

A Meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held in Council Chambers at Baddeck on April 14, 2025, at 11:00am with Warden Organ in the Chair.

### **COUNCILLORS PRESENT**

District #1- Donna Matheson-Lefort

District #2- Perla MacLeod, Deputy Warden

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

Natasha Kochhar, Manager of Communications

Jessica Klein, Digital Communications Administrator

### **ABSENT**

District #3- Jess Kerr

### **CALL TO ORDER**

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

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councillors Patterson and Matheson-LeFort requested additions to the agenda.

- FCM Board elections.
- Council and COW meeting schedules.

***On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Donovan to approve the Agenda for April 14, 2025, with the noted change.***

***Motion Carried.***

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the March 24, 2025, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Deputy Warden MacLeod to approve the Minutes of March 24, 2025, Regular Council Minutes all the Minutes.***

***Motion Carried.***

***On Motion of Councillor Matheson-LeFort seconded by Deputy Warden MacLeod to approve the Minutes of March 31, 2025, Special Council Minutes.***

***Motion Carried.***

## CAPE BRETON PARTNERSHIP PRESENTATION – BILL CULP

Mr. Culp presented to Council on the Futures In Film in Cape Breton and some of the key highlights and takeaways were:

- Hire a locations photographer with film industry experience to develop a Victoria County presence on the Screen Nova Scotia locations database.
- Encourage local property owners to sign up to the Screen Nova Scotia Starring Your Property Program.
- Develop a municipal pitch package template for prospective film productions driven by economic impact, similar to sporting events, festivals, etc.

**DESTINATION CAPE BRETON PRESENTATION – TERRY SMITH**

Mr. Smith gave an update to Council that included the following areas:

- Mandate
- Governance
- Board of Governors
- Current Board Members
- Marketing Levy Update
- Engaging Industry
- Visitor Overview

CAO MacEachen has a list of questions that she will send out to Mr. Smith and will send the answers back to Council.

**WATERFRONT BADDECK PRESENTATION – STEVE GOLDTHWAITE AND STEVE ROSS**

Mr. Goldthwaite and Mr. Ross provided an update to Council on the following areas:

- Living Shoreline
- Boardwalk Reconstruction Project
- Design
- Engineering and Planning
- Tender and Bids
- Permits
- Construction Start Anticipated May or June 2025.
- Road Closure Considerations
- Project Costs
- Cover the costs of tipping fees for the project.

Tip fee request will be taken to budget discussions.

**RECESS**

Warden Organ called for a 10-minute recess.

The Council meeting was running late so Warden Organ called for the Council meeting to be tabled to proceed with the scheduled 1pm meeting with Minister Tilley with the Department of Public Works. Council will return to the Regular meeting of Council following the Minister meeting.

***On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to table the Regular Meeting of Council at 1:13pm.***

***Motion Carried.***

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to resume the Regular Meeting of Council at 3:29pm.***

***Motion Carried.***

## **DISTRICT HIGHLIGHTS**

### **DISTRICT 1**

- Board Governance Training Session, Led by: Anchored Recruiting & HR Solutions. Join a FREE one-day workshop designed to boost your board governance skills! Whether you are new to a not-for-profit board or a seasoned member, this session will cover everything from board structures and responsibilities to conflict resolution and project management—all through a not-for-profit lens. Plus, lunch is provided for free! Monday May 5th, 2025 (Backup date May 6th). St. Columba Parish Centre, Iona (2561 St Columba Rd.) 10:00 a.m. — 2:30 p.m. Open to anyone who currently serves on a non-profit board or who is planning to in the future. All attendees must register in advance using the online form or by calling Colleen Whelan-Smith at (902) 295-0788. Registration is open until May 1st, 2025, at 4:00 p.m.
- The Sacred Turtle, a boutique farm shop in district #1, has successfully relocated. The new shop is conveniently situated right off the road on route 223 in Jamesville and they are on track to have their grand opening on Mother's Day. Items and services available range from freshly cut flowers, gifts and artisan crafts to freshly made bagels, specialty coffee and smoothies. Had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the positive impact The Sacred Turtle has had on our community. Their innovative approach to celebrating and promoting local has not only addressed critical needs but also contributed to the economic and social well-being of our region.

***On Motion of Councillor Matheson-Lefort seconded by Councillor Patterson to have a discussion around Council meetings schedule.***

***Motion Carried.***

Discussion took place and it was agreed that Committee of the Whole Meetings will be held at various locations around the County.

Regular Council meetings were also discussed, and it was agreed that Council will contact the Municipal Clerk by the end of the week with their council meeting suggestions, including suggested times, breaks, lengths and frequency.

