



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, August 20, 2025, at 7:00 PM
Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Market

In Attendance:

Council: Mayor Garth Gillis (*Chair*) Deputy Mayor Lynn Docherty
Councillor Katherine Bryson Councillor Trisha Carter
Councillor Billy Gamble Councillor Charley McGivern
Councillor James Kinnee

Administration: CAO Bob Brooks Ashley Feschuk

Members of Public: Reporter – Eastern Graphic, Sherry Pelkey Executive Director - Belfast Area Watershed Group, 7 members of Belfast Rural Volunteer Fire Department, MLA Darlene Compton, Russell Compton, Rick Kirkpatrick

Livestream Viewers: There were 15 people watching the meeting on Facebook. 869 views 24 hours after livestream posted.

***Please Be Aware: RMB Council Meetings are Livestreamed to facebook.com/belfastpei
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.”

Mayor Gillis – “Before we start, I just wanted to recognise the members of the Belfast Rural Volunteer Fire Department, who are here in the audience today, for their ongoing and selfless contribution to our municipality – every single day! Thank you for all you do.”

2. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – Three members of Council declared a conflict of interest with items on today’s Agenda. **Councillor Carter** – Belfast Rural Volunteer Fire Department, **Councillor Gamble** – Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG) and **Councillor McGivern** – Iona Park.
(Council Members involved in any CCBF Grant Applications on today’s Agenda are required to declare their Conflict for public record. Council Members in Conflict will be asked to leave the room if their specific conflict is being discussed individually. That said, those same Council Members are eligible to participate in discussions and voting if dealing with a Council Motion as a block. i.e. the Committee Recommendation for Council consideration; or a separate Council Motion involving the CCBF fund as a block)
3. **Approval of Agenda** – There were two suggested Agenda Items placed under item 15.)

Moved by **Councillor Carter** and seconded by **Councillor Bryson** to adopt the agenda as amended.

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

4. **RCMP Report for the Month of June and July** (*Admin - Ashley Feschuk*) July incidents have fallen since May where 36 occurrences in our Municipality were reported. Thanks to additional patrols within RMB the average has dropped to our steady 25 incidents per month. RCMP reports have been updated on the RMB website for public review at: www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com
5. **Public Presentations** – There were no public presentations.
6. **Adoption of the June 18, 2025, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated*)
- Moved by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** and seconded by **Councillor Carter** to approve the Minutes of the June 18, 2025, Council Meeting as presented.
 Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**
7. **Business Arising from the June 18, 2025, Council Minutes** (*dealt with in today's agenda*)
8. **Adoption of the July 30, 2025, CCBF Committee Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all changes incorporated – this item is for CCBF Committee Members only, as there are no other scheduled committee meetings for the near future*)
- Moved by **Councillor McGivern** and seconded by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** to approve the Minutes of the July 30, 2025, Committee Meeting as presented.
 Votes for: 4 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**
9. **Business Arising from the July 30, 2025, Committee Minutes** (*dealt with in today's agenda*)
10. **CAO Report** (*CAO – Bob Brooks*)
- a) **Financial/Variance/Planning Report**
- i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ August 2, 2025:**
- | | |
|---|-------------|
| a. Share Acct 001 | \$5.52 |
| b. Chequing Acct 010 | \$35,154.49 |
| c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 (<i>for approved projects</i>) | \$31,138.79 |
| d. Reserve Savings Acct 020 | \$38.13 |
| 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 July 31, 2025:**
- | Revenues: | <u>Budgeted</u> | <u>To-Date</u> |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------|
| i1 – Assessment Income (Commercial & Non-Comm) | \$407,697 | 137,240 |
| i2 – GPEI Rink Grant (<i>in</i>) | 8,500 | 0 |
| i3 – Sub-Lease Rent (<i>starting July 1, 2025</i>) | 5,635 | 1,127 |
| i4 – CCBF (<i>in</i>) | 57,624 | 0 |
| i5 – Other (<i>a, b and c</i>) (<i>in</i>) | 1,900 | 196 |
| Total | 481,356 | 138,563 |
| Expenditures: | <u>Budgeted</u> | <u>To-Date</u> |
| e1 – Council Remuneration, RMB Payroll, Deductions | \$133,759 | 41,698 |
| e2 – Travel Allowance | 1,500 | 166 |
| e3 – Office Admin (Supplies/Hardware/Lease/Cleaning) | 30,157 | 6441 |
| e4 – Advertising, Promotion & Website | 2,119 | 0 |

e5 – Audit, Financial, Bank Fees, Amortization	7,876	828
e6 – Insurance, Legal, WCB	11,208	89
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	870
e10 – Miscellaneous	500	0
e11 – Fire Protection Grant	120,000	40,000
e12 – GPEI Rink Grant (out) & BAWG & Pantry (out)	8,500	196
e13 – Community Grants	106,860	76,510
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	3,039
Total	513,138	172,837
	=====	=====
Change in Fund Balance (Net)	-\$31,782	-\$34,274

Expenditures and Community Grants payments are on track per payment schedule.

