



# Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

Mayor: Garth Gillis; Chief Administrative Officer: Bob Brooks; *Incorporated 1972*

## COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, January 17, 2024, at 7:00 PM  
*Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Market*

### ***In Attendance:***

Council: Mayor Garth Gillis (Chair) Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty  
Councillor Katherine Bryson Councillor Trisha Carter  
Councillor Billy Gamble Councillor James Kinnee  
Councillor Charley McGivern

Administration: CAO Bob Brooks Ashley Feschuk

Guest Speakers: Sherry Pelkey, Julie-Lynn Zahavich and Janice Harper  
BCDC Mark Booth – Chair, Barry Galloway – Executive Director  
Matt Kenny – Co-owner of Wild Pines Cabins - Belfast Resident  
Michelle McKenna – Belfast Resident

Public Attending: Nine, in addition to above; 20 during Facebook Livestream; and over 300 views of the meeting livestream after the meeting (and counting).

---

***Please Be Aware: RMB Council Meetings are Livestreamed to [facebook.com/belfastpei](https://facebook.com/belfastpei)***

### **Item      Order of Business**

1. **Call to Order** – Council Meeting was called to order by Mayor Gillis at 7:00 PM.

*“In the spirit of Reconciliation, we acknowledge that the land upon which our organization stands is unceded Mi’kmaq territory. Epekwitk (PEI), Mi’kma’ki, is covered by the historic Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We pay our respects to the Indigenous Mi’kmaq People who have occupied this Island for over 12,000 years; past, present, and future.”*

2. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – No members of Council declared a conflict of interest with any items on today’s Agenda.
3. **Approval of Agenda** – *(there were many other suggested agenda items, which were placed under Item 15)*

Moved by **Councillor Carter** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to adopt the agenda as amended.

Votes for:   6      Votes against:   0      Result: **Carried Unanimously**

4. **RCMP Report for the Months of November and December** (presented by Admin – Ashley Feschuk) Staff Sergeant Robinson was unable to join us this evening; however, he sent us the Municipality Incident Reports for November and December to review. These reports will be posted to the RMB website @ [www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com](http://www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com)
5. **Presentation – Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG) “Planning for Nature and Climate in our Municipality”** – Sherry Pelkey of BAWG introduced Julie-Lynn Zahavich with PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife; and Janice Harper (Land Planner), who made a 25-minute presentation to Council (Karen Potter and Julie Lynn also helped create the presentation).

Following the presentation, the presenters answered questions from the floor, and also specifically requested that when RMB continues with the Official Community Plan and Development Bylaw public consultations, that RMB consider including protected areas within the Plan. The presenters agreed to send RMB a succinct request that they can bring up during consultations, to be included in the records. A copy of the presentation can be found on the RMB website @ [www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com](http://www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com) and is also available to watch in the full livestream, available on RMB's Facebook page @ [www.facebook.com/belfastpei](http://www.facebook.com/belfastpei).

6. **Public Presentations:**

**Belfast Community Development Corporation (BCDC)** – Barry Galloway Executive Director of BCDC presented Council with a rough outline of where they are at with their plan to develop affordable Community Housing in Belfast. BCDC is still in the initial stages of gathering information and are working on their business plan for this project which is due April 1, 2024. BCDC are considering the development of ten two-bedroom units which should cost between \$175,000 and \$200,000 to build, with a finished size around 750 - 800 square feet each. The location proposed, is at the Old Driving Range located beside the Polly Cemetery on Lord Selkirk Road and adjacent to the Lord Selkirk Park (a lot owned by BCDC). These would be rental units to help assist the needs of the community during PEI's housing crisis.

BCDC also mentioned that they would be looking for an organization to administer the rental units, as BCDC is not currently in Rental Housing Administration. When asked about how the public is being informed about the project, BCDC replied that while they would be using a BCDC Website, that they also hoped that RMB would help to inform the public and the residents through the RMB website. BCDC, then agreed to answer questions from the public...

**Wild Pines Cabins** – Matt Kenny, Co-owner of Wild Pines Cabins, located directly across from this proposed development site, is very concerned that the placement of this new subdivision will harm his local business, both in value and in lower tourist customer draw, and the proximity of this development being so close to a Park. Mr. Kenny wondered why another location was not selected.

