

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on August 21st, 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 – Barbra Longva

District #5 – Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Larry Dauphinee, Deputy Warden

District #7 – Jackie Organ

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Alix Redden, CFO

Jennifer Dagsvik, Communications

Jessica Klein, Communications

Colby MacRae, Recorder

ABSENT

District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Councillor MacDonald regrets to inform he could not attend due to illness.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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.

Councillor Longva added Cape Breton Bible Camp to the agenda.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, Seconded by Councillor MacLeod that the agenda for August 21, 2024 be approved with the noted changes.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATION - NORTH SHORE AND DISTRICT VALLEY FIRE DEPARTMENT

The Power Point Presentation can be viewed at the following link,

[Presentation - North Shore and District Fire Dept.](#)

Questions

Warden Morrison began by thanking the two for their service.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said he recognizes the water limitations with the smaller apparatus, and in the event of a structure fire, they would have to receive aid from another fire department to ensure there is enough water on the scene. Deputy Warden Dauphinee thinks this is a good use of the land and is in favor of a land use agreement.

Councillor Patterson recognizes that the proposed plot was acquired by the Municipality to be used by municipal services, but he would like to see more information and details of the project to come to a decision.

Warden Morrison discussed the history of the property; it was the North Shore elementary school which when closed was divested back into the Municipality. He also highlighted a policy council passed to retain waterfront properties that came into the Municipality's possession and maintain them.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee proposed that since the lot is a waterfront property staff could see if the plot is large enough to be subdivided so the Municipality could maintain the waterfront portion.

Councillor Longva agrees that it's a great use of the property. It is good for the community and surrounding area.

The fire department is happy to share the lot.

Councillor MacNeil agrees the North Shore Fire Department has insufficient space and is running over the capacity of their building and land. He is in support as well.

Warden Morrison is offering a leasing agreement. It will be referred to the CAO and staff to look further into.

On motion by Councillor Longva, seconded by Patterson to have CAO MacEachen discuss with the North Shore Fire Dept to come to an agreement for land use.

Motion carried.

DISCUSSION – VILLAGE OF BADDECK COMMISSION

At the last meeting, the commission was surprised at council's decision. Commissioner MacDonald asked for more reasoning behind the decision, as they are unsatisfied with the option provided by the council.

Commissioner MacDonald asked Council to shed some light on their reasoning behind their decisions to try and provide more information to why they should reconsider.

Warden Morrison discussed that their decisions were made in conjunction with staff to make 3 options on the table to vote on. Council voted for option 3 with 6 of 7 Councillors in favor.

Commissioner MacDonald asks if Council could share how they came to their decision from their last meeting together.

Warden Morrison explained that the ask was sent in post budget passing and mentions that he was also conflicted in that there were multiple projects without much background information.

Warden Morrison requested a long-term plan outlining why they need funding, how much it will cost, how much you expect to receive from us and how that remedies the issue.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee explained his decision was made due to the fact it didn't make it to the budget on time, Deputy Warden Dauphinee sees a lot of funding and development in this area. Most of the other districts lack water and sewage systems Baddeck has received, and other districts believe Baddeck has an advantage over the other areas.

Commissioner MacDonald says she tried to put their plan in prior to the budget. She feels that the Commission was not engaged with promptly, the meeting was prepared and scheduled to discuss this endeavor. But the date was cancelled and never rescheduled, which has pushed the discussion past budget passing.

Warden Morrison clarifies that Council couldn't meet at the time the Village Commission proposed and the Village Commission couldn't meet at the time Council proposed and that was the source of the scheduling mishap.

Commissioner MacDonald continued her discussion stating that village residents pay more taxes due to a village tax as well as that the fact that the Village houses 320 residents per square kilometer, whereas the county has a population density of 2.2 people per square kilometer. Commissioner MacDonald states it makes sense for the areas with a higher population density to see more development in their area.

Councillor Patterson feels the Commission made multiple big asks and would have liked to have seen a list of priorities so that they would be able to figure out what is most important.

Councillor Patterson chose option 3 because he believed it met their needs and remedied the issue in his and staff's opinion. He also says the Village received substantial funding over the years and proposed the waterfront project as an example.

