



# Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

## COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 7:00 PM  
*Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Market*

Council:	Mayor Garth Gillis ( <i>Chair</i> )	Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty
	Councillor Katherine Bryson	Councillor Trisha Carter
	Councillor Billy Gamble	Councillor Charley McGivern ( <i>Regrets</i> )
	Councillor James Kinnee ( <i>Regrets – Excused Absence</i> )	
Administration:	CAO Bob Brooks	Ashley Feschuk
Public Speakers:	Rachel Buell – Eastern PEI Navigators	

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

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** – *Council Members involved in any Community Grants Applications on today’s Agenda will need to declare a Conflict; if they are an Organizer, if they are a Board Member, or if they have Monetary Involvement. Those Council Members that are merely participants or that have family members that are participants, fall under Community-of-Interest and are not in a direct Conflict of Interest. Those members MAY step out if they feel they have a ‘Perceived Conflict of Interest’ (if they wish). Council Members in Conflict will need to step out during any discussion about their individual Community Grant Application, but may remain and vote on any other application, and on the Community Grants Recommendations as a block.* There were three “Conflicts of Interests” declared, Councillor Carter – Belfast Rural Fire Department and Belfast Wrestling, Councillor Gamble – Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG) and Deputy Mayor Docherty – Belfast Days.
3. **Approval of Agenda** – One additional item was added to Item 16 regarding the “Act to Amend the Off-Highway Vehicle Act”

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

Votes for:   4      Votes against:   0      Result: **Carried Unanimously**

4. **RCMP Report for the Month of February** (*presented by Administration Ashley Feschuk*) Belfast RCMP Reports are no longer available on our website and are available to view for Councillor’s upon request to Administration. Belfast continues to maintain it’s low average for incidents involving RCMP. Keep up the good work Belfast!
  
5. **Public Presentation: Rachel Buell from Eastern PEI Community Navigators** – This is a settlement service designed to assist newcomers and new residents to integrate into their communities, and through the many immigration changes. We also provide welcome services in different languages. April is always an especially busy month with the arrival of temporary workers. Getting ready for their upcoming PINOY Basketball Tournament, Saturday, March 29<sup>th</sup> at 5pm at the Montague Intermediate School. All are welcome! Please check out our Facebook page ‘Eastern PEI Community Navigators’ to stay up to date and reach out to the team if you have any questions.
  
6. **Adoption of the February 19, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated*).  
  

**Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Gamble to approve the Minutes of the February 19, 2025, Council Meeting as presented.**  
**Votes for: 4    Votes against: 0    Result: Carried Unanimously**
  
7. **Business arising from the February 21, 2025 Council Meeting Minutes** (*already addressed in today’s agenda – no other items*).

8. **CAO Report (CAO – Bob Brooks)**

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

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ March 10, 2025:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.52
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$83,885.24
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 ( <i>for approved projects</i> )	\$44,830.67
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$38.00
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 February 28, 2025:**

<b>Revenues:</b>	<b>Budgeted</b>	<b>To-Date</b>
i1 – Assessment Income (Commercial & Non-Commercial)	\$377,234	370,412
i2 – GPEI Rink Grant ( <i>in</i> )	\$8,500	-
i4 – CCBF ( <i>in</i> )	\$92,000	44,831
i5 – Other (Gen.) & BAWG ( <i>in</i> ) & Community Pantry ( <i>in</i> )	\$8,363	61,610
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$486,097</b>	<b>476,853</b>
<b>Expenditures:</b>		
e1 – Council Remuneration, RMB Payroll, Deductions	\$128,272	116,820
e2 – Travel Allowance	\$1,500	1,115
e3 – Office Admin (Supplies/Hardware/Lease/Cleaning)	\$20,860	20,230
e4 – Advertising, Promotion & Website	\$2,018	1,961
e5 – Audit, Financial, Bank Fees, Amortization	\$4,715	5,203
e6 – Insurance, Legal, WCB	\$10,211	9,610
e7abc – Projects (MEMPP/Com.Plan/ShopBelfastPEI/Other)	\$3,250	2,923

e7d – Events (Remembrance/Halloween/Christmas/Other)	\$1,500	2,290
e8 – Elections or By-Elections	\$500	-
e9 – FPEIM, FCM, Prof Fees, Conferences, Workshops	\$5,467	5,772
e10 – Miscellaneous	\$750	256
e11 – Fire Protection Grant	\$115,000	110,000
e12 – GPEI Rink Grant (out) & BAWG & Pantry (out)	\$14,863	4,350
e13 – Community Grants	\$69,900	69,700
i4 – CCBF (out)	\$92,000	44,831
e14 – Contingency	\$1,000	-
e15 – 2 <sup>nd</sup> Warming Ctr Gen. (\$51,192) & RMB Share (\$2,817)	\$10,814	54,009
e16 – Warming Ctr Operations (Belfast Rec Ctr/WIADC)	\$2,416	2,416
e17 – New Office (New)	0	231
e18 – Dish Washer (ACOA Grant - WIADC) (in/out) (New)	6,100	6,100
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$491,137</b>	<b>457,817</b>
	=====	=====
<b>Change in Fund Balance (Net)</b>	<b>+\$1,061</b>	<b>+\$19,036</b>

