



**Victoria County Municipal Council**  
March 28, 2022

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers in Baddeck on March 28, 2022, at 2:00pm 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
- Alix Redden, CFO
- Stephanie MacLeod, Recorder
- Dan Coffin, Tourism Officer
- Ursula Melski, Communications

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.

Warden Morrison there was a slight change with the presentation order.

***It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor Longva that the Agenda for March 28, 2022, be approved.***

***Motion carried.***

**ALEXANDER GRAHAM BELL (AGB) FOUNDATION PRESENTATION – MARY TULLE**

Ms. Tulle gave a presentation about the Alexander Graham Bell Foundation (AGBF) and the creation of a new garden project in partnership with Parks Canada and Dr. Alana Pindar who concentrates on bee diversity and how that will contribute to the Mabel Gardens project.

Mabel Bell had precise documentation on how she planted her gardens, and those documents will be used to construct the gardens at the Alexander Graham Bell Museum. Her garden plans highlight the diversity to food protection, wildflowers and productive crops.

On August 5th, the AGBF will have a ribbon cutting ceremony and on the 6<sup>th</sup> there will be a Bell Dinner. The dinner will be hosted on the rooftop of the Museum. Please check their website for more details.

Ms. Tulle said Victoria County can contribute to the AGBF by promoting a “No Mow May”, promote the launch, activities and unveiling of the gardens on August 5<sup>th</sup> and sponsor a plate/table at the dinner.

Warden Morrison thanked Ms. Tulle for her presentation and opened the floor up to questions.

Councillor Longva said great presentation and so important to look after the bees.

Councillor MacLeod thanked Ms. Tulle for her presentation and happy to see this project come to life.

Councillor MacNeil said it is a great initiative.

Councillor MacDonald thanked Ms. Tulle for her presentation and said it is always nice to see her come to Council.

Councillor Organ said great presentation and asked if Ms. Tulle was going to take a version of the presentation to elementary schools and she said yes, and a goal is to have some children come and help plant and harvest.



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Deputy Warden Dauphinee thanked Ms. Tulle and said this is a great project and good to give the Bell's some more recognition and mentioned that maybe at some point the gardens can be expanded around the County.

Councillor Patterson mentioned that Victoria County was the summer home of the Bell family and perhaps maybe Mabel Bell lived in the shadows of Alexander, but it was her that was behind many of the accomplishments of her husband.

Warden Morrison thanked Ms. Tulle and said that Victoria County has a connection to Alexander Graham Bell, and it should be better promoted. Warden Morrison requested a sponsor package and Ms. Tulle said she will send one and thanked Council for their support.

***It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that “No Mow May” will be supported at all of Victoria County facilities.***

***Motion carried.***

**CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP VICTORIA COUNTY WELCOME GROUP – NORMA JEAN MCPHEE**

Ms. McPhee gave a brief overview of the Cape Breton Partnership Victoria County Welcome Group and some of the highlights included:

- Started in 2020, there are now 10 Welcome Groups.
- Councillor MacLeod is Chair of the Victoria County Welcome Group.
- 230 newcomers have been welcomed.
- More than 100 volunteers involved.
- Activities of all Welcome Groups include phone calls, tea/coffee, welcome baskets, text messages, community events and face to face events.
- Inviting representatives from the North to volunteer.
- Cultural Competency Training is offered to volunteers.
- Cape Breton Partnership Immigration Settlement Services: CBLIP (Cape Breton Local Immigration Partnership), Belonging is for Everyone campaign, Welcoming Ideas Bank, Immigrants Advisory Table, Connector Program and AIP (Atlantic Immigration Program).

Victoria County can help by telling friends and family about the Welcome Network, share promotions when you see them, send people to the Welcome website [www.welcometocapebreton.ca](http://www.welcometocapebreton.ca), host events and visit the Welcome Ideas Bank for more tips.

Warden Morrison thanked Ms. McPhee for her presentation and opened it up to questions.

