



Rural Municipality of Belfast

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

Firehall Expansion Project Timeline Summary

July 30, 2026

Concept Discussions:

1. **Jan. 22, 2025** – Mayor Gillis and CAO Brooks met with Belfast Rural Fire Department (BRFD) to discuss BRFD Fire Protection Ask for 2025/2026. The need for a Firehall Expansion was raised at that time and how they could possibly pay for it.
2. **Feb. 13, 2025** – the Mayor and CAO again met with BRFD to discuss possible funding options and talked about other Firehall Expansion Projects that were known to members.
3. **Feb. 19, 2025** – during the regular Council Mtg. members were made aware that the Canada Community Building Fund (CCBF) cycle for 2025/2026 was now open and that for the first time, the program allowed for Fire Department expenditures. The Mayor and CAO made Council aware of the Fire Department interest in an Expansion Project at that time and discussed the possible use of the CCBF funds to kick-start the expansion.
4. **Mar. 12, 2025** – RMB's Community Grants Committee met to discuss possible projects to support for the 2025/2026 fiscal year; one project the committee recommended was \$9,085 to come up with an initial estimate of what an expanded Firehall might cost.
5. **Mar. 19, 2025** – Council approved a recommendation for a Firehall Expansion estimate in the amount of \$9,085.
6. **Jun 12, 2025** – the Mayor and CAO met with BRFD specifically to discuss: an estimated cost, the possible phases, the different options for funding agencies, the establishment of a small working group, support from RMB, support from Gillis Lodge and other local contributors, and/or the need to finance the expansion.
7. **Jun 25, 2025** – a Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP) RMB training session, specifically for the growing '*Wildfire Prevalence across Canada*' and how the need for a Firehall Expansion was needed now more than ever.

Commitment Discussions/Decisions:

8. **Jul 30, 2025** – RMB's first CCBF committee meeting to discuss possible projects to allocate the CCBF funds (formerly called the Gas Tax Funding Program). Nine members of the Fire Department showed up to support the Firehall Expansion Project. The Committee recommended that ALL available CCBF funds go to a Firehall Expansion Project (\$294,835).
9. **Aug 20, 2025** – during the Council meeting it was discussed that while the CCBF Committee believed that all applications for CCBF funding had merit, it was felt that the Firehall Project should be the highest priority – Council agreed. Council approved through a Resolution that Infrastructure Secretariat should approve the Council request that all available funds be allocated to the Firehall Project – Infrastructure Secretariat agreed. It was also suggested at that time that Council may want to look at just financing the rest, so that the project could get built sooner and not have to wait the whole five years to get it built. Council felt that looking into other avenues for funding first would be more prudent.

10. **Nov. 19, 2025** – during the Council meeting, Infrastructure Secretariat also asked for an additional commitment from Council, which Council approved in Resolution # RES2025-002 namely:
Therefore, be it resolved: That the Rural Municipality of Belfast commits that it will assist the Belfast Rural Fire Dept. to acquire the funding for its Firehall Expansion Project through the means listed above (which are the various funding agencies including RMB), and
Also, be it resolved: That in addition to RMB assisting the Fire Department in finding funding for this project, RMB will work with the Fire Department, the Province and the lending institution (if required), to explore the options necessary for paying the monthly payment of the loan. (Carried Unanimously)
11. **Jan 15, 2026** – during an Arena meeting at the Belfast Rec Centre (attended by the Mayor, CAO and others from RMB), MP Kent MacDonald mentioned that he would also look for possible funding opportunities for the Firehall Expansion Project.
12. **Jan.21, 2026** – during the Council Meeting, Council was made aware that all CCBF approvals were acquired and that the project could now proceed.
13. **Jan. 22, 2026** – the Mayor and CAO met with the Fire Department to discuss funding sources and funding options, one being, financing through Finance PEI and what that might look like if Council goes that route.
14. **Feb. 25, 2026** – during the Council meeting, the Fire Department was in attendance to answer any questions Council may have regarding the Firehall Expansion Project.
15. **Mar. 18, 2026** – during the Council meeting, the Fire Department gave an update on how the fundraising for the Firehall Expansion Project was going. Their aim: to find as much funding as possible to decrease the amount required to finance. It was recognised that the only source of funding that the Fire Department receives (other than what is donated or fundraised) is monies received from RMB. They also gave a progress report on finding a successful contractor for the project.
16. **Apr. 15, 2026** – during the Council meeting, the Fire Department was in attendance looking for Council support for its application to the Rural Growth Initiative (RGI) for \$248,000 to reduce even further what would be required for financing. RGI, in addition to the \$294,000 from CCBF was also looking for a commitment of at least \$60,000 from Fire Department fundraising, and RMB's \$30,000+ in reserve, and RMB's commitment to back the financing required, which now sits at about \$750, 000. Council decided not to commit the reserve at this time; recognizing that Council would be showing its support, by backing the monthly financing (whatever amount that may turn out to be). RMB would also continue to assist the Fire Department in looking for other funds. RGI ultimately approved the \$248,000, which can be release once the arrangement with Finance PEI is established. Council agreed unanimously to support the RGI application.
17. **May 20, 2026** – Council was given an update regarding the Firehall Expansion Project. The final quote for the project is now \$1,322,500. Not only is there a commitment for CCBF funds (over five years), RMB funds for the initial concept plan, RGI funds (once Finance PEI is in place), at least \$60,000 committed from Fire Department fundraising; there is now a commitment from MP Kent MacDonald to help push for \$529,000 through the Canada Strong Fund (CSF). (application now in process). Additionally, we had a very positive meeting with Finance PEI, who are willing to do the financing with very good rates, very flexible term limits, allowing for balloon payments with no penalty, early payout with no penalty and up to \$750,000 if required. It would operate similar to a credit line where you are only charged interest on what you actually take out as you go.