**Regular Revenues, Expenditures & Community Grants are on track after 11 months of the fiscal year, plus receiving additional monthly GPEI Assessment dollars at (\$2,818/month) and the additional Generator funds.**

9. **Sustainable Two-Ferry Service (Councillor Trisha Carter):** No significant updates to report this meeting; however, the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, noted that there will be two ferries ready for Wood Islands, when the season opens on May 1, 2025.
10. **One on One Interview (Municipal Government Act) - (Admin – Ashley Feschuk)** Since the enactment of the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA) in 2017, municipalities across PEI have been implementing the MGA requirements, while adapting to the evolving needs of their own municipalities. As part of the review process, launched on February 18<sup>th</sup>, RMB is set to participate in a one-on-one interview, to express the collective municipal experience of this municipality. The RMB interview will be guided by a structured framework that systematically reviews key sections of the MGA, focusing on how specific provisions impact municipal operations. Topics will cover: Capacity, Municipal Services, Transparency; Rural Municipalities, Elections and Suggestions from the RMB Municipality. This meeting is scheduled for RMB Council and Staff for April 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:pm.
11. **Sublease within the New RMB Office Facility (Admin – Ashley Feschuk)** – Administration continues to look for a Sub-Lease tenant for a portion of its new office space. Due to seasonal construction issues, the new RMB Office facility is now set for mid-May, with the new lease to start on June 1<sup>st</sup>. RMB continues to follow-up on leads and will keep Council informed on the progress.
12. **Adoption of the March 12, 2025, Community Grants Committee Meeting Minutes (attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated – this approval is for Committee Members Only).**  
  

Moved by Councillor Bryson and seconded by Councillor Gamble to approve the Minutes of the March 12, 2025, Committee Meeting as presented.  
 Votes for: 3    Votes against: 0    Result: **Carried Unanimously**
13. **Business arising from the March 12, 2025 Council Meeting Minutes (already addressed in today’s agenda – no other items).**
14. **Community Grants Committee - Recommendations to Council (presented by Committee Chair – Councillor Gamble):** On March 12, 2025, the Community Grants Committee deliberated on 17 Grant Applications for this year’s 2025/26 Community Grants cycle.

Following the deliberations Committee Members approved two recommendations for Council consideration. With these Community Grant allocations, Committee Members also recognized that by providing these Community Grants to the various community groups, volunteer groups, facilities, sporting groups, and numerous miscellaneous groups; RMB is able to help support many integral services to the RMB residents. Recommended Grants/Services for this year’s funding cycle include:

**(1) Recommended 2025/26 Grant Allocations as follows:**

1. Belfast Rural Fire Department - Ops	\$120,000
2. Belfast Rec Centre (GPEI Rink Grant)	\$8,500
3. Belfast Rural Fire Department - Firehall Plans ( <i>One-Time</i> )	\$9,085
4. Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG)	\$8,500
5. Belfast Community Development Corp. (BCDC)	\$7,500
6. Belfast Days	\$7,500
7. Belfast Historical Society	\$4,500
8. Belfast Minor Hockey Assoc.	\$1,500
9. Belfast Rec Centre - Ops	\$26,500
10. Belfast Wrestling Club	\$750
11. Pinette Raceway Inc.	\$2,000
12. Point Prim Lighthouse Society	\$3,000
13. Vernon River/Belfast Community Pantry	\$2,400
14. WIADC - Wood Islands Market - Ops	\$10,000
15. WIADC - Wood Islands Lighthouse	\$3,000
16. WIADC - Train Station Accessible Deck	\$9,625
17. Iona Park Inc.	\$1,500

**Total 17 Allocations Recommended \$225,860**

**(2) Continued Caveat on Community Grant Allocations:**

The Community Grants Committee is also recommending continuation of the practice: that any organization receiving a Community Grant in 2025/26, be required to produce a Summary Report on how the awarded Community Grants Funds were utilized, by December 31, 2025. Any group who does not provide such report, will not be eligible for a future Community Grant.

For Council Consideration...

Council discussed the recommendations presented and made two further suggestions: **(1) add an additional \$7,500 to the BCDC award, and (2) add an additional \$2,000 to the Iona Park award. These two additions would bring the total 2025/26 Community Grants allocations to \$235,360 – Council Agreed.**

Council also discussed and agreed that any overages to the bottom line in the budget could be covered by the RMB Reserves for this fiscal year.

