

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on July 22, 2024, at 5:00pm 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 #5 - Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden

District #7 - Jackie Organ

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Steff MacLeod, Recorder

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications

ABSENT

District #8 – Norman MacDonald

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 Councillor Longva that the Agenda for July 22, 2024, be approved with the noted change.

Motion Carried.

EDPC REPORT – JOHN BAIN

- Mr. Bain presented his annual report for 2023-2024 to Council.
- Report was submitted June 30, 2024, to Council.
- Went over the role of EDPC.
- EDPC has been working closely with Upland for the new proposed Minimum Planning Standards. It is in the final draft stages.
- \$2.2 million budget.

QUESTIONS

Councillor Patterson asked why the Bras d'Or Lakes were not included in the Coastline Mapping RFP, and Mr. Bain said that will be a different RFP in partnership with the Mi'kmaq.

Councillor MacNeil asked if EDPC will be hiring more staff to accommodate the Coastal Protection Guide from the Province. Mr. Bain said the Province set up a working group, which John Bain acts as an advisor to discuss this Guide and the Municipal role in that.

Warden Morrison thanked Mr. Bain for the report and attending Council today.

Motion to accept the EDPC report and financial statement moved by Councillor MacLeod seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the June 20, 2024, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was presented for approval.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor Organ to approve the Minutes of June 20, 2024.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor MacNeil to approve the Special Council Minutes of May 29, 2024.

Motion Carried.

CAO REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

ACTION ITEMS

- Victoria County signs in District 5 have been replaced and look wonderful- thanks to staff.
- We have signed an MOU with VCT and Alderwood, for sharing a transit bus with Alderwood, so residents can get out and about.
- Housing Accelerator fund has opened up again. EDO is looking to update the application.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Newsletter is almost ready to go, will go out the beginning of August.
- Election meetings held with the Returning Officer to prepare for the election.

FINANCE and HR

- Tender tax sale July 30th; 3 properties.
- Next in person tax sales are November 26th and March 11th.
- 30-day letters have gone out for the November tax sale.
- Tax bills are all gone out.
- Water bills went out last week.
- Getting a lot of interest in the PACE program for energy upgrades.

PUBLIC WORKS

Waste Management:

- Treated Wood Ban is fully in effect, with fines imposed.
- Light bulb recycling program is coming back, beginning in August for businesses and residential, any type of bulb will be accepted.
- Working on a tender for an efficiency upgrade for all sites.

TOURISM

- Colleen has scoured websites and called organizations to complete an exhaustive list of events and activities happening in Victoria County this summer and fall. It has two parts with the first being a list of events in chronological order and another list of recurring or regular events that take place weekly/monthly or on a specific schedule. It is mostly used as a resource for VIC and Tourism operators to advise guests and will be updated at the Visitor Information Centre in Baddeck on a regular basis as new events are announced.

Community Development:

- Visited Placemaking location in Ingonish known as Cops Cove. This has resulted in a major increase in use of this space by locals and has created an enjoyable gathering place that feels good to spend time in. Hats off to all involved in this project and

partnerships and look forward to continuous, community led improvements to this space.

- Meetings had with North Waves Development Society in Dingwall for next step plans and discussions on the placemaking space at 310 Dingwall Road. These discussions involve the placement of a public washroom as well as community garden project.

Recreation:

- Wellness Warrior Jamboree was postponed.
- E-bikes have been delayed from the supplier as the popularity this year is very high with so many rebates offered out there. It is anticipated they will be arriving, and a program launched for borrowing them by mid-August 2024.
- Our first Girls on Boards program was postponed due to threat of thunder and lightning. The other session was a success and seems to be well received by participants.

Trails:

- The trails committee met to review funding applications submitted to the trail's development support program. The following groups who originally applied through community grants were confirmed to receive support for their projects.
- Work continues on planning and permitting for the next section of trail work. An RFP is expected out this week for the Big Hill Road section of the trail work on the original plan.

EDO

- EV Feasibility Study: The EV feasibility study is progressing smoothly and remains on track for completion by mid-August as planned.

OTHER

- Elections planning is ongoing. I'm sure you've seen some posts.
- Reached a settlement on Ingonish roof with insurance – Hurricane Fiona damage.
- Working with SSO on an Aging and Mental Health Project, with Seniors.
- Had a meeting with Restorative Justice to discuss the aftermath of the Village issues, in relation to Megan Cooper. August 25 is the next court date, but the restorative justice is going to request more time before sentencing to finish their report.

QUESTIONS

Councillor Longva asked what the deadline is to run, and CAO said that information is online, but it is September 10th.

