



Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at Council Chambers in Baddeck on February 6, 2023, at 2:00pm with Warden 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 and Recreation Manager

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.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

CALL TO ORDER

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

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil seconded by Councillor MacLeod that the Agenda for February 6, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

WIND TASK FORCE – AMANDA MOMBOURQUETTE, BRENDA CHISOLM-BEATON and TYLER MATTHEIS

Presentation Highlights:

- Largescale offshore wind potential widely recognized by industry.
- Competitive due to wind speed, seabed, water depth and local capability
- Formerly Stranded resource with no commensurate scale domestic load requirements
- Rapidly emerging market opportunities for hydrogen and clean fuels mean this tremendous resource is no longer stranded •Value is recognized by global investors who are racing to establish large scale ventures in Nova Scotia –and more specifically right here in the Strait Area
- Municipal, provincial and federal governments embracing the opportunity to support development of offshore wind to serve key economic, climate and geo-political imperatives.
- Relatively small (11TWh) winter peaking system(2200MW). Anticipated growth through electrification is mitigated by efficiency gains across heating and other technologies.
- Once the 2030 targets of 80% renewable electricity supply and elimination of coal for electricity generation, additional renewable energy resources will need to provide non-energy products in addition to energy in order to compete. Resources that can provide firm capacity during peak winter periods will be more valuable. These types of resources will be important in meeting the (as yet undefined) federal Clean Electricity standard for 2035.

Ms. Chisolm-Beaton asked if Victoria County Council would consider designating someone to sit on the task force.

Warden Morrison said this will be a discussion and we will get back to you in the next couple of days with our answer.

Questions:

Councillor MacNeil asked if Nova Scotia Power is involved in the task force and Ms. Mombourquette said a lot of the discussions with Nova Scotia Power will be had with the Province so they haven't been involved in the task force too much.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

Councillor MacDonald asked if there is any specific areas or targets that the task force is looking at in Victoria County?

Ms. Mombourquette said that will be left up to the Province to decide where these off shore developments will be.

Councillor MacLeod asked about communications with the communities, is this up to the municipality to convey this information to residents.

Mr. Mattheis said as it moves forward these engagements could change but the sessions haven't been decided yet.

Councillor Longva asked what impact offshore wind has on the sea floor and ocean and I know some of my residents have concerns with this.

Ms. Mombourquette, environmental impact assessments will be required and there will be people at the engagement sessions to address issues that residents may have.

Councillor MacNeil asked if there was a possibility of having structures put in the Bras d'Or Lakes?

Ms. Mombourquette said to her knowledge, no developers have looked at putting these structures in the Bras d'Or Lakes.

Warden Morrison asked if you're looking for support from the Municipality and Ms. Mombourquette said we are looking for participation.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the January 23, 2023, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the Victoria County Municipal Council Minutes of January 23, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

CAO REPORT

Action Items

- Baddeck washrooms are open year-round - at least one
- Contacted Steve MacDonald about attending Council- awaiting date.
- Develop NS (BuildNS) will be attending Council in February
- Municipal Services on Private Roads - documents and Recommendation were sent to Council previously. CAO's recommendation is for Council to adopt the Municipal Collection on Private Roads Policy.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee agreed with the policy and said it's a great first step.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacLeod to accept the recommendation from CAO to adopt the Municipal Collection on Private Roads Policy.

Motion Carried.

CAO MacEachen said we will put that policy in place immediately.

- Comfort Centres - See latest update on costing, and Comfort Centres that were approved.

There was discussion around the additional costs of generators for comfort centres. CAO asked for Council approval of an additional \$24, 568 for comfort stations to get generators. Out of the 8 stations, 2 need the additional funding.

On Motion of Councillor Organ seconded by Councillor MacLeod to disperse the \$92,000 to 8 comfort centres instead of 11 as previously approved.

Motion Carried.

Boundary Review Public Hearing will be held in Council Chambers on April 18th, 2023.

Finance

- Compiling input and ideas from strategic planning session for next steps
- Audit planning has begun with Grant Thornton
- Start first budget day planning – need to select day. Possibly February 21, 2023.
- Ad for public rep for Finance/Audit Committee has been extended to February 17
- Drafting municipal fee policy (council policy)
- Tax sale prep ongoing for March 28 sale
- Tax Update, we are ahead \$151,798 from last year.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

Public Works

Waste Management:

- In the process of procuring a 2016 “new to us” transfer truck. It’s being shipped down from Montreal and should be in Dartmouth this week. We will go up and see it/test drive it prior to purchase.
- Former Ingonish school roof tender has been posted and will be closing February 17th.
- Cell #1 (Baddeck) is being surveyed to determine our requirements for upgrades related to our current leachate collection system.
- Received a quote for solar at the Baddeck Transfer Station. \$225,000 (would have been \$92,000 had we done this 3 years ago). Will be a budget discussion.
- New side loader is on schedule for the end of March.

Water:

- We will be shutting off the water in Neil’s Harbour to do some leak detection on February 6, 2023.
- Messaging to water customers related to water rate increase soon.
- Meeting with Neptune on February 21st regarding the roll out of our new meters.