Councillor Patterson thanked Ms. McPhee for her presentation and said that a lot of people tell him that people moved here because they came on vacation one time and loved it and are committed to being here, i.e. building/buying houses, starting businesses.



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Deputy Warden Dauphinee thanked Ms. McPhee and mentioned that there are new people coming to the Ingonish area and will look into getting volunteers.

Councillor Organ thanked Ms. McPhee and agreed with Deputy Warden Dauphinee and will look at finding some volunteers.

Councillor MacDonald also agreed with Councillor Organ and Deputy Warden Dauphinee and can we promote getting volunteers down North to have on the Welcome Group.

Councillor MacNeil mentioned that there is a Welcome Wagon event in Iona next week and will give the organizers of this event the contact info for Councillor MacLeod and Ms. McPhee to provide more ideas for this event.

Councillor MacLeod wanted to also mention that they are still looking for volunteers in this area as well.

Councillor Longva thanked Ms. McPhee for the presentation and mentioned the TimeBank and how they are doing a great job and are planning an event in May, and they are compiling packages and Councillor Longva will be handing those packages out personally to the newcomers.

Councillor Longva is also hoping to start up the suppers and get together again at the hall like the former Councillor MacInnis held.

Warden Morrison mentioned that Victoria County has shown growth so there is a need for the Welcome Network.

Warden Morrison acknowledged Juanita Macaulay and her group for also providing welcome baskets to newcomers in districts 1-4 for the last number of years.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes of the March 14, 2022, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

***It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of March 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2022, be approved.***

***Motion carried.***



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***Old Business***

- School Board responded - one bus driver is trained this week, and no changes to school zone in Cape North.
- Minister Env is looking to set up a meeting about Ingonish Wilderness.

Councillor Patterson hasn't heard anything back from the cellular funding and he also circulated a draft of a policy regarding publication of Council, Committee and Committee Reports on the Municipal Website. CAO requested Councillors have comments on that policy submitted by Friday.

Councillor Patterson also commented that he is still working on which Committee Minutes should be proposed to be posted and suggested to have a special committee or executive board to approve the Minutes before the next committee meeting. That committee or board can/should consist of the Warden and one member of Council, Committee Chair, one member of the Committee and the CAO.

Councillor Patterson requested Council to take a look at the draft of the policy and provide feedback and suggestions.

Warden Morrison mentioned the new form for making motions and had a few points of clarification, it doesn't not have to be submitted before Council, it can be presented at Council and then passed on to Steff at the end of Council.

CAO MacEachen confirmed that the RCMP Contracts, will be an 11.04% increase for this year's budget.

**CAO REPORT**

***Rec/AL***

- Cape North Placemaking in Dingwall is rescheduled for April 7<sup>th</sup> at 630pm.
- Accessibility Advisory Committee – survey will be posted on our socials and will be distributed to local organizations.
- Waiting to hear Council comments on the ACAP report.
- Community Garden – major restoration work is being done there. Not taking any requests for beds at this time. Beds and waterline work will be done at this site, hoping this year, but we will let the public know when they are ready.



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***Finance***

- Replies to the UARB are due tomorrow
- ICIP Grant due on the 31<sup>st</sup> for the wastewater and water line extension
- Going to advertise for a cashier/customer service assistant for the front desk as the Tax Department is now going to switch to a Revenue Department.
- Scheduling budget meetings.
- Successful Tax Sale on March 22. Sold 15 of the 17 properties.

***Tourism***

- Lots of meetings the last couple of weeks, on Tourism initiatives.
- DCBA – downtown music projects/Mainstreet Program
- Review Tourism Strategy. Council will hear more on this in the coming weeks.
- Community Development: Working with Ingonish Development Society on Community Master Planning and Placemaking. Met with a group in Baddeck regarding a pump track.
- Trails: final touches on the funding applications and budget finalizations and ARIA is continuing, ongoing.

