



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - AGENDA

Wednesday, March 18, 2026, 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
	Councillor James Kinnee	
Administration:	CAO Bob Brooks	Ashley Feschuk

***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 to be 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** – Do any members of Council have a conflict of interest with any items on today’s Agenda?
3. **Approval of Agenda** – Any other suggested Agenda Items for today’s meeting? (*to be placed under Item 15*)

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____
to adopt the agenda as presented/amended.
Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

4. **RCMP Report for the Month of February 2026** (*Admin - Ashley Feschuk*)
5. **Public Presentations (if any)** – *Members of the public are offered five minutes to make a presentation to Council. Reminder should any member of the public wish to speak on any issue on today’s Agenda, this is the time allotted for that. All other Agenda items are reserved for Council Participation. Are there any public presentations?*
 - a. ??? _____
 - b. ??? _____

6. **Adoption of the February 25, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all suggested changes already incorporated*)

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____ to
approve the Minutes of the February 25, 2026, Council Meeting as presented.
Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

7. **CAO Report (CAO – Bob Brooks)**

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

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ February 9, 2026:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.56
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$98,725.16
c. Gas Tax (CCBF) Acct 011 (for approved projects)	\$83,156.53
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$38.27
e. Reserve Savings GICs; Acct 041	\$50,887.26
(Reserves Breakdown \$50,887.26 in GIC)	
1. RMB Expansion Reserve	\$5,547.44
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)	\$33,589.82

b) **Revenues and Expenditures Tracking (2025/26) to February 28, 2026:**

Revenues:	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>To-Date</u>
i1 – Assessment Income (Commercial & Non-Comm)	\$407,697	377,114
i2 – GPEI Rink Grant (in)	8,500	0
i3 – Sub-Lease Rent (starting July 1, 2025)	5,635	4,508
i4 – CCBF (in) (New Projection w 2026 CCBF Approval)	57,624	134,342
i5 – Other (a HST & Govt, b Govt Programs, c. Foundation) (in)	1,900	18,540
Total	481,356	534,504
Expenditures:	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>To-Date</u>
e1 – Council Remuneration, RMB Payroll, Deductions	\$133,759	115,529
e2 – Travel Allowance	1,500	530
e3 – Office Admin (Supplies/Hardware/Lease/Cleaning)	30,157	25,040
e4 – Advertising, Promotion & Website	2,119	1,348
e5 – Audit, Financial, Bank Fees, Amortization	7,876	4,626
e6 – Insurance, Legal, WCB	11,208	10,355
e7abc – Projects (MEMP/Com.Plan/ShopBelfastPEI/Other)	750	0
e7d – Events (Remembrance/Halloween/Christmas/Other)	2,450	1,531
e8 – Elections or By-Elections	500	0
e9 – FPEIM, FCM, Prof Fees, Conferences, Workshops	5,750	3,474
e10 – Miscellaneous	500	500
e11 – Fire Protection Grant	120,000	110,000
e12 – GPEI Rink Grant (out) & BAWG & Pantry (out)	8,500	196
e13 – Community Grants	106,860	106,660
i4 – CCBF (out) (New Projection w 2026 CCBF Approval)	57,624	134,342
e14 – Contingency	1,000	395
e16 – Warming Ctr Operations (Belfast Rec Ctr/WIADC)	3,000	3,000
e17 – New Office (New)	19,586	14,039
Total	513,138	531,565
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Change in Fund Balance (Net)	-\$31,782	\$2,939

Community Grants are on track per payment schedule. Better than expected Expenditures savings and additional GPEI revenues are being realized. RMB have now reached a surplus by the end of February and expect to improve on that by the end of the fiscal year.

8. **Update on Dog Act/FPEIM (Councillor Bryson) ...**

9. **Update on Snowmobile Issue (Admin – Ashley Feschuk) ...**

10. **Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)** (*Admin - Ashley Feschuk*) ...
11. **2026/2027 Community Grants Committee Recommendations** (*Committee Chair – Councillor Gamble*) On March 11, 2025, the Community Grants Committee deliberated on 15 Grant Applications for this year’s 2026/2027 Community Grants cycle.

