

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held via Zoom on May 23, 2023, at 2:00pm with Warden Morrison in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Paul MacNeil

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

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Allan Bragg, Manager of Finance

Dan Coffin, Tourism and Recreation Manager

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications and Marketing Coordinator

ABSENT

District #2- Perla MacLeod

Deputy Warden Dauphinee 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.

Warden Morrison mentioned that it was National Paramedics Week and acknowledged all our paramedics and recognize our own Norman MacDonald.

CALL TO ORDER

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

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor MacNeil that the Agenda for May 23, 2023, be approved with the addition.

Motion Carried.

NEPTUNE PRESENTATION – PETER TAKACS AND ANDREW ROOKE



Victoria County Water Meter Replacement
Program

Neptune Technology Group

Win Your Day

- North American Made Products
- Over 125 Years in Business
- 100% Focused on Water Market
- Over 38 Million Meters Sold – Market Leader
- Over 4,000 R900® AMR/AMI Customers



Installation Methodology–

The main installation portion includes a series of important ongoing tasks that drive the program. Territory Assignments and Area Management A geographical breakdown of the County into specific installation territories is formulated based on the database provided. This methodology of “sweeping” is an essential component of Neptune’s success. Customer Communication Plan and Appointment Management Neptune’s extensive communication plan which includes several customer appointments booking methods that are explained below.

Mailers

Tri-Fold Pamphlet

The tri-fold provides a clear, comprehensive guide to everything a customer needs to know about the meter replacement program, from how to make an appointment, to water conservation tips

Reminder Notice

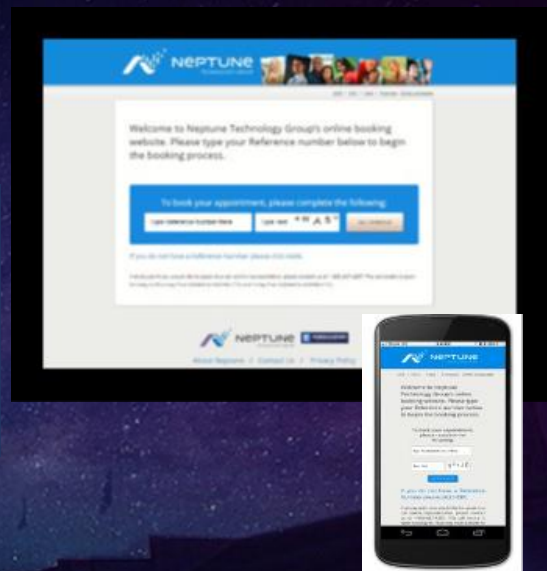
Homeowners will also receive notification which may reference bylaw information. The letter provides all the necessary information required for a homeowner to book an appointment.

Door Tag

While technicians are out in areas to conduct installations, they will call on houses that did not make appointments. A door tag will be left at any residences where in person contact was not made.

Real-Time Online Booking

Neptune's online appointment website (watermeterappointment.com) allows your customers the ability to book, cancel, or reschedule an appointment time 24 hours a day.



CALL CENTRE

Headquartered in Mississauga, Ontario, Neptune's Call Centre provides exemplary support and an outstanding customer experience for all of our projects from coast to coast.

24-hour emergency service:

In the unlikely event that a homeowner has an emergency concern, emergency service calls will be answered by a live agent.

Installation Process

THE INSTALLATION PROCESS

Installations will be carried out on an area by area basis. As technicians move into your area, you will receive a notification containing information on how to book your appointment. If you are a tenant, please contact the building owner when you receive this information. *Please do not contact Neptune until you received the notice with booking reference number.*

QUICK AND CONVENIENT

Appointments can be made to fit your schedule. The installation procedure requires approximately 30-90 minutes to complete, during which time the water will be shut off for a brief period. There is **no charge** for the meter or the installation.

PRIOR TO THE INSTALLATION

Please ensure the area around the existing water meter is clear and accessible, and leave ample room for the technician to work. Your existing shutoff valve should be located where the water service comes into your house. Check your main water shutoff valve to make sure it is operable.

QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

- Mr. Rooke said 48% of accounts booked their appointments and hoping to start installation next week.
- Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked what constitutes an emergency? Mr. Rooke said because there is an installation warranty so in case there is a leak after installation.
- Councillor MacNeil asked if residents could monitor their water levels on their own and Mr. Rooke said not at this time. It is not part of the contract, but the technology is there.

