

VICTORIA COUNTY MUNICIPAL COUNCIL

September 10, 2018

A meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council was held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 10, 2018, beginning at 5:00 p.m. with Warden Bruce Morrison in the Chair.

Present were:

District #1 – Paul MacNeil
District #2 – Perla MacLeod
District #3 – Bruce Morrison, Warden
District #4 – Merrill MacInnis
District #5 – Fraser Patterson
District #6 – Larry Dauphinee
District #8 – Norman MacDonald

Also present were:

Leanne MacEachen, CAO
Alix Redden, CFO
Heather MacLean, Recorder

Absent was:

District #7 – Wayne Budge (Due to Illness)

IN CAMERA

It was moved and seconded to go In Camera to deal with Labour Relations and personnel issues. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded to come out of In Camera to the regular meeting. Motion carried.

CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion carried.

IN CAMERA RECOMMENDATIONS

It was moved and seconded that the In Camera meeting recommendations be approved. Motion carried.

SOLID WASTE COMPLIANCE PLAN UPDATE

Courtesy of Council was extended to Robert Dauphinee, Director of Public Works, and Jocelyn Bethune, Communications Officer, who were in attendance to update on the proposed solid waste compliance plan.

It has been one year since clear bags became mandatory, and although for the most part, the public have been quick to come on board, there is still work to be done. The problem being encountered now is that more recyclables are being seen in clear bags and garbage in blue bags. Garbage in blue bags contaminates all the contents in the bag.

Robert Dauphinee indicated that the compliance plan will begin on October 22, 2018. Prior to this date, an education blitz will be undertaken. There will be newspaper ads, scale house handouts, a newsletter and other outreach beginning the week of September 17, 2018. The compliance message will be posted on the County website, Facebook page and at the waste management sites.

Meetings will be held with the solid waste collection crews and waste management site employees to outline their responsibilities in the compliance plan. Outreach will take place at the sites the week of October 22-26, 2018. After the education efforts, if unsorted materials are seen during collection or being brought to the sites, they will be rejected.

It was felt that education will make the compliance program successful and this effort is the next level of compliance.

There are a number of new residents in the County that may not be aware of the County's waste management and the sort sheets are an important tool. This information will be included in the newsletter.

An education effort at the schools in the County would also be an important initiative.

After further discussion, Warden Morrison extended a thank you to Robert Dauphinee and Jocelyn Bethune for their presentation.

VICTORIA COUNTY TOURISM STRATEGY UPDATE

Warden Morrison extended the courtesy of Council to Tom Wilson, Director of Recreation and Tourism, who was in attendance to present an update on the Victoria County Tourism Strategy.

Mr. Wilson advised that the Victoria County Tourism Strategy is a three year strategy – 2017 to 2020. We are now in the second year of the strategy.

There were 71 items identified in year one of the Strategy. 67 out of the 71 items were started, 25 out of the 71 are in progress and 37 of the 71 items were completed in year one.

The tourism strategy involves five pillars:

- Outdoor experiences
- Cultural experiences
- Culinary experiences
- Sea Coast and Bras d'Or Lake/Inland sea
- Experience all seasons

It also involved supporting the advancement of the overall strategy.

Mr. Wilson outlined the regional tourism associations and other partners that have been involved in the advancement of the Strategy.

To date in year two, 45 items have been started, 23 are in progress and 6 have been completed.

Mr. Wilson outlined the new Hiking Ambassadors Program and provided statistics on the tourism season to date. He outlined all the tourism websites promoting tourism in the Province.

The hours of operation of the Victoria County Welcome Centre were discussed. The facility is open from 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and a number of tourists would like to have it open earlier in the day so their day can begin earlier. The hours will change from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00

p.m. in the fall season. It was indicated that a lack of funding is the reason the hours cannot be extended.

The condition of the Uisge Ban Trail was discussed. The Department of Lands & Forestry has no funding for trails, but will be removing the wind falls. The bridge will not be replaced.

Councillor MacNeil indicated that Central Cape Breton Community Ventures have started their own Brand for Iona which has made a significant difference to the area. He thanked Mr. Wilson for the assistance he provided.

Mr. Wilson presented Council with the Year 1 (2017-2018) report card for the Victoria County Tourism Strategy for their review and information.

Warden Morrison extended a thank you on behalf of Council to Mr. Wilson for his report.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – AUGUST 7, 2018

The minutes of the August 7, 2018, meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council were presented for approval.

It was moved and seconded that the August 7, 2018, minutes of Victoria County Municipal Council be approved as presented. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

Meeting with Minister Geoff MacLellan

Whether a reply was received from Minister Geoff MacLellan to come to Council to discuss the \$1 million Cabot Trail funding was questioned.

Leanne MacEachen advised that she met with Minister MacLellan in Glace Bay recently. This funding will be administered by the Department of Business and they are putting the finishing touches on the program criteria. Bathroom facilities and identifying the next big tourism destination like the Seawall Trail are possible items.

Inverness and Victoria Counties will work together on these initiatives.

Bras d'Or Lakes Day Camps (BOLDC)

The Bras d'Or Lakes Day Camp (BOLDC) has requested Council to hold off on their financial request until they reevaluate their program.

Janet Knox, NSHA

A reply was received from Janet Knox, NSHA, advising that she is unavailable to meet with Council on the September dates provided, but will meet in October.

Council agreed to meet with Ms. Knox on any day she is available in October. The CAO will contact her for a meeting date.

Council Stipends

Alix Redden advised that she reached out to other municipalities to see what they are doing in regard to Council stipends with the elimination of the 1/3 non-taxable portion on January 1, 2019. She also outlined some approaches that could be taken in this regard and advised of her findings to date.