***Public Works***

- EPR: Nova Scotia Provincial Government is looking more into this initiative. Not sure how this will affect us right now. We may have options on how we collect.
- Tenders close tomorrow for the warehouse in Baddeck and Dingwall.
- 13 applications for the Re-Use centre, we only have 9 slots available so there was a draw and the 9 groups for 3 weeks each that were selected were: Crowdis Mountain Snowmobile Club, Alderwood Rest Home Recreation, Rocking Horse Ranch, Baddeck Valley Community Hall, Baddeck Bay Hospital Auxiliary, Hospice Society of Victoria County, Baddeck Rugby, Baddeck Cat Rescue and BOLD.
- Sidewalks in Ingonish, tender out in phases.
- New Treatment technology is online at the WTP commissioning this week in Neil's Harbour.
- Inspectors from Environment and ICIP down looking at water utilities and issued some directives on just some small deficiencies.



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**Senior Safety**

- Completing Assessor Training all week for ACTing Collectively.

**Other**

- Regional EMO exercise planning in progress.
- Had a Community Consultative Group meeting - DOJ is contacting our residents to start PAC (Police Advisory Committee).
- Covid Vaccine policy - thoughts?

CAO recommends that we revoke the Covid Vaccine Policy while we are not in a state of emergency, once/if we got back into a Covid 19 state of emergency, we have it in effect again.

Councillor MacNeil asked about new employees and if they need to show proof of vaccination and CAO MacEachen said she is not sure if we are legally allowed to ask for it not but indicated that we will go back to the policy which states a proof of vaccination if a Covid 19 state of emergency is declared again.

Councillor MacNeil said we may run into staffing shortages if new hires who are not vaccinated have to leave their positions because they are not vaccinated, if we go into another state of emergency.

Councillor MacDonald asked what is it exactly that you are amending? CAO said currently we mandated that in our policy, you must be vaccinated, and you must wear a mask since that is what the Province had in place. The Province has now pulled back on that because there is no longer a state of emergency so we probably shouldn't have a more strict policy in place than the Province.

Councillor MacDonald then asked if new opportunities come up with the County, do those potential new hires have to be vaccinated and CAO said no they do not have to be vaccinated because we are not in a Covid 19 state of emergency.

CAO said although masks are not mandated to be worn, we are still mask friendly.

Councillor MacLeod agreed with Councillor MacNeil and asked if it could be left in the policy that proof of vaccination is a requirement for new hires.

CAO said when we put this policy in place in October, that was stated that proof of vaccination was a requirement and it was listed on the job descriptions.

***It was moved by Councillor Patterson and seconded by Councillor MacNeil to amend the Covid 19 Vaccination Policy to state that the policy is in place when there is a Provincial Covid 19 State of Emergency.***



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***Motion carried.***

Councillor Organ asked about the 11.04% increase for RCMP costs and asked what that is in dollar value and CAO MacEachen said it will be about \$2.2 million. Our current budget for RCMP is \$2million.

Councillor Patterson asked if we received an invoice for that and CAO said that we get billed quarterly and we have not received our bill yet. He also asked when our next quarterly bill is due and CAO said probably April

Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked if any other municipalities brought up a provincial police force and CAO said it was discussed at the board meeting, but the police forces are feeling the same crunch.

Warden Morrison mentioned the ReUse Centre and said if any of the groups had to cancel then the other groups will be contacted.

**RECESS**

Warden Morrison called for a 10 minute recess.

**TAXATION UPDATE**

Today we're at \$875,996 total outstanding, compared to \$991,591 this time last year for a total difference of **\$115,595** ahead.

Current outstanding is **\$31,877** higher than last year - \$519,685 as of today compared to \$487,808 this time last year.

Arrears outstanding is at **\$147,472** better than last year - \$356,311 compared to \$503,783 this time last year.

Since the last update, just about **\$87,000** has been collected toward outstanding taxes. A lot more money than that has come through the door though, because our tax sale by tender was on March 22 and it was resounding success.

