

A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on January 27, at 2:00pm with Warden Organ in the Chair.

COUNCILLORS PRESENT

District #1- Donna Matheson-Lefort

District #2- Perla MacLeod, Deputy Warden

District #3- Jess Kerr

District #4- Rosella Born

District #5- Fraser Patterson

District #6 – Tim Donovan

District #7- Jackie Organ, Warden

District #8 – Wanda Hennick

STAFF PRESENT

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Steff MacLeod, Municipal Clerk and Executive Assistant, Recorder

Alix Redden, CFO

CALL TO ORDER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the Agenda for January 27, 2025.

Motion Carried.

Warden Organ addressed Council and the public that as a new Council there will be some changes going forward and one of those changes is no longer taking questions from the public at Council Meetings. Those who have questions are encouraged to contact their local Councillor and that Councillor will deal with their concerns going forward, or, bring it to Council.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the December 4, 2024, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council and the December 12, 2024, Special Council Meeting were presented for approval.

On Motion of Councillor Hennick seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the Minutes of December 4, 2024.

Motion Carried.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Born to approve the Special Council Minutes of December 12, 2024.

Motion Carried.

PRESENTATIONS

Central Cape Breton Community Ventures - Vince MacLean gave a presentation to Council and had the following the request:

- For the County to support Phase II Vision (2022-2028) “Expanding Our Impact” plan and request \$25,000/year for each of the next four years (2025-2028).

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Kerr to move Central Cape Breton Community Ventures request to Budget discussions.

Motion Carried.

Ingonish Development Society (IDS) – Kelsey Goobie representative of the (Infrastructure Sub-Committee of the Ingonish Development Society) gave a presentation to Council and had the following the request:

- Asking that land previously allocated to the Destination Cape Breton Housing project, has no further commitments, so it can continue to be considered for the future Community Center.

Councillor Donovan said there would have to be a timeline for Council to consider holding onto this piece of property. Ms. Goobie requested to hold it for at least 6 months until the feasibility study is complete.

Deputy Warden MacLeod requested that IDS come back to Council with updates within the 6 months.

Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI) – Ron Newcombe and Stan Johnson gave a presentation to Council to provide an update on initiatives of CEPI and Pitu'paq.

RECESS

Warden Organ called for a 20-minute recess.

Warden Organ resumed Council and requested the following motion.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Hennick to accept the recommendations from the January 27, 2025, Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Motion Carried.

Councillor Matheson-LeFort made the following motion regarding livestreaming meetings of Council.

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-Lefort seconded by Councillor Hennick to rescind the following Motion made at the July 22, 2024, Council meeting:

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.

On Motion of Deputy Warden MacLeod seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to livestream Regular Council Meetings when in Council Chambers.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS

DISTRICT 1

- Extended sympathies to the Mackenzie family of Hazeldale on the loss of Louise Mackenzie.
- Speeding through Route 223 continues to be an issue and members of the community will be submitting a petition for council to review.

On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Councillor Patterson to approve Councillor Matheson-LeFort to travel out of province for FCM's Sustainable Communities Conference in February 2025.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 2

- Invite Provincial Department of Public Works Supervisor, Steve MacDonald to come to Council to provide updates on spring projects.
- Office Hours for District 2 are January 30th from 12pm-1pm in Council Boardroom.

DISTRICT 3

- Sidewalks are still an issue that must be addressed.
- The state of the streets in general must be addressed in District 3 and requested to contact the Minister of Public Works through MLA Timmins office to come to Council
- Office Hours for District 3 are the first Tuesday of every month from 12pm-1pm in Council Boardroom.

DISTRICT 4

- Extended gratitude to the communities of District 4 for all the community events and highlighted SABDA and the South Haven Community Hall.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Patterson to appoint Councillor Born to sit on the SABDA Board.

Motion Carried.

DISTRICT 5

- Requested that the gravel roads to be addressed as well with the Provincial Department of Public Works.

