



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, January 15, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Market

Council:	Mayor Garth Gillis (<i>Chair</i>)	Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty
	Councillor Trisha Carter (<i>regrets</i>)	Councillor Katherine Bryson (<i>excused absence</i>)
	Councillor Billy Gamble (<i>regrets</i>)	Councillor James Kinnee
	Councillor Charley McGivern	
Administration:	CAO Bob Brooks	Ashley Feschuk
Public:	Josh Lewis (Eastern Graphic), Russell Compton	
Facebook Livestream:	8 views in real time, 24hours later 1.3K plays, 4 shares	
	<i>* Note: Quorum for a Council Meeting is Four (Three Members and One Chair)</i>	

***Please Be Aware: RMB Council Meetings are Livestreamed to facebook.com/belfastpei
Livestream Comments are not monitored in real time during the meeting.***

A New Practice for RMB now includes a requirement for all visitors to Council and Committee meetings to Sign In. For Fire Safety Reasons as well as more accurate Minutes – Thank you.

Item Order of Business

Happy New Year

- 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.”

- Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – No members declared a conflict of interest.
- Approval of Agenda** – No additional items were added to today’s Agenda.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor McGivern to adopt the agenda as presented.

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

RCMP Report for the Month of Dec. (*distributed at meeting*) (by Admin Ashley Feschuk) Sergeant Robinson sent along the RCMP report for December. It shows that we are up seven incidents but overall, we continue to maintain our low monthly incident average, compared to other municipalities. Good work Belfast. January is National Crime Stoppers Month 🚔 🚒

PEI Crime Stoppers has been operating since 1989 and processes about 560 tips per year. Tips received in PEI have resulted in more than 900 arrests, assisted in clearing more than 1,300 cases, and resulted in the seizure of 3.2 million dollars in stolen goods and drugs. Cash rewards of up to \$2,000 are available for tips resulting in an arrest. Tips received by phone, a free App, or through the internet are completely anonymous - check out the Crime Stoppers website - [www. peicrimestoppers.com](http://www.peicrimestoppers.com) to learn more. Please be mindful that all crimes in progress, such as impaired driving, should always be reported directly to 911.

4. **Public Presentations** – There were no public presentations.
5. **Adoption of the November 20, 2024, Regular Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated*)

Moved by **Councillor McGivern** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to approve the Minutes of the November 20, 2024, Council Meeting as presented.
 Votes for: 3 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

6. **Business arising – November 20, 2024, Council Meeting Minutes** (*none*).

7. **CAO Report** (*CAO – Bob Brooks*)

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

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ December 31, 2024:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.44
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$63,696.17
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 (<i>for approved projects</i>)	\$48,923.27
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$37.90
e. Gas Tax (CCBF) GIC Acct 040 (<i>for approved projects</i>)	\$53,998.27
f. Reserve Savings GICs; Acct 041 & 042	\$48,742.59
(Breakdown as approved)	
1. RMB Expansion Reserve	\$25,000.00
2. Emergency Preparedness Reserve	\$10,000.00
3. Un-allocated	\$13,742.59
4. (FYI) Remaining Funds in ShopBelfastPEI	\$523.01

b) **Revenues and Expenditures Tracking (2024/25) to December 31, 2024:**

Revenues:	Budgeted	To-Date
i1 – Assessment Income (Commercial & Non-Commercial)	\$377,234	304,359
i2 – GPEI Rink Grant (<i>in</i>)	\$8,500	-
i4 – CCBF (<i>in</i>)	\$92,000	20,695
i5 – Other (Gen.) & BAWG (<i>in</i>) & Community Pantry (<i>in</i>)	\$8,363	51,329
Total	\$486,097	376,383
Expenditures:	Budgeted	To-Date
e1 – Council Remuneration, RMB Payroll, Deductions	\$128,272	96,103
e2 – Travel Allowance	\$1,500	1,114
e3 – Office Admin (Supplies/Hardware/Lease/Cleaning)	\$20,860	16,564
e4 – Advertising, Promotion & Website	\$2,018	1,666
e5 – Audit, Financial, Bank Fees, Amortization	\$4,715	4,057
e6 – Insurance, Legal, WCB	\$10,211	8,875
e7abc – Projects (MEMP/Com.Plan/ShopBelfastPEI/Other)	\$3,250	2,923
e7d – Events (Remembrance/Halloween/Christmas/Other)	\$1,500	1,453
e8 – Elections or By-Elections	\$500	-
e9 – FPEIM, FCM, Prof Fees, Conferences, Workshops	\$5,467	5,628
e10 – Miscellaneous	\$750	112
e11 – Fire Protection Grant	\$115,000	90,000
e12 – GPEI Rink Grant (<i>out</i>) & BAWG & Pantry (<i>out</i>)	\$14,863	3,250
e13 – Community Grants	\$69,900	69,300
i4 – CCBF (<i>out</i>)	\$92,000	20,695
e14 – Contingency	\$1,000	-
e15 – 2 nd Warming Ctr Gen. (<i>\$51,192</i>) & RMB Share (<i>\$2,817</i>)	\$10,814	54,008
e16 – Warming Ctr Operations (Belfast Rec Ctr/WIADC)	\$2,416	2,416
e17 – New Office (<i>New</i>)	0	0
e18 – Dish Washer (ACOA Grant - WIADC) (<i>in/out</i>) (<i>New</i>)	6,100	6,100
Total	\$491,137	384,264

Change in Fund Balance (Net)	\$1,061	-7,881
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Regular Revenues, Expenditures and Community Grants are on track after 9 months of fiscal year, with slightly higher monthly GPEI Assessment dollars (\$2,818/month). In/Out Revenues/Expenditures from Generator Grant are now included. Transfer of ...0042 GIC Reserve was required in October (**\$21,294.28**) to cover generator and cash flow.

