



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, February 21, 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

Public Attending: 3 members of the public attended in person; 16 public during the Facebook Livestream; and over 445 views of the livestream after the meeting was over (and counting).

Please Be Aware: RMB Council Meetings are Livestreamed to facebook.com/belfastpei

Item Order of Business

1. **Call to Order** – Council Meeting 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** - *(four other suggested agenda items 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 Month of January** (presented by Admin- Ashley Feschuk). Staff Sergeant Robinson was unable to join us this evening; however; he sent us the Municipality Incident Report for January to review, statistics page only. This report will also be posted to the RMB website @ www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com.
5. **Public Presentations (if any)** – *(There were no public presentations).*
6. **Adoption of the January 17, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes** *(previously distributed; all changes already incorporated).*

Moved by **Councillor Bryson** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to approve the Minutes of the January 17, 2024, Council Meeting as presented.

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

7. **Business arising from the January 17, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes** (*already addressed in today's agenda – no other items*).
8. **CAO Report** (*presented by CAO - Bob Brooks*)
 - a) **Financial/Variance/Planning Report**
 - i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ February 7, 2024:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.44
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$32,841.08
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 (<i>for approved projects</i>)	\$125,620.18
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$37.39
e. Gas Tax (CCBF) GIC Acct 040 (<i>for approved projects</i>)	\$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 nd 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, the Belfast Community Development Corporation (BCDC) and the Belfast Rec Centre, are currently on hold – the CAO will continue to follow-up.
 - i. That said, RMB must clear up a rumour that is floating around: BCDC is an independent, not for profit organization owned by residents, and the Belfast Rec Centre is a privately held not for profit organization. RMB has absolutely no stake, no ownership, and no voting privileges in either organization. The only relationship that RMB has with either organization, is that BCDC has received funding from RMB in the past (about four years ago) and the Belfast Rec Centre receives Community Grants for the Arena operation and Warming Centre operation. Additionally, where it is in the public interest to hear about major projects that might or could be going on in our municipality (like a possible Wellness Centre), RMB will use its public venues (like our Council meetings, our website, etc.) to help inform the public.
- c) **Warming Centre MOUs** – The Belfast Rec Centre is registered with the PEI Emergency Measures Organization and the Red Cross as RMB's Primary Emergency Warming Centre and the Wood Islands site is registered as RMB's Secondary Emergency Warming Centre. To operate these Warming Centres in an emergency, RMB requires a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between RMB and the two Centres. RMB also needs MOUs with Volunteer Groups to operate on specific days in an emergency. Progress on those is as follows:
 - i. **Mondays** – Friends of Iona (completed)
 - ii. **Tuesdays** – Belle River Women's Institute (completed)
 - iii. **Wednesdays** – RMB Council (completed)
 - iv. Belfast Lions Club – Is willing to be put on the Alternate List; and
 - v. RMB is also looking into other possibles, such as: the Wood Islands Women's Institute; BCDC; Belfast Historical and others.

d) **Generator Funding/Installation** – The Emergency Generator for the Wood Islands Warming Centre, funded through the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, is progressing and should be on-site by early March. Funding for the installation through the Regional Growth Initiative Fund, should be in place in early April. Everything is proceeding as planned – many thanks to our funders and to the Wood Islands and Area Development Corporation for hosting the Secondary Warming Centre.

9. **Recommendation / Resolution # RES2024-002 as presented by the Annexation Sub-Committee (ASC)** (*presented by ASC Chair – Councillor Bryson*). *Councillor Bryson detailed the Recommendation to Council and the Resolution, # RES2024-002 as unanimously recommended from the members of the ASC. (attached)*

Councillor Bryson read the Resolution aloud, and detailed the expected process and timelines, if Council decided to proceed with the Resolution. The CAO has already had many meetings with Municipal Affairs, whom he says is ready and willing to help guide RMB through a Municipality-led Annexation process, whenever RMB is ready.

Councillor Bryson also clarified the questions for bringing the Resolution forward at this time, and talked about the fact that the actual Annexation Exercise that RMB would embark upon, would actually answer all the questions about: which communities would be recommended; what the benefits of Annexation would be to the communities and to RMB; how the Fire-map areas are covered; how the process is funded; the timelines; and so much more.