Following the deliberations Committee Members approved recommendations for Council consideration for grant allocations. As well as a second recommendation that would see applicants providing Financial Statement information with their grant applications.

With these Community Grant allocations, Committee Members recognized that by providing these Community Grants to the various not-for-profit groups, community groups, volunteer groups, facilities, sporting groups, and numerous miscellaneous groups; RMB is able to help support many ***integral services*** to the RMB residents. One of those integral services, is funding for the Belfast Rural Fire Department for ***Fire Protection Services*** – seen as an ***Essential Service*** for our municipality.

Additionally, Committee Members recognised the current state of the local economy, all the way up to world events that are causing everyone to be more cautious in their spending, and necessitating, more than ever, the need to live within our means.

With that lens in mind, Committee Members deliberated to achieve (with Council approval) allocation recommendations that would see the municipality achieve a ***0% increase*** for the 2026/2027 fiscal year, with a projected Balanced Budget. Unfortunately, that goal necessitated awarding less than requested, for almost all of the applicants.

Therefore, the Community Grants Committee is recommending the following for 2026/2027:

(1) Recommended 2026/2027 Allocations as follows:

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Belfast Rural Fire Department - Fire Protection Services | <u>\$165,000</u> |
| 2. Belfast Rec Centre (GPEI Rink (In/Out) Grant) | <u>\$8,500</u> |

Community Grants:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| 3. BAWG - Belfast Area Watershed Group | <u>\$8,000</u> |
| 4. BCDC - Belfast Community Development Corp. | <u>\$5,000</u> |
| 5. Belfast Days | <u>\$4,000</u> |
| 6. Belfast Historical Society | <u>\$2,500</u> |
| 7. Belfast Minor Hockey Assoc. | <u>\$2,500</u> |
| 8. Belfast Rec Centre - Operations | <u>\$29,000</u> |
| 9. Coop Cottage | <u>\$0</u> |
| 10. Iona Park Inc. | <u>\$2,000</u> |
| 11. Pinette Raceway Inc. | <u>\$2,000</u> |
| 12. Point Prim Lighthouse Society | <u>\$2,000</u> |
| 13. Vernon River/Belfast Community Pantry | <u>\$2,400</u> |
| 14. WIADC - Wood Islands Lighthouse | <u>\$2,000</u> |
| 15. WIADC - Wood Islands Market - Operations | <u>\$5,000</u> |

<i>Total Allocations Recommended</i>	<u>\$239,900</u>
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Committee Members found that many of the applicants did not have the sufficient financial information within the applications for Committee to assess their applications properly. Committee wanted to see financial information that showed: operations, capital, revenues, expenditures and balances, and how the funds were to be spent. This resulted in a second recommendation...

(2) A second recommendation was made by Committee members that all future applicants must submit the following documentation with their Community Grants Application for review.

1. Operational budget - including revenue sources and expenses.
2. Capital projects - including funding sources and expenses
3. A profit/loss statement with year end bank balance.
4. Request identifying the amount and anticipated use of funds from RMB.

Discussion: _____

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____ to accept the Community Grants Committee recommendations (1) and (2) as detailed above/or amended and add those recommendations into the 2026/2027 RMB Budget document for Council Consideration.

Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

12. **Adoption of the March 11, 2026, Community Grants Committee Meeting Minutes** (*Committee Chair – Councillor Gamble*) (*attached – as there are no further committee meetings scheduled in the near future, Committee Members Only will approve their attached Minutes of March 11, 2026.*)

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____ to approve the Minutes of the March 11, 2026, Community Grants Committee Meeting as presented.

Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

13. **2026/2027 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan – 2nd Reading and Final Approval** - (*presented by CAO Bob Brooks*). On February 25, 2026, Council received a full briefing on the contents of the Feb 10th Draft Budget (*attached*). After clarifications and discussion, Council gave the Draft Budget – 1st Reading without amendments. Council reserved any amendments for the March 18th meeting.

Today CAO Bob Brooks will present the known Amendments to the Budget document, then hand the floor back to the Mayor for any further Discussion, Amendments, 2nd Reading, and ultimately Final Approval.

