

District 3

Warden Morrison said that speed reduction signs will be installed on hwy 105 near the Tim's and Irving to warn drivers to slow down.



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District 4

Councillor Longva discussed the following issues at the meeting with Steve prior to Council;

- Thanked Steve and Jamie for having a meeting with Council earlier and updating us on all the work being done after the storm and other scheduled work being done.
- Steve mentioned that both bridges are ready and on standby up the province until the foundation is ready for them. Councillor Longva stated that she hopes they are put in asap as its been a long time to be stranded.
- The signage at the Gaelic College is incorrect but Steve said signs were placed in wrong location and just have to be switched.
- The brush cutter on Murray Road cut on the water side and she expressed concern about that as it is cutting close to water and it is an environmental issue as well as an erosion issue. Constituents are concerned about no protection left from going into the water when roads are slippery. Steve said Public works will be putting in guard rails.
- Constituents are worried about the big changes in direction and location of the Tarbotvale Road and that for safety reasons a light should go in. Steve said that they will be putting in a guard rail all along that area with reflective strips on it.
- A constituent asked about the bridge on his private road, Steve said that is not a Public Works bridge but that the constituent should contact EMO to get info on how to proceed.

District 6

Nothing new to report.

District 7

Councillor Organ got a call about plowing on the side roads and getting complaints about the plow driver and she has brought those concerns to Steve.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald confirmed that Public Works is working with 2 contractors for sanding in Meat Cove.

Councillor MacDonald discussed the job postings local operators for the department of public works and as of today, nobody has applied.

Councillor MacDonald also asked for an update on the Dingwall Road at the meeting with Steve and confirmed that in the new year, when the capital project list comes out that they are 99.9% sure that it's a go.



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DISTRICT CONCERNS

District 1

Councillor MacNeil said the lights on the bridge are still out and said he knows they are working on it and there is still no street light at South Cove.

Councillor MacNeil thanked everyone who organized the Christmas Party, was a good time had by all.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod send thoughts and prayers to Mr. Gibson for his missing wife in Middle River.

Councillor MacLeod said that there is currently a shortage of bus drivers with the CBVRCE and Baddeck Academy was impacted with some drivers. As a result, cuts were made to two gravel roads bus stops to save time.

Councillor MacLeod wanted to have on record that once they are hiring or finished training the spare drivers that the routes be put back.

There are 3 families on Hillcrest Drive that need to walk to the main road to get the bus, they are elementary school aged children, so this is very dangerous on a busy road and the parents need to go work and some children in Middle River are not back home until 4:30pm.

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor Organ to send a letter to the Minister of Education requesting bus stops be re-instated after new drivers are hired. CC' MLA Keith Bain, Tara Gaskell and Susan Kelley.

Motion carried.

Councillor MacLeod is also going to request MLA Bain to ask this in the House and what they plan to do about this.

Councillor MacLeod requested the following amounts to be taken from her district budget;
\$275 to cover what was left to pay for free skating. Warden Morrison said that he would split that cost with Councillor MacLeod and to take that from his district budget.

\$500 to Middle River Hall to thank them for the support for the missing senior.



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District 3

Warden Morrison mentioned Dr. Leah Genge, a former Victoria County resident was acknowledged by Doctors Nova Scotia and that she was awarded the Physician Health Promotion Award and asked that a letter of congratulations be sent to her.

It was moved by Warden Morrison and seconded by Councillor Organ to send a letter of congratulations to Dr. Leah Genge.

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison mentioned that Nova Scotia Power has applied to the UARB to request that the ratepayers cover the substantial costs for Maritime Link which also included bonuses that were paid out to their executives. Warden Morrison mentioned that Premier Houston expressed his disappointment with this request and the Warden would like to make a motion to express our concerns as municipality to UARB that we agree with the Premier that those increases should not be paid and the bonuses should not be paid out by the residents of this province.

It was moved by Warden Morrison and seconded by Councillor MacNeil to send a letter of to the UARB to express our concerns as a municipality that these increases requested by Nova Scotia Power should not be paid out from the residents of this province.

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison congratulated Deputy Warden Dauphinee on his retirement from Parks Canada on December 28th, 2021.

Warden mentioned the Village of Baddeck voted to stay as a village and said we respect the decision of the rate payers.

CAO MacEachen said she is concerned that not everyone realizes that the County and the Village are separate entities and wanted to confirm and ensure with residents that we are two separate entities.

CAO and Warden will be meeting with the Village over the next couple of weeks and will report back to council if there is anything to report back on.

Warden Morrison mentioned the rink engagement session and confirmed that the County is an active participant and will work with any group that is taking that on. We are not making any commitments right now and if we do in the future it will always be brought to council first.



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District 4

Councillor Longva asked what the results of the EDPC meeting for demolition and Warden Morrison said that both properties were ordered for demolition.

Councillor Longva expressed concern over the lack of adequate cell service in the areas of North River and Tarbot. She said that a resident mentioned that there is a black box that can be installed on trees to get cell service. Councillor Longva asked if this could be looked into and Deputy Warden Dauphinee suggested she contact Develop Nova Scotia regarding this.

Councillor Longva asked when there will be a review the streetlight policy and Warden Morrison said we are going to discuss that at the next Council session.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee made a motion and seconded by Councillor MacNeil for a streetlight at Tall Pine Estates.

Motion Carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said that he would fill out the streetlight request form and send to Steff.

District 7

Councillor Organ getting along of complaints that Parks worked too slowly getting the repairs made.

Councillor Organ was frustrated over lack of communication and updates regarding the water and road repairs.

Councillor Organ asked when CBVRCE is coming to council and mentioned that they are losing 2 bus drivers in here area. CAO responded that the CBVRCE is coming to council on January 10th, 2022.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald mentioned that the postmaster from St. Margaret's Village is retiring so there was some concern as to what will happen to the postal service there because it will no longer be located where it currently is and it's a very valuable service to the residents in that community for over 60 years. There were a few businesses that said that they would possibly consider taking it over at their location and Councillor MacDonald directed them to Sean Tobin to get it passed onto Jaime Battiste.



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Councillor MacDonald made a motion to send a letter to Canada Post

It was moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to send a letter to Canada Post to reiterate the importance of the postal service in the St. Margaret's Village area. CC' MLA Bain

Motion Carried.

Councillor MacDonald mentioned that he is glad to see the Victoria County Transit bus service is back in the North.

CORRESPONDENCE

A letter of support was requested from Raising the Villages, but Councillor MacLeod asked if we could look further into this request as she does not hear a lot of what they are doing in the County.

CAO MacEachen requested Councillor MacLeod to look further into this and draft a letter of support if she sees fit.

COUNCIL MEETING

Next Council meeting is January 10th, 2022 at 5:00pm.

ADJOURN

It was moved by Councillor MacLeod to adjourn.

The Municipality of the County of Victoria County council session was adjourned at 3:00pm.