Councillor Bryson then moved the following Resolution:

Resolution # RES2024 – 002

Where-as: The Rural Municipality of Belfast, was made aware that the Government of Prince Edward Island has an interest in reducing the number of municipalities on the Island; and

Where-as: The Government of Prince Edward Island also has an interest in reducing the number of un-incorporated communities on the Island through either an Annexation and/or an Amalgamation Exercise process; and

Where-as: The Rural Municipality of Belfast, believes that it would be in our municipalities' best interest, if we did the initial Annexation Exercise work ourselves, to make a recommendation to the Government of Prince Edward Island on which un-incorporated communities to Annex; and

Where-as: The Rural Municipality of Belfast has an interest to keep its current Rural Focus and to look at possible un-incorporated communities for Annexation, with a Rural Lense only; rather than a Government of Prince Edward Island process that may not fit with our 'Rural' municipality focus.

Therefore, Be It Resolved: That the Rural Municipality of Belfast, work in consultation with the Government of Prince Edward Island on an Annexation Exercise, that will result in a Rural Municipality of Belfast Annexation Proposal to the Government of Prince Edward Island.

Moved by **Councillor Bryson** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty to** approve Resolution # RES2024-002, to work in cooperation and in concert with the Government of Prince Edward Island on an Annexation Exercise, that will result in an Annexation Recommendation to the Government of Prince Edward Island, as presented.

Prior to the vote on the Resolution, a proposed Amendment to Table the Resolution to a later date, until after RMB has a better understanding of all the answers the Annexation Exercise will provide. An amendment moved by Councillor Kinnee, as follows:

Moved by **Councillor Kinnee** and seconded by **Councillor McGivern** to Table Resolution # RES2024-002 to a later date.

Votes for: 2 Votes Against: 4 Result: **Motion Defeated**

With the Proposed Amendment defeated, Council then proceeded with the original Motion as follows:

Moved by **Councillor Bryson** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty to** approve Resolution # RES2024-002, to work in cooperation and in concert with the Government of Prince Edward Island on an Annexation Exercise, that will result in an Annexation Recommendation to the Government of Prince Edward Island, as presented.

Votes for: 4 Votes against: 2 Result: **Motion Carried**

10. **2024/2025 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan - 1st Reading** - (*presented by CAO Bob Brooks*) (*attached*) Notice was given in January that RMB would be holding public meetings in February and March for passage of the 2024/25 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan. The public was encouraged to attend these meetings and/or send comments. To-date RMB has yet to receive comments.

The CAO then provided some background about the Budget Exercise and how the Municipality had grown from a ***Belfast Community Council*** to a fully compliant ***Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)***, per the ***Municipal Government Act (MGA)***. The CAO went over all the aspects of the Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan, including detailed line-by-line revenues and expenditures. At the end of the presentation, the Budget was open for discussion and clarification, both by Council and by some members of the public.

In addition to discussion and clarifications on line-items, Council also asked about the growth of Administrative requirements from the evolution of the Belfast Community Council in 2018 to the now MGA-compliant RMB. Per the MGA requirements; not only is RMB now required to operate a fully-accessible public office at a minimum of 20 hours per week, there is also a very detailed administrative duties, legislative and reporting structure that is required. The CAO also advised, that with the current growth of the municipality, the MGA commitments, the possible Official Community Plan and Development Bylaw, and the implementation of the publicly-discussed and Council-approved Strategic Plan – the CAO expects that by the end of this current Council term, RMB will be at two full-time staff (equivalent). Also addressed in the Capital Plan.

Council was then asked if there were any suggested amendments at this time? Or, if they preferred to wait until after the Community Grants Committee held its meeting on the 8th of March, which would then result in a recommendation to Council? Council decided to let the Community Grants Committee do its work first and decided to move to First Reading. Council was reminded that they can bring forward suggested amendments at the March 20th Council Meeting during Second Reading of the Budget.

Moved by ***Councillor Carter*** and **seconded** by ***Councillor Gamble*** to give First Reading to the Rural Municipality of Belfast 2024/2025 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan as presented.