Councillor Patterson says he is shocked at the ask for water utility funds as Neil's Harbor and Iona residents pay over 4x the water rate the Village does. Water is \$6.32/cubic meter in those districts where Baddeck pays \$1.38/cubic meter.

Commissioner MacDonald responded that water rate studies were done, and rates are going up. Commissioner MacDonald wants to ensure that the residents of Baddeck can hook up to water systems. But they don't have the capacity to create more infrastructure.

Commissioner MacDonald notes the province is on board, granting 100,000.00 to the commission. Making up almost half of the cost of an engineering study.

Commissioner MacDonald notes that the Municipality collects a significant portion of taxes from Baddeck, and she explains that those funds make sense to be allocated back into the Village.

CAO MacEachen asked if the study was included in the water rate study, and if so 30% is already funded.

Councillor Longva and Councillor MacLeod made their decision based on the recommendation of staff and the accountants working for the council.

Councillor Organ states North of Smokey hasn't received a lot of the amenities and utility infrastructure. She believes the Village should've paid more in water rates.

Commissioner MacDonald also notes that the village takes on hookups that are outside the village limits. If the Municipality can't assist the funding for more capacity, then they have the option to stop taking on those water hookups outside the village which would mean the municipality would have to find a solution.

CAO MacEachen notes those water users outside the village are some of the largest sources of revenue on the water system, and a water utility should always be self-supporting.

Warden Morrison asked Council if they would like to hear more from the village, a more concise, cut-out proposal.

Council and Commissioner MacDonald conclude their conversation to reconvene with more information, where funds will be allocated and how it will be implemented, and Commissioner MacDonald asked of council to provide a breakdown of the 1.4 million dollars in municipal taxes, collected from the village is being spent.

On Motion of Warden Morrison seconded by Councillor MacNeil to maintain the original recommendation of staff to grant 50,000.00 as well as loan the VOB 150,000.00.

Motion Carried.

Warden Morrison and Councillor MacLeod opposed.

Warden Morrison called for a 10-minute recess.

APPROVAL OF JULY 22, 2024 MINUTES

On Motion of Councillor Deputy Warden Dauphinee, Seconded by Councillor Longva to approve minutes of July 22, 2024 Council Meeting.

Motion Carried.

APPROVAL OF JUNE 18, 2024 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil, Seconded by Councillor MacLeod to approve Minutes of June 18, 2024 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion Carried.

CAO REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

OLD BUSINESS:

- Waiting on response from ECC on Water Protection Zone for last step on Upland MPS report.
- Next steps will be to take to first reading.
- PACE program increase due to rising costs of everything, its an admin cost passed on. Price is expected to be raised to \$850 shortly.
- We checked back in the minutes, and Councillor MacNeil did request to reserve \$2,000 for Pitapaq funding.
- Still a couple of tax rulings to be figured out on the transfer of the BVFD to the BVFD. Sent to our advisors.

COMMUNICATIONS:

- August newsletter completed, printed and mailed to 3,500 residents – also
- 2024 Election Planning/Preparation – Interviews and videos of Warden/Deputy Warden and Returning Officer.

FINANCE:

- Tax bill due date has passed – very busy with payments – interest of overdue accounts has been run.
- Now accepting online payments for Tipping Fees and Marketing Levy – Contact Revenue department for more information.
- Lots of calls regarding short-term rental registration. rentals@edpc.ca

WASTE MANAGEMENT:

- Tenders for energy efficient upgrades at all Municipal building will be posted the week of August 19th.
- We'd like to remind businesses that if they need to put out extra garbage, recycling, organics or cardboard, tags can be purchased at our facilities. (\$25 for a bundle of 10).

WATER:

- As of August 12th, the Ingonish Waterline Project was 100% complete. SEL will perform a final inspection and sign-off.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

- EV Feasibility Study Update: The EV feasibility study continues to progress smoothly, remaining on track for completion by mid/end-August. While the research has not yet fully clarified the best way forward, the goal remains to equip the council with valuable insights to drive rapid EV adoption in Victoria County. Next week, the consultants will present their overview of the feasibility, as we work towards finalizing the study and providing well-founded recommendations to council on the most sustainable pathway forward. When the study is completed, we look to find a time to have the consultants present their findings to council in September, and again after the election if desired by council.

TOURISM:

- Have been visiting and have a schedule to visit newly opened tourism operators (past 3 years) for a tour and meeting with owners. If you have a new business, reach out to Colleen to get included.