Additionally, Council has requested some more-detailed information on the **e1b line item** – specifically speaking to the tasks and duties of the Administration, planned over this upcoming fiscal year. In addition to the (*attached*) Job Description, as mandated by the **Municipal Government Act**, some of the additional planned tasks for the two workers (one staff and one contracted) are projected as follows:

- Review of the Municipal Elections Bylaw and Legislation to ensure that RMB is current, in preparation for the 2026 Municipal General Election.
- Review of the new Provincial **Dog Act** to check Municipality requirements, legal positions and liabilities, enforcement provisions, municipal costs, other municipal examples, etc.
- Review of soon to be tabled Provincial Legislation/Policies for new Land's Act, Official Plan Requirements, Municipal Government Funding models; and whatever else the Province brings forward for consultation.
- Dealing with the Department of Tourism, in preparation for this and upcoming tourism and tourism business initiatives.
- Dealing with the Department of Transportation regarding issues like: snowmobile access, Selkirk Road access, possible Transit Route connection, etc.
- Dealing with the Federal Government, the Province, the Eastern Chamber of Commerce, on the ongoing Ferry Issue to help ensure a sustainable two-ferry service at Wood Islands.
- Working with the Federation of PEI Municipalities and the Association of Municipal Administrators on all the issues listed above.
- Working with the Belfast Rural Fire Department to help find funding for a Firehall Expansion.
- Administering the Canada Community Building Fund – specifically aiding with the Firehall Expansion.
- Feed and monitor RMB Website, Facebook site and Belfast Newsletter copy information.
- Succession Planning with new Sub-Committee to replace the CAO.
- Preparing for, training and staffing for, doing the public call for, and running the upcoming Municipal General Election in November.
- Training and orientating the New Council after the November Elections.
- RMB Events, like the Christmas Tree Lighting and Decorating, and others.
- And, much much more.

Discussion: _____

Amendments:

AMENDMENT 1.

An amendment to accept or amend the 2026/2027 Community Grants Allocations, as discussed and approved/amended in Item 11 above.

Moved by _____ **and seconded by** _____
to approve the 2026/2027 Community Grants Allocations from Item 11 above as agreed by Council.

Votes for: _____ Votes against: _____ Result: _____

AMENDMENT 2.

If approving the Community Grants allocations as recommended by the Community Grants Committee, there would no longer be a need for a \$0.01 increase to the mill rates. Therefore, unless there are other amendments affecting the Budget bottom line, an amendment is required to strike the \$0.01 increase from the Budget, as listed in the February 10, 2026 Draft Budget.

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____
to strike the listed \$0.01 mill rate increase, which would leave RMB with NO mill rate increase for the 2026/2027 fiscal year.
Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

Discussion: _____

AMENDMENT 3.

To achieve a Balanced Budget for the 2026/2027 Fiscal Year, a slight adjustment of \$76, removed from the “e3 – Office Supplies” line item is required.

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____
to adjust the “e3 – Office Supplies” line item, by reducing the line item by \$76 for the 2026/2027 fiscal year.
Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

Discussion: _____

AMENDMENT 4. Other???

...

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____
to ...
Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

Discussion: _____

Having had 1st Reading of the 2026/2027 RMB Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan, and having had the acceptance of the Amendments above; the 2026/2027 RMB Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan is now ready for 2nd Reading and Final Approval.

Moved by _____ and **seconded** by _____ to
give 2nd Reading to the Rural Municipality of Belfast 2026/2027 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan and give Final Approval.
Votes for: ____ Votes against: ____ Result: _____

14. **Belfast Rural Fire Department – Monthly Update** (*Councillor Carter*) ...

15. **New Business Items** (*per Agenda Item 3 above*):
- a) **Ferry Panel Advisory – Committee Update (and Ferry discussion in general)**
(*Councillor Carter*) ... _____
 - b) **???:** _____
16. **Next Meetings:**
- a) **Regular Council Meeting** – Wednesday, April 15, 2026: 7:pm – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands
 - b) **Regular Council Meeting** – Wednesday, May 20, 2026: 7:pm – Upstairs Meeting Hall, Wood Islands
17. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...
- Moved** by _____ to adjourn the meeting at: _____