11. **Recommendation of the 2024-2029 Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF)**

Committee Recommendation to Council – (Committee Chair – Councillor Trisha Carter)

Following a 5-week Call for Proposals, the CCBF Committee met to discuss and deliberate the applications received, to determine a recommendation to Council for the dispersal of this CCBF Cycle Funds. Committee discussed all seven applications received, including application #7 that did not meet the “Not-for-profit” status – this application was rejected (as referenced in the Committee Minutes). While the Committee felt that all applications had merit and value, the majority of the Committee felt that, at this time, the higher priority for the RMB municipality should be for the new Firehall Project being proposed by the Belfast Rural Fire Department. A motion was put forward by the Committee that the entirety of the CCBF Fund be dedicated to the Firehall Project, and in a 3-1 approval vote – voted to bring that recommendation to Council for consideration and concurrence. Per the request of the Canada/PEI Infrastructure Secretariat, a formal motion/resolution is required from Council for **Approval in Principle** – the motion/resolution and application will then be sent to the Infrastructure Secretariat for final approval.

Discussion: Council members asked for clarifications regarding Infrastructure Secretariat’s eligible and ineligible expenditures for the CCBF funding. The CAO detailed the Firehall Project plans for the CCBF funds, confirmed the instructions from Infrastructure Secretariat about the requirement to identify a use for all of the funding available in the 2024-2029 cycle (\$294,835.51), that the CCBF application for the Firehall Project, was only looking for approval of a portion of the project funding that CCBF provides and not for approval of the estimated \$1.5 million dollar entire project, and discussed the Fire Department’s plans for finding the remaining required funding.

Resolution for Approval in Principle as follows:

RESOLUTION # RES2025 – 001: A Resolution to Award the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) for the 2024-2029 Cycle

August 20, 2025

Whereas: The Council of the Rural Municipality of Belfast has decided to allocate all of the Notional Funding that is available to the municipality through the Canada Community Building Fund for 2024-2029 to a Not-for-Profit organization, and

Whereas: From June 20 through July 25, 2025 (5 weeks), the Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB) held a Call for Proposals to all Not for Profits and Community Development Organizations for proposal applications for the use of the CCBF funds, and

Whereas: As authorized through the **RMB Bylaw # 2018-02 A Bylaw to Establish Municipal Grants** - both Committee and Council meetings were held in public for the dispersal of the Notional Funds, and discussions and recommendations/decisions were made in public, and

Whereas: Through those public discussions, the Rural Municipality of Belfast has selected the following for the 2024-2029 dispersal:

#	Organization	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Recommended
1	Belfast Rural Volunteer Fire Department <i>Firehall Expansion Project</i>	82,233	52,109	52,108	54,193	54,193	\$294,835.51

and,

Whereas: The Belfast Rural Fire Department is incorporated as a Not-for Profit Organization. Incorporated in November of 1967 and will participate as a co-applicant with the municipality, and

Whereas: The Rural Municipality of Belfast will be responsible to see that the project is conducted in accordance with the terms of the eligible and ineligible expenditures and ultimate recipient requirements, as found under the funding agreement signed with the province, and

Whereas: As the municipality does not own the asset, the Infrastructure Secretariat will need confirmation that the Not-for-Profit organization will own, operate, and maintain the asset after project completion. If the Not-for-Profit organization sells the asset within five years, the organization will need to transfer the awarded funds back to the Canada Community Building Fund.

Therefore, be it resolved: That the Rural Municipality of Belfast ***Approves in Principle***, the allocations of the Canada Community Building Fund for the 2024-2029 funding cycle (as listed above), and forward the approved applications to the Canada/PEI Infrastructure Secretariat for **Final Approval**.

Moved by Councillor Bryson and **Seconded by Councillor Gamble to approve Resolution # RES2025-001 as presented above.**

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

- Update on Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) Training Exercise, Hurricane Preparedness and Fire Ban - (Admin – Ashley Feschuk):** Thank you to the Belfast Rural Fire Department volunteers who have been working hard during this exceptionally dry summer. **Fire Ban** – There is a fire ban in effect on PEI – Campfires are not allowed, burning permits have been suspended, and all wood burning is prohibited regardless of what appliance is being used. Fines under the Forest Fire Prevention Act are enforced while a fire ban is in place. Fines can reach up to \$50,000, plus victims of crime costs. In addition, a person causing a fire may be liable for all damages arising from the fire. For a full list of cautionary measures please visit www.princeedwardisland.ca **Hurricane Preparedness** – Hurricane Season is now upon us, and we are closely monitoring the weather looking ahead at potential storms in development. Council is encouraged to please take a moment to review their positions on the MEMP team and what they are responsible for within that role. Also, Council is reminded that two days prior to a storm their presence is requested to prepare RMBs post storm plan of action.

25-Person Shelter Cart – RMB has secured a 25-Person Shelter Cart from the Province and it is now situated at our primary warming centre which is located at the Belfast Rec Centre. This cart includes cots, blankets, pillows, first-aid supplies, a radio and personal hygiene pouch kits. The Belfast Rec Centre continues to test the generator on site on a weekly basis and RMB thanks the staff there for their proactive spirit and continued diligence to make sure everything is working appropriately. The Wood Islands generator at RMBs second warming centre was also tested last week successfully and is ready to go if it is needed.