Councillor Organ asked if the Women on Boards program expanding throughout the County and CAO MacEachen said that is the plan.

Councillor MacLeod asked about the PACE program and mentioned there was a price increase for applications and CAO MacEachen said she will ask Clean Energy why there was an increase.

SABDA's request for Timebank to expand throughout the County and CAO said the current staff member does not have the capacity to take on more, but it can be brought forward before the next budget meeting in 2025.

Councillor Longva clarified that they were looking to have Senior Safety coordinate the TimeBank and CAO MacEachen said we have not built another staff into the budget and the Senior Safety Officer does not have the capacity to take that on, but it can be brought forward again next year.

Warden Morrison called for a 10-minute recess.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Calls about the PACE program.
- Call about extending the waterline through Hazeldale and informed resident that it is currently not being looked at right now.
- Contact with MLA Bain and will be having a driving tour with him and Steve MacDonald.

DISTRICT 2

- Send a letter to Meghan Morrison for her new position as director for Baddeck hospital letting her know Council are here to support her.
- People are happy with all the recreation programs that Chris is doing.

DISTRICT 3

- Celebrated 100th birthday for Stella Capstick in Dingwall.

DISTRICT 4

- Cape Breton Bible Camps were upset that they are no longer tax exempt due to religious affiliations. But mentioned that some churches get some and CAO mentioned the Municipal Grants Policy that Council passed, and staff went by the Policy for this year's awarding. Staff took an academic approach, and Council still had final say, and approved staff's recommendations.
- \$500 to Little River Port Authority for help with the port-a-potty.
- \$300 to South Haven Weavers' Spinners and Dyers.
- \$250 to Baddeck Regatta. (BYC)
- Condolences to Burrows and MacEachern's family on the loss of Joe, local bus driver.

DISTRICT 5

- July 1, 2024, attended the Canada Day events at the Ross Ferry Marine Park, lots of positive comments on the work done to the wharf that the County contributed funds to.
- The foot clinics are very well attended.
- Attended a concert at the Big Bras d'Or Fire Hall and they used the County stage and thanked Dan Coffin and Colleen Whelan-Smith for their efforts.

DISTRICT 6

- 25th anniversary for Councillor MacDonald as a paramedic.
- Bridge in Ingonish Harbour is in bad shape, Provincial Department of Public Works said permanent work will be done on that.
- Thanks to staff for the Ingonish Waterline Extension, the project is almost done. The more users we can get on the system, the better.

DISTRICT 7

- Condolences to Lyle Donovan on the loss of his mother.
- Residents in White Point were concerned about the number of tourists that are visiting are leaving "stuff" behind, so the port-a-potty will be staying on the wharf for the month of August.
- A great big congratulations going out to the Pinkalicious organizers, the people who donated and all those who bid and won. This is for a great cause for the people North of Smokey.
- As there is an election coming up in the fall, I feel an information package should be handed out to all councillors with names, positions, emails, phone numbers, insurance benefits, healthy living incentives, etc.

STAFF REPORTS

Livestreaming Meetings:

CAO MacEachen went over the previously circulated Staff Report found here:

[Livestreaming Meetings Staff Report](#)

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said he has only ever had one request for livestreaming meetings and asked how many have requested this, and CAO said, two people. Warden Morrison asked the rest of Council who had requests for livestreaming, and none have excluding Councillor Longva, who has had lots of requests but thinks staff should continue working on the communications plan. Councillor Longva understood that not all public meetings can livestream and requested to rescind the motion made at the June 20, 2024, Council meeting and make a new motion to only livestream meetings that are held in Council Chambers.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor Patterson to rescind the following Motion made at the June 20, 2024, Council meeting:

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor Patterson to livestream all meetings of Council.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Councillor Longva seconded by Councillor Patterson to livestream Council and Committee of the Whole meetings that are held in Council Chambers via the technology we have now and for staff to continue working on the communications plan.

Motion Carried.

Ingonish Central Wastewater Collection and Treatment System Survey Results:

CAO MacEachen went over the previously circulated Staff Report, found here:

[Ingonish Wastewater Survey Report](#)

Deputy Warden Dauphinee expressed that his main concern was for future development and stressed that we need to have the infrastructure in place for development, but the next stage is gone out to an engineering firm for costs and CAO said that staff are in the process of that now.

There is an RFP out for the modules of the system then we will start pricing out the pipe and it has to be in by March 2026 based on the funding from the province and we budgeted for it.

MOTIONS

KitchenFest Funding Request:

KitchenFest requested \$10,000.00, they did not submit their application in time through the Municipal Grants time frame (January 2, 2024 – March 31, 2024), and they were also late last year as well. The representative for the organization, Rodney MacDonald realized that the email he sent did not go through.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said it's a great event, but we have to stick to our budget if we keep adding things on to it, which we do year after year.

