

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL
September 10, 2012

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 10, 2012, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Keith MacCuspic
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson, Deputy Warden
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #7 – David Donovan
District #8 – Johnny Buchanan

Also present were:

Sandy Hudson, CAO
Heather MacLean, Recording Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

It was moved by Councillor MacInnis, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

PARKS CANADA PRESENTATION

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Chip Bird, Field Superintendent, Parks Canada.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Councillor Larry Dauphinee declared a conflict of interest as he is an employee of Parks Canada and he was excused from this portion of the meeting.

PARKS CANADA PRESENTATION

Mr. Bird updated Council on the Government of Canada's Economic Action Plan reductions in Parks Canada and their effect on the Victoria County sites – AG Bell National Historic Park and Cape Breton Highlands National Park.

Mr. Bird outlined the measures introduced to cut costs which were announced in April, 2012. One decision was the seasonality of the workforce when visitors are present. The AG Bell site will not be offering programming between Thanksgiving and Victoria Day annually. The CBHNP will be a five day a week operation, being closed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays. The Visitor's Centre will remain open during the spring and fall shoulder seasons.

Councillor Donovan questioned on the spring and fall shoulder seasons. Mr. Bird advised that the spring shoulder season is Victoria Day to Canada Day and the fall shoulder season is Labour Day to Thanksgiving.

The staff complement was questioned and Mr. Bird indicated that Parks Canada have 350 employees in Cape Breton and provided a breakdown of the Victoria County sites.

Discussion took place on the storm damage that occurred in 2010 in the area of the Clyburn River and whether there were any recommendations on preventing such an incident in the future. Mr. Bird indicated that at present it is a requirement that Parks Canada repair the damage from such an occurrence.

Mr. Bird was questioned on whether there were any future plans for expansion of the AG Bell Museum to accommodate the Silver Dart Replica. Mr. Bird indicated that Parks Canada will not undertake an expansion, but would participate if funding was received by the Silver Dart Centennial Committee.

The staffing changes in Victoria County were questioned and Mr. Bird indicated that full-time employees were cut back to 9 month positions and other seasonal employees have seen their work term shortened by as little as up to 5 days.

The AG Bell Museum will be closing after Thanksgiving and the question was raised as to whether it would remain open for Celtic Colours. Mr. Bird advised it would remain open for Celtic Colours.

Mr. Bird indicated that the change in the lunch cafeteria at the Bell Museum has proven to be a success and is more profitable since the relocation from its former location.

The floor was then opened to the public in attendance to ask questions and Mr. Bird addressed same.

Mr. Bird then addressed the issue of the privatization of the Keltic Lodge and Highland Links Golf Course. An RFP is presently being issued.

Mr. Bird advised that in 2007 the government decided to review all agencies – Parks Canada being one. A decision was made at that time that certain recreation areas/facilities (golf

courses being one) would no longer be done by Parks Canada staff. This was reaffirmed in the 2008 budget.

It was felt that it would be viable to package the Keltic and Highland Links as one facility.

The RFP will be on the Government of Canada's tendering site – www.MERX.com. The RFP has been sent to people in the golf industry and any submissions will be reviewed and a decision should be made in mid-December/early-January on the new operator.

Mr. Bird indicated that this is a necessary step. The Highland Links Golf Course loses \$500,000/year, and the losses are accumulating, now standing at \$2.5 million in the last five years. The government will remain the owner of the property and will lease its interest in the property.

Whether the MERX site could be accessed to view the RFP was questioned. Mr. Bird will investigate whether this matter if see if can be shared and do whatever the regulators permit.

The question was raised as to whether the members of PSAC have seen this RFP and Mr. Bird indicated they have been consulted.

Mr. Bird indicated that there has been interest expressed from parties that are interested in both facilities.

Further discussion took place and Mr. Bird answered various questions.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Bird for his attendance and he was excused at this time.

RECESS

Warden Morrison announced that Council would recess for 10 minutes.

ENTERED

Councillor Dauphinee returned to the meeting.