OTHER:

- Investor summit sponsorship – CBP is asking us to sponsor the boat tour. (\$3,250)
- J Class Roads – Anyone interested in 50% funding for maintenance/paving? Need to submit to Province.
- Code of Conduct information from Minister Lohr. See correspondence in package for next steps.
 - CAO and Deputy Warden have been asked by Parks Canada Historian to provide some comments as to Keltic Lodge's significance to the

Municipality. If anyone has any comments to provide, please get them to be by the end of the week.

- Travel expense claims have a new look on our website - they are filtered by councillor/month/type of expense.

Councillor Patterson had a few comments;

- Hats off to Jennifer Dagsvik and Jessica Klein in communications for their work with the councillor interviews released recently to the county website.
- EV Charging Stations: Level 2 – \$5,000.00; Level 3 – \$300,000.00.
 - Program sponsored by the Federal Government, which would pay up to 50% of setup costs. ROI is expected over 6 years. Deadline for applications is September 19, 2024.

Councillor MacNeil asked about short-term rentals and the new provincial policy which asks those rental property owners to pay a fee to register with the province.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

DISTRICT 1

- Request for funding of washrooms at the port of Iona, which are well used by the community.
- Received several phone calls about confusion around Mercer Lane with the Province's mailing list, some have Mercer Lane some have Mercer Road. CAO MacEachen will investigate and follow up.

On Motion of Councillor MacNeil to draft a letter of congratulations to Sloan Mackenzie and her partner Katie Vincent for her bronze medal at the Olympics, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 2

- Noticed a smell of sewage in the lake by the Red Barn campground and the water by Gasoline Alley on the way to Sydney.
- Strait Area funded school supplies for their students this year.
- Maybe we can have the program for next year.

On motion of Councillor MacLeod that a letter be drafted to MLA Bain regarding the smell in the lake by highway going by the Red Barn and the North Sydney, there are campgrounds around, send a request to investigate.

Motion Carried.

Letter to CBVRCE regarding the program Strait School Board have for free school supplies this school year 2024-2025.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 3

- Victoria County Memorial Hospital Foundation held a golf tournament as a fundraiser. They raised over \$108,000.00.
- Warden Morrison has concerns about burning in the district.

On Motion of Warden Morrison to suggest for next term's council to add 50% of costs associated with the J Class roads into the budget so they can be updated over the next couple of years, seconded by Councillor MacNeil.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Warden Morrison to draft a letter to Dept of Transportation, Steve MacDonald and the Minister, to request signage for the intersection of Jessica Wong Lane and Old Margaree Road to designate that area as a hospital zone to reduce the speed limit, seconded by Councillor MacLeod.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 4

- The North Shore and District Fire Department was out checking out water supplies and brooks in the area, they noticed the water levels getting low, they felt concern for the footing of the bridge in Goose Cove is being undermined on by the end of Meadow Road. Steve MacDonald inspected and reported this to the bridge engineer; repairs will be done but the bridge is safe for residents at this point. Thanks to North Shore and District Fire Department.
- There's a large pothole on the bridge in Morrison Brook.
- Residents in Skur Dhu requested signage back for their community borders.
- There are two residents on the North Shore looking for hidden driveway signage. Steve MacDonald will inquire to Bernie Murphy about those signs.

- \$500 from District 4 budget to Giant MacAskill Museum in Englishtown.
- Garbage problem with the Clucking Hen, they receive 2 tax bills, one for the business and one for their personal residence. They spoke to Councillor Longva to inquire about a garbage allowance as they have not been able to put all their garbage on the truck, but own and pay taxes on two lots. CAO MacEachen will investigate.
- Rumor of a cell tower to be installed in District 4. Deputy Warden Dauphinee says he hasn't heard anything specific about District 4 but there is supposed to be upgrades to cell service across the province.
- Request to replace signage in front of the picnic parks at top of Smokey and in Whycocomagh.
- Wishing Kenny MacAskill a happy 91st birthday!

