

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Ingonish at the Keltic Lodge on August 1, 2023, at 2:00pm with Warden Morrison in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Steff MacLeod, Recorder

Allan Bragg, Manager of Finance

Dan Coffin, Tourism and Recreation Manager

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications and Marketing Coordinator

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.

CALL TO ORDER

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

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee that the Agenda for August 1, 2023, be approved.

Motion Carried.

CLEAN FOUNDATION PRESENTATION – RACHAEL MITCHELL

Ms. Mitchell went over a short PowerPoint presentation:





CLIMATE CAPACITY

Municipalities and communities throughout Nova Scotia have been struggling to find **the resources, support and staff** to take action against the climate challenges that face them.

Community Climate Capacity Program can help.

4



COMMUNITY CLIMATE CAPACITY

funding provided by the Department of Environment and Climate Change Nova Scotia



CLEAN FOUNDATION

provide
staff resources and capacity



15 COMMUNITIES

Primary goal of CCC is to help communities:

- identify climate risks;
- assess opportunities; and,
- develop/implement climate adaptation and mitigation action.

CLEAN'S CCC INITIATIVE

- A **Climate Lead will be assigned to successful CCC recipients** to enhance their adaptive capacity, community resilience and greenhouse gas emission reductions.
- Communities will **have three years of support** for climate change work.
- Our objectives are to action:
 - funding applications;
 - ground implementation; and,
 - necessary policy development for **climate and sustainability considerations** in operational decision making.



The program is focused on building up **your capacity to implement climate action.**



PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Communities will be:

- Required to have an existing internal staff liaison to support the Climate Lead on the ground .
- Supported by a team of specialists at Clean to provide guidance and expertise on climate mitigation, adaptation, resilience and asset management.
- Provided with regular training and capacity building initiatives.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The Community Climate Capacity Program's application process will open in Fall 2023!

Who is eligible?

Municipal and local governments, not -for-profit organizations, indigenous organizations and communities, and municipal corporations or entities, who are struggling to find the resources, support and staff to take action on climate challenges.

We encourage collaboration between community organizations, municipalities and First Nations, and we are open to joint applications!



ROADSHOW

The Community Climate Capacity team is traveling around Nova Scotia (virtually and in-person) to meet with communities and discuss their needs as it relates to climate change.

During these initial meetings, we want to find out how we can structure our program to best support communities. So please, **tell us your needs, challenges and opportunities for climate action!**



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

Councillor MacNeil commented on provincial policies having an impact with climate change, in particular, smaller culverts, creating more flooding. Ms. Mitchell will mention this as part of her reporting structure with the province.

Councillor Longva spoke about the residents on the New Campbellton Road and they are planning an evacuation initiative and asked if these residents could apply for funding through your programs and Ms. Mitchell said there are different levels that might be able to assist with emergency management. The County would have to apply with the Foundation to work with the Clean Foundation and form a committee with Council and Municipal staff to support the Climate Lead/Champion.

Councillor Organ commented on coastal erosion and asked what kind of plans the province has for coastal erosion measures and Ms. Mitchell said she is not an expert in that area but there is a lot of work happening through St. Mary's University for green shore infrastructure projects but noted that the province is taking coastal erosion very seriously. If the County were to enter into an agreement with the Foundation, there could be expertise on this, and a study done for coastal erosion.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee commented on the lower impact that rural Cape Breton has on the overall impact on climate change, what we need here is better infrastructure. There is Federal funding available, but it has to be applied for by the Province so it's the province needs to get

onboard and take on this initiative, not everything can be put on the municipalities, if the province is asking others (municipalities) to do something, they need to do it themselves, first.

Warden Morrison agreed with Deputy Warden Dauphinee, the province needs to take on this coastal erosion act, it can't be just put on the municipalities to do it.

Ms. Mitchell said the Clean Foundation is not a governmental body but it is funded by the provincial government.

Warden Morrison asked if we were to partner with Clean Foundation, would we be contacting you? Ms. Mitchell said we would need a staff liaison and then the climate lead would report back to myself. We need to have a contact in the County, on the ground so that our climate lead can contact them for funding opportunities, presentations, etc. We are just trying to reduce the barriers with funding opportunities and applications.