SOLID WASTE/WATER UPDATE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Robert Dauphinee, Director of Public Works, who was in attendance to provide an update on solid waste and the water utilities.

Mr. Dauphinee advised that we have seen another good year with regard to waste collection. The equipment is holding up well. No complaints are received from the public and the collection vehicles are out on schedule every day.

Mr. Dauphinee indicated it has also been an uneventful year with regard to the transfer station operation. He updated Council on an incident at the Dingwall site with regard to a fire in the woodpile. This was contained and an emphasis has been placed on being diligent as to what is coming into our site.

The walking floor trailer used to transfer waste to Guysborough is in need of replacement. Mr. Dauphinee also indicated that something must be done to formally close cell number 2. This cell has never been formally closed.

Mr. Dauphinee indicated that he felt it was time for the Municipality to consider initiating a clear bag waste collection program. He felt that the best time of the year to institute such a program would be in the fall of the year. This would give residents a chance to get comfortable with the requirements before the busy summer collection period.

Mr. Dauphinee updated Council on the Region 1 contract with the RRFB to deliver education. At present an individual is providing the required education by contract and Mr. Dauphinee indicated that having a long term education contract should be considered.

The challenge with regard to construction and demolition (c & d) materials was discussed. At present there are two streams at both transfer station sites – clean wood materials and unclean wood materials. These materials should be going to an approved site. It was felt that costing the best option to meet the Department of Environment requirements should be investigated – whether this would be shipping materials or developing our own site.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the requirements for developing a c & d site. Mr. Dauphinee indicated that a site would be lined and the materials placed there would degrade over time.

Councillor MacCuspic indicated that a lot of the c & d material is reusable and he questioned whether it could be possible for the public to access these materials. A release of waiver could be signed releasing the County from any liability. This would cut down on the volume and the potential for fire hazard. Discussion took place on this matter.

It was moved by Councillor MacCuspic, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that the Director of Public Works investigate the potential for public access to c & d materials at the Baddeck and Dingwall sites. Motion carried.

Councillor MacInnis questioned on the acreage at the Baddeck site and whether there would be room for a c & d site. Mr. Dauphinee indicated he could not provide the exact area, but DNR own adjacent property which may be available for exchange.

Councillor Buchanan brought up the matter of the shells piling up at the Dingwall site. Mr. Dauphinee advised of the process used with regard to the shells. They have to be stabilized and covered and sit for a period of time and then remixed. These materials are used when ready.

Councillor Donovan questioned on derelict vehicles. The Municipality is no longer actively involved in this removal and the removal of derelict vehicles is not supplemented by the RRFB.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned the replacement of the walking floor trailer and the costs of contracting as opposed to purchasing. He also questioned on the costs associated with the closure of cell number 2.

Deputy Warden Patterson indicated that the solid waste collection vehicles look great on the road and they give Victoria County a good image. He also felt a more extensive advertisement on the availability of compost at our sites could be provided.

Warden Morrison advised that the feedback received on the solid waste collection is all positive and he requested Mr. Dauphinee to share this positive feedback with staff.

Mr. Dauphinee indicated that it was a good year in terms of the water utilities. All systems ran well. He outlined repairs to lines, etc. that had been completed throughout the year.

A water source is presently being identified for the Bay St. Lawrence area. An exploratory well for a ground source for the Neil's Harbour system has been drilled and the volume is fairly promising, however, there are concerns with regard to the water quality that are being investigated.

Mr. Dauphinee indicated that work has been undertaken on collection of accounts and at present most accounts are in good standing.

Discussion took place on the production and consumption of water not meshing and this is presently being actively investigated.

A question was raised on whether the meters in homes are considered to provide accurate readings and Mr. Dauphinee indicated he believes they are. Meters in homes are read quarterly on the billing cycle.

Why some customers obtain free water was questioned and Mr. Dauphinee explained that these customers are few and are mainly due to providing land access for the water system.