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

11. **Code of Conduct Training – Deadline March 31, 2024** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). RMB can now confirm that all members of Council and all members of RMB staff have completed the mandatory Code of Conduct Training for 2024.
12. **2024/2025 Community Grants Call/Process** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). Council and the public were reminded that applicants have until noon on Thursday, March 7th to submit their grant applications. The Community Grants Committee will review the applications on March 8th and Council will decide on March 20th.
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 and our Planners (FOTENN); RMB expects that it should be able to resume public and Council discussions on the Official Community Plan and Development Bylaw, this Spring 2024. This process may now also include Annexation discussions (to be determined). If everything proceeds as expected, Council could 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 may come-into-force by April 1, 2025, if that is the wish of Council.
14. **Events and Social Media Report** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*)
 - a. **EMO Training Reports** – Two training reports have been included this evening for Basic Emergency Management and Incident Command 100. Both Kerry White and Ashley Feschuk attended this training hosted by PEI Emergency Measures Organization.
 - b. **MEMP Special Council Meeting** in April or May a Special Municipal Emergency Management Meeting is being planned for RMB Council Members. This meeting would focus on updating existing contact information and review existing documentation. EMO offered to create a Hazard Risk Analysis specific to RMB. This is a risk management model that identifies potential hazards that could cause concerns and how RMB could prioritize awareness/prevention. This HRA would also be an agenda topic at the MEMP Special Council Meeting.
15. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above*)
 - a) **Belfast Consolidated School (BCS) Report Update** (*presented by Deputy Mayor Docherty*) The BCS Home and School Meeting was held at the BCS on January 22nd. This was the first meeting since the holiday break. The music teacher Mr. Ellis received \$400 from the school to enhance the music program by enabling him to purchase new instruments. The Valentine’s Day dance was a success and further enhanced by the addition of 50/50 and Toonies for Trayton. Home and School will be making a donation to the Heart and Stroke Foundation from the money raised that night. Point Prim Women’s Institute will pay for half of the new basketballs. On April 12th there will be a Family Games Night. Skiing will be held in Brookdale for students over a two-day period in March. The next school meeting will be held on March 12th.

- b) **Community Pantry Update (presented by Councillor Bryson)** The AGM for the community pantry was January 21st at the Uigg-Kinross Community Centre, it was open to the public to attend and was well attended by various community groups. The coordinator Bonnie Shave-Hillier, along with the founder Randy Visser led the meeting, graciously hosted by the Uigg-Kinross Women’s Institute. It has been determined that approximately 35 families are using the pantry routinely. Upgrades are being continuously made with grant monies and the shelves are well stocked by both physical and monetary donations. Thank-you to the Rotary Club of Charlottetown who recently donated 20 bags of food and to the individuals and groups who continue to donate on a regular basis to help those in need in our community.
- c) **Selkirk Millennium Club Meeting Update (presented by Mayor Gillis)** Mayor Gillis was invited to attend the Selkirk Millennium Club Meeting and had a really nice visit, along with a question-and-answer period for the members who were in attendance.
- d) **Conservation of lupins (presented by Councillor Bryson)** Kip Smith, a local area resident raised concern over the conservation of lupins on the roadside in RMB. The lupin is actually imported to PEI in the 1800’s and is considered an invasive species. Councillor Bryson, in addition to her research on this, reached out to Belfast Area Watershed Group, who sent the following statement in response: *“We (BAWG) would never participate in, or try to conserve the lupin. However, the native swamp milkweed is in our wheelhouse to conserve and expand. BAWG would be interested in the conservation of native species, especially the native milkweed which feeds the endangered monarch butterfly.”* It should be noted that RMB is not responsible for maintenance done on the highways and roads and therefore, this issue would fall under provincial jurisdiction. MLA Darlene Compton was in attendance at the RMB meeting when this issue was addressed and has been included on initial emails expressing concern over the lupin.
16. **Next Meetings:**
- Community Grants Mtg** – Friday, March 8th @ **5:PM** – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
 - Council Mtg (and 2nd Budget Mtg)** – Wednesday, March 20th @ 7:PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
17. **Motion to Move In-Camera for a Confidential Legal Matter – (No minutes are taken, and no decisions are made during In-Camera Sessions).**
- Moved By Councillor Carter and seconded by Deputy Mayor Docherty**
to move into In-Camera for a Confidential Legal Matter
Votes for: 6 Votes Against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**
- Moved by Councillor Carter and seconded by Councillor Gamble**
to move out of In-Camera for the Confidential Legal Matter
Votes for: 6 Votes Against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**
- No decision required by Council out of this In-Camera Session.
18. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...
- Moved by Councillor Carter to adjourn the meeting at: 9:40 PM**

Ashley/Bob