Some stats put together by the tax department:

- 23 properties on original list
  - o 2 paid before tax sale date (9%)





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- 4 removed and deferred to public auction format (17%)
- 17 available for bid (74%)
  - 2 properties received no bids
  - 1 property received one bid but bidder decided to decline
  - 14 properties sold
    - 6 redeemable (six months)
    - 8 non-redeemable
- Received 254 eligible bids in total
  - 4 bids arrived late (not counted)
  - Most bids received on one property: 45
  - Least bids received on one property: 1
  - Bids ranged from \$1,500 to \$78k – a vast majority exceeded \$10k
  - Total surplus approximately \$247k (transferred to the capital reserve after 20 years)

A few comments on process:

- In tender vs. public auction, we are seeing that individuals submit bids for multiple properties and then will refuse if they are the successful on more than one. This creates additional work for our staff and also increases the timeline as a successful bidder has three days to pay or decline. This wouldn't be the case if the format was public auction.
- All unsuccessful bidders were all contacted which is additional effort but it seems to be greatly appreciated. Most people stated interest in future tax sales.
- We expected interest in the public auction scheduled for June will be considerable. It will also likely be the largest list of properties we've had available for public auction so we intend to require pre-registration likely a week or so in advance. Details to come.
- We will update our tax sale process listed on our website with additional details. The notable addition will be that once all payments are received, we will post a list of successful bid



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amounts. We will not be posting names. Once deeds are registered, the public can access this information through Property Online records.

We've been continuing to comment on the great work coming from the tax department but staff really need to be commended for the amount of time, effort and dedication to this tax sale. Coordinating 250+ bids is a huge task and it was all done seamlessly so please do extend praise that's well deserved.

Councillor Patterson asked about the surplus and asked why this has to happen, CFO said because some properties are redeemable, but not after 6 months but the MGA says if you can prove you have an interest in the land, you have 20 years to legally pursue that interest. The surplus has nothing to do with the actual land, it just refers to accessing the surplus. The surplus goes in a reserve for 20 years.

Councillor MacDonald asked about the highest bidders, how does it work to secure the payment, CFO said bank draft or cash within 3 days. You have to pay what is outstanding immediately, the rest owing must be paid in 3 days.

Warden Morrison asked if that surplus goes against our arrears and CFO said it does not, the taxes, interest and the fee is what gets cleared from taxes outstanding.

Warden Morrison commended and thanked the tax department, Alix, Cathi and Lauri.

## **DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**

### **District 1**

Councillor MacNeil had the following concerns:

- Still no gravel at the washout repair in Iona
- Number of bad potholes in dire need of patching
- Will contact Steve MacDonald on Spring grading and make sure that mowing and cutting will be done in the District this year

### **District 2**

Councillor MacLeod shared the reply she received from the Provincial Department of Public Works and it read as follows:

*"WS Middle River Rd, the detour has been hard on the road causing some major potholes and the bridge on Cabot Trail will be sometime in early construction season before traffic can use, hopefully early summer, PW has committed to doing some paving on WS Middle*



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*River Rd, estimates of cost are being reviewed now, and how much work will be determined by available funding. Hopefully the work can take place as early as possible if weather cooperates.”*

***It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor MacNeil that a letter be sent to Minister Kim Masland requesting extra funding that is necessary to pave West Side Middle River after the damage from the last November storm. Depending on the funding we will know how much of the West Side will get paved. Just for a background this is a result of the detour where we have daily traffic and it is the only route to go to the Cabot Trail, traffic is heavy on a daily basis, there is no more road, it is just potholes. CC’ MLA Main and Liberal Leader, Iain Rankin.***

***Motion carried.***

Councillor MacLeod also mentioned that in the coming spring, we will have very bad sections in Big Baddeck Road with deep potholes that will need patching and the gravel road will need maintenance after the melting of the snow in all District#2 gravel roads.

### **District 3**

Warden Morrison had an opportunity to tour several locations within the Village and in some areas in District 2 with Steve and MLA Bain to assess pothole damage and thanked them for their time.