Discussion took place on the topic of septic pumping and disposal and whether Mr. Dauphinee had carried out any research on the dewatering sludge technology. He indicated that he did look into it, but did not do any research in detail. Mr. Hudson advised that he is still working with the Department of Environment and Island Vacuum on the closure of the disposal site at Dingwall.

Councillor MacNeil questioned on the Little Narrows Water system and the fact that when the power is out, there is the ability to open a valve to back feed the supply, allowing the customers to still have water. In the past, this was not done and he questioned on why this wasn't known in previous power outages when residents lost their water. Mr. Dauphinee explained the situation.

Council was advised that there is a new water rate study to be undertaken beginning in November, 2012.

Warden Morrison extended a vote of thanks to Mr. Dauphinee for his report and he was excused at this time.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 13, 2012

The minutes of the August 13, 2012, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the Victoria County Municipal Council minutes of August 13, 2012, be approved as presented. Motion carried.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM MINUTES

The four sets of green gyms have arrived and will be delivered to the sites as requested. Councillor MacNeil indicated that the equipment has been set up at the school in Iona if anyone would like to view same. A requirement of the ECBC funding is that the equipment be fenced and this will be completed.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #5

Deputy Warden Patterson advised that there will be Municipal Climate Change Action Plan workshop held from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on Friday, September 14, 2012, in Port Hawkesbury.

Sandy Hudson advised that he will be attending this workshop.

Deputy Warden Patterson advised of the COMFIT Workshop to be held in Halifax on September 24-25, 2012. He expressed concern on the cost to attend the workshop. The regular fee is in excess of \$1,700.00; however, UNSM members can register for \$1,200.00. This cost is exorbitant.

It was moved by Deputy Warden Patterson, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the UNSM be notified of the Municipality's concern with regard to the cost of the COMFIT workshop indicating the cost is exorbitant and unjustified. Motion carried.

District #6

Councillor Dauphinee indicated that a house fire occurred recently in Ingonish and NSPI was contacted to disconnect the power and the response time was in excess of 90 minutes. He questioned whether a response was ever received from NSPI concerning the service and staffing North of Smokey.

It was felt that representatives from NSPI should be requested to appear before Council.

Councillor Dauphinee questioned whether a time and date had been established for a meeting with the Minister of Transportation while Councillors are attending the UNSM. He was advised a specific time has not been established. Two topics to be discussed with the Minister are graffiti on Kelly's and Smokey Mountain and the condition of the look offs and the lack of garbage disposal at same.

District #7

Councillor Donovan presented a thank you received from the Morrison/MacIver family for the Victoria County pins provided for their recent reunion.

Councillor Donovan expressed concern with regard to the cement debris be left on the roadsides in conjunction with signs being erected under the Cabot Trail Façade Program.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that a letter be forwarded to Lucille Timmons, Coordinator, requesting that the cement debris left on the roadsides as a result of the installation of signs in conjunction with the Cabot Trail Façade Program be cleaned up and removed. Motion carried.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal and the Department of Tourism requesting that the viewsapes program be reintroduced in Victoria County. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan presented a petition to name an unnamed road in Ingonish to “Loretta Lane”.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the petition requesting the road name change to “Loretta Lane” be forwarded to the Eastern District Planning Commission and Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal for their approval. Motion carried.

Councillor Donovan, on behalf of the organizers of the Linger by the Sea Festival, extended a vote of thanks to Council for their support.

District #8

Councillor Buchanan brought up the matter of the South Harbour Channel and questioned whether a meeting could be set up regarding same. Sandy Hudson advised that Mark Peck, Municipal Advisor, is meeting at the Deputy Minister level, to see what can be done. The Municipality is not responsible for this channel.

Councillor Buchanan questioned on when the next round of green gyms would be advertised. This will be done over the winter, so that the equipment will be obtained for installation in the spring.

Councillor Buchanan presented a letter from the North Highlands Community Museum’s Collections Management Committee, requesting \$5,000.00 to assist with acquiring, cleaning and cataloging a large collection of artifacts.

It was moved by Councillor Buchanan, seconded by Councillor Donovan, that this matter be deferred to budget talks. Motion carried.