The 2025/26 Fiscal Year Budgeting is underway. The initial Draft Budget will be available for Council and Public review by the beginning of February. The document will be considered/amended/ratified by Council on February 19 and March 19 in its public meeting.

8. **2025/2026 Community Grants Call/Process** (*Admin - Ashley Feschuk*). Procedures are now upon us for the 2025/26 Community Grants Program cycle. The call for Community Grants Proposals and Applications are now on the RMB Website, Facebook page and various Bulletin Boards around our municipality. Applicants have until **noon on Friday, March 7th** to submit their grant applications. In addition to the public call, anyone receiving a Community Grant last year will receive a package by mail and email. RMB has received all required Summary Reports from the previous Community Grant Recipients – making each one eligible to apply again for the 2025/25 Funding Cycle. The Community Grants Committee will review the new applications on Wednesday, March 12th for a recommendation to Council. Council will make its decision on Wednesday, March 19th.
9. **Official Community Plan and Development Bylaw – Follow-up** (*CAO – Bob Brooks*): With the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) Project for the Official Community Plan and Development Project now complete; an Abridged Summary Report was created (*distributed at the meeting*). The report has been submitted to Infrastructure Secretariat for wrap-up. The report was also vetted through our Auditors and with Municipal Affairs. RMB has yet to hear back from Infrastructure Secretariat on the final report. All in all, the Report showed that not only did RMB achieve all the defined project deliverables, but also enlightened RMB on the actual ramifications of having the municipal land-management responsibilities done in-house. The project also provided a realistic picture of the costs to a municipality.
10. **Dark Sky Preserve (New Initiative in 2024/25 Strategic Plan)** (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*): One of the New Initiatives listed within the 2024/25 Strategic Plan was for RMB to use its existing promotional vehicles, to create awareness about Dark Sky Preserve initiatives in the RMB area. An awareness video can be found on the RMB Website along with the RMB Facebook page.
11. **Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce Meeting Re: Sustainable Two-Ferry Service** (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*): On January 8th, the Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce hosted a meeting of stakeholders to discuss the Sustainable Two-Ferry Service at Wood Islands and possible actions to be taken. Mayor Garth Gillis and Administration Ashley Feschuk attended the meeting on RMB’s behalf. *“Mayor Gillis and I recently attended a meeting at the Eastern PEI Chamber of Commerce in regards to the Ferry situation. This meeting was intended to discuss an economic impact study that would engage Eastern PEI businesses and residents on how Ferry service is affecting the region. At the meeting, RMB expressed its continued desire to assist in whatever ways possible”*. More information to follow-up on with Council at the RMB February and March meetings.
12. **Notice of 2025/26 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan Meetings** – Notice is hereby given, that RMB will be holding open public meetings on **February 19th and March 19th** to discuss and ratify RMB’s 2025/26 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Everyone is welcome to attend. Any member of the public wishing to be placed on the Agenda in this regard; should contact the RMB Office to make arrangements.

13. **Sublease within the New RMB Office Facility** (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*) In November of 2024, Council authorized RMB Administration to search for possible sublease tenants for a long-term sublease. RMB advertised in: The Guardian Newspaper, on the RMB website/Facebook page, posted on various bulletin boards, and made phone calls to possible tenants. To-date, there is one possible tenant interested. Deadline for interest is January 31st. RMB Administration will work with the interested party after the deadline, so that Council can then will confirm the sub-lease tenant, during its February 19th Council Meeting.

14. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above*)
 - a) **Lobby to Minister Stephen Myers for a Small-Municipality/Community Meeting, as well as well as instructing Lands to begin sending details to RMB on Development applications/decisions.** After receiving Council input on the letter (*attached*), the letter was sent in December 2024 under the Mayor’s Signature – No response from the Minister or the Department to-date.
 - b) **Lobby to Minister Stephen Myers for a Small, Rural and Remote Municipality Meeting, to discuss possible *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* changes.** A second letter (*attached*) was drafted to Minister Myers (as per title) to discuss the current governance model of the MGA. The draft letter received some suggested edits, then was supported by all Council Members in attendance. The revised letter will be mailed and emailed to the Minister’s office on January 16th and cc’d to the Belfast Area MLA, Darlene Compton. RMB will ask for a confirmation of receipt of the letter, and RMB will invite the Minister to RMB’s next Council Meeting on February 19, 2025.

15. **Next Meetings:**
 - a. **Regular Council Meeting** – Wednesday, February 19, 2025: 7:pm – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market.
 - b. **Community Gants Committee Meeting** – Wednesday, March 12, 2025: 7:pm – RMB Office, Wood Islands Market.
 - c. **Regular Council Meeting** – Wednesday, March 19, 2025: 7:pm – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market.

16. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...
Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty to adjourn the meeting at: 7:30pm

Ashley/Bob

Minutes Approved On: _____

 Mayor – Garth Gillis

 CAO – Bob Brooks

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