



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, August 21, 2024, at 7:00 PM

Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Market

Council:	Mayor Garth Gillis (<i>Chair</i>)	Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty
	Councillor Trisha Carter)	Councillor Katherine Bryson
	Councillor Billy Gamble	Councillor James Kinnee
	Councillor Charley McGivern	
Administration:	CAO Bob Brooks	Project Coordinator Ashley Feschuk
Public Attending:	Josh Lewis – Reporter (<i>Eastern Graphic</i>)	
	Robert MacDonald	John Clemens
	Shawn Vincent	Robert Martin
	MLA Darlene Compton	Alec Blue
	Facebook Livestream: 1.4K Views in 24 Hours, 15 Views in Real Time	

**Meeting was advised: RMB Council Meetings are Livestreamed to facebook.com/belfastpei
Livestream Comments are not monitored in real time during the Council Meeting.**

Item Order of Business

1. **Call to Order** - 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** – None.

3. **Approval of Agenda** -Any other suggested Agenda Items for today’s meeting? (*five additional items were placed under Item 14*)

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

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

4. **RCMP Report for the Month of July and August 2024** (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*) Staff Sergeant Robinson sent his regrets to Council for being unable to attend this meeting. The average number of incidents is relatively steady and is approximately 20 per month. For full reports please visit the RMB website www.ruralemunicipalityofbelfast.com

5. **Public Presentations** - *There were multiple public presentations (see names below) – each speaker was offered 5 minutes, which was followed up by a question period.*

Robert MacDonald	John Clemens	Shawn Vincent
Robert Marti	Alec Blue	MLA Darlene Compton

6. **Adoption of the June 19, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached*).

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Gamble to approve the Minutes of the June 19, 2024, Council Meeting as presented.

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

7. **Business arising – June 19, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes** (*addressed in today’s agenda*).

11. **Official Community Plan & Development Bylaw (CAO – Bob Brooks):** Prior to the September 21st Public Meeting regarding resumption of public consultations for the Draft Official Plan and Draft Development Bylaw; Council will be briefed by GPEI Lands and a PEI Rural Development Officer. **Process:** FOTENN has revised the Draft documents, based on the comments heard from the public and Council in 2022 – Now on the RMB Website for further public review. Council and the Public will have another chance to voice concerns or comments for further documentation and changes as required. Based on findings, Council will have the option to accept, or amend, or decline, or accept for information only.
12. **Annexation Exercise (Councillor Bryson)** – The Annexation Sub-Committee (ASC) had a well-attended Public meeting on Wednesday, August 14th. Due to the considerable public interest, the meeting was Livestreamed on Facebook. At the time of this Agenda, there were over 1,800 views of this meeting to-date. The reason for such interest: CBC requested an interview with the Committee Chair and CAO after seeing the regularly posted Agenda. A comprehensive 45-minute interview was given that explained RMB’s plan to start a process that would explore whether there were some unincorporated communities, that surrounds the RMB borders, that might be a candidate for Annexation with RMB. It was explained that RMB had not started yet, that we had yet to hire a contractor, and had yet to acquire funding for the project. IF RMB were to submit a Proposal to the Province, it would only happen after considerable public consultation. Unfortunately, the CBC 45-minute interview resulted in a 3-minute clip that incorrectly left people with the impression that RMB had completed the project and were ready to make a decision. That was the reason 40+ people showed up at the meeting, and why so many people have looked at the Facebook session. Councillor Katherine Bryson, then made a statement about the meeting (*attached*).

Following Councillor Bryson’s statement: all Councillors expressed their full support and admiration for all the work the Sub-Committee and Chair Katherine Bryson in particular, put into the Annexation file work to-date, and admonished anyone who used this platform to express hateful or inappropriate comments to anyone – Council Members or Public alike. Hate-speech is inappropriate in ANY forum. Following the discussion of the ASC work to-date and the realization that this file was much bigger than a sub-committee mandate, Council decided to dissolve the Annexation Sub-Committee, and move the file to be deliberated on by the full RMB Council. Resulting in the following motion:

Moved by **Councillor Kinnee** and **seconded** by **Councillor McGivern** to dissolve the Annexation Sub-Committee and move the Annexation Exercise File to the Full RMB Council for future consideration. Council thanked Councillors Bryson and Gamble, Mayor Gillis and CAO Brooks for the work on that file.