DISTRICT 5

- Councillor Patterson has been reelected to be a member of FCM's Board of Directors in Calgary in June. His first meeting is in September, which will take place in Ottawa with a deadline to register on August 16th.
- Councillor Patterson asks Council to be granted permission to attend the FCM meeting in Ottawa this September.
- Councillor Patterson inquired about the $\frac{3}{4}$ ton garbage truck for a resident who lives on the far end of MacLean road, work has been done, but the road's condition is not ideal for the large truck. The resident has health issues and does not own a vehicle, it would be appreciated if the smaller truck could pick up his garbage. CAO Leanne will forward this to Public Works.

DISTRICT 6

- \$1,000 from District budget to Saint Peter's Parish Church Hall for building maintenance.
- Draft a letter of appreciation to Spencer Ferguson from Ingonish for his weather predictions.
- Draft a letter to Parks Canada to inquire about Wildfire Prevention planning around Cape Breton Highlands, Keltic Lodge, and Middle head Peninsula, based on what happened with Jasper.
- Deputy Warden Dauphinee received a video of the main Keltic Lodge, the building is full of mold, he deemed the building unsafe for people to stay in and considers this as a breach of the terms of the lease, which was to take care of the building and upkeep of the property. He requested a letter be drafted on his behalf.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee that \$1000 of the District 6 budget be provided to Saint Peter's Parish for maintenance on the building, seconded by Councillor Organ.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee to draft a letter of appreciation to Spencer Ferguson for sharing his accurate weather predictions with the residents of Victoria County, seconded by Councillor Organ.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee to send a letter to Parks Canada inquiring about wildfire prevention planning around Cape Breton Highlands National Park, Keltic Lodge and Middle-head Peninsula, seconded by Councillor MacLeod.

Motion carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, to write a letter asking for an immediate response to Minister of Environment Guilbeault, Blair Parry of Parks Canada, and MP Jaime Battiste in regard to the Keltic Lodge and the state of the building, Seconded by Councillor Longva.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 7

- People are stopping to take pictures at Phillip's nose and are wondering if there could be a sign available that says that there is a look off and to include height measurements.
- There have been reports of overnight camping and burning among provincial parks. There are also no washrooms on those sites and as such is raising concerns.

On Motion of Councilor Organ to send a letter to the Department of Lands and Forestry asking for enforcement against overnight camping in all provincial picnic parks & to ask their staff to stop telling people to ignore the no camping signs, seconded by Deputy Warden Dauphinee.

Motion carried.

DISTRICT 8

- Councillor MacDonald regrets to inform us he was ill today; his district concerns will be forwarded to the next meeting on September 16th, 2024.

MOTIONS

On Motion of Councillor Longva, seconded by Councillor MacNeil to pass second reading of Water Supply or Septic Upgrade Lending Program By-Law.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden Dauphinee, Seconded by Councillor Longva to Sponsor 2024 Cape Breton Partnership Investor Summit.

Motion Carried.

AIDAN FOUNDATION

Councillor Patterson wanted to talk about the Aidan Foundation as they were not tax exempt this year due to religious affiliation as per the Grant By-Law.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee said the Aidan Foundation doesn't support many people in the community and doesn't think tax dollars should go that way.

CAPE BRETON BIBLE CAMP

Councillor Longva added Cape Breton Bible Camp to the agenda to talk about their tax exemption, she explained that it's the only camp for children in Victoria County, while they have religious affiliation, they still offer a lot to the community. In previous years Cape Breton Bible Camp was exempt from Municipal Taxes, and now they are not which does put a wrench in their operations.

Councillor MacLeod wants to stick to the policy, but she offered that Council consider grants or other policy compliant options to help them.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson to exempt Cape Breton Bible Camp from Taxes, Seconded by Councillor Longva.

Motion Carried.

Councillor MacLeod and Warden Morrison opposed.

CORRESPONDENCE

All forwarded.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Fences Arbitration Committee reviewed a complaint from the Middle River area where sheep were moving off the owner's farm onto a neighboring property.

The committee was informed a bear might have destroyed his fence, and a letter was sent to inform him of the complaint. No further action at this time.

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Approximately 7 members of the public attended today's meeting.

Gary Crowder made an appearance at today's meeting to announce his candidacy for District 3, he asked if the commission should come back with more information for a reconsideration.

Warden Morrison reiterated that Council had made their decision.

NEXT MEETING

Regular Council Meeting scheduled for September 16th, 2024 @ 2:00pm.

ADJOURN

Warden Morrison made a motion to adjourn at 7:37pm.