

A Special Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck, on December 12, 2024, at 2:00pm with Warden Organ in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Donna Matheson-Lefort

District #2- Perla MacLeod

District #3- Jess Kerr

District #4- Rosella Born

District #5- Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Tim Donovan

District #7- Jackie Organ

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

STAFF PRESENT

Alix Redden, Acting CAO

Steff MacLeod, Executive Assistant, Recorder

Jessica Klien, Communications

Dan Coffin, Manager of Tourism and Recreation

ABSENT

CAO MacEachen

CALL TO ORDER

Warden Organ called the meeting to order and presented the one agenda item, snow clearing in the Village of Baddeck. Members of the Village Commission in attendance were:

Jen MacDonald, Chair, Bonnie Whyte, Vice Chair, Denise Roberts, Commissioner, Dan MacNeil, Commissioner was absent.

SNOW CLEARING IN THE VILLAGE OF BADDECK

Warden Organ addressed Chair MacDonald and asked what she was requesting from Council.

Chair MacDonald said in June 2024, the Village Commission presented to Council and asked why the County didn't put out an RFP to cover the costs of snow plowing for the Village of Baddeck.

Acting CAO Redden covered the reasons why Victoria County did not issue the RFP as requested because the County are contesting ownership of the sidewalks.

Acting CAO Redden went back to 1950 to cover the history of the sidewalks in the Village to explain why the County is contesting ownership of the sidewalks.

Chair MacDonald responded with research they had conducted in relation to a County sidewalk that is in Ingonish.

Chair MacDonald said the ownership of the sidewalks and the snow plowing are 2 separate issues. Our first concern in that history is that at the time, sidewalks were only in Baddeck and not provided elsewhere in the County, but now there are sidewalks in another part of the County (Ingonish) and the County covers all expenses incurred with those sidewalks.

The Village Of Baddeck Area Rate is paying for them, but the Village is also paying County tax.

Chair MacDonald asked why is it that the area tax rate in the Village needs to subsidize the plowing services and not elsewhere.

Acting CAO Redden acknowledged that the County has heard this claim of double taxation, there is a distinction between an area rate and taxation. Acting CAO Redden went on to explain that Ingonish lacks an area rate, so it is built into the tax rate, and the Village does have the authority under the Municipal Government Act (MGA) to charge for plowing services, this does not exist in Ingonish, so it is not comparable.

Chair MacDonald said from the Village's perspective it is the responsibility of the County but if the County are not going to take that on then the Village will take that on if that what's Council chooses.

Chair MacDonald said the question about ownership is extremely difficult to ascertain. I think the question most helpful moving forward is clearly we have sidewalks in the Village, they need maintenance, they need to be upgraded we both know that but we need to move forward together. Since 2023 we have come to the County to express concerns over the sidewalks and we can't alone, upgrade or maintain but we need to be collaborative but highlighting that the sidewalks are the responsibility and owned by the County and are they going to be maintained by the area rate or by the municipality.

Chair MacDonald added that if the Village does own them, the Village would like to divest them to Victoria County because the Village cannot sustain them.

Further discussions took place around ownership, costs, mandates, research and liability.

**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
December 12, 2024**

Warden Organ, with acknowledgment of Council not prepared to make a decision today, ended the discussion and Chair MacDonald clarified that the Village is then responsible for clearing the sidewalks for the winter season as of right now and the Warden agreed.

ADJOURN

Councillor MacLeod made a motion to adjourn at 3:02pm