At that Council meeting, it was also confirmed that as Council might be funding about half of the project by supplying the funds to the Fire Department for the Finance PEI financing, that Council would defer the transfer of the reserve at this time until a more clear final financing picture was available.

18. **May 27, 2026** – MEMP meeting that discussed Council roles and responsibilities and also held a ‘Wildfire Exercise’ under the ever-increasing expectation that a Wildfire could take place on PEI and how best to be prepared.
19. **Jun. 17, 2026** – Council was informed that the Firehall Expansion Project was well underway and are expecting to complete the project this fiscal year (by March 31, 2026). Council was also made aware that while we still need over \$713,000 at present (\$745,000 if the RMB reserve is not used); should the \$529,000 come in from the CSF application; that would still require \$184,000 to be found. Finance PEI is willing to finance whichever amount is required.
20. **Jul. 15, 2026** – Council was informed that the status of the Firehall Expansion Project was basically the same as was reported at last meeting and awaiting to hear from Canada regarding the CSF application. MP Kent MacDonald was in attendance to express his support for the project and was also commended for loaning the use of one of his staffers to assist in getting the application in. Council was also made aware that an RMB Reserve Bylaw would be introduced, not only authorizing our ongoing emergency reserves, but is also the same bylaw that authorizes RMB to set up a financing platform for the Firehall financing.
21. **Jul. 30, 2026** – On today’s Council Agenda, is the Disposition of the Reserve Funds item that Council has been deferring. As a very large construction progress invoice has arrived and is due to be paid by August 14th, it would be crucial if RMB authorized the use of the RMB reserve funds in the amount of \$32,000 now for a couple reasons: (1) releasing those funds would enable the Fire Department to pay that invoice on time (without being in default) – (\$105,000 from CCBF, \$32,000 from RMB and \$47,150.17 from BRFD). (2) By releasing the RMB reserve fund now, would mean saving the additional finance costs of financing the \$32,000 that is already there. Also, on the Agenda today, is first reading of a Reserves Bylaw that is required from Finance PEI to get started on finalizing the terms of the financing required for the Firehall Expansion Project.

Moving Forward:

22. With approval of the RMB reserve (\$32,000), the invoice from Riley & Sons Construction can be paid on time.
23. At the August 19th Council meeting, Council will be able to give second reading of the Bylaw.
24. At the August 19th Council meeting, Council will also be asked for a Resolution of Support for the Firehall Expansion Project Financing, with RMB being the Guarantor of the Fire Department Financing Loan. Something Finance PEI will need to get the financing approved.
25. Once the Finance PEI financing is in place, the RGI funding of \$248,000 can be released. That amount of money, along with whatever else the Fire Department donations have garnered would pay for additional progress payments.
26. By that time, we should know if the Canada application is successful?

Summary:

27. There are still some unknowns that we are in the process of working out, however, suffice it to say, that this project is moving forward in an expedient fashion (comparatively), with all parties working very cooperatively to make this '*Much Need*' and '*Very Timely*' Project come to fruition.
28. Thanks to all those parties involved and to the public support that this project has garnered.

Sincerely and on behalf of Mayor and Council



Bob Brooks

CAO – Rural Municipality of Belfast