Councillor Buchanan also brought forward a letter from Clayton MacKinnon, Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department Chief, requesting one time emergency funding to assist with the purchase of a rescue boat and ATV.

It was felt that this matter should come under the jurisdiction of the Victoria County Chief Fire Officers Association for their discussion and recommendation. This Committee will be meeting on September 23, 2012.

District #4

Councillor MacInnis suggested that during the course of the renovations to the Heritage and Archives Department, consideration should be given to fire proofing all, or a section of, the space.

Councillor MacInnis indicated that there are still problems in the St. Ann's Bay Loop with regard to the Canada Post requirements for mailboxes. Sandy Hudson advised that he would forward a copy of the requirements by email to Councillor MacInnis for his information.

Councillor MacInnis questioned whether the County is eligible for COMFIT and if so, consideration should be given to installing a windmill at a location on the property at the Gaelic College. There is a backlog of COMFIT applications at present and the CAO will check on the application process.

Councillor MacInnis felt that it would be beneficial for the Municipality to invite successful business people in Victoria County to meet to discuss and enlighten on how they achieved their success in business.

District #2

Councillor MacCuspic indicated that the red flashing light at Exit 7 is still not working. Contact was made with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal in this regard.

District #1

It was moved by Councillor MacNeil, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that \$1,500.00 be approved from the District #1 budget to assist with the purchase of athletic uniforms for the Rankin School of the Narrows. Motion carried.

Councillor MacNeil requested that the Washabuck Road and the warranty on the new pavement be added to the list of topics for the meeting with the Minister of Transportation.

It was also suggested that the salt silo in Wreck Cove be added to the list for the meeting.

District #3

Deputy Warden Patterson assumed the Chair.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor Dauphinee, that the CAO investigate the cost of installing audio equipment in the Council Chambers. Motion carried.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that an order be placed for the installation of a street light at 26 Water Street, Baddeck. Motion carried.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacInnis, that the Municipality provide sponsorship in the amount of \$500.00 for the Cape Breton Partnership's AGM to be held at the Inverary Resort, Baddeck, on October 4, 2012. Motion carried.

It was moved by Warden Morrison, seconded by Councillor MacCuspic, that the Municipality investigate the cost of installing "cycle friendly county/share the road" signs at the entry points to the Municipality. Motion carried.

Warden Morrison then returned to the Chair.

District #1

Councillor MacNeil questioned on whether there is another dedication ceremony planned for the Cape Breton Highlanders this fall and whether the County is represented in same.

Warden Morrison indicated that a ceremony is scheduled for October 13, 2012. There will be a parade and dedication of a plaque and the Municipality has been active in the planning of the event. Council will be advised of the particulars when the schedule is determined.

NEW BUSINESS

Sandy Hudson presented a letter from the UNSM to the UARB regarding the NSPI LED Streetlight replacement cost of \$23 million to Municipalities. They suggest that there is not adequate proof provided with regard to the age of the existing lights and that in many cases they are older than NSPI assume. They are suggesting that there should be a way to actively determine the age of the lights.

It was moved by Councillor Donovan, seconded by Councillor Buchanan, that the Municipality endorse the UNSM's letter to the UARB. Motion carried.

Sandy Hudson advised that he checked on whether fire halls were billed for water and reported that they are charged for water.

The Markland Resort has requested that the water system be extended 300 yards from the end of the existing system to allow them to connect to the water system in Dingwall. The Markland will pay for the extension of the line and we will monitor and meter the consumption and bill accordingly. This was felt to be a win/win situation and Council had no objections.

The Victoria Highland Civic Centre Golf Tournament will be held on September 22, 2012. Warden Morrison advised that he will enter a team through his district budget.

NEXT COUNCIL

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held on Monday, September 24, 2012, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

Sandy Hudson questioned whether Council wished to meet in October prior to the Municipal Elections.

Council will meet on Monday, October 1, 2012, at 5:00 p.m. also.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, on motion of Councillor Donovan, the meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

Bruce Morrison, Warden

Sandy Hudson, CAO