



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, May 21, 2025, at 7:00 PM

Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Market

In Attendance:

Council: Mayor Garth Gillis (*Chair*) Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty
Councillor James Kinnee Councillor Trisha Carter
Councillor Billy Gamble Councillor Charley McGivern
Councillor Katherine Bryson (*Regrets*)
Administration: CAO Bob Brooks Ashley Feschuk
Public Speakers: Sherry Pelkey, Executive Director- Belfast Area Watershed Group
Mike Robinson, Staff Sergeant - RCMP
Members of Public: Josh Lewis, Reporter – Eastern Graphic, Robert MacDonald – Resident,

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Livestream Comments are not monitored in real time during the Council Meeting.
Visitors – Please remember to sign in – 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** – No members of Council declared a conflict of interest with any items on today’s agenda.
3. **Approval of Agenda** –Two additional items were added to the AGENDA under item 14

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

Votes for: 5 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

4. **RCMP Report for the Month of April** (*Staff Sergeant Mike Robinson, RCMP*) There were 21 incidents up slightly from last month which was at 19. However, Belfast continues to maintain it’s extremely low average compared to other municipalities. To review a full copy of the report please visit the RMB website www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com
5. **Public Presentations**
 - a. **Sherry Pelkey, Executive Director – Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG)**, The BAWG Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday May 28th at 7pm upstairs at the Wood Islands Market and the Guest Speaker will be Dr. Emma Ladouceur, Assistant Professor at University of Prince Edward Island, cross appointed with the Biology Department and the School of Climate Change Adaptation.

The topic will be Restoration in Changing Landscapes. June 14th is **Wetland Wonders** at Wood Islands Market – Walk and Learn with Daniel Macrae from MacPhail Woods Ecological Project. August 9th is – **Click into Nature: Explore with iNaturalist** at the Wood Islands Market with Rosemary Curley retired generalist biologist and recent author, with others, of “*Mammals of Prince Edward Island and Adjacent Marine Waters*”. June 28th BAWG will be participating in Belfast Days. There will also be a community tree planting – date to be determined.

6. **Adoption of the April 14, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated*).

Moved by **Councillor Gamble** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to approve the Minutes of the April 14, 2025, Council Meeting as presented.

Votes for: 5 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

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

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

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ May 2, 2025:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.52
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$83,746.65
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 (<i>for approved projects</i>)	\$43,903.73
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$38.06
e. Reserve Savings GICs; Acct 041	\$48,742.59
(Reserves Breakdown \$48,780.65)	
1. RMB Expansion Reserve	\$21,159.67
2. Emergency Preparedness Reserve	\$10,000.00
3. Legal Reserve Fund	\$1,250.00
4. Elections Reserve Fund	\$500.00
5. Remaining – (for Budget Shortfall)	\$15,870.98
6. (FYI) Remaining Funds in ShopBelfastPEI	\$523.01

b) **Revenues and Expenditures Tracking (2024/25) to April 30, 2025:**

Revenues:	Budgeted	To-Date
i1 – Assessment Income (Commercial & Non-Comm)	\$407,697	34,310
i2 – GPEI Rink Grant (<i>in</i>)	8,500	0
i3 – Sub-Lease Rent (<i>starting June 1, 2025</i>)	5,635	0
i4 – CCBF (<i>in</i>)	57,624	0
i5 – Other (<i>a, b and c</i>) (<i>in</i>)	<u>1,900</u>	<u>196</u>
Total	481,356	34,506
Expenditures:	Budgeted	To-Date
e1 – Council Remuneration, RMB Payroll, Deductions	\$133,759	9,581
e2 – Travel Allowance	1,500	0
e3 – Office Admin (Supplies/Hardware/Lease/Cleaning)	30,157	1,512
e4 – Advertising, Promotion & Website	2,119	0
e5 – Audit, Financial, Bank Fees, Amortization	7,876	19
e6 – Insurance, Legal, WCB	11,208	0
e7abc – Projects (MEMP/Com.Plan/ShopBelfastPEI/Other)	750	0
e7d – Events (Remembrance/Halloween/Christmas/Other)	2,450	0
e8 – Elections or By-Elections	500	0
e9 – FPEIM, FCM, Prof Fees, Conferences, Workshops	5,750	188
e10 – Miscellaneous	500	0
e11 – Fire Protection Grant	120,000	10,000
e12 – GPEI Rink Grant (<i>out</i>) & BAWG & Pantry (<i>out</i>)	8,500	196

e13 – Community Grants	106,860	26,785
i4 – CCBF (out)	57,624	0
e14 – Contingency	1,000	0
e16 – Warming Ctr Operations (Belfast Rec Ctr/WIADC)	3,000	3,000
e17 – New Office (New)	19,586	840
Total	513,138	52,121
	=====	=====
Change in Fund Balance (Net)	-\$31,782	-\$17,615

Expenditures and Community Grants are on track after the first month of the fiscal year and the Year-end documentation has now been sent to the Auditors. Council should be able to see the draft audited statements, sometime in June.