**Resident of Belfast** – Michelle McKenna agreed that there is a demand for affordable housing units in Belfast, but also opposed the location. Ms. McKenna stated that the location would be inappropriate due to its proximity to the Historic Polly Cemetery site and the Park.

**BCDC** – will provide contact information for RMB to place on the RMB Website, that will direct residents on how to provide comments (for or against, or to just ask questions). BCDC also agreed to provide more project information, so residents could better understand what is being proposed.

7. **Adoption of the November 15, 2023, Council Meeting Minutes (*previously distributed; all changes incorporated*).**

Moved by **Councillor Gamble** and seconded by **Councillor Bryson** to approve the Minutes of the November 15, 2023, Council Meeting as presented.

Votes for:   6   Votes against:   0   Result: **Carried Unanimously**

8. **Business arising from the November 15, 2023 Council Meeting Minutes (*already addressed in today's agenda – no other items*).**

9. **CAO Report** (presented by CAO - Bob Brooks)

a) **Financial/Variance/Planning Report**

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ January 11, 2024:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.35
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$26,421.09
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 (for approved projects)	\$125,623.18
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$37.33
e. Gas Tax (CCBF) GIC Acct 040 (for approved projects)	\$52,016.24
f. Reserve Savings GICs; Acct 041 & 042	\$66,288.49
(Breakdown as approved)	
1. RMB Expansion Reserve	\$25,000.00
2. Emergency Preparedness Reserve	\$5,000.00
3. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Warming Ctr Generator Reserve	\$5,000.00
4. Remaining*	\$31,288.49
<i>(*to be considered during Annual Budget Deliberations)</i>	
5. Remaining Funds in ShopBelfastPEI Program	\$523.01
<i>(There are also 12 T-shirts left to be sold or gifted)</i>	

**CAO – Other Matters dealt with/involving the CAO:**

- b) **Wellness Centre issue** – talks between RMB, BCDC and the Belfast Rec Centre currently on hold; RMB will report when/if the start up again.
- c) **Warming Centre MOUs** – The Belfast Rec Centre is registered with the PEI Emergency Measures Organization (EMO) and the Red Cross as RMB’s Primary Emergency Warming Centre. To operate the Warming Centre in an emergency, RMB requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RMB and the Belfast Rec Centre (**completed**). RMB also needs MOUs with Volunteer Groups to operate on specific days in an emergency. Progress on those are as follows:
- Mondays** – Friends of Iona (**completed**)
  - Tuesdays** – Belle River Women’s Institute (**completed**)
  - Wednesdays** – RMB Council (**completed**)
  - Also looking into: Wood Islands Women’s Institute; BAWG; BCDC; Belfast Historical; and Belfast Lions Club and possibly others. It was also suggested that RMB could put out a call out to residents, once our group list has been explored, for individuals willing to help out in an emergency.
- d) **Secondary Warming Centre** – In 2023, Council expressed an interest in a second Warming Centre to have available, should the Primary Warming Centre not be available, for whatever reason. RMB has been working with the Wood Islands Area Development Corporation (WIADC) to become the second/alternate site. In 2023, a joint funding application between RMB and WIADC was submitted to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA); which was successful. ACOA is covering the cost of the Emergency Generator (\$83,000 – Very Much Appreciated – Thank You). RMB also applied to the Rural Growth Initiative (RGI) of PEI to cover the installation and set-up costs (approximately \$36,000 +HST – Thank you, Thank you). To-date, the ACOA funding is confirmed, and while not complete at present, the RGI funding is looking very positive. ACOA covers 100% in their funding and RGI covers 80% in their funding. Consequently, the RMB share of this entire project is approximately \$10,000+. The \$10,000+ will be itemized in the upcoming 2024/2025 RMB Budget. While this Generator will be owned by WIADC; the reason it is being applied for, is to be used in an emergency only, for an RMB Emergency Warming Centre.

A motion is now required to complete the funding applications for both ACOA and RGI funding.

**Moved** by **Councillor Carter** and **seconded** by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to authorize RMB to apply and complete funding applications for the Emergency Generator through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and for the installation and set-up of the Generator through a Rural Growth Initiative funding application.