CAO said she will discuss among the staff and decide which way we will move forward.

Ms. Mitchell said she will be bringing back Council's concerns back to the province and hopefully the next time Clean Foundation comes to Council there will be a provincial representative in attendance as well.

RECESS

Warden Morrison called for a 10-minute recess at 2:48.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the June 12, 2023, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval with one noted change from Councillor Longva with changing the name "Mary" to "Marian".

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacLeod that the Victoria County Municipal Council Minutes of June 12, 2023, be approved with the noted change.

Motion Carried.

CAO REPORT/DEPARTMENTS UPDATE

ACTION ITEMS

- Federal Provincial Property In Lieu Taxes – document sent to Council
- Meeting held with DNRR on South Channel.
- Councillor Contact landing in Junk Email - should be Unblocked now.
- Highland Manor Bridge Financing - has been put in trust with the lawyer and they have since paid us back.
- Sideloader has arrived! Branding has happened.
- Smokey Rec roof has been completed.
- We and the Village received Ministerial approval for the sale of the Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department to Baddeck Volunteer Fire Department.
- Rural Transit Fund Scope change was approved, and we received funding approval for 2 Hybrids and an Electric Vehicle- Tenders are now out.
- Nova Scotia Power replied about a meeting about the Wreck Cove Project. We directed them to Councillor Longva to discuss the meeting further.
- Neil's Harbour stairs being done over, with a piece built on the end for access to the beach.
- No littering signs are here, contact Steff for any signs.
- Contacted Lester Tingley Surveyors – finishing Roper Lane survey, waiting on Lester Tingley.

FINANCE

- Year-end audit
- Water meter change out / compiling data for current Q billings
- Transit 3-year budget for CTAP)

Tax Sale:

- The most recent tax sale was held on July 18, 2023, at the Inverary Resort's MacAulay Conference Centre.
- There were 9 properties sold out of the 9 properties remaining at the public auction style sale. The proceeds from that day resulted in the collection of \$12,492 in outstanding tax arrears and interest.

Tax Sale Numbers:

- **21** properties were listed on the tax sale ad.
- **9** property owners paid taxes prior to the sale.
- **3** properties were deferred prior to the sale.
9 properties available for bid by public auction.
- **9** properties were sold, and balances owing were paid within 3 days as required.
- **\$688 to \$36,000** range of successful bids.

- **\$26,139** collected in outstanding tax arrears and interest, before tax sale/at tax sale.
- **\$94,495** surplus collected.

In the lead up to the tax sale:

- There were 41 accounts that were sent the first notice of tax sale, and 21 were listed for the tax sale.
- The accounts deferred still have work that needs to be done on them, either by land registration, assessment and/or Lester Tingley.

Tax Collections:

- Year-over-year current taxes owing are up at **\$1,020, 024**.
- Year-over-year arrears are down by **\$63,357**.
- Overall collections when comparing year-over-year are **\$956,667** behind. However, tax bills were issued in late June and not due until August 1st.
- Total billed was **\$867,333** higher than prior year due to changes in assessment (considering the tax rate did not change).

PUBLIC WORKS

Waste

- C&D haul - 12 or so trucks hauling Monday - Friday this week. We're using our own machine to load the material. This will cost around \$190,000.
- New side loader isn't in service yet but getting close. Once it's in service we can start thinking about putting a couple of items up for surplus.
- Have a request in to NSE to see if we can get approval to leave brush and shingle stockpiles in Dingwall because we will be closing that site.
- CAO requested that there be a Public Works meeting prior to next Council meeting.
- Tender out for scrap metal recycling.
- Tender out for maintenance truck.
- Tender out for transit.

Water

- Neptune is getting close to finishing meter installs. Not all customers will have new meters due to refusal of install, failure to make an appointment or because they are seasonal. Some of these will be addressed by internal staff.
- Water bills will be late this quarter due to the conversion from old meters to new. This bill will be a hybrid containing reads from old and new meters. This is also the first-time people will see the new water rate increase.

