



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, August 19, 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 (<i>Excused Absence</i>)
	Councillor Billy Gamble	Councillor James Kinnee
	Councillor Charley McGivern (<i>Excused Absence</i>)	
Administration:	CAO Bob Brooks	Ashley Feschuk
Public:	Josh Lewis, Reporter Eastern Graphic, Robert MacDonald Belle River Resident, Russell Compton	
Livestream:	844 Views 12hrs after Livestream, 11 Comments and 5 Likes	

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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 present have a conflict of interest with any items on today’s Agenda. ***Note: Councillor Carter will be in conflict of interest of item # 21 – whether in attendance at this meeting or not.***
3. **Approval of Agenda** – There were 3 items to change for this Agenda: (An excused absence for Councillor McGivern; a motion to defer items 24. 25. 26. since those items were on the Agenda at the request of Councillor McGivern, and a suggestion to combine items 22. and 24. in the interest of expediency.)

Moved by Councillor Bryson 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 July 2026** (*Admin - Ashley Feschuk*) Incident rates are down slightly and is still the lowest in Eastern Kings. Even with the additional guests and traffic to our municipality, Belfast continues to maintain respectable numbers. For access to detailed RCMP reports please visit the RMB website www.ruralmunicipalityofbelfast.com
5. **Public Presentations (if any)** – There were no public presentations.
6. **Adoption of the July 15, 2026, Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all suggested changes already incorporated*)

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Bryson to approve the Minutes of the July 15, 2026, Council Meeting as presented.

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

7. **Adoption of the July 22, 2026, CAO Sub-Committee Meeting Minutes** (*attached on this Council Agenda for approval of the CAO Sub-Committee Members Only – as no other CAO Sub-Committee meetings are planned at this time.*)

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Kinnee to approve the Minutes of the July 22, 2026, CAO Sub-Committee as attached/presented. (*CAO Sub-Committee Members Only*).

Votes for: 3 Votes against: 0 Result: Carried Unanimously

8. **Adoption of the July 30, 2026, Special Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all suggested changes already incorporated*)

Moved by Councillor Gamble and seconded by Deputy Mayor Docherty to approve the Minutes of the July 30, 2026, Special Council Meeting as presented.

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

9. **Adoption of the August 5, 2026, Special Council Meeting Minutes** (*attached - previously distributed; all suggested changes already incorporated*)

Moved by Deputy Mayor Docherty and seconded by Councillor Kinnee to approve the Minutes of the August 5, 2026, Special Council Meeting as presented.

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

10. **CAO Report (CAO – Bob Brooks)**

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

i. **Provincial Credit Union Account Balances @ August 1, 2026:**

a. Share Acct 001	\$5.56
b. Chequing Acct 010	\$129,882.38
c. CCBF (Gas Tax) Acct 011 (<i>after partial payout</i>)	\$372.41
d. Reserve Savings Acct 020	\$38.37
e. Reserve Savings GICs; Acct 041	\$51,997.58
(Reserves Breakdown \$51,997.58 in GIC)	
1. Emergency Preparedness Reserve	\$10,000.00
2. Legal Reserve Fund	\$5,000.00
3. Elections Reserve Fund	\$5,000.00
4. Remaining Reserve (T.B.D.)	\$31,997.58

b) **Revenues and Expenditures Tracking (2026/27) to July 31, 2026:**

Revenues:	Budgeted	To-Date
i1 – Assessment Income (Commercial & Non-Comm)	\$424,807	144,580
i2 – GPEI Rink Grant (<i>in</i>)	8,500	0
i3 – Sub-Lease Rent (<i>bi-monthly pmts</i>)	6,762	2,254
i4 – CCBF (<i>in</i>) (<i>for Firehall Expansion Prj</i>)	82,000	133,137
i5 – Other (<i>HST/WCB refunds & other funding initiatives</i>)	17,000	15,000
Total	539,069	294,971
Expenditures:	Budgeted	To-Date
e1 – Council Remuneration, Contracts, Payroll, Deductions	\$149,368	40,079
e2 – Travel Allowance	1,000	0
e3 – Office Admin (Supplies/Hardware/Phones/Rent/Cleaning)	27,741	10,165
e4 – Advertising, Promotion and Website	1,500	535
e5 – Audit, Financial, Bank Fees, and Amortization	8,045	690

e6 – Insurance, Legal, WCB	10,566	9,286
e7abc – Projects (MEMP/Other)	250	0
e7d – Events (Remembrance/Halloween/Christmas/Other)	1,550	69
e8 – Elections or By-Elections	5,000	100
e9 – FPEIM, FCM, Prof Fees, Conferences, Workshops	7,649	5,538
e10 – Miscellaneous	500	0
e11 – Fire Protection Grant	165,000	55,000
e12 – GPEI Rink Grant	8,500	0
e13 – Community Grants	66,400	64,800
i4 – CCBF (out) (for Firehall Expansion Prj)	82,000	133,137
e14 – Contingency	1,000	1,726
e16 – Warming Ctr Operations (Belfast Rec Ctr/WIADC)	3,000	0
Total	539,069	321,125

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Change in Fund Balance (Net)

\$0.00 -\$26,154

All 2026/27 Community Grants are on track to pay out early. All revenues and expenditures are on track to-date. The deficit currently shown will start to disappear shortly, as the non-recurring Community Grants are now all paid out. As in past years, RMB is trying to finish the fiscal year with a better-than budget surplus.