Ms. Redden will forward the information on to Council for their review and it will be further discussed at the next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Neil's Harbour/New Haven Fire Department

The CAO advised that she was contacted by the Fire Chief of the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Volunteer Fire Department questioning why they received a tax bill for their fire department hall.

It was moved and seconded that the Neil's Harbour/New Haven Fire Volunteer Department taxes in the amount of \$1,274.12 be written off. Motion carried.

Exempt Charitable Properties

The list of charitable properties which qualify for the commercial to residential property tax reduction was outlined. This list is to be forwarded to Council for review.

It was moved and seconded that the taxes in the amount of \$17,698.85 be written off for the list of properties identified for the reduction in taxes from the commercial rate to the residential rate. Motion carried.

Immigrant Workers

The topic of immigrant workers through the Atlantic Immigration Program (Cape Breton Partnership) is to be investigated for the Enviro-depot, Transfer Station and water utility as a possibility for employees.

Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities

The Annual Conference of the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities (NSFM) will be held in Halifax from November 6-9, 2018.

All Councillors in attendance expressed an interest in attending and Councillor Budge will be contacted to see if he is interested. Accommodations were booked at the Westin Nova Scotia previously.

Celtic Colours

This year's Celtic Colours Festival will be held from October 5-13, 2018. Council members who are available to volunteer for the Festival are to contact Gail Montgomery to register.

TAXATION UPDATE

The CAO reported that as of today's date, outstanding taxes are \$3.011 million, down from \$3.162 million at the same time last year. Current taxes are 74,000.00 behind at this point, but arrears are ahead by \$225,000.00.

She indicated that tax collection has improved by \$150,000.00 overall for this year from last year. This is a positive report.

A change in the interest rate charged will be reviewed prior to next year's billing.

DISTRICT CONCERNS

District #1

It was moved and seconded that an order be placed for two streetlights – one for the Red Point area and one for the Hazeldale area – the civic addresses to be provided. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal (TIR) expressing frustration with regard to the completion of the Gillis Point Road and questioning on that status of the completion of the remaining 2.6 km. Motion carried.

District #2

Councillor MacLeod brought up Strait Area Transit and whether they are interested in working with the County on a transit plan.

Jessie MacDonald, SAT, will be coming to Council on September 24, 2018, to provide an update.

Councillor MacLeod is still trying to obtain “Share the Road” signage for the Big Baddeck Loop. Where these signs can be obtained and the installation of same will be investigated.

Her concern regarding Uisge Ban Falls was addressed previously.

Councillor MacLeod brought up the lack of language services for the refugees in Baddeck and other areas of Cape Breton. The FCM is to be contacted advocating for more support and services for the refugees in this area.

District #4

It was moved and seconded that a letter of congratulations be forwarded to Paul Cranford on receiving the Katharine McLennan Award. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that Bell Aliant be contacted expressing concern on the telephone line along Highway 205, Baddeck Bay. Motion carried.

Included in the letter to TIR is a request for a meeting regarding the Englishtown Ferry service and “no stopping” signs be erected on both ends of Smokey Mountain.

District #5

Councillor Patterson brought up the matter of a Trailer By-Law for the Municipality. More and more trailers on wheels are being located on property and not paying property taxes which cabin owners must pay.

John Bain, EDPC, provided information on this topic some time ago. A Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) is to be established to investigate this matter.

District #6

A letter was received from GolfNorth last week regarding a meeting that same week, but there was no time to arrange a meeting with the Business community.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to GolfNorth requesting they provide advance notice for possible dates they can meet. Motion carried.

Deputy Warden Dauphinee indicated that the present recruitment of doctors for Buchanan Memorial Hospital is not working and many areas are now doing their own recruitment. At some point in the future, they may be requesting financial support from Council to assist with recruitment. This applies to the Baddeck area also.

It was moved and seconded to that consideration be given to supporting a county-wide doctor recruitment initiative. Motion carried.

District #8

Councillor MacDonald indicated that in his district some positive TIR work is being conducted such as brush cutting and shouldering. He did bring forward concerns that the car counter vehicle trackers were just located on the Dingwall Road in late August and that repairs to the bridge at South Aspy took 3 ½ weeks to complete after reported and this wait is unacceptable.

These concerns are to be included to the letter to TIR.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be forwarded to Morley MacNeil, Department of Lands & Forestry, requesting more signs and patrols for the Dingwall Beach area as waste is being dumped and left on the beach. Motion carried.

The Cape North water issue was discussed. At the Public Works meeting prior to Council, a motion was passed to task the Public Works staff to do a survey of the properties identified in Cape North and South Ridge Road to find out their current water source, their needs and their preference if there was water sourced by the Municipality.

It was moved and seconded to accept the recommendation from the Public Works Committee with regard to the Cape North/South Ridge Road water issue. Motion carried.

It was moved and seconded that a letter be sent to Cabot Volunteer Fire Department and Bay St. Lawrence Volunteer Fire Department thanking them for their efforts and response to the motorcycle accident at Meat Cove. Motion carried.

District #3

Warden Morrison updated Council on the Irving/Tim Hortons situation and the discussion with Minister Hines requesting a reduction in the speed limit in the area to 70 km/hour during the planned construction to add turning lanes

He forwarded a copy of the follow up letter sent to Minister Lloyd Hines to Council for their information. The construction project is to commence the week of September 17, 2018.

Councillor MacLeod requested that a follow up report be requested from the Department of TIR for an update on all the road work done in each district of the Municipality this construction season.

This completed the items for the letter to the Department of TIR and the motion was put and carried.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of Victoria County Municipal Council will be held at the Court House, Baddeck, on Monday, September 24, 2018, beginning at 5:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, it was moved to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

Leanne MacEachen, CAO

Bruce Morrison, Warden