- Waiting on engineers to approve pad for Dingwall tower. Because the tower materials are coming from the UK, there has been a delay due to inability for UK and Canadian engineers to agree on pad specs.
- Little Narrows second production well project stalled.
- Ingonish waterline extension test pits are completed.
- Dingwall well has been cleaned to help address turbidity concerns, but this is a short-term solution.

COMMUNICATION

- The newsletter, News and Views, has been sent out.
- Working on a waste video with Public Works.
- Working on a new Victoria County Transit strategy for social media and website.
- Looking into an email listserv for residents for communications.

TOURISM AND RECREATION

Tourism:

- Coordinate next STEP meet for July 20 and other STEP Planning duties.
 - Arrange bathroom signage delivery and installs.
 - Meet with Ingonish Development Society to review ACOA financial reporting.
 - Hearing concerns from operators of a slow start to the season. Wildfires, weather, cancelled flights and flooding have been the main suspected sources for decline from expected numbers this year.

- Recreation:

- Working in Partnership with School Plus offering a one day a week, six-week summer program for children in grades 4 to 8 at Cabot Education Centre called Monday Funday.
- Working in Partnership with Basketball Cape Breton to bring a one-day Basketball Program event for different school-aged children to Neil's Harbour/New Haven outdoor basketball court.

Councillor MacLeod requested Recreation to speak to Baddeck Academy about this program as well.

- Working in Partnership with the Active Transportation Planner/Designer with delivering the next phase of the Core AT process which is the public engagement phase.
- Working in Partnership with NS Walks with creating a walking program throughout Victoria County.
- Working in Partnership with the MPAL from Wagmatcook and CPRA on an Activate Your Neighborhood Initiative.

Trails:

- Planning day trips to hike "unmanaged" trails around Victoria County for info on trailheads, parking, landowners - asset inventory
- Have contracted the building of the currently funded portions of the Multi-Use Trail Project. These sections are known locally as Dennison Rear Rd. and Old MacDonald Cross Rd. Bidder's meeting and RFP will be coming out on these sections in mid-August.

Community Development:

- Developed Stage Rental agreement and program.
- Coordinate Bathroom Sign installations.
- Beacon Baddeck Advisory Group has agreed on Terms of Reference for the project and the Nomination and Selection process for the Volunteer Beacon Baddeck Working Group. It is expected a public announcement and possible event will be held in late August.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Working on the housing accelerator funding strategy for the County, due on August 18th.
- Low Carbon Fund project applications are submitted.
- Assisting with Smokey on a petition concerning communications around natural disasters.

OTHER

- Sustainable Services Growth Fund - where do we want to direct this funding - \$557,000?

CAO recommends the money is used for the extension of the waterline in Ingonish. CAO will leave it with Council to think about it and will look for a motion from Council later on as to how to spend that money. CAO will send a list to Council as to where that money can be spent.

- Cape Breton Partnership Investor Summit Sponsorship - What level?

CAO asked Council what they are willing to support.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Organ to sponsor the Cape Breton Partnership Investor Summit up to \$2,500.00.

Motion Carried.

- Met with Build NS to discuss progress on Seawall Trail. Inverness is the lead Municipal on that project.
- A couple of Beautification Grants have been awarded; Ross Ferry Stewardship, BABTA, congrats to those organizations.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee asked CAO about the test kits and CAO said she doesn't know 100% but we are looking at the cost benefit of extending past the marina and Deputy Warden Dauphinee said there are two houses that are in desperate need of water there.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Longva to write a letter to the Department of Environment and Climate Change once again to request a meeting to discuss changes to the solid waste regulations.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Longva asked when Upland will be coming back for community engagement, CAO said they will be sending a newsletter soon and that she forwarded on to them what areas Council requested Upland to visit.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Road Issues are ongoing, not much has been done. With the new development of Little Narrows Gypsum, major work needs to be done.
- Councillor MacDonald added that he thinks Victoria County is being neglected with roads. MLA Bain is copied on everything and still nothing is being done.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacDonald to request a meeting with MLA Bain to discuss the state of the roads in Victoria County.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to write a letter to the Department of Public Works to request new signs for all the Provincial Parks in Victoria County.