DISTRICT 6

- Meeting with Smokey Developments concerning long term plans with the condos and ski lodge and community engagement.
- Meeting with residents on the Land Use Bylaw.
- Working on Council hours and still trying to confirm a location.

DISTRICT 7

- Councillor Donovan and I met with the RCMP about district concerns, will be meeting on an ongoing basis.
- Comfort station is back up and running as is the rink.
- Fundraiser for Neil's Harbour Lighthouse is underway.
- South harbour beach is now opened and working with MLA Timmins on a long-term solution.

DISTRICT 8

- Received several calls about North Harbour being blocked, Gwynn's trucking is currently clearing it out, but a long-term solution still needs to happen.

MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS

- VICTORIA COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT RESOLUTION

Councillor Born read the following resolution:

***Emergency Department at Victoria County Memorial Hospital
RESOLUTION***

WHEREAS the Emergency Department at Victoria County Memorial Hospital has been closed since September 2022, due to staffing shortages, resulting in significant concerns within the community regarding timely access to emergency care;

WHEREAS the Urgent Treatment Centre (UTC) has been providing interim support, but the continued absence of an Emergency Department remains a critical issue for residents of Victoria County;

WHEREAS the issue of reopening the Emergency Department has been a priority raised by local

constituents and continues to be a concern for the community;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Municipality of Victoria County formally requests that Nova Scotia Health provide a detailed update on the following areas:

1. A report outlining the specific staffing shortages and other contributing factors leading to the ongoing closure of the Emergency Department.
2. An update on the efforts being made to address staffing challenges and increase the capacity of the Emergency Department.
3. A clear and realistic timeline for the reopening of the Emergency Department, including any modifications to recruitment or retention strategies.
4. An explanation of any additional support or resources being implemented to meet the community's emergency care needs during this period.
5. A confirmation of the date for the next public engagement session to keep residents informed about the ongoing situation and progress.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Nova Scotia Health provide quarterly updates to this Council regarding staffing efforts, challenges, and overall progress in addressing the community's emergency care needs, to ensure continuous and transparent communication with the public.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this Council remains committed to advocating for the timely reopening of the Emergency Department and will continue to work closely with Nova Scotia Health to ensure that the residents of Victoria County have access to the emergency care services they need.

I respectfully move that this motion be adopted.

On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Kerr to adopt the Victoria County Memorial Hospital Emergency Department Resolution.

Motion Carried.

- CBREN AGREEMENT

On Motion of Warden Organ seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the CBREN Agreement.

Motion Carried.

There were two other Motions on the agenda: The Village of Baddeck CCBF (formerly known as Gas Tax) and the Municipal Grants Policy. Both were discussed and recommendations were made at Committee of the Whole and a Motion to accept those recommendations was made and passed at the beginning of Council, see page 3 and to see the recommendations, see the posted Committee of the Whole Minutes for January 27, 2025.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Fences Arbitration Committee met and sent a registered letter to a resident with roaming livestock.
- Another letter of complaint was sent to a property owner regarding roaming horses.
- Councillor Patterson requested a letter be sent to Ken Oakes, a member of the Fences Arbitration Committee to thank him for his work with this committee.
- Victoria County Transit met prior to Council.

FCM (FEDERATIONS OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES) AND NSFM (NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES) REPORTS

Councillor Patterson presented reports from the recent FCM and NSFM board meetings he attended.

Councillor Patterson put his name forward for the election to the board of the NSFM.

On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve travel outside of the province to attend FCM Board of Directors meetings in March 2025.

Motion Carried.

Warden Organ requested a report from Councillor Patterson be brought back to Council and going forward, any councillor travelling to conferences to report back to Council following the conference/meetings with their own report of their representation there.

NEXT MEETING

TBA

ADJOURN

Deputy Warden MacLeod made a motion to adjourn at 4:11pm.