8. **New Welcome Signage for RMB - (CAO – Bob Brooks):** In April of 2025, members of Council expressed their interest in Highway Welcome Signage for RMB. CAO Bob Brooks had already done some preliminary work on a suggested design (*2 design choices were attached*), as well as possible suitable map placement (*also attached*). This was not an item within this fiscal year’s budget; however, it is now possible to accommodate in 2025/2026. In keeping with Council’s request, both Bob and Ashley did further research, including:
- Price:** All-in, with materials, installation, and taxes, each sign will cost \$693 X 4 = \$2,722,
 - Authority from Highways:** Written authority from Highways will be required; however, RMB has already received ‘verbal’ cooperation and is working with Highways.
 - Size:** Approximately 4’ x 4’ each,
 - Materials:** (4) Outdoor Signs, (8) 8’ Posts, (8) Stakes, and Hardware,
 - Installation:** Highways will assist with the installation to ensure compliance and placement – we will find out later if we need any Council Volunteers, and
 - How many are allowed:** 3 – 4 max.
- Regarding costs** – due to RMB now receiving an additional \$15,000 from GPEI for Municipal Funding, we can now absorb this unbudgeted expenditure, for this fiscal year.
Regarding how many – Highways felt that any more than three would be excessive; however, agreed that they would allow four, but not more.
Regarding design – two design options are attached. After reviewing the two proposed options Council decided that they would like to see a few other options as well, before approving artwork. Administration has also been asked to inquire with the Department of Highways about adding Tourism symbols along with the cost of adding those to the proposed signage. There will be an update on this at the June 18th RMB Council meeting.
9. **Update on New (Train Station) Office - (CAO – Bob Brooks):** Work is still progressing in our new office. The fully accessible Deck will not be ready for the 1st of June and has now been delayed with RMB/BAWG scheduled to move in for mid June. The installation has been delayed, due to the soft (muddy ground conditions). Once the deck is completed, move-in can proceed – RMB will continue to operate throughout the move.
10. **New Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) Cycle - (CAO – Bob Brooks):** All projects from the previous CCBF funding cycle (2019-2024), have now been completed. RMB is now able to start the process and public call for funding proposals for the new (2025-2029) CCBF funding cycle. This cycle, RMB is eligible to apply for approximately \$350,000 (to be confirmed by the Infrastructure Secretariat). The first step in the process, is for the CCBF Committee to meet and go over the parameters.

Council discussed whether RMB should submit its own proposal, such as a Splash-Park, a Playground, or a Dog Park, but ultimately decided to see what type of proposals come in from the community first. The CCBF Committee will meet on Wednesday, June 11th at 7pm in the RMB office to discuss the program, prior to going out for a Call for Proposals.