11. **Belfast Rural Fire Department – Firehall Funding Update** (CAO – Bob Brooks) ... per Council's Resolution (Resolution # RES2026-002), made during the Special Council Meeting of August 5th the Reserve Funds Bylaw, the Resolution, the Financial Ask/Breakdown, the Minutes of the Council Meeting, and RMB's latest Audited Financial Statements, were all sent to Finance PEI.

Finance PEI required those documents from RMB so they could start the financing process with the Belfast Rural Fire Department for the Firehall Expansion Project (*that process is underway*).

Still no word regarding the financing application with Canada; however, our MP Kent MacDonald, his office, us and the Fire Department continue to follow the process closely.

The Contractor, Riley and Sons Construction Ltd., recently confirmed that the Project is on track for completion in this fiscal year.

12. **Mayor's Meeting at Pilot House ...** (Mayor Gillis) On July 20, 2026, Mayor Gillis met with a member of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities along with a member from Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities at the Pilot House. Also In attendance were Mayor Phillip Brown, Jeff Spencer (Kensington), Deputy Mayor of Rustico David LeClair, Councillor Vandonkersgood of Three Rivers and MLA Kent Dollar, this was an excellent opportunity to network for RMB.
13. **Calgary Foundation Grant (In/Out for Belfast Rec Centre** (Admin – Ashley Feschuk) As reported at the last meeting a donor wants to submit a grant to the Belfast Rec Centre and needs a host to help deliver the funds. I spoke to the donor stewardship advisor and she hopes that their office can have the paperwork to us so that Belfast Rec Center could receive the funding support in September. I will have another update at RMB's next meeting.
14. **Small Play Area at Wood Islands Market area, Update -** (Admin – Ashley Feschuk) RMB staff spoke with Todd St. Clair, Executive Director of the Wood Islands and Area Development Corporation (WIADC), who suggested that the RMB explore potential funding opportunities in 2027 to collaborate with WIADC on the development of a playground space at the Wood Islands Market. The WIADC Board is very supportive of Deputy Mayor Docherty's proposal and would welcome the addition of a playground as a way to further enhance the facility and provide an additional amenity for families and visitors to the area.

WIADC Board Director John Rousseau stopped by the RMB office personally to express the Board's support and to thank Deputy Mayor Docherty and RMB for their forward-thinking approach to the project. As a follow-up, Todd St. Clair contacted the insurance provider for the Wood Islands Market regarding the potential playground. The insurer advised that the additional insurance costs are expected to be minimal and that the playground would fall under the existing policy, as the land is owned by WIADC. It was suggested that a preliminary concept or draft plan outlining the type of playground equipment being considered could be provided to the insurance company. This would allow the insurer to provide a more accurate assessment of any potential increase to the current policy costs. A further update will be provided to Council in September once additional information regarding the proposed playground, insurance considerations, and potential funding opportunities is available.

15. **Getting a Nurse Practitioner in the RMB Municipality - (*Deputy Mayor Docherty and Admin, Ashley Feschuk*)** On August 17th RMB met to discuss the issue of getting some type of Health Practitioner to our municipality. In attendance was the Hon. Cory Deagle Minister of Health and Wellness, Lisa Thibeau Deputy Minister of Health and Wellness, MLA for Belfast- Murray River Darlene Compton, HPEI CEO, Laurae Kloschinsky along with their admin support. A special thankyou goes out to the Belfast rural volunteer Fire Department for providing our office with statistics prior to the meeting as well all the Belfast residents who showed their continued support of this RMB initiative by commenting on the recent Facebook post. This was a very positive meeting in the sense that RMB was able to re-open communication with Health PEI and begin reestablishing some context around this initiative. **This is not a new project. It was originally initiated and documented by our municipal office in 2021 and has gained some momentum as a sort of legacy project of the municipality.**

The work undertaken over the years has been driven by the recognition that access to healthcare is an ongoing challenge for residents in our rural communities and that the municipality has a role to play in advocating for solutions. RMB appreciated the opportunity to remind Health PEI of the countless hours and work spearheaded by Councillor Mary Mecher-Carlson, Mayor Gillis, CAO Brooks and administration. Originally talks began with Andrew MacDougall Executive Director for Health PEI back in 2021 and showed promise; however, at that time the space RMB was renting was not conducive to the requirements of Health PEI so talks were put on hold. The meeting was a step in the right direction, but not an outcome. RMB has reopened the door, Belfast is once again on their radar and now we need to see whether there is meaningful follow-through. The RMB office space here has been offered, RMB administration offered to volunteer to provide administrative support, an individual willing to come out once a week to help make this happen. If any of the parties provide any further updates with permission to share, I will do so at upcoming meetings. In the efforts of full transparency, RMB office Administration will be sharing the notes brought to the meeting on the RMB website. One of the main points administrative staff raised was that the Belfast population is aging, and not everyone has the ability or access to navigate online resources. As a rural community, reliable internet access can also be a challenge in some areas. This has been made even more clear to the RMB staff through conversations with residents. For example, a 79-year-old resident regularly calls our office and asks if I can help her book an appointment because she has been waiting for a family doctor since 2019. That is a powerful reminder that access to healthcare cannot simply depend on a person's ability to navigate an online system.

