



# Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

## COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, Apr 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: Rachel Buell – PEI Community Navigators  
John Rousseau and Todd St. Clair – (WIADC)

Public Attending: Xandra van der Geer-Stok – (Red Sands Floral Farm)  
Sherry Pelkey – Exec. Director – (BAWG)  
Facebook livestream 211 views after the meeting was over (and counting).  
11 people watched the livestream in real time.

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***Please Be Aware: RMB Council Meetings are Livestreamed to [facebook.com/belfastpei](https://facebook.com/belfastpei)  
Livestream Comments are not monitored in real time during the Council Meeting.***

### **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** - Any other suggested Agenda Items for today’s meeting? (*three additional items suggested which were placed under Item 21*)

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

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

4. **RCMP Report for the Month of March** (*presented by Ashley Feschuk-Administration*)  
This report is slightly more detailed; it includes a chart on the last few pages which looks at incident trends over the last 12 months. I’m proud that Belfast being the third largest municipality has the lowest incident rate on the Eastern side of PEI. RCMP Reports can be found on RMB website [www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com](http://www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com)

5. **Guest Speaker - Rachel Buell, PEI Community Navigators Program.**  
Community navigator's role is to welcome and support newcomers and new residents with settlement needs in rural PEI. They provide information, orientation sessions, connecting newcomers with resources – employment counselling and support. For more information or to contact them please visit their website: [www.peicommunitynavigators.com](http://www.peicommunitynavigators.com) or visit RMB website to see a copy of the meeting materials [www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com](mailto:www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com)
6. **Guest Speaker - WIADC Office Space Presentation - (*members of WIADC – John Rousseau (Chair) and Todd St. Clair (Executive Director)*):** A history of the Wood Islands and Area Development Corporation (WIADC), along with the information about the train station, which formerly housed the restaurant the Whistle Stop, is now available for rent; however, it needs several upgrades. While the opportunity for RMB to lease the vacant space came sooner than expected; the option to have the municipality move into that space and sublet a portion of the space to accommodate a type of wellness initiative, would be a great way to serve both the community and support fiscal responsibility. The train station is in need of repair before leasing to a new tenant, namely: a new foundation, upgrading the electrical to a 200-amp service, and installing two heat pumps. These upgrades are due to be complete around April 1, 2025. This space consists of 954 square feet and is fully insulated. Council asked a few questions for clarification; WIADC confirmed that they would still be seeking the usual Community Grants each year (no matter which space RMB leases), then Council thanked the members of WIADC for coming out.
7. **Public Presentations (if any) - (*Members of the public are offered five minutes to make a presentation to Council. After the five minutes are up, the Presenter may ask for an extension – only granted if UNANIMOUS consent of Council is given. Following the presentation, Council may or may not ask questions*)**
  - a) **Xandra van der Geer-Stok, owner and operator of Red Sands Floral Farm** representing the Canadian Mental Health Association PEI Division, spoke to Council about her grant application(s) and the importance of her establishment and its goal to assist with mental health wellness and awareness on the Island. CAO Bob Brooks provided her with clarity and the step-by-step process of how the Community Grants Application process works each year. The CAO also confirmed with the Chair of the Community Grants Committee (Councillor Gamble) that the complete process was done correctly and publicly transparent. When asked “*what can I do differently to be successful next year?*” Ms. Geer-Stok was encouraged to apply again, but may want to consider applying for smaller amounts, since RMB is trying to provide funds to as many groups as they can.
  - b) **Sherry Pelkey, Executive Director of the Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG)** provided an update on upcoming events: April 22<sup>nd</sup> is Earth Day and BAWG will be sharing their Work Plan along with a presentation regarding the ‘2 Billion Tree Program’. May 18<sup>th</sup> there will be fishing at Roseberry Pond, no license required. This is fun for all ages and there will be a BBQ. May 29<sup>th</sup> is the BAWG Annual General Meeting at Wood Islands Market (Upstairs) starting at 7:pm. There will be an appearance by guest speaker Stephanie Arnold with Climatatlantic and UPEI School of climate change, as well as be an election for new board members and will be a couple hours in length. The conservation proposal presented to Council in January is being simplified and should be ready shortly, and will be placed on RMB’s Website.

8. **RMB Office** - (*presented by CAO Bob Brooks*): Following the March 20<sup>th</sup> Council meeting; it was decided that Council and RMB would do further research to look for additional space options for the RMB Office (*see completed report attached*). Council was also offered the opportunity to tour the proposed ‘Train Station’ space on April 6<sup>th</sup>. Any Council member who missed the tour can also make arrangements for a tour at a later date. The question is now on the floor to Council to move ahead with the additional space option as provided by WIADC; or decide on another option?

**Discussion/Decision:** Council discussed the options and decided that there were really only two options: To take advantage of the new lease opportunity created when the previous tenant vacated the lease; or remain in the current office space that RMB is leasing and look for other options when additional space is required. Council decided to move ahead with the opportunity for the new lease space. RMB will start to look for a sublet of the space that involves a health and wellness-type tenant. RMB will work with WIADC on a lease agreement in principle, with the expectation of moving into the new space around April 1, 2025.