Votes for:   6   Votes against:   0   Result: **Carried Unanimously**

10. **Progress Report of the Annexation Sub-Committee (ASC)** (*presented by ASC Chair – Councillor Bryson*). Councillor Bryson provided a brief summary report on the ASC progress to-date (*report attached*) and confirmed that ASC will have a recommendation for Council at the next RMB Council Meeting – February 21<sup>st</sup>.
11. **Code of Conduct Training – Deadline March 31, 2024** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). The call was put out by Municipal Affairs to have all RMB Council complete the new Code of Conduct training by March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024. All but one of Council has completed the training (is in progress), and all of Administration has also completed the training. Thank you and good work everyone!
12. **2024/2025 Community Grants Call/Process** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). Administration and procedures are now upon us for the 24/25 Community Grants Program cycle. The call for Community Grants Proposals and Applications are now on the RMB Website, along with notifications on RMB’s Facebook site and various Bulletin Boards around our municipality. Applicants have until noon on Thursday, March 7<sup>th</sup> to submit their grant applications. In addition to the public call, anyone receiving a Community Grant last year will receive a package by email. All applications will be checked to ensure eligibility, which now also includes the requirement to have completed a Summary Report that describes how a 23/24 Community Grant was used. The Community Grants Committee will be reviewing the applications on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> for a recommendation to Council on Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup>.
13. **Completion of the Official Plan and Development Bylaw** (*presented by CAO – Bob Brooks*). In a recent conversation with members of Municipal Affairs as well as the Lands Division; RMB expects that it should be able to resume public and Council discussions on the Official Community Plan and Development Bylaw, this Spring 2024. If everything proceeds as expected, Council should be able to have the two documents in front of them for a decision-in-principle by October or November of 2024. It will then be up to the Province to approve and/or amend. If all goes well, the two documents could come-into-force by April 1, 2025.
14. **Events and Social Media Report** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*)
  - a. **Social Media Report** - 300 views, 12 hours after this meeting was livestreamed, 2 comments and 3 shares. This Council Meeting had 20 people watching from home in real time. RMB Facebook page has 536 Likes and 655 Followers.
  - b. **Belfast Craft Collective** – Saturday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, 10-1pm - upstairs Wood Island Meeting Hall. Bring a craft project and have a coffee. This is a great opportunity to trade supplies you may not be using and meet some likeminded crafty people. Please email [noplacelikehomepei@gmail.com](mailto:noplacelikehomepei@gmail.com) to register. No fee.
  - c. **Belfast Ukulele Group** - also on Saturday January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2-3:30pm - upstairs Wood Island Meeting Hall.

Dennis Wells will be leading the group and we are very lucky to have him teach us a few things. The cost of this workshop is \$5 and is open to all skill levels. We have graciously been able to borrow some of the ukuleles from Belfast Historical Society, so if you don't have one of your own but want to give it a try, email Ashley Feschuk [noplacelikehomepei@gmail.com](mailto:noplacelikehomepei@gmail.com) to reserve one. Thank-you to Doris MacDonald for dropping the ukes off for us and thank-you to Audrey Shillabeer for helping coordinate this effort.

15. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above*)
- a) **CPHO – Live-Well PEI – Community Consultation Report** (*attached*) (*by Councillor Bryson*) the Chief Public Health Office hosted a Live Well PEI (LWPEI) Community Consultation on December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023. LWPEI is a program running from CPHO funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, Healthy Canadians and Communities Fund. The goal is health promotion through their own initiatives as well as funding opportunities for municipalities and not for profit community groups.
  - b) **Community Pantry – Update** (*by Councillor Bryson*) December was very busy and the donations, both food and monetary, was tremendous. Turkey, hams, veggies and fixings were provided for Christmas dinners. Usage is still up in January and the pantry is receiving lots of support from the community. Randy Visser donated and installed a new door. New shelving has been purchased as well. These updates make the building much brighter and tidier. The expectation is that usage will continue to stay high over the winter months. The Community Pantry's Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Sunday January 21<sup>st</sup> at 7pm at the Uigg Community Centre.
  - c) **Federation of PEI Municipalities Update** (*by Councillor Bryson*) FPEIM is currently seeking legal advice as to whether to partner with the Rural Municipalities of Alberta Insurance proposal. This is a reciprocal, not for profit company, and tends to come in 25% cheaper than standard insurance policies. Updates will be ongoing. Dates are set for the FPEIM Annual Meeting - April 29<sup>th</sup> at the Rodd Charlottetown. The semi-annual meeting will take place October 19<sup>th</sup> in Abram Village at the Musical Village. The **2025** semi annual meeting is also booked for October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at the Eastern Kings Community Centre. The Provincial government have hired a professional negotiator to discuss the overpayment of tax credits and the future financial framework and tax sharing between the province and municipalities. This leaves FPEIM with no choice but to hire its own negotiator to continue these discussions. President Bruce MacDougall and Mayor Steve Ogden attended the FCM advocacy Days in Ottawa. It was well attended and there is some welcome news from the Federal Government that they are working on doubling gas tax money, hopefully leading to more opportunities for RMB.
  - d) **Report on RMB's Family Skate** (*by Councillor Bryson*) On Thursday December 28<sup>th</sup> 2023 between 12:30-1:30pm, RMB held their first ever Family Skate! There were an estimated 50 participants on the ice and an additional 20 on the side lines. Ashley Feschuk (Administration) provided Hot Chocolate and Councillor Bryson provided home-baked sweets. The costs for this event were \$100 for ice rental and \$30 for hot chocolate. Thank-you to everyone for coming out and RMB hopes to sponsor more ice time and possibly some swims in the summer months. It is on the agenda for our budget discussions.
  - e) **Meeting Schedule 2024/25** (*by Councillor Bryson*) RMB is becoming increasingly active and it is now difficult to go two months between meetings. Councillor Bryson suggested that we hold 12 meetings per year, as opposed to the 10 that we agreed on. The proposed change can be considered during the November Meeting item for 2025; until then, Council can call for a Special Council Meeting at any time as needed/desired.

- f) **School Age Child Care Project** (*by Councillor Bryson*) Councillor Bryson had a meeting with Carolyn Simpson – former Director of the Dept. of Education and Early Years Learning, now an Advisor/Consultant for the Province, and Tina Harvey, current CAO of Kinkora. Carolyn has been contracted by the Province to determine what’s possible for school age childcare in this Province. Future updates will be provided as issue is ongoing.
- g) **Invitation to join the Selkirk Millenium Club** (*by CAO Bob Brooks*). Joanne Vessey extended an invitation for a member of Council to speak at an upcoming Millenium Club meeting (Feb 21<sup>st</sup> @ 2:PM) to bring the group up-to-speed on all the goings on with RMB. Mayor Gillis could only give a tentative yes at this time, and Council Bryson was also a tentative yes – to be confirmed.
16. **Notice of 2024/2025 Budget and Financial Plan Meetings** – Notice is hereby given, that RMB will be holding open public meetings on ***February 21<sup>st</sup>*** and ***March 20<sup>th</sup>*** to discuss and ratify RMB’s 24/25 Budget and Financial Plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Everyone is welcome to attend and provide comments. Anyone wishing to be placed on the Agenda to make a presentation; should contact the RMB Office to make arrangements.
17. **Next Meetings:**
- Annexation Sub-Committee Mtg** – Tuesday, January 30<sup>th</sup> @ 7:PM – RMB Office
  - Council Mtg (and 1<sup>st</sup> Budget Mtg)** – Wednesday, February 21<sup>st</sup> @ 7:PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
  - Community Grants Mtg** – Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup> @ 5:PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
18. **Motion to Move In-Camera for a Confidential HR Matter** – (*No minutes are taken, and no decisions made during In-Camera Sessions – all non-Council members were asked to leave the room, with the exception of the CAO, and the Livestream was shut down*)
- Moved** by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** and **seconded** by **Councillor Carter** to move into In-Camera for a Confidential HR Matter.  
 Votes for:   6   Votes against:   0   Result: ***Carried Unanimously***
- Moved** by **Councillor Carter** and **seconded** by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to move out of In-Camera from the Confidential HR Matter.  
 Votes for:   6   Votes against:   0   Result: ***Carried Unanimously***
- There was no decision required out of this In-Camera item.***
19. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...
- Moved** by **Councillor Gamble** to adjourn the meeting at: **10:10 PM.**

Minutes Approved On: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Mayor – Garth Gillis

\_\_\_\_\_  
 CAO – Bob Brooks