Motion Carried.

- Councillor MacNeil talked to CAO MacEachen prior to Council about the new bridge in Washabuck. There used to be a boat launch there, and now its not there, Councillor MacNeil requested CAO to look into municipal owned lands in that area for where a new boat launch could be put.

DISTRICT 2

- Reported washouts from last rain.
- Residents calling about the proposed Local Improvement Charge By-Law and Warden Morrison mentioned there will be one public hearing, and residents can send in their written comments if they can't attend the hearing.

DISTRICT 3

- Acknowledged the positive feedback from the newsletter and thanked Communications for their efforts. Communications commented that the issue on the website is current and up to date as there were some small errors in the printed version.
- Attended the grand opening of the Highland Village and acknowledged Councillor MacNeil on his efforts with this project and Councillor MacNeil said it all started with \$100,000 from the County so thank you to the County.

On Motion of Warden Morrison seconded by Councillor MacNeil to send a letter to the Highland Village Board thanking them for their efforts with the new re-opening of the Highland Village.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Warden Morrison seconded by Councillor Longva to send a letter to MP of Rural Economic Development, Gudi Hutchings, to thank her for coming to Victoria County and meeting with Council.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 4

- Requested grading and calcium be put on the road to reduce dust.

- In Tarbotvale there was some old lumber that was left since 2021 that was picked up recently, but there is a big crate of wire and oil jugs left there and now is overgrown with brush and a large bridge abutment that needs to be removed. Hydroseeding and topsoil is needed on both sides of the bridge that was promised to the land owner but has not been done, it will be 2 years in November since the bridge went out. A part of the bridge is still floating in the river and the creosote beams are still in another neighbour's yard and the river running by his house, where he used to fish. It also causes a strong smell of creosote especially on hot days.
- Had complaints about the New Harris Road, it has had more damage from the past few rainfalls causing washouts and ruts, people are damaging their vehicles. The New Campbellton Road requires grading and requested someone from the Department of Public Works take a drive down these roads to assess the situation.
- Constituents are asking if the brush cutter could cut at the St. Anns Lookoff as they have seen people standing on the guardrail to take pictures of the view.
- Residents are requesting guardrails on the Oregon Road at two locations.
- Talked to residents about an evacuation plan on New Campbellton Road and will also reach out to our EMO, Lyle Donovan.
- A resident's address doesn't show up on Google, so she can't get her mail because it's not recognized. It is on civic address finder but not anywhere else. Councillor MacDonald also has residents in his area with this issue as well. Canada Post was sending the mail back. Councillor Longva contacted EDPC and was told they couldn't help, CAO asked Councillor Longva to send her the information and she will follow up with EDPC.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to give 1,600.00 from District 4 budget to Kelly Cove Heritage Society

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor Organ to write a letter to Honourable Pat Dunn, the Nova Scotia Minister of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage and MP Jaime Battiste asking for plaques or signs to be placed at the St. Anns lookoff detailing the historical significance of that area, regarding the first French Settlement in Englishtown and also the Glooscap Cave at the bottom of Kelly's Mountain on the New Campbellton Road.

Motion Carried.

- There is a group that has been formed for the ambulance service to meet with MLA Bain.
- Lots of concerns with Neptune and the water meter installs.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor Organ to contact the Provincial Department of Public works again, requesting an update for when the driver examination office will be re-instated in Ingonish.

Motion Carried.

- Lots of Public Works concerns to still be addressed but thank you to the department for what has been so far.

DISTRICT 7

- Numerous complaints with Neptune.
- Lots of calls about the proposed Local Improvement Charge By-Law and I'm encouraging residents to write down their concerns and attend the public meeting once it happens.
- Concerns about the ambulance service, North of Smokey.