Moved by **Councillor Carter** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to proceed with the option to lease the ‘Train Station’ space, starting from April 1, 2025, from the Wood Islands and Area Development Corporation.

Votes for: 4 Votes against: 2 Result: Carried

9. **Adoption of the March 20, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated*).

Moved by **Councillor Kinnee** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to approve the Minutes of the March 20, 2024, Council Meeting as presented.

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

10. **Business arising from the March 20, 2024 Council Meeting Minutes** (*already addressed in today’s agenda – no other items*).

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

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

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ April 8, 2024:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.44
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$50,925.47
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 ( <i>for approved projects</i> )	\$114,243.55
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$37.51
e. Gas Tax (CCBF) GIC Acct 040 ( <i>for approved projects</i> )	\$52,016.24
f. Reserve Savings GICs; Acct 041 & 042	\$68,452.73

(Breakdown as approved)

1. RMB Expansion Reserve	\$25,000.00
2. Emergency Preparedness Reserve	\$10,000.00
3. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Warming Ctr Generator Reserve	\$11,000.00
4. Un-allocated	\$22,452.73
5. Remaining Funds in ShopBelfastPEI Program*	\$523.01

*(\*There are also 12 T-shirts left to be sold or gifted – also looking for additional outside funding)  
Revenues and Expense Report to be added next month as an ongoing part of the Financial Report*

12. **Official Community Plan and Development Bylaw** - (*presented by CAO Bob Brooks*): RMB has been in discussions with Fotenn about a timeline and process to startup again. And Councillor McGivern reformatted the Feedback Matrix of the last information session so that we may place the information on the RMB Website (*thank-you – much appreciated*). Once we've finalized timelines and process, RMB will post public notices.
13. **Annexation Exercise** - No update this month - ASC to meet on May 1, 2024.
14. **Community Grants 2024/25** - Council confirmed allocations on March 20, 2024 - RMB has already started paying out grant allocations, and will continue, per timelines requested and as able, in keeping with RMB cashflow. The additional finance question will be added to the application forms starting in 2025, and the move out of Community Grants for the Warming Centre operations and into RMB Operational Line items is already registered in the 2024/25 budget/financial plan.
15. **2024/25 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan** - Municipal Affairs and Taxation have already received all the finalized financial documents that are required to proceed with the 2024/25 fiscal year plans.
16. **shopbelfastpei Update** (*presented by Councillor Bryson*). The Official Launch Date this year is Saturday, June 1, 2024. There is a meeting scheduled for Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at Wood Islands Market at 4:pm for interested vendors where the Program will be discussed in detail. Shopbelfastpei will be opened up this year for vendors outside of our municipal boundaries. Any business wishing to participate from outside of RMB will be charged \$75 to be included in this year's program. This year a \$20 deposit is required to cover a lawn sign and other materials which will be returned at the end of the campaign. Experience based businesses, cottages and campgrounds are now also eligible to be included in this Program; however, not individual Airbnb's. Please RSVP to save a spot at the meeting [ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com](mailto:ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com).
17. **Scams and Frauds Information and Chat Session** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). RCMP will be on site at the Wood Islands Market (13056 Shore Road) for this FREE information session on Saturday, April 27<sup>th</sup> at 2:pm. The focus of this session will be on how to spot scams and frauds, simple steps to protect yourself and what to do if you are a victim. I hope to see people come out for this as it is very timely and is a good chance for community engagement with our local law enforcement. This meeting will be livestreamed to the RMB Facebook Page.
18. **ACOA Grant for Commercial Dishwasher** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). As a result of funds leftover from the Emergency Generator Grant provided by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA); WIADC was able, with the assistance of RMB, to purchase a new Commercial Grade Dishwasher for the upstairs kitchen – many thanks to ACOA.
19. **Emergency Warming Centres - MOUs** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). RMB is still searching for community groups and individuals who would like to assist us in the event of a local emergency; if we open up one of our community warming centers to help in that emergency (Belfast Rec Center or Wood Islands Market). Looking for volunteers. This would require a four-hour donation of your time, once a week (only during the emergency), to help us hand out sandwiches, snacks and drinks, provided by RMB. If you are interested, please email Ashley Feschuk at [ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com](mailto:ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com).