Tourism and Recreation

Tourism:

- Working with Destination Canada, Tourism Nova Scotia, Destination Cape Breton and Inverness County on a Cluster Mapping pilot project for Victoria County and Inverness County.
- Met with Destination Cape Breton to review current and upcoming projects and Opportunities to improve tourism conditions in our area.
- Met with Tourism Nova Scotia to continue planning the influencer visit to Ingonish for Feb 9th-11th in order to help promote the area as a Premier Winter destination.

Recreation:

- Signed agreement with Bicycle Nova Scotia for analysis and assessment of our area for certified Bicycle routes and steps to take for increased ability to serve the cycling community.
- Completed class presentations and surveys of students to gauge interest in different forms of physical activity. Results will help direct future efforts in programming for this age cohort.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

Trails:

- Met with Build Nova Scotia to discuss next steps and upcoming plans for Seawall trail development.
- Had discussions with Crowdis Mountain Snowmobile Club and Cabot Snowmobile Clubs on current season and projects they are working on to enhance sections of their trails.
- RFPs for Phase 3 and Upgrade 2 will be ready to distribute soon and a Bidders meeting has been set for February 17th at 2pm here in the Council Chambers.

Community Development:

- Baddeck Beacon Project – Selection Committee met for their 1st meeting last week and have begun some groundwork on establishing a terms of reference and selection process for a community led project steering committee.

Senior Safety

- More seniors' groups and events have been up and running again since covid, so Senior Safety has been able to do more public outreach. Reach out if you want the Senior Safety Coordinator to bring information to your event.
- We are currently seeking funding to assist with some accessibility upgrades for the Court House parking lot and entrance.
- There seems to be ever increasing number of Frauds and Scams targeting seniors in our communities. If you are worried that you have been the victim, call your local RCMP detachment, or find more info from Canadian Anti fraud Centre or Senior Safety
- Senior Safety will connect any seniors interested to learn how to play chess with Charlie who teaches and connects players.

Other

- Ongoing discussions with Smokey
- Scheduling a meeting to discuss C&D changes, and Shell future.
- Ambulance – EMO has sourced a "new to us" ambulance. Next step is asking each FD that has an interest in using this an a MFR truck, to make a formal ask. - Great news!!
- Province had Fiona Debrief session. Lyle attended and is preparing a report for VC response.

Councillor MacLeod asked if staff would look into any provincial or federal funding for the solar panels and CAO said yes, we will always look into funding opportunities.

RECESS

Warden Morrison called for a 10-minute recess at 3:09pm.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District 1

Councillor MacNeil had the following concerns:

- Receiving a number of complaints about unsightly premises and dumping on the Nyanza Wharf Loop Road
 - Old cars and trailers and debris throughout the area. Beavers have dams and now some of the debris is partially underwater which could be a major concern.
 - Debris believed to have come from a previous unsightly property.
 - I sent in a formal complaint to EDPC they were supposed to investigate on Friday.

District 2

Councillor MacLeod read parts of a letter from local resident Joe Harvey, that was sent to her:

Councillor MacLeod said she received emails and letters from Mr. Harvey. Mr. Chris King and Stephen Kerr, who is present in Council as she made a mistake at last Council when she said she has not received any complaints about the new rink from residents in her district. That was a mistake.

From the letter:

I request that the warden's prejudice at the January 9, 2023 meeting of council be tabled and discussed by council as an agenda item at the next meeting of council. I want to ensure there is a public record of this conduct and trust the minutes and outcome of the same will be made available on the municipal website.

Deputy Warden said Warden Morrison did a good job and has no issues, this is not our issue.

From the letter:

The Council needs to answer why they have opted to provide this sort of money to a project with no contingencies. i.e., Why were there no conditions such as openness, transparency, public engagement attached to this commitment of our money? Please ensure this is discussed at the next council meeting and ensure the discussion and resolution is part of the minutes.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

Councillor Longva said she agreed with this part of the letter, I didn't see any financials, CAO responded and said there were contingencies on it and the rink has not received any money yet. Money is contingent on the project receiving Federal/Provincial funding.

Councillor MacNeil said that the County said from the beginning that we weren't going to be owning a recreation facility, we possibly could look into having our offices there and that if we didn't have a rink in Victoria County, we would be going backwards.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said this is a Baddeck issue, its not a County issue. The Village of Baddeck needs to step up. If we are being asked to contribute a \$1 million for a \$25 million investment, then I support that.

From the letter:

Any declared conflict of interest prior to voting on the financial committal by council is requested as well. If no conflict was stated please declare the same for the public record. Any member of Council who has pecuniary interest in the proposal is in conflict with the Municipal Conflict of Interest Act. If there is financial conflict present, this should be disclosed by the council.

Councillor MacLeod mentioned that Warden Morrison had stepped down from the Board that was creating a steering committee.

Warden Morrison gave a timeline of when he was on the steering committee, once the conversation started about a community centre and possibly the County renting office space, the Warden sent a letter to the Chair indicating he would be stepping down from the committee.

Warden Morrison said he was not a member of the VHCC board of Directors, he was asked by that board to join other community members to sit on the Steering Committee to pursue a new recreational centre. He officially resigned in writing from the steering committee once municipal office rental became a topic of revenue for a potential new building.