Councillor MacNeil asked to schedule the quarterly meeting with Steve MacDonald and Jamie Chisolm and CAO said yes, we can get that scheduled.

### **District 4**

Councillor Longva had the following concerns:

- Is there a timeline on the bridge at West Tarbot being repaired or replaced? It has been out since the rainstorm in November that caused many bridges to wash out. It is right next to an elderly couple living on that road and cuts off their access to their adjacent property where their rental/guest house is located. Their driveway was also badly damaged by access water in the brook that took out the bridge. For them to go to their rental they must drive out one end of the West Tarbot Road and go several miles to go in the other end of the road, when they can walk to it in 5 minutes when the bridge is working, it also cuts them off from their closest neighbours who check in on them.



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- There is a deep pothole at the bridge in Munroe's Point. It is very dangerous.
- I mentioned this last meeting but will mention it again, there is major washout in Tarbot, by Anna Carmichaels, undermining the road in places.

**District 5**

Councillor Patterson mentioned the potholes all over the roads, dirt roads all need grading and south side on the Kempt Head Road needs patching and/or repaving.

**District 6**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said there are lots of washouts on shoulders. We need signage just south of the marina, really bad bump in that area, he is also going to follow up with Steve about meeting with residents in the Ingonish area.

**District 7**

Councillor Organ has been receiving calls about the hole at the bottom of Ocean View Drive in Neil's Harbour, cars are going into the other lane to avoid this hole. The County Waterline is in the middle of this as well. She is also receiving calls about the shoulders of the road and pavement undermining on the White Point Road.

**District 8**

Councillor MacDonald had the following concerns:

- Shoulder washout in Cape North hill by Cabot Fire Department, a better approach to maintaining this section as it is continuously washed out (shoulders)
- Dingwall road update when will we be expecting work to begin, the road is the worst it has ever been, and needs attention.
- Government Wharf Road in Dingwall needs grading along with all D8 gravel roads.
- A section of Cabot Trail at the bottom of Schoolhouse Hill needs attention.
- Sections of roadway along Bay Road Valley into St Margaret's Village sections need attention.



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**DISTRICT CONCERNS**

**District 1**

Councillor MacNeil said the Welcome Wagon Event for newcomers in the area is on April 10, 2022. Looking for pins and possible swag and pamphlets on Victoria County to have on hand.

***It was moved by Councillor MacNeil and seconded by Councillor MacLeod that a letter be sent to Minister Druhan with the Department of Education requesting a meeting to discuss the rural bussing issues.***

***Motion carried.***

**District 2**

Councilor MacLeod mentioned that on August 11th, the Village formed a committee regarding the green space (tennis court) on Shore Road and asked if it would be possible to have an update about the project and maybe to ask if they are able to get the project going? The community has waited a long time for this.

Warden Morrison said we will send a note to the Village for an update on this.

Councillor MacLeod also thanked the parents of Middle River and Big Baddeck, for their patience regarding bussing. The bus service has been reverted as of March 27<sup>th</sup> to September bus times and thank you to CBVRCE for getting the services back in place.

***It was moved by Councillor MacLeod and seconded by Councillor Longva that a letter be sent to Susan Kelley with the CBVRCE to thank her for getting the bus service back in place.***

***Motion carried.***

Councillor MacLeod requested a meeting to discuss the local improvement bylaw. CAO agreed and will set up a meeting.

Councillor MacLeod also asked about the Community Grants and CAO said lots of interest is coming in and the due date for submission is March 31<sup>st</sup>.

**District 3**

Warden Morrison made the following proclamation for Lyme Disease Awareness Month:



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**PROCLAMATION**

LYME DISEASE AWARENESS MONTH  
May 2022

WHEREAS Lyme disease is a serious illness caused by the bite of a black-legged tick infected with the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*: and

WHEREAS black-legged ticks carrying a variety of diseases or illnesses can now be found in all parts of Nova Scotia; and

WHEREAS awareness, education and practicing preventative measures, such as daily tick checks and proper tick removal, can help reduce your chances of contracting tick borne diseases;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Warden Bruce Morrison, on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Victoria, do hereby proclaim May 2022 as “Lyme Disease Awareness Month”.