20. **Events and Social Media Report** (*presented by Admin - Ashley Feschuk*)
- a. **EMO Training Reports** – On April 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 Ashley Feschuk - Admin and Kerry White - Accounting, attended Incident Command Training 200 at PEI Emergency Measures Organization (EMO). To read the full report please visit RMB website [www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com](http://www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com)
  - b. **Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) Special Council Meeting** – At RMB’s last Council meeting I mentioned that I was working to set up a Hazard Risk Assessment for RMB through PEI EMO. This would be a collaborative session, which would include various groups throughout the community. The focus would be on risk identification, historical hazards and mitigation related to RMB. Invitations will be sent out in the next couple weeks and those who wish to participate must RSVP. The tentative date for this meeting is **June 26<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**, upstairs at the Wood Islands Market (13056 Shore Road).
  - c. **Christmas Decorations Clean-up** - Special thanks go out to **Mayor Gillis** and **Councillor Gamble** for their invaluable assistance in the decorations tear-down on April 6<sup>th</sup>. We’d also like to give a special shout-out to **Todd St. Clair of WIADC** for coming in on his day off to provide a tour for Council of the Train Station facility.
21. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above*)
- a) **Belfast Consolidated School Report - Update** (*presented by Deputy Mayor Docherty*) Ecole Francois Buote – French Music. Family Game Night was on April 12<sup>th</sup> and provided free healthy food, coffee/tea. Floor Hockey League, Medals and Trophy, 6 teams. April 16<sup>th</sup> was a Presentation on Bullying by Shelley Hassall. The focus was on recognizing bullying, supporting kids at home and facts and behaviour analysis. April 26<sup>th</sup> is the Pancake Breakfast at the school prepared by staff and students.
  - b) **Selkirk Road Concerns - Update** (*presented by Deputy Mayor Docherty*) Mike Stewart, Highways Engineer with the Province is planning to conduct a road audit and survey this spring. The Deputy Mayor will accompany the Highways Engineer - further updates on this issue to follow.
  - c) **Belfast Days - Save the Date** (*presented by Deputy Mayor Docherty*) SAVE THE DATE June 21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>, this year will be the best yet! There has been a wonderful show of support; however, Belfast Days is still looking for new sponsors and waiting to hear back from previous ones. Movie Night this year is sponsored by Northumberland Ferries and will be presented by House Front Productions. The Sweet Company is a new vendor this year and will be on site to distribute all kinds of goodies. Steam PEI will also be in attendance with some Science fun for kids. Radio Group will be setting up radios so people can chat with people from all over the World. Axes Eh will be back again this year! Also very excited to have PEI Inflatables back on site for some fun. 50/50 draw with online options and all donations over the weekend will once again be presented to Make-A-Wish PEI. This is still early stages and there are more activities being coordinated and researched. The overall theme this year will be **Carnival**. If you want to help volunteer, please email the RMB office at [ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com](mailto:ruralmunicipalityofbelfast@gmail.com).
  - d) **Community Pantry Update** (*presented by Councillor Bryson*) No formal update at this time however, thank-you to everyone for their continued support either by contributing food or monetary donations.
  - e) **Community Grants Process - Detailed** (*presented by CAO Bob Brooks Bryson*) Councillor Bryson noted that there were some individuals that were confused about this year’s process for the Community Grants Program. The CAO moved up this item to explain the detail in item 7.a) in this Agenda.

- f) **Belfast Science Awards, Heritage Awards and Looking for Pins** (*presented by Councillor Carter*) Heritage Awards: There are five Belfast students moving onto Provincials: Grade five – Alexis Knox, Grade six – Devyn Carter, Grade seven – Austin Knox, Grade eight – Alley Myers, and Grade nine – Tegan Brum. Congratulations everyone! Belfast sent four students to the Science Fair Provincials, Grade seven – Emmylou Ryan and Maya Lungal, Grade eight – Temperance MacCormick, and Grade nine – Kaley Carter. All the participating students involved received special awards from numerous sponsors. Congratulations on your achievements and for representing Belfast. Kayley Carter also took first place at the fair and will be moving onto the Nationals to represent PEI in Ottawa. Congratulations! Her study was on how many apples are safe to give to a horse? Her research findings after monitoring blood glucose levels show that two is the maximum amount. Please be mindful of this if you are feeding animals that do not belong to you, there are serious health risks associated with high sugar levels. Always ask first. Nationals run from May 25<sup>th</sup> to June 1<sup>st</sup> and students involved, like to collect and trade pins from different municipalities and provinces. MLA Darlene Compton is providing some pins to share. However, if anyone has any pins to share, please drop them off at the RMB office or at Galla Designs before May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- g) **IONA Park Revitalization** (*presented by Councillor McGivern*) There is the first ever AGM on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 10:am being held at the Iona Community Hall – All are welcome to join.
- h) **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** (*presented by Admin – Ashley Feschuk*) Our very own CAO Bob Brooks has been nominated by a municipal colleague to be featured as an FCM Municipal Trailblazer. He will be featured in an upcoming edition of FCM's Municipal newsletter the FCM Voice highlighting his municipal achievements. This publication is distributed across Canada to thousands of elected municipal officials. Congratulations Bob on all your hard work both past and present!
22. **Next Meetings:**
- a. **ASC - Committee Mtg** - May 1, 2024 @ 7:PM - RMB Office, Wood Islands Market
  - b. **Regular Council Mtg** - Wednesday, May 15, 2024 @ 7:PM - Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
23. **Adjournment** - As there is no further business... Moved by **Councillor Carter** to adjourn the meeting at: **9:37pm**

*Ashley/Bob*