**Moved by Councillor Bryson and seconded by Deputy Mayor Docherty for Council to approve the two recommendations of the Community Grants Committee, for inclusion into the 2025/26 RMB Budget as amended above.**

Votes for: 4 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

15. **2025/26 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan – 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** - (*presented by CAO Bob Brooks*) (*attached*). RMB completed the First Reading Budget deliberations on February 19, 2025. At that meeting, Council decided to defer any Amendments to the Budget, Financial Plan, and Capital Plan until Second Reading. Council also decided to wait to see the Community Grants Committee recommendations first and the effect it would have on the budget.

Today the CAO Bob Brooks presented Administrative Amendments to the Budget that provided the updated Provincial Assessment numbers and Projections, giving greater detail and accuracy to the RMB Budget. Council were shown the Amendments, and discussed the effect they would have on the budget. They then proceeded to the Amendments:

**AMENDMENT 1.**

An amendment to accept or amend the 2025/26 Community Grants Allocations, as discussed and approved/amended above in Item 14 that now totals: \$235,360.

**Moved** by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** and **seconded** by **Councillor Carter** to approve the 2025/26 Community Grants Allocations from Item 14 above as decided by Council.

Votes for:   **4**   Votes against:   **0**   Result: **Carried Unanimously**

**AMENDMENT 2.**

An amendment to accept the updated Provincial Assessment Numbers and the updated projections for both years 2024/25 and 2025/26 as presented (*see attached Budget with amendments after First Reading*).

**Moved** by **Councillor Gamble** and **seconded** by **Councillor Bryson** to accept the updated Provincial Assessment Numbers and the updated projections for both years 2024/25 and 2025/26 as presented.

Votes for:   **4**   Votes against:   **0**   Result: **Carried Unanimously**

Having had 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of the 2025/26 RMB Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan, and having had the acceptance of various Amendments; the 2025/26 RMB Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan; RMB is now ready for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading as Amended and Final Approval.

**Moved** by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** and **seconded** by **Councillor Carter** to approve 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading of the 2025/26 Rural Municipality of Belfast Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan, as amended: and give Final Approval.

Votes for:   **4**   Votes against:   **0**   Result: **Carried Unanimously**

16. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above*)

- a. **Doors Open Downeast Project - Update** (*Councillor Carter*) Exciting News for Our Community! I'm thrilled to announce an incredible promotional program for our area called "Doors Open Down East" happening on April 26 and 27, 2025. We're aiming to make this an annual event that grows each year! This initiative shines a spotlight on the rural gem stretching from Vernon to Panmure and beyond - an area often overlooked as visitors hurry to catch the ferry. Our goal is to boost awareness of our local attractions so that visitors can take the time to explore, instead of rushing off to popular spots like Charlottetown or

Cavendish. This is a fantastic opportunity for local businesses to open their doors to the public for the weekend, allowing everyone to discover places they may have never visited before. All businesses can participate, from foods to gift shops, accommodations (Air BnBs), to entertainment venues, boutiques, service providers, and more. The possibilities are endless! There's still time to get in on the fun but time is running out. Contact Trish at Galla Designs Studio 902-326-1015. 50 participants have been confirmed so far and the map for this project is being finalized. Each business will be offering special promotions for visitors and discounts over the course of the weekend. This is a great opportunity for vendors to showcase their individuality and welcome new clients into their businesses.

- b. **Selkirk Road - Update** (presented by Deputy Mayor Docherty) Follow-up was made with Micheal Stewart in regards to the Selkirk Road. This type of investigation typically takes some time; however, the Deputy Mayor was assured that they are still working on it, and the Deputy Mayor will continue to keep Council informed.
- c. **Consultation Draft – An Act to Amend the *Off-Highway Vehicle Act (No.2)*** (presented by Councillor Bryson) The PEI Department of Transportation and Infrastructure is proposing amendments to the *Off-Highway Vehicle Act* that would allow municipalities the option to create bylaws for ATV use. The Department has requested feedback from municipalities on the proposed draft amendments. After discussing the draft document, Council has decided that it is not specific enough for them to embrace for the Rural Municipality of Belfast. The Act itself is very broad and leaves several areas open for interpretation which need to be clarified further, before requiring any further action from RMB.

**17. Next Meetings:**

- a. **One-on-One Council/Staff MGA Mtg** – Wednesday, April 2, 2025 @ 7:PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
- b. **Regular Council Mtg** – Wednesday, April 16, 2025 @ 7:PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market

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

Moved by Councillor Carter to adjourn the meeting at: **8:34pm**

Ashley/Bob

Minutes Approved on: **April 14, 2025**

**Signature and Seal on File**

Mayor Garth Gillis

**Signature and Seal on File**

CAO Bob Brooks

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