Included in Councils packages, everyone was given a copy of the **Emergency Preparedness Guide** to review. These booklets are available at the RMB office and there is some useful planning information in there along with emergency kit suggestions.

First Aid Training – The RMB office had a visit from Jeff Thompson – Occupational Health and Safety Officer who has given RMB thirty days to complete Basic First Aid Training. RMB staff is attending training in Montague September 17th 8:30-4pm. Council members are also invited.

MEMP Training Exercise Cancellation – Emergency Management Operations had planned to host a Live emergency exercise with multiple organizations including the Coast Guard and the RMB MEMP team entitled **Safe Return**. This event was designed to be a practice run and an opportunity for different agencies to be introduced and practice on a larger scale emergency management. This training exercise has been postponed until further notice.

13. **Update Regarding RMB's Phone System and Website Updates - (Admin – Ashley Feschuk):**

When the new RMB office was being renovated, essential wires were cut, which now must be re-established by two different parties. Bell is confirmed to be on-site Thursday, September 2nd for a follow-up appointment. RMB is hopeful that the phoneline will finally be connected again. Once this is confirmed there will be an announcement made on the RMB Facebook page and the RMB website.

14. **2024/2025 RMB Audited Financial Statements (attached and previously distributed) (CAO**

- Bob Brooks) – Per the *Municipal Government Act* (MGA), RMB has its annual Financial Statements audited. As in the past, the audit firm is MRSB. The CAO went through the statements and was pleased to announce that RMB not only achieved another clean audit, but also ended the fiscal year with a slightly higher surplus (\$24,939) than was initially projected. Council then voted on adoption/approval as follows:

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Kinnee to adopt the Audited RMB Financial Statements for the 2024/2025 fiscal year as presented.

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

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

a) **Belfast Days 2025 – Results Update – (Deputy Mayor Docherty):** Belfast Days was a success, “best year to date!” There was an additional day added this year, spread over multiple locations throughout Belfast. Organizers were able to raise \$1,630 for Make a Wish Foundation, the most on record for this event. The weather this year was perfect and a huge thankyou to all this’s sponsors including: the Belfast Rural Volunteer Fire Department, Belfast Community Development Center and the Pinette Raceway.

b) **Excused Absence Request – (Councillor – Katherine Bryson):** I have a request to be absent from meetings from September to November 2025 (3 Council Meetings). Previously, I was fortunately able to change schedules from the last request and therefore was able to attend all meetings. This year my schedule is not flexible, and I have an online course on Wednesday evenings. I won't know until I get into the course in September, but the professor may not make classes mandatory, in which case, I will be able to attend meetings. But this would be worse case scenario.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Carter to accommodate Councillor Bryson’s request for absences due to school commitments.

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

- c) **Bridge and Ferry Tolls Reduction** – (*Councillor – Katherine Bryson*): The federal government lowered tolls on the Confederation Bridge and ferry fares in Eastern Canada, Prime Minister Mark Carney announced while in P.E.I. in July. Effective Aug. 1, the cost of crossing the bridge, which connects P.E.I. with New Brunswick, will fall to \$20 from \$50.25. Transport trucks will also pay a flat rate of \$20. There is no change in the cost for cyclists, pedestrians, shuttles or motorcycles. RMB recognizes and appreciates the amount of work that was involved in making this happen and local businesses have seen increased consumer traffic as a result.
- d) **Wood Islands Transportation Route** – (*Councillor – Katherine Bryson*) In order to take advantage of reduced ferry tolls and the subsequent increase in traffic it would be beneficial to the community to look at developing a transportation line from Wood Islands to Charlottetown. The demand is there and frequent requests are seen on social media asking for ride sharing options. This was previously a portfolio that was overseen by Councillor Carter and the timing seems appropriate to reopen looking into this project. MLA Darlene Compton spoke to Minister Ernie Hudson about this topic in the past and he is open to looking at it providing we can assist them with some statistics.

Moved by Councillor Bryson and seconded by Councillor Carter to Open discussions on a potential transportation line from Wood Islands to Charlottetown. Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

- e) **Dredging** – (*MLA Darlene Compton*) There have been a number of meetings with fishers in the area and Department of Fisheries. The fisher people are concerned because they don't want the dredging put out into the straight where the lobsters are spawning. Twelve years ago, the Province used suction dredging and placed the dredge across the road. MLA Compton met with the Department of Fisheries and Tourism, Environment and Transport Director, and decided that suction dredging is the solution. MLA Compton is working closely with Minister Freeland. The contract for the dredging has been awarded to the Irving's. 80,000 cubic meters of dredging needs to be completed and the space available to put the dredge is only capable of holding 20,000 cubic metres, so other options are being looked at.

16. **Next Meetings:**

- a) **Regular Council Meeting for September** – Wednesday, September 17, 2025 at 7:00PM – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands Market

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

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty to adjourn the meeting at: **8:08PM**

Ashley/Bob

Minutes Approved on: **September 17, 2025**

Signature and Seal on File

Mayor - Garth Gillis

Signature and Seal on File

CAO - Bob Brooks