On Motion of Councillor Organ, seconded by Councillor MacLeod to contact Elden MacDonald with EHS to come to Council to address ambulance concerns North of Smokey. Also requesting MLA Bain, EMO, Lyle Donovan and local resident, Deidre Fraser to also attend that meeting as well.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 8

- Presented a letter as correspondence from a resident who wants to purchase municipal property, CAO explained to Council the process of how the County sells land that is municipally owned, and it is done by a tender process. Deputy Warden Dauphinee also added that Council does not normally sell off land unless its for development. CAO reminded Council that this property was not on the list of properties that Council wanted to sell, however; it is still a Council decision if they want to sell but it is still through a tender process. CAO was instructed to bring information back to Council about this piece of property to consider.
- A resident was inquiring about survey lines that were removed by the County and CAO will get clarification from the Municipal Department of Public Works and Councillor MacDonald will send the address to CAO.
- CAO, EMO and I had a meeting with Morley MacNeil about South Harbour Channel to get the channel opened up. DNR is saying that is not their responsibility to open the channel and its not the responsibility of the County either so it looks like it should be the

responsibility of Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture so Councillor MacDonald asked CAO to contact that department for a meeting.

- Shoulders need immediate attention in Cape North and thank the Department of Public Works for the work they have done so far.
- \$500 for the BSL boat parade to the BSL Community Centre.
- \$500 for the BSL fire department for work on the cemetery.
- \$250 for the Cabot Auxiliary in Cape North.

MOTIONS/PROCLAMATIONS

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS the climate emergency is here (recent wildfires and Fiona), and climate change has been identified as a priority area of municipal interest; and

WHEREAS all Nova Scotians have a right to public safety and this area is identified one of six priority areas of municipal interest; and

WHEREAS the United Nations (https://www.un.org/disabilities/documents/events/wcdrr/background_DiDRR.docx) Identified people with disabilities are two to four times more likely to die in a disaster; and

WHEREAS equity and community well-being is another priority area to serve the 30% of Nova Scotians, and 41% of seniors identify as having a disability (<https://novascotia.ca/accessibility/prevalence/>), and aging in place is being encouraged; and

WHEREAS First Voices are advocating for better emergency management and planning for people with disabilities (<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-2-as-it-happens/clip/15992821-disability-rights-advocate-calls-vulnerable-persons-registry-great>); and

WHEREAS disasters do not respect administrative boundaries (<https://masscasualtycommission.ca/final-report/>); and

WHEREAS all forty-nine municipalities may not have the same technical capacity or paid staff (and rely on volunteers) to respond to these needs and it's important for all Nova Scotians to have access to the same level of public safety; and

WHEREAS a Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registry (VVPR) is recognized best practice in the emergency field (<https://www.sooopr.com/Home>). This is a voluntary registry so those with privacy concerns need not register and only location and accommodation needs are required data. A paid coordinator who manages the Registry ensures it is constantly updated; and

WHEREAS HRM’s Chief of Emergency Management, in her report <https://cdn.halifax.ca/sites/default/files/documents/city-hall/regional-council/230620rc1511.pdf> to HRM asking for a VVPR (recently passed by HRM) identified that the risk of not doing a VVPR (death and injuries) outweighs the risk (managing expectations) of doing one; and

WHEREAS a leading expert in disaster planning and managements Paul Kovacs, (Executive Director of the Institute for Catastrophic Loss, Univ. Of Western Ontario) says “all mechanics of a Registry have been sorted out and every question that can be asked, there is an answer for.”; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT we at *the Municipality of the County of Victoria* ask the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities, newly formed Public Safety Advisory Committee to prioritize collaboration and partnership between municipal governments with possible support from the provincial government to ensure implementation of Voluntary Vulnerable Persons Registries province-wide that are integrated into the 911 system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED a copy of the resolution be sent to the NSFM and the Minister responsible for Emergency Management Office.

Dated at Ingonish, Nova Scotia, August 1, 2023.

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Councillor MacLeod to adopt the Resolution.

Motion Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

All previously forwarded and sent.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Victoria County Transit changed dispatchers and it is going well and one of the busses is down for inspection and repairs.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No questions from the Public.

NEXT MEETING

August 21, at 2pm possibly in District 5.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to go In-Camera.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to come out of In-Camera.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacDonald to accept the recommendations made in the In-Camera meeting.

Motion Carried.

ADJOURN

Councillor MacLeod made a motion to adjourn.