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

13. **shopbelfastpei Update (Councillor Carter)** Shop Belfast has one month left to get stamps and get the cards submitted. Belfast has seen a significant decrease in the numbers of participants which correlates to the low Island Tourism numbers, as reported by local business owners. They are also reporting that business is actually worse than last year when the Ferry was not operational, disappointing to say the least. This campaign is being well received by locals but we are not getting traffic from Charlottetown or west of Charlottetown. Please support local over big box stores and support our community businesses. Shop Local, Shop Belfast!
14. **Excused Absence for Four (4) Separate Regular Council Meetings in 2025 (Councillor Bryson).** On Monday, July 29, 2024, Councillor Bryson met with CAO Bob Brooks to discuss the process for an Excused Absence. Councillor Bryson just received her schedule for her University Classes for 2025 and turns out that four (4) dates conflict with four (4) of the usual Regularly Scheduled Council meetings in 2025 (yet to be approved). The *Municipal Government Act* requires that any member of Council will require an Excused Absence from Council, to avoid being penalized, in the case of three absences in a row.

Councillor Bryson is requesting an Excused Absence for the four consecutive absences (in principle) as follows (if these actual dates are adopted by Council in November 2024):

- a. Wednesday, January 15, 2025 (Regular Council Meeting)
- b. Wednesday, February 19, 2025 (Regular Council Meeting)
- c. Wednesday, March 19, 2025 (Regular Council Meeting)
- d. Wednesday, April 16, 2025 (Regular Council Meeting)

Councillor Bryson would continue her duties as a member of Council in all other aspects of her role during that time period. Council also discussed the possibility of selecting other dates. The CAO will poll the members of Council about other possible dates.

Moved by **Councillor Carter** and **seconded** by **Councillor Gamble** to grant Excused Absences for the four (4) Regular Council Meetings, as described above for Councillor Katherine Bryson.

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

15. **Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) (Administration – Ashley Feschuk)** RMB has spoken to Belfast Recreation Centre Management and they confirmed that they are ready to act as the primary warming centre for the Municipality in an emergency situation. The staff at the Belfast Recreation Centre have been diligently testing the generator every Monday to ensure it is functioning correctly. The backup generator at the Wood Islands Market has also been tested and training on that has been completed. Wood Islands Market is the secondary warming centre site and will only be utilized if the primary location is compromised. Council was given a list of their fellow councillor's contact numbers, emails and the positions they serve within the emergency committee.
16. **New Business for the Agenda (as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above)**
 - a) **Selkirk Road Concerns – Update (Deputy Mayor Docherty)** Michael Stewart assistant engineer of infrastructure, July 18th, surveys completed. Data collected at the intersections and beginning corridor analysis. Michael Stewart was notified on July 18th that there was a motor vehicle accident that occurred on July 17th that resulted in numerous people being sent to hospital and he added that to the study that is currently in progress. When asked if Michael was the GPEI contact for other road issues, it was said he was not. MLA Darlene Compton offered to be that contact; however, it was decided that RMB would find out who GPEI employee is and also cc MLA Compton on the concerns. MLA Compton was thanked for her offer.
 - b) **Belfast Days (Deputy Mayor Docherty)** Belfast Days was a huge success this year and was attended by many. It was the largest parade to date, great food, awesome prizes, lots of helpers, Belfast Consolidated Grade 9 class started fundraising by working the canteen, fantastic fireworks and harness racing. Prizes were distributed for all six races and a cooling blanket was presented to the winner of the final race. Some of the residents from the Gillis Lodge were in attendance as well. There were 25 sponsors this year, Belfast Days biggest show of support yet. Hope to see y'all again next year!
 - c) **Make a Wish Foundation (Deputy Mayor Docherty)** \$1,300 was fundraised at Belfast Days and donated to the Make a Wish Foundation! Congratulations Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty and your Volunteer Team along with all the Sponsors on all your hard work.
 - d) **The Little Harvest Town News (Deputy Mayor Docherty)** A new initiative in Belfast kicking off the weekend of the 70 Mile Coastal Yard Sale. In addition to the sunflower and pumpkin patch will be The Little Harvest Town. A play area of 15 unique fall/farm themed inflatables. More news in the coming weeks so stay tuned for all the fun!
 - e) **Community Pantry Update (Councillor Bryson)** In response to concerns over misuse of the pantry, Bonnie Shave passed along an official statement which reads:

“We have no reason to suspect any thief or significant misuse. We are not watching the cams but if there is ever a concern, then we can look back on the video. We have no reason for concern at this time”. Thank-you to everyone for dropping off fresh produce from their gardens, it is greatly appreciated. Also, the Community Pantry was the recipient of a grant worth \$4,800 from PEI Charlottetown Rotary Club – a huge thank-you to CAO Bob Brooks and the Rotary Club for their support. Thank-you to everyone who continues to donate items or send funds to assist in this effort.

- f) **Apartments at the Legion (Councillor Bryson)** Work has begun on six-unit senior’s housing complex contracted by Riley & Sons beside the Legion. 4.9 acres of land there and the potential for expansion in the future.
- g) **CBC Statement (Councillor Bryson)** It was suggested that RMB create an official public statement in response to the CBC Interview. It would be posted on the RMB website and Facebook page – to be determined.

RMB CAO is asked to create a draft statement regarding the recent CBC interview and subsequent story/reporting regarding Annexation. This draft statement will be reviewed by all Council members and it must be a unanimous vote on whether it is released on RMB’s website and Facebook Page. The vote will be taken at the September 18th Council meeting.

- h) **Councillor Role Clarification (Councillor Bryson)** Councillors and the Mayor are elected positions. Often in small municipalities these positions are acclaimed - meaning there are only enough applicants as there are seats available and therefore there is no actual vote. In the case of this current council, all positions were acclaimed. Anyone who is a member of the municipality is entitled to put their name forward as mayor or councillor. Councillors receive a very small honorarium, slightly over \$1000 each year, committee chairs receive an additional \$100. This amount is subject to taxes, and the result, at least in my experience, has equated to gas money for attending these meetings. It is essentially a volunteer position.
- i) **CCBF meeting schedule change (Councillor Carter)** Councillor Carter requested that the meeting that is currently scheduled for Wednesday, August 28th, be rescheduled. Committee members will be contacted by CAO Bob Brooks to discuss rescheduling.
- j) **70 Mile Yard Sale Traffic Concerns (Councillor Carter)** It’s that time of year again and the 70 Mile Coastal Yard Sale is almost upon us. Councillor Carter wanted to ensure that the RCMP were aware of the dates ahead of time. RMB administration has already informed our RCMP liaison as of August 1st of the dates in advance to ensure that they can schedule additional officers to patrol traffic in the area.
- k) **Outdoor Lighting at the Wood Islands Market (Mayor Gillis)** Mayor Gillis raised the concern over lighting in the courtyard. RMB will address the issue Wood Islands and Area Development Corp. right away. *(the problem has now been resolved)*.

17. **Next Meetings:**

- a. **CCBF – Committee Meeting – ~~August 28, 2024 @ 7:PM~~** – Wood Islands Market – RMB Office – to be rescheduled.
- b. **Regular Council Mtg** – September 18, 2024 @ 7:PM – Wood Islands Market – Upstairs Meeting Hall
- c. **Resumption of RMB Official Plan and Development Bylaw Discussions** – September 21, 2024 @ 1-3:PM – Wood Islands Market – Upstairs Meeting Hall.

18. **Motion to Move In-Camera for a Confidential Personnel Matter – *(No minutes are taken, and no decisions made during In-Camera Sessions)***

Moved by **Councillor Carter** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to move into In-Camera for a Confidential Personnel Matter.

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

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** and seconded by **Councillor Carter** to move out of In-Camera for the Confidential Personnel Matter.

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

No decision is required out of this In-Camera item.

19. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...

Moved by **Councillor Carter** to adjourn the meeting at: **10:13 PM.**

Feschuk/Brooks

Minutes Approved on: **September 18, 2024**

Signature and Seal on file

Mayor - Garth Gillis

Signature and Seal on file

CAO – Bob Brooks