BELL ALIANT PRESENTATION – ISABELLE BOULET AND JEFFREY PREVOST

Ms. Boulet is government relations.

Mr. Prevost is a Senior consultant on the wireless team.

Each Councillor voiced their concerns and the main topics of concerns that were expressed were:

- Service disruptions during a power outage and the effects that has on the 911 system.
- Significant safety concerns with emergencies in no service areas.
- No cell reception in many areas across the County.
- The high cost of cell service for no service.
- Slow repair times.
- Back up batteries and lack of maintenance or upkeep on them.
- 100 Year Anniversary Celebrations for the Cabot Trail and partnerships with all levels of government and Bell.
- Bell Canada profits vs. lack of rural infrastructure.
- Fibre Op projects not being completed.
- Tower costs.
- Level of service to customers when travelling to areas without cell service.

Bell responded to Council concerns with the following comments:

- There are many factors that contribute to the length of time the batteries/backup will last. They are part of the yearly maintenance plan.
- The challenge for lack of service is the ruralness and the cost of putting in more towers that don't have enough residents to make it profitable for Bell Canada. There are no expansion plans scheduled for Victoria County in the near future.
- Many factors for repair time please contact Ms. Boulet with specific resident issues.
- There is a unique geography of the Atlantic region, this provides a challenge to cell service so even if Bell were to put more towers in, its still a challenge with geography and how the cell service works within the area. It has to be a reasonable expense so that

as a private enterprise there needs to be a return on investment in the areas where Bell is looking to put some of these services.

- It costs \$750,000.00 - \$1.5 million for a tower.

CAO said that Victoria County has started an initiative for 100-year anniversary and commented that Bell customers will be travelling to this area and please think about all your customers including residents and visitors. There are many levels of government making initiatives and we will be knocking on Bell's door to be part of these initiatives.

Mr. Prevost said Bell have no capital plans past 3 years but asked to have the 100-year plans sent to him and said Bell could potentially set up temporary sites.

Warden Morrison added that it is not a great reflection for Bell Canada since Baddeck was the summer home for Alexander Graham Bell, the inventor of the telephone. Cell service is basic infrastructure, it needs to be better.

Warden Morrison requested another meeting in six months to get any updates.

COUNCIL RENUMERATION PRESENTATION – GERALD WALSH

Mr. Walsh went over his report regarding Council remuneration.

Base compensation:

- Very much in line with other municipalities.

Benefits:

- Very much in line with other municipalities. Wouldn't recommend any changes.

Warden Morrison mentioned that Councillors can opt in or out of this if they so choose.

How are increases determined:

- Very much in line with other municipalities.
- Timing of the increases should be consistent. And go along with when there is an election.

Increases:

- Should agree to pay increased by cost of living done annually, this should be in a policy.
- The County does not currently have a policy in place for compensation for Councillors. Most municipalities have a policy so its something that should be considered moving forward.

Mr. Walsh did not recommend any changes at this time, other than drafting a policy.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee wanted to clarify that he will not collect a pension from the County.

Councillor Patterson asked if Mr. Walsh looked at medians and also asked if an hourly rate was ever looked at? It could vary greatly, depending on the week and Mr. Walsh said he has not looked at an hourly rate.

Councillor MacNeil agreed, a policy is needed and mentioned when councillors lost their tax credit and asked if Mr. Walsh thinks the province will consider this and Mr. Walsh said he wasn't really qualified to answer that question.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor MacNeil to accept Mr. Walsh's report as presented with looking at implementing the recommendations made in the report.

Motion Carried.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Are the max compensation rates in alignment with other counties? Is there a salary cap? And should/does the county publish councillor compensation?

CAO said the councillor compensation is included in our consolidated financial statements.

Mr. Walsh said Victoria County is consistent with other municipalities and there is no salary cap that he is aware of.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the April 25, 2023, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval.

Councillor Patterson mentioned cost of FCM from last council. CAO said we are totalling all expenses and what is charged on the County credit card.

Councillor Patterson clarified being a committee member versus a board member and the cost associated with it. Warden Morrison requested Councillor Patterson to break down the costs and send it to Council.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Longva that the Victoria County Municipal Council Minutes of April 25, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

DISCUSSION

- Fish Offal cost comparisons and there is not really a separate breakdown for fish offal but similar products ranged from \$30-\$150.
- It cost the County \$52,276.00 to process the fish offal and we received \$14,752.00 in tip fees. We will be billing extra costs/overages to the Co-op, as in the past.
- Gas tax discussion at the next Committee of the Whole meeting.