Councillor Matheson-Lefort gave the following Notice of Motion for consideration at the next Regular Council meeting:

Topic: Litter

Desired outcome: the development of/proposal for a pilot project/campaign for the municipality to reduce litter. This project would consist of a multi-pronged approach that would include the following:

- **Engaging communities** and making people think about their unconscious acts of littering.
- **Taking unusual approaches** to clearing roadsides, parks, and trails.
- **Increasing public awareness** about proper waste disposal.
- **Implementing practical solutions** such as public education, community clean-ups, etc.

Alignment with strategic priorities: preserving our rural natural beauty.

## DISTRICT 2

- Requested a Nova Scotia Power update on a streetlight request and entered a repair request for 8332 HWY 105.

## DISTRICT 4

- Attended the Victoria County RCMP event in Baddeck. The session provided an overview of the District RCMP's resourcing and accomplishments for 2024, along with their goals for 2025. The RCMP is seeking community input on future priorities and responded to questions from residents during the event. Attended the Futures in Film Series located at the Gaelic College, an information session to explore how you can begin or grow your career in the Film Industry.
- Spoke with Public Works Manager Steve MacDonald regarding the ongoing garbage issue at the St. Anns Lookoff. Visited the site in person and observed a significant amount of debris that had been thrown over the side. Mr. MacDonald is currently developing a plan to address the issue.
- Also received calls from residents concerned about flooding and road damage along The Bay Road and those concerns have forwarded to the department for follow-up. On April 11th,
- Attended a sod-turning event and announcement at Beinn Mhàbu in Mabou. This marks the beginning of a major student resident project—a two-storey, 24-unit building that will support both students during the academic year and seasonal workers from May to August. This is an important step forward for both the Gaelic College and the wider community. Congratulations to all those involved in making this project a reality.
- Hosting a Community Drop-In on Wednesday, April 16th, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at the Indian Brook Firehall, as part of the regular "Take a Break" session. Residents are welcome to stop in to ask questions, share ideas, or discuss concerns. More sessions will be scheduled throughout the district in the coming months.
- On May 5th, South Haven Hall will be hosting a CPR/AED course. Anyone interested is encouraged to contact the hall directly for more information.

### **DISTRICT 5**

- Receiving a number of complaints about the New Campbellton Road.
- Acknowledged Chris Woodford for his recreational programs held in the community.
- Attended a retirement dinner for Hon. Keith Bain.

### **DISTRICT 6**

- 285 Take Out is a new food service catering establishment opening soon in Ingonish It will be open all year.
- Snowmobile races at Ski Cape Smokey was a great event.
- Was in contact with Percy Rasmussen regarding the renovations with the daycare. The heat pumps were put in and it was communicated to Mr. Rasmussen that the work for the daycare would be completed in August.

### **DISTRICT 7**

- The fishing season is upon us once again, passed on to all captains and fishers and hope the season is good to you all. May the seas stay calm and your catches plentiful. Be safe out there.
- Library renovations are still ongoing in Ingonish hopefully to be operating soon
- Attended an RCMP open house in Ingonish, approx. 12 people attended, met with the 4 members.
- Both the Volunteer Fire Departments obtained new to them Fire trucks. Ingonish was from Isle Madame, Neil's Harbour/ New Haven truck was from Port Hastings, their old one went to Codroy Newfoundland.
- Toured the Bay St Lawrence Community Center along with Councillors Hennick and Donovan. As Councillor Hennick mentioned we are waiting for quotes and direction to move forward.
- Attended the AGM for Highland Manor, update on the new build, still waiting for levels of government to sign off on the budget.
- Girl Guides had a cookie drive and sales went well.
- Branch 105 Legion holds a weekly crib game night on Wednesdays.
- Congratulated the coaches and teams who participated in the Middle school boy's basketball regional tournament, Cabot came away with the Banner. Great couple days of ball.
- The educational tour from Cabot had a great trip to New York.
- I would like to relay congratulations to new members of council also returning member from MLA Dianne Timmins as she recognized us in The Nova Scotia House of Assembly
- And I would be remiss if I do not mention a proud Nanny moment, my granddaughter Meghan Organ was also recognized by her MLA Hon Iain Rankin Timberlea Prospect for her activeness in student politics and passion for civic engagement.

**DISTRICT 8**

- Bay St Lawrence Community Center had an electrical fire in which smoke damage went through the building. Its still closed at present time and they are still dealing with the insurance company. Warden Organ and Councillors Hennick and Donovan went to the Center, and contracted a different restoration company.
- North Highland Nordic will be coming to council with a presentation asking for funds for an expansion, the area that the new groomer is in is very small.
- There will be a Heath Fair, April 30<sup>th</sup> 1-4pm at the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre, all welcome, out of the district 8 budget, money was donated and will be a gold sponsor of this wonderful event put on by the Bay St. Lawrence Community Center
- Received complaints about the roads in Meat Cove, A resident would like to have a letter of support from the County to give or send to the province, she has already been in contact with Dianne Timmons, and she is going to start a petition and had photos put on social media on the conditions of the roads.
- Supporting a community clean up and a BBQ.