Dated at Nova Scotia, this 28th day of March 2022.

Warden Morrison mentioned inviting Erica Shea with NuDawn to Council to discuss their housing initiatives.

Warden Morrison requested the Provincial Department of Public Works let Council know how many J class roads there are in Victoria County.

**District 4**

Councillor Longva made the following motions:

***It was moved by Councillor Longva and seconded by Councillor MacDonald we ask our staff to send out a survey to all constituents in Victoria County asking if they are interested in opening their homes to refugees fleeing from the Ukraine.***

***Motion Carried.***

***It was moved by Councillor Longva and seconded by Councillor MacNeil to strike a committee, which would be comprised of interested councillors, minimum of 2, and members of the public, to devise a plan to create a billeting program for those interested in taking in refugees and to report the progress back to council regularly.***



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***Motion Carried.***

Councillor Macleod asked what the plans are and how are we going to get the people here and Councillor Longva said the committee would look into how Victoria County people can billet these people and that there is a priest in CBRM she has been in contact with and he is keeping track of people who want to house them.

Warden Morrison asked about the survey and asked if she had a sample one and Councillor Longva said she will come up with a survey and give it to the Communications Officer.

***It was moved by Councillor Longva and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to request Nova Scotia Power to move the streetlight in the yard at 41682 Cabot Trail to the end of the driveway at the road, at the same address.***

***Motion Carried.***

**District 5**

Councillor Patterson commented that they reinstated the cooking classes at the Hall in Big Bras d'Or.

**District 6**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said that new driver testing has not been in Ingonish for quite some time and requested a letter be sent to get it reinstated again in the North.

***It was moved by Deputy Warden Dauphinee and seconded by Councillor Organ a letter be written to Minister Masland and MLA Bain requesting that the Registry of Motor Vehicles Driver Testing be reinstated to provide this service North of Smokey.***

***Motion carried.***

**District 7**

***It was moved by Councillor Organ and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that \$1,000.00 be taken from District 7 budget for the North Ingonish Vol. Fire Dept.***

***Motion carried.***

***It was moved by Councillor Organ and seconded by Councillor MacDonald that \$1,000.00 be taken from District 7 budget for the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Vol. Fire Dept.***

***Motion carried.***

Councillor Organ requested that a streetlight at 35618 Cabot Trail in Ingonish be removed and relocated further down their driveway where it is darker.



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***It was moved by Councillor Organ and seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to request a streetlight be removed and relocated at 351618 Cabot Trail.***

***Motion carried.***

**District 8**

Councillor MacDonald had the following motion:

***It was moved by Councillor MacDonald and seconded by Councillor Organ that a letter be sent to Susan Kelley with the CBVRCE regarding the disruption to students and parents that do not have adequate bussing transportation. When a driver is absent or there is a bus breakdown, no replacements are available. This causes missed time and education for the students. On more than one occasion, busses have broken down and no mechanic is available North of Smokey and there are no replacements busses offered in an adequate timeframe. CC' Tara Gaskell***

***Motion carried.***

**COMMITTEE REPORT and OTHER UPDATES**

Deputy Warden Dauphinee will forward the Housing Survey to rest of Council and said we might have to start developing lands that we own for housing, there is a huge staffing shortage and lack of proper housing plays a part in this.

Councillor MacLeod mentioned the VCT (Victoria County Transit) AGM was on March 23 and that the VCT Board are taking over the VCT administrative operations effective April 1 and interviews are this week for an administrator for that.

**COUNCIL MEETING**

Next Council meeting is April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022, at 2:00pm.

**ADJOURN**

The Municipality of the County of Victoria County council session was adjourned by Councillor MacLeod at 4:40pm.