RECESS

Warden Morrison called for a 5-minute recess at 3:47

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Maintenance and patching have to be done on road east of ferry from Little Narrows all the way to MacKay's Point in Lower Washabuck.
- Shoulder Repair on washout on Gillis Point Road
- Patching in Grass Cove
- Repair of road at Gypsum Outcrop in Jamesville

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee take \$1000.00 from District 1 Budget to the Nova Scotia Highland Village for their Next Chapter Campaign.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor Longva to take \$1000.00 from District 1 Budget to Grandona Branch 124 Royal Canadian Legion to assist with purchase of new cooler.

And

\$1000.00 from District 1 Budget to Central Cape Breton Community Venture for sponsor of World Ocean Day Celebrations.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 3

- Speaking on behalf of Councillor MacLeod as well.
- Newcomers event in Baddeck hosted by BOLD. Was a great event and thanked and acknowledge BOLD.
- Baddeck Waterfront is requesting a sidewalk be painted near Jones Street.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Longva to write a letter to the local Department of Public Works requesting a sidewalk be painted at the Jones Street and Water Street intersection.

Motion Carried.

- Warden Morrison mentioned the bad car accident near the Baddeck intersection and HWY 105. The County is requesting, yet again to reduce the speed limit to 60 km/h.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to write a letter to the Provincial Department of Public Works requesting a speed reduction of 60km/h in this area.

Motion Carried.

- Warden Morrison requested CAO to contact other CAO's and First Nations neighbours to be part of that letter.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Longva to write a letter to the District Health Authority requesting an update on the capital work to be carried out at the Victoria Memorial Hospital in Baddeck, especially in regard to the exterior cladding of the building.

Motion Carried.

- Acknowledged local resident of Baddeck, Fraser MacLeod as he was selected as one of the coaches for Nova Scotia for the Indigenous Summer Games.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Organ to write a letter to Continuing Care regarding the replacement of crucial point of care equipment.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to write a letter to the Department of Municipal Affairs and Housing to maintain that the Municipality can't be held responsible to administer the Coastal Protection Act.

Motion Carried.

- CAO MacEachen also mentioned that as part of that report for coastal protection was also C&D changes and that will have significant impacts on the Municipality, we don't have the space and it will be a financially significant cost.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacDonald to contact the Department of Environment and Climate Change to request a meeting to discuss the new C&D regulations.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 4

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to write a letter to the Honorable Kim Masland, copied to Honorable Tim Houston, Peter Hackett, and MLA Keith Bain supporting the recent petition the residents of New Campbellton submitted in regarding the bad condition of their road. All dirt roads in District 4 have similar issues and deserve to have a safe and passable road as it is an essential service.

Motion Carried.

- I would like to thank Will Balsler and Kortney Dunsby for their presentation and recommendations to council regarding climate change.

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Councillor Organ to invite Chris Benjamin from Ecology Action Centre to come to a council meeting and give a presentation on building codes and the tiered building code system the Federal Government is implementing to make new builds more efficient and work towards stopping the burning of fossil fuels aiming for 0 carbon energy.

Motion Carried.

- A constituent was inquiring about the monthly road reports that Public Works and who has access to those reports and Warden Morrison instructed to contact Steve MacDonald for this list and if he doesn't get back to her, then we will invite him to come back to Council.
- Big Harbour Road/Plaister Mines Road: still no change to the sign.

- I wanted to give a huge thank you to the Stewards of St. Ann's for their hard work and dedication as a volunteer community liaison organization the past 20 years asking for regular updates from the mussel farm operators.

DISTRICT 5

- Number of people commenting on road signs, a lot of them are down or damaged. Contacted the two local supervisors but have not heard anything back yet.
- Newcomer's event last Sunday went very well, over 70 people.

DISTRICT 6

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor Patterson that a letter of congratulations be sent to Buddy MacDonald on the recent induction of his "Getting Dark Again" into the Cape Breton Music Hall of Fame.

Motion Carried.

- Number of inquiries for the grader to come to the District.