***On Motion of Councillor Hennick seconded by Councillor MacLeod to approve \$26,984.21 for clean up costs to the Bay St. Lawrence Community Centre.***

***Motion Carried.***

***On Motion of Councillor Hennick seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve a streetlight move from 77 Fraser Road in Bay St. Lawrence to across the street from 83 Fraser's Road, Bay St. Lawrence.***

***Motion Carried.***

**COUNCIL CELL PHONE AND INTERNET STAFF REPORT – CAO MACEACHEN**

CAO MacEachen went over the report submitted to Council and provided recommendations for Council considerations.

Those recommendations were:

**1: Continue the Process in Place**

Currently, a laptop, increase in stipend, and a tax write off of expenses related to Councillor duties.

As has been practice since years, Council in the past have also had personal cell phones but were not reimbursed. Since the Warden has to be available for more in-depth discussions with Councillors, and with Staff, the Warden position warrants the extra asset.

## **2: Reimburse Council for Internet and Phone costs, with a Cap, based on receipts**

\$35 could be reimbursed monthly to Council, based on receipts (Provincial phone plan costs). Council could also choose a Capped amount for both cell phone and Internet reimbursement. Monthly bills should be provided. If monthly bills are not provided, the allowance would be a taxable allowance, or not reimbursed.

If this option is chosen, the T2200 will be adjusted, or, not issued.

## **3: Council become part of the Provincial Plan**

The County has, as part of the Provincial Phone plan, a deal with our service provider, that, hardware (phone) is not included, but monthly cell phone plans are \$35 max.

Council could become part of this plan, with their hardware and phone number ported over. Problems could arise if Council have signed into a long-term plan on their own.

If this option is chosen, the T2200 will be adjusted, or, not issued.

A Council discussion took place around the recommendations and option 2 was chosen with the following conditions: that option will be available to Councillors who want it. Councillors who want this reimbursement will submit monthly receipts, those who do not choose to use it, the T2200 will be issued but it has to be one or the other. Internet costs were also discussed and agreed that \$45.00 would be reimbursed monthly for those Councillors who want it with receipts submitted monthly.

***On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve option 2 with a \$35 reimbursement for cell phones and a \$45 reimbursement for internet with submitted receipts.***

***Motion Carried.***

## **MOTIONS/RESOLUTIONS**

***On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to oppose fracking in Victoria County, support First Nations' Rights, and request expert consultation and support from NSFM.***

***Whereas the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs has expressed strong opposition to hydraulic fracturing (fracking) and reaffirmed its commitment to protect the Mi'kmaq unceded and traditional territory from such activities;***



***Whereas the majority of residents in Victoria County rely on well water for their drinking water, and fracking poses a significant risk of groundwater contamination, which could endanger the health and safety of our community;***

***Whereas the risks associated with fracking, including potential water contamination, air pollution, and long-term environmental damage, are concerning, and the Province has not provided sufficient information regarding these risks;***

***Whereas it is essential to protect the health of the people of Victoria County, our natural resources, and the traditional rights of First Nations to protect the land;***

***Now therefore be it resolved that the Council of Victoria County formally opposes the practice of hydraulic fracturing (fracking) within our region due to insufficient information from the Province on the environmental and health risks, in alignment with the position of the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and Mi'kmaq communities;***

***Be it further resolved that the Council will send a letter to the Premier of Nova Scotia expressing our opposition to fracking and calling on the Province to provide transparent, comprehensive information regarding the potential impacts of fracking in Nova Scotia, including environmental assessments and health studies;***

***Be it further resolved that the Council will send a letter to the Assembly of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq Chiefs and Wagmatcook First Nation, thanking them for their leadership on this issue, expressing solidarity with their stance, while reaffirming our commitment to protecting water resources and the environment;***

***Finally, be it resolved that the Council will send a letter to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM), urging them to support the opposition to fracking in Nova Scotia, to advocate for the protection of local water resources, and to ensure that no fracking takes place on Mi'kmaq unceded territory across Nova Scotia.***

***Motion Defeated.***

There was a discussion around the motion and Council agreed that more information and/or different wording of the motion is needed before writing a letter.

