



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

ANNEXATION SUB-COMMITTEE (ASC) MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 7:00 PM

RMB Office, Wood Islands Market

Sub-Committee: Councillor Katherine Bryson – Chair (voting)
 Councillor Billy Gamble – (voting)
 Mayor Garth Gillis – Ex-officio (voting)

Administration: CAO Bob Brooks – (non-voting)
 Project Coordinator Ashley Feschuk (non-voting) Live Stream Operation

Public: 40+ Members of the public were in attendance

Live Stream: 1,700 views 24 hours after meeting concluded 20+ Viewers in real time

This Sub-Committee meeting was open to the public (as are all ASC meetings). Attendees were notified that this meeting was being Livestreamed on Facebook.

Item Order of Business

1. **Call to Order** – Meeting was called to order by Chair – Councillor Bryson @ 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 for this Meeting?** - None.
3. **Approval of Agenda** – Any other suggested Agenda Items for today’s ASC meeting? - None.

Moved by Councillor Gamble and **seconded** by Mayor Gillis to adopt the agenda as presented.

Votes for: 3 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

4. **Public Presentations** – There were multiple public presentations (see the names below).

Tom MacDonald – Vernon River	Janice MacBeth – Three Rivers
Robert MacDonald – Belle River	Alec Blue – Hopefield
Charles Murphy – Cherry Valley	Jan ? – Cherry Valley
Kelly Campbell – Kinross	Joe Donahoe – Uigg
Donna Murphy Macinnis – Vernon River	Dianne MacDonald – Little Sands

* All presenters were under the mistaken impression that RMB was in the completion stages of an Annexation Exercise, rather than only just preparing to start; after we had found a Contractor and funding for the Project, and then to **START** consultation. All attendees, through a Statement (attached) were informed about what the project is, where we are at, and the process to start the exercise. The public was then given an opportunity to express their opinions and concerns and for committee to clarify. All concerns were taken note and will be followed up on as required.

5. **ASC Member - Mayor Garth Gillis** had to excuse himself from the meeting at 9:20 PM.

6. **Adoption of the July 3, 2024, ASC Meeting Minutes** (*previously distributed - attached*).

Moved by **Councillor Gamble** and seconded by **Councillor Bryson** to approve the Minutes of the July 3, 2024, ASC Meeting as presented.

Votes for: 2 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

7. **Business arising from the July 3rd ASC Meeting Minutes** (*addressed in today's agenda*).

8. **ASC Follow-up on Previous Action Items:**

- a. **Funding of Annexation Exercise** – The CAO contacted the ***Infrastructure Secretariat*** about the possibility of funding an Annexation Exercise type project, should we start a project, through the ***Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) Program*** – they confirmed that as the new program (2024-2034) is very similar to the last program (2019-2024), it is ‘very likely’ that it will. Unfortunately, the final Program documents have yet to be released for RMB to confirm. Any day now... :-) No other funding agencies should be required.
- b. **Proposals from contractors to handle the Annexation Exercise:**
 - i. RMB received a Preliminary Proposal from ***FOTENN Planning and Consulting*** to help give RMB a scope of the work involved, if RMB was to go ahead. RMB is also researching other possible contractors for comparables, before going out for an RFP.
 - ii. RMB has reached out to ***S.J. Murphy Consulting*** – SJ did the Annexation Exercise (Municipal Restructuring) for the Town of O’Leary. O’Leary had nothing but high praise for the work of SJ and would recommend contracting them. The CAO did find out that the comparables will be significantly different, as the O’Leary contract only dealt with twelve (12) properties. Our contract could involve as many as 4,341 people.
 - iii. The CAO is also looking for ***other potential contractor candidates***. Checked with GPEI, they did not want to suggest any names as it might show favoritism. Am now looking at the PEI Registry of Planners.
- c. **Timeline** – it was determined that an Annexation Exercise could start as soon as there is confirmation of a funding program eligibility. An RFP call would then be required and awarded for a contractor. Once/if awarded, an Annexation Exercise could take as much as 12-24 months to complete – To Be Determined.
- d. **Other Municipalities to be Consulted:**
 - i. **Three Rivers** (Montague Fire District) – The CAO contacted Three Rivers to let them know about RMB’s possible project. Three Rivers confirmed that they had no current plans for any Amalgamations or Annexations in its foreseeable future. They were very pleased to be kept in the loop and expressed their willingness to help in whatever way they could, should our project go ahead.
 - ii. **Murray River** (Murray River Fire District) – The new CAO of Murray River confirmed that the original plans for Murray River and Murray Harbour was to do a ‘***study***’ about whether to undertake an Amalgamation or Annexation Exercise. That plan fell through and was dropped. They did not have a contractor in mind, because they thought the Province would

do the study. They also had no budget in mind for the same reason. Ultimately, their Council made the decision to drop the idea. They mentioned that they would be grateful if RMB kept them in the loop, if our project were to get started.

- iii. **Murray Harbour** (Murray Harbour Fire District) – Similarly, the new CAO of Murray Harbour, also confirmed that the idea was dropped (Council decision). The CAO also expressed her gratitude if RMB was to keep them in the loop, if our project got started.
- iv. **There are no Municipalities in the Vernon River Fire District to consult with** – Should an Annexation Exercise get started, RMB would reach out to the Vernon River Fire District, and also consult with the unincorporated community members directly.

- e. **Contractor and Sample Annexation Database** – at the last ASC meeting, the Committee asked the CAO to create a Contractor and Sample Annexation Municipality Database for easy reference. This database will be an ongoing living document throughout the process, if the project goes ahead.
- f. **Population Stats** – the CAO contacted the Province to get the population statistics for the potential Annexation Communities, to enable RMB and the potential contractors a better idea of the scope of an Annexation Exercise. As unincorporated communities: it was difficult getting individual community population #s; however, I was able to get Fire District #s. To be consulted in each Fire District if the project goes ahead, as follows:
 - i. Vernon River = 2,499
 - ii. Murray River/Harbour = 1,768
 - iii. Montague = 74TOTAL = 4,341 to be consulted

- 9. **Other Agenda Items from Item 3 Above?** – None.
- 10. **Next Steps?** – To be determined.
- 11. **Next Meetings:**
 - a. **Next Regular Council Meeting** – August 21, 2024 – WIADC Upper Mtg Hall – 7:00 PM.
 - b. **Next ASC Meeting** – To be determined.
- 12. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...

Moved by **Councillor Gamble** to adjourn the meeting at: **9:42 PM.**

Minutes Approved On: **October 16, 2024**

Mayor Garth Gillis for Chair Bryson (Sigs on File)
Sub-Committee Chair – Councillor Bryson

Signature and Seal on File
CAO – Bob Brooks

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