DISTRICT 7

- Still no parking sign for the school bus turning in White Point. I first requested this with Public Works on September 20, 2021.
- A big thank you to all who turned out for the Annual Gordie Budge community cleanup. Thank you to you all who picked up garbage and hauled it away, it is sad though if everyone put their trash in the appropriate place no community clean up would be needed. Thank you to the Municipality for supplying the bags and gloves.
- Thank you to the County and the contractors who participated in heavy garbage pick up "the best time of the year" great job but a reminder to anyone who had things left that was not picked up please remove it from the side of the road.
- I encourage anyone who has not made an appointment to get their new water meter to do so.
- I have had a few calls about the dredging material in North Ingonish; The material has been tested more than once no contaminants are present, the material has been placed on Harbour Authority property. The Harbour Authority does not have to grant access to the beach, there are two other access points on either end. As for the sand it will diminish as it dries out and locals have been taking it for their own use.
- I am in the process of getting the beach access stair repaired for the upcoming season.

DISTRICT 8

- The grader needs to come to District 8
- Meat Cove Road is appalling.
- Contact Public Works to get the RIM list for each district.
- Asked about the petition process and how that is done. Deputy Warden said to reach out to MLA Bain for this. CAO said the Municipality doesn't have anything and Councillor MacNeil has a template that he can send. Organ added that all VC Council should sign that petition.

On Motion of Councillor MacDonald, seconded by Councillor Organ to take \$1000.00 from District 8 Budget for Masonic Hall in Cape North for a new roof.

Motion Carried.

MOTIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

- EDPC Terms of Reference, need to make changes as we are working with Plan Cape Breton. Planning Advisory be changed to an Area Advisory.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacDonald to accept the terms of reference in relation to Advisory committees.

Motion Carried.

- Plan Victoria is under review with EDPC right now and will take drafts to the community and specific stakeholders.

Councillor MacNeil asked if Upland has been in contact with stakeholders and CAO MacEachen said community consultations weren't great, which is why we haven't accepted the plan yet.

Clean Foundation for PACE program has expired.

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to award the administration of the Clean Energy Financing Program to Clean Foundation for a period of 1 year (subject to positive evaluation on an annual basis), ending March 31, 2024 which is to be known as Clean Energy Financing (the "Program").

Motion Carried.

NS Department of Public Works J class agreement expired, need a new agreement. Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked who makes the decision when/what road is being paved and CAO said it can be either way between us or the Province. Resolution for a cost share agreement.

Councillor MacNeil asked if it is just the paving that is cost shared, and the municipality covers everything else, and CAO confirmed that was correct.

The following Resolution was then presented and passed:

Resolution of Council
Cost Share Agreement No. 2023-021

The following Resolution was passed at a meeting of the Council of the Municipality of the County of

Victoria on the 23rd day of May A.D., 2023

Moved by: Councillor MacNeil
Seconded by: Councillor Longva

“That the Warden and CAO MacEachen be authorized to sign Cost Share Agreement No. 2023-021”

Motion Carried.

I certify that the above Resolution was passed at the duly called meeting of the Municipality of the County of Victoria Council on May 23A.D., 2023.

CORRESPONDENCE

All forwarded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacDonald agreed that the residential (\$1.22) and commercial (\$2.12) rates are to remain the same for 2023-2024.

Motion Carried.

Budget 2023 -2024

Total revenue: \$15,835,800.00

Total expenses: \$15,834,849.00

Surplus: \$951.00

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to approve the 2023-2024 Budget.

Motion Carried.

- CEPI meeting June 1, 2023.

OTHER

Councillor MacNeil thanked staff on the great job they did with the heavy garbage pickup.

Councillor Longva thanked staff as well. Councillor Longva also mentioned welcoming meetings in her area as well and includes local carpenters, plumbers, etc. The timebank also organizes garbage pickup in the area as well and they were looking for a prize for volunteers.

Cape Breton Hospital Foundation golf fundraiser District 1-5 made a \$250 donation each.

On Motion of Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Longva for the County to contribute \$500.00 to the golf fundraiser as well.

Motion Carried.

Jessica Fogerty with the Cape Breton Partnership told Warden Morrison that any newcomers events, she would be happy to attend.

Councillor Organ asked CAO when the next meeting of the CCG group will be and CAO said we have tried but this is a good reminder to reach out again and get a meeting.

Councillor Patterson commented that he prefers to have in person meetings over Zoom and/or Teams.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions from the Public.

NEXT MEETING

June 12, 2023, at 2pm.

ADJOURN

Councillor MacNeil made a motion to adjourn at 4:46pm.