16. **A Harassment Policy for RMB – Progress to-date (*Admin – Ashley Feschuk*)** – I brought the issue of a Harassment Policy forward last month as RMB is legally required to have one in place. An excellent example from Eastern Kings was sent to Council to review and provide comment. Their policy was adopted and vetted by their legal Council. RMB is still waiting for some Council members to provide comment. RMB plans to have an adjusted Harassment Policy on the Agenda for the September Council Meeting for Council consideration.

17. **A NEW Code of Conduct Bylaw for RMB, as required by the *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* (Admin – Ashley Feschuk)** RMB's current Code of Conduct Bylaw # 2019-02 (may) currently be out of date. Municipal Affairs have provided an updated model that RMB can compare. This updated Code of Conduct Bylaw should be available for the September Council Meeting for any changes that might be required.
18. **A Draft Letter for FPEIM for Council Comment; (Councillor Bryson) (attached)** Fire Departments across Prince Edward Island, including our own Rural Volunteer Fire Department are seeing an increased number of medical calls and not receiving an increase in Provincial funding. A draft letter has been given to each Council member to review with their package and this letter is intended to support the Federation of Prince Edward Island Municipalities in their ongoing negotiations regarding funds to compensate for the increase in work due to ambulance availability and response times. This letter will be formatted and posted to the RMB website, and sent to Premier Rob Lantz, Minister of Justice and Public Safety and Attorney General Bloyce Thompson, MLA Kent Dollar and MLA Darlene Compton.
19. **Belfast Days – Make a Wish Foundation (Deputy Mayor Docherty)** Belfast Days was able to raise \$2000.00 for Make-A-Wish-Foundation, the most funds ever raised in the History of this event. Congratulations to Deputy Mayor Docherty, vendors at this event and all the volunteers.
20. **Meeting with MP Kent MacDonald and Minister Valdez on August 8th (Wood Islands Lighthouse) (Admin – Ashley Feschuk) (posted agenda items 20 and 22 were combined)** Administration had the opportunity to represent the RMB at the **Wood Islands Lighthouse and Heritage Museum** on two recent occasions. On **August 8th**, Councillor Bryson, Mayor Gillis and Administration attended the lighthouse to support MP Kent MacDonald during his visit and tour with Minister Valdez, highlighting the importance of the museum and the role it plays in preserving and promoting our local history and heritage. There were also discussions around the importance of the ferry which MP MacDonald highlighted during the newly renovated room dedicated to the Northumberland Ferry Service within the Wood Islands Lighthouse. Administration also attended the **150th Birthday Celebration on August 15th**, joining the community in celebrating this important milestone and recognizing the volunteers and supporters who continue to preserve this significant piece of Wood Islands' history. Both events provided a wonderful opportunity to support our local heritage, connect with community members, and represent the RMB at important community occasions.
21. **Continued Canada Post Operation in Belle River, PE (CAO – Bob Brooks)** – On July 20th, Canada Post sent a confirmation email of discussion with our Mayor Garth Gillis confirming that **"A Post Office in Your Community – Option 1"** was the preferred option for this municipality, and that, if they were unsuccessful in finding an appropriate contractor in the current location, Canada Post would move the postal operation to Montague (either temporarily or permanently). Trisha Carter (and current RMB Councillor), the previous Post Master with the Post Office location at their location of Gala Designs, has arranged for a replacement contractor in the current location, and is asking for Council's support to keep the Post Office operation in the current Belle River Post Office location.

Moved by Councillor Bryson and seconded by Councillor Gamble to send a letter under the Mayor's signature, supporting Option 1 of keeping a Post Office in our Community and keeping the Post Office operation in the current location in Wood Islands.

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

22. **New Business Item** (*per Agenda Item 3 above*):

a) **Motion for an Excused Absence:**

On Friday, August 14th, the CAO of RMB was contacted by Councillor Charley McGivern and made aware of an urgent family matter that would make it impossible for her to attend the August 19th Council Meeting. The CAO suggested and Councillor McGivern agreed, to request an excused absence.

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Docherty** and **seconded** by **Councillor Bryson** that RMB accept Councillor McGivern's request for an excused absence for the August 19, 2026 Regular Council Meeting.

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

23. **Next Meeting:**

- a) **Regular Council Meeting** – Wednesday, September 16, 2026: 7:pm – RMB Office, Wood Islands
- b) **Municipal General Election** – ***Monday, November 2, 2026***

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

Moved by **Councillor Gamble** to adjourn the meeting at: 7:54 PM

Ashley/Bob

Minutes Approved On: **September 16, 2026**

Signature and Seal on file

Mayor Garth Gillis

Signature and Seal on file

CAO Bob Brooks

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