11. **Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) – Community Wildfire Protection Plan** - (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*): Wildfire Season is now upon us; Emergency Operations Coordinator (EOC) (Ashley Feschuk), in cooperation with Ms. Emily Foster, Fire-smart Coordinator with PEI Forests, Fish and Wildlife, will be hosting a meeting for RMB Council members on Wednesday, June 25th at 7pm. The Belfast Rural Fire Department along with BAWG have also been invited. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss preparedness and mitigation measures.
12. **YouTube – Social Media Update** - (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*): RMB already has a YouTube channel which has some of our Holiday Tree Lighting videos posted but in the past two weeks the channel has undergone some major cosmetic and content updates. All of our 30 (livestreamed) Council Meetings to date are now archived and now available on our channel. This was necessary as Facebook will be deleting all live content after 30 days. To help keep accurate records, Council asked to preserve this material. RMB is not eligible for the YouTube partnership program which requires 500 subscribers and over 3,000 valid watch hours. That said, RMB will start promoting our YouTube channel to grow our social media footprint so that we can benefit from potential advertising revenue in the future.
13. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as discussed in Approval of Agenda, Item 3 above*)
 - a) **Doors Open Downeast - Results** (*Councillor – Trisha Carter*) Doors Open Downeast was embraced by the Community and the Island. Participation numbers were incredible, and turnout was so high that food vendors SOLD OUT! This program was a wonderful opportunity for people to explore businesses without any pressure. Plans are already being discussed for 2026 with participants asking to reserve a spot for next year. Expansion of the program will likely include a Facebook page and a website moving forward. It was confirmed that NO municipal funds were spent on this program. Thank you for engaging and supporting Doors Open Downeast! See you in 2026!
 - b) **Belfast Days – Lead up to Event** (*Deputy Mayor – Lynn Docherty*) NOW four days! Belfast Days is an annual community festival held in Belfast, it is a family friendly event and opening night this year will be Thursday June 26th in Pinette Park from 6-10pm. Come out and hear a local ghost story ‘The Pinette River Pirates’ at 9pm, Bonfire and Smores, Inflatables, Axe Throwing, The Little Island Artist Facepainting! On Friday June 27th at the Selkirk Campground, Volleyball pit, Belfast Trivia, Pool Party, Inflatables, Mini Golf and Drive-in Movie Night. June 28th Gates open at Pinette Raceway at 3pm for mechanical bull rides, Splash pad and Slip n’ Slide, Belfast Area Watershed Group Booth, and Fireworks by Fireworks FX at 10pm. June 29th Admission \$2 for Live Harness Racing at Pinette Raceway, 50/50 tickets available. Donations this year are once again going to Make a Wish Foundation! For a full list of events and times stay tuned to Facebook and we hope to see you all there!
 - c) **WIADC Events – Cruisin’ Down East** - (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*): A Classic Car Evening, to be held every Thursday, June through August, 6pm until dusk. All vehicles are welcome! FREE Admission! 50/50 Draw (open to everyone), Weekly Prizes, Chef Cesar will be on site with the food truck and The Sweet Company will be open late. This is sure to be a great time with cars, music, food and good times! For inquires please email wiadc@woodislands.ca **Musicabilia** is also back for it’s third year running on Saturday June 14th, 10-4pm at the Wood Islands Market. Vinyl records, CDS, Cassettes, Audio Equipment and More! Admission for Musicabilia is \$4 and vendor tables are \$10 (still some available). For more information, please email wiadc@woodislands.ca

- d) **Federation of Prince Edward Island's Municipalities (FPEIM) - New Executive Director's stance on a province-wide recreational levy** (*Councillor Kinnee*). Councillor Kinnee stated that he was concerned after hearing that smaller municipalities may be forced to pay a new recreational tax to help fund facilities like the CARI Complex in Charlottetown (as an example). RMB Administration has followed up on this, as stated in the meeting. Councillor Bryson who is VP Rural Representative with FPEIM stated that this was not a resolution passed at the AGM by voting municipal members across our province. The recreational levy is intended to be drawn from unincorporated areas to fund the recreational programs and facilities being used by those outside of a municipality. There would be no changes to municipal structure, small municipalities would not be required to fund cities recreational facilities. Additionally, the Bell Alliant centre is a private business and would not fall under this levy - it is for municipally run recreational facilities (rinks, pools, etc.) This is simply a resolution put forward to FPEIM from the Town of North Rustico, it was voted on by the voting delegation at the AGM. It is now for the FPEIM to bring it forward to the provincial government to advocate for, with the provincial government to have final say regarding new levies or funding agreements.
- e) **BCDC Update** (*CAO Bob Brooks on behalf of Keir White who sends his regrets*). Please pass on my regrets for this evening's meeting. I will be in Halifax for a dance competition. (No not me, my daughter ;) I will most definitely be at the next meeting. For an update: The golf course is progressing nicely (best greens around), the campground is now open for the season, and work on the small pool has commenced. We have many more exciting announcements upcoming that I can review at the next meeting. We also had an excellent clean-up night at Pinette Park last evening. Stay posted for more clean-up nights. Looking forward to seeing you all again soon! Keep up the great work.

14. **Next Meetings**

- a. **CCBF Committee Meeting** – Wednesday June 11th @ 7PM – RMB Office, Wood Islands Market, Committee Members Only
- b. **Regular Council Meeting for June** – Wednesday, June 18th @ 7PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
- c. **MEMP Wildfire Meeting** – Wednesday, June 25th @ 7PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market
- d. **Regular Council Meeting for July** – Per Council-approved Meeting Calendar – there is no regular Council meeting scheduled for July.

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

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty to adjourn the meeting at: **8:35pm**

Ashley/Bob