CAO MacEachen also added that Mr. MacDonald also requested multi year sponsorship, but Council has already agreed to not sign into multi-year sponsorship in an election year.

Councillor MacLeod asked if we could give some, but not all or could the Tourism department give some and Mr. Coffin said he doesn't have any to give from his department.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee seconded by Councillor MacNeil to not approve the KitchenFest Funding for 2024-2025 due to the late application.

Motion Carried.

Councillor MacLeod is opposed and wanted to support KitchenFest.

Councillor MacNeil said Pitapaq also said that they sent in a request as well, but none was received at the Municipal Building. We have given \$2,000.00 every year and I did mention that we reserve some from the municipal budget in case the application was found. Warden Morrison suggested this be deferred until next council to confirm Councillor MacNeil did request this at a grants meeting.

First Reading of Yard Sale By-Law:

Councillor Patterson asked about clause 3a and why is it being limited to weekends and holidays and Council requested to amend it to 3 consecutive days.

On Motion of Councillor MacLeod, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee to approve the First Reading of the Yard Sale By-Law with the noted change.

Motion Carried.

First Reading of Amendment to the Water Supply or Septic Upgrade Lending By-Law:

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to approve the First Reading of the Amendment to the Water Supply or Septic Upgrade Lending By-Law.

Motion Carried.

Village of Baddeck Funding Request:

CFO Redden provided a Staff Report to Council found here:

[Village of Baddeck Funding Request Staff Report](#)

Council discussed the options and Warden Morrison expressed he liked Option 1 and asked the other remaining Councillors what option they preferred, and 6 councillors preferred Option 3.

Councillor Organ asked if there was a rate study and Village Commissioner MacDonald said we have one and Deputy Warden Dauphinee said there is huge difference between County water rates and Village water rates and Councillor Organ mentioned the base rates as well.

Village Commissioner MacDonald said the Village just increased their rates which haven't been done in a long time and we know the rates were too low. The UARB said they can only raise the rates incrementally and the thought is at the next study, the rates would go up again.

Village Commissioner MacDonald clarified some issues around the water system vs the wastewater system, stating that 50% of the funding requested is for water, and 50% is for wastewater.

Councillor Organ asked if portions of the 15% Community Building Fund will be going toward the village systems and Village Commissioner MacDonald said yes, absolutely, and they have to do system upgrades.

Village Commissioner MacDonald said if the Village ceases to exist, these systems will be the sole responsibility of the County, as the village now owns them.

Warden Morrison called for a motion of Council to choose which option to offer the Village of Baddeck.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to recommend that the County offer the Village of Baddeck Option 3 from the report.

***Option 3. It is recommended that the Municipality provide:
\$50,000 as a one-time direct funding contribution to be funded through the Municipality's
Operating Reserve
Maximum of \$150,000 loan at 5% for up to 5 years. VOB annual loan payment: \$34,646
Total interest revenue earned by Municipality: \$23,231.***

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE

All Forwarded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Victoria County Transit meeting was held today and signed an MOU with Alderwood for use of the buses.

Councillor MacNeil attended the Pitpaq meeting, looking at decarbonization in the Bras D'or Lakes.

Councillor Patterson had a meeting with the Fences Arbitration Committee, no action taken at this time, but a letter was sent. Heard from the property owner that he was making efforts to secure the herd.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Approximately 26 members of the public were present.

Jenn MacDonald, Chair of Village Commission said there as been a suspension on any new water hookups so that is going to affect new development, and no building permits will be issued. Extremely disappointed in Council's decision today and we will be coming back to Council. Warden reminded that we can't commit beyond this council term.

Commissioner MacDonald invited Council to the next commission meeting.

Commissioner MacDonald also expressed concerns that there was no mention in the CAO report about the missing person in Baddeck and expressed that she has serious concerns how that situation was handled at the municipal level and not using the Voyent Alert system. She would ask that in the future, the municipality use a Voyent alert for a missing person.

Warden Morrison said we followed the protocol that the search and rescue gave direction to.

Senior Safety also reached out to the RCMP and heard nothing back, CAO said the Village also has the Voyent alert system to use. The county would only use Voyent alert for missing persons if the RCMP requested. That request did not come.

Commissioner MacDonald asked if the County will be requesting a report from the RCMP about this incident and Warden said we can, and she requested that report to be shared with the Village.

NEXT MEETING

TBA

ADJOURN

Councillor MacNeil made a motion to adjourn at 7:15pm.