Councillor MacNeil said he attended a meeting with Councillor Longva and that's all I attended.

CAO said that Council agreed to ask CB Partnership to hire a consultant and said the mistake we made was agreeing with the consultant on "blue sky" thinking, I was not aware that this was the intention of the consultant.

Councillor Longva said why not think big. It is supposed to be a community thing and the community is still being excluded, they just want input.

CAO said that is steering committee issues not County issues, Councillor Longva said the County needs to take a leadership role.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said it is a Village of Baddeck issue. It is not a council issue.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

There was discussion between Mr. Kerr and Council.

Mr. Kerr expressed his frustrations with Council and Council not addressing his Vision document.

Warden Morrison had to remind Mr. Kerr to regain order and not to raise his voice and or curse in Council Chambers.

CAO MacEachen invited Mr. Kerr to bring his proposal with a solution to Council. Warden Morrison said the door to Council is open for you and your proposal will be given the same consideration as the rink proposal.

Mr. Kerr expressed his doubts that his proposal would be given the same consideration and CAO MacEachen and Warden Morrison assured him it would.

Mr. Kerr said there is no vision here about the future of Baddeck infrastructure.

Councillor MacLeod said the committee is trying to be part of the solution in getting a new rink.

Warden Morrison said he doesn't think anyone knew how bad the rink was until after the engineer's report came in and the courthouse is in the same situation.

Mr. Kerr asked why he wasn't asked if he had any questions with the wind presentation and Warden said all you have to do is put your hand up and Mr. Kerr said he should have been called upon and Warden Morrison said we will do that in the future.

Councillor MacLeod said her Provincial Public Works concerns were sent to Steve MacDonald.

District 3

Warden Morrison said there was a resident wondering about solar power and asked if that would fall under our PACE policy and CFO said it does.

Warden Morrison thanked staff and Council for the work done at the Priority Planning Sessions last week.

District 4

Councillor Longva had the following concerns/requests:

- \$300 from district budget to the Baddeck Women's Curling Bonspiel.
- Councillor Longva addressed why she voted in favour of supporting the funding to the rink and added she hopes the new rink will be built on a space big enough to house all organizations.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

- Thanked residents who contributed to the strategic priorities' questions, and she will be providing some feedback at the seniors lunch this week.

District 5

Councillor Patterson addressed the power outages from the past weekends storm.

District 6

Deputy Warden Dauphinee had no concerns.

District 7

Councillor Organ had no district concerns.

District 8

Councillor MacDonald had the following concerns:

- Received numerous calls, regarding recent and past power outages in district 8 area. There were damages to appliances/ electronics and residents have been told to reach out to Nova Scotia Power. I also am inquiring as to frequent interruptions, more often than usual. This last storm area residents were without power for up to six hours.
- I would like to make a motion that we ask representatives from Nova Scotia power to come to Victoria County Council for an updated presentation with stats on outages and service interruptions etc. as the UARB has just approved, a 14% increase for 2023-24. Would like to be updated on progress of infrastructure and area maintenance that is being suggested or taking place for Victoria County.

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Patterson to invite Nova Scotia Power to come to Council to provide updates about outages, services and maintenance in Victoria County.

Motion Carried.

- Request to inquire with Bell Aliant, on the status of backup battery for land lines, some seniors in this district with the latest power outage were without landline usage. This causes great concern with lack of communication when emergency services may be requested fire police, or ambulance.

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Longva to write a letter to request information from Bell Aliant about the status of backup batteries for land lines.

Motion Carried.

Victoria County Municipal Council
February 6, 2023

- Resident of Big Interval on this side of the District 8 County line have experienced little or no cell service since the last month. When residents call in their providers, they are told there are no issues on their end and to use Wi-Fi calling. Had a conversation with the owner of Maple Ridge Cabins who explains the service is terrible. He has called numerous Bell representatives, and he's getting no results. This internet is terrible for business and he has taken cancellations from out of town due to the issue of no cell service. More importantly, again, the importance of 911 emergency services required by residents and businesses of Big Interval.

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to contact Bell Cellular to request they come to Council so they can respond to the critical concerns mentioned above.

Motion Carried.

- Received emails regarding service and maintenance of roads in District 8. All emails have been forwarded to MLA Keith Bain and Steven MacDonald.

COMMITTEE REPORT

Planning Advisory Committee met last week, once the standard planning goes throughout the entire municipality the Committee will form an Area Advisory Committees for areas around the County.

OTHER

On Motion of Councillor Patterson, seconded by Councillor Longva to nominate Councillor MacNeil to be on the Wind Task Force

Motion Carried.

Councillor MacLeod said we should reach out to community members as well to be on the task force.

CORRESPONDENCE

All sent out and heard from the Provincial Department of Works regarding the golf cart pilot project and this was denied again.

COUNCIL MEETING

Next Council meeting is February 21ST at 2pm.

ADJOURN

Councillor Organ made a motion to adjourn at 4:12pm.

X

Approved by: Steff MacLeod
Executive Assistant

X

Approved by: Bruce Morrison
Warden