***On Motion of Councillor Born seconded by Councillor that Victoria County provide a 50% cost share contribution toward the operational costs of three port-a-potty units at Wreck Cove General Store for the 2025 Tourism season from June 1 to October 31. The estimated cost for the service last year was approximately \$2,500, and the Municipality's contribution will be based on a similar cost structure.***

***Motion Defeated.***

Dan Coffin, Manager of Tourism and Recreation spoke to the challenges faced in the past with port-a-potties.

There was a discussion, and it was decided to bring this request to budget discussions.

***On Motion of Warden Organ seconded by Councillor Matheson-LeFort to approve the following EDPC appointments:***

***Building Inspection: David MacKenzie, Sean Donovan, Todd Samson, Jonathan Martin, Andre Samson and Luke Ross.***

***Development Officer: Kristen Scanlan, John Bain, Andrew Jones, Brennan MacDonald, Mikayla Tait, Heike Bruckner, David MacKenzie and Luke Ross.***

***Fire Inspector: David MacKenzie, Andre Samson, Luke Ross, Sean Donovan, Todd Samson and Jonathan Martin.***

***Dangerous or Unsightly Premises: Sean Donovan, John Bain, Luke Ross, David MacKenzie and Andre Samson.***

***Special Constables: Sean Donovan and Jonathan Martin.***

***Motion Carried***

Deputy Warden MacLeod left the meeting at 4:39pm.

Warden Organ read the following Resolution recognizing May being Lyme Disease Awareness Month:

*WHEREAS Lyme disease is a serious illness caused by the bite of a blacklegged tick infected with the bacterium Borrelia burgdorferi: and*

*WHEREAS blacklegged ticks carrying a variety of diseases or illnesses can now be found in all parts of Nova Scotia; and*

*WHEREAS awareness, education and practicing preventative measures, such as daily tick checks and proper tick removal, can help reduce your chances of contracting tick-borne diseases;*

*THEREFORE, be it resolved that I, Warden Jackie Organ, on behalf of the Municipality of the County of Victoria, do hereby proclaim May 2025 as "Lyme Disease Awareness Month".*

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Hennick to approve the recommendation made from the February 24, 2025, Audit Committee Meeting.***

***Motion Carried.***

CAO MacEachen read the following Resolution regarding the Municipal innovation Program for Council consideration:

*WHEREAS the Municipality of the County of Victoria and the Municipality of the County of Inverness have identified the need to enhance curbside waste collection services through a collaborative approach;*

*AND WHEREAS the Municipal Innovation Program (MIP) offers funding to support regional collaboration and service delivery improvements;*

*AND WHEREAS both municipalities have agreed to jointly apply for MIP funding to support regional collaboration that will create efficiencies and improve service delivery across both municipalities;*

*BE IT RESOLVED that Municipality of the County of Victoria Council hereby authorizes the submission of an application for the Municipal Innovation Program to fund the collaborative delivery of waste collection services between Municipality of the County of Victoria and the Municipality of the County of Inverness;*

*AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Municipality of the County of Victoria Council commits to participating in the project, including providing necessary financial resources and support for implementation, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the MIP.*

*FURTHER RESOLVED, that Municipality of the County of Victoria Council agrees to the formation of a joint working group with the Municipality of the County of Inverness to manage and oversee the planning, procurement, and implementation phases of the project.*

***On Motion of Councillor Donovan seconded by Councillor Born to accept the MIP Resolution and submit the application.***

***Motion Carried.***

***On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Matheson-Lefort to renew the FCM Membership for 2025.***

***Motion Carried.***

CAO MacEachen said all total, the FCM cost about \$10,000.00 in 2025. The membership is \$2,500.00 and it costs an average of \$1,500.00 per councillor for conference registration costs, not including flights and accommodations. Council had a discussion regarding the FCM renewal.

***On Motion of Councillor Patterson seconded by Councillor Born to allow Councillor Patterson to run for FCM Board elections for a two-year term.***

***Motion Tabled.***

There was discussion on costs and in the past, the expenses have been in the range of \$2,000.00 to attend one in person meeting plus the conference registration fees.

There was a vote, and 3 councillors were in favour and 3 against so it will be tabled until all Councillors are present to vote again.

CAO MacEachen gave the following updates:

- Next Tax Sale is on May 20<sup>th</sup>.
- Municipal Grant applications are due on April 30<sup>th</sup>.
- The Baddeck and Dingwall Transfer Stations will be accepting fishing rope coiled and tied, if it not coiled and tied, it be will rejected.
- Tendering a demolition for the old Dingwall water tower.
- Volunteer Award Nominations are being accepted.
- Recreation will reach out to Council on learn to play program.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

May 5, 2025.

#### **ADJOURN**

Councillor Donovan made a motion to adjourn at 5:06pm.