

Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, February 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Village

In Attendance:

Council:	Mayor Garth Gillis (Chair)	Deputy Mayor Virginia Cooke
	Councillor Lynn Docherty	Councillor Billy Gamble
	Councillor Andy Henry	Councillor Mary Mecher-Carlson
	Councillor Joanne Vessey	
Administration:	CAO Bob Brooks	Ashley Feschuk Jill Harris
Presenters:	Mark Booth, Debbie Beck, Ian Dohoo	
Public:	(2) =	(15 total in Attendance)

Item ***Order of Business***

1. **Call to Order** – Council was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Gillis
2. **Covid-19 Restrictions** – per Provincial Covid-19 restrictions: a maximum meeting room limitation of 21 people allowable with 6-foot distancing (7 Council, 3 Admin, 11 Public). Double-vaccination and the wearing of masks at all times is required for attendance.
3. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – No Council members were in a conflict of interest with any items on today's Agenda items.
4. **Approval of Agenda** – There was one additional suggested Agenda item (*placed under Item 15*)

Moved by **Councillor Henry** and seconded by **Councillor Docherty** to adopt the agenda as presented.

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

5. **Adoption of November 17, 2021 Council Meeting Minutes** (*previously distributed and attached – all changes received to-date by Council have been incorporated*).

Moved by **Deputy Mayor Cooke** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to adopt the Minutes of the November 17, 2021 Council Meeting as presented.

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

6. **Business arising from the November 17, 2021 Council Meeting** (*there is no business arising from the November 17th meeting, not already on today's agenda*).

7. **Municipality-Wide Mosquito Abatement Program Proposal**

On January 18, 2022, RMB received a Municipal-Wide Mosquito Abatement Proposal for the 2022/2023 fiscal year and ongoing, by the ***Pinette/Flat River and Point Prim Mosquito Control Groups***.

RMB Council Members were asked to look at the proposal and prepare any questions or concerns they might have (*attached*); and the proponent would answer those questions during the next Council meeting; before consideration of the 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan.

Responses from Proponents:

1.a How are the two areas comparable? (RMB and Municipality of Eastern Kings)

Although Eastern Kings is a smaller area and smaller population, it already treats about 200 Breeding Sites, due to its numerous years of its Mosquito Program.

1.b Will \$60,000 per year be enough?

We estimate it will be enough to start, but Program should run at least 4-5 years; will gather data during that run and assess.

2.a Does this Program cover the whole area of the RMB Municipality?

Yes; the Program intends to target the “hot spots” across the Municipal Area, and will rely heavily on community engagement/involvement, to help identify those areas. Identified areas should also increase as the Program continues to be more established.

3.a In light of the tax increase already required for this fiscal year; is this still the best time to propose such a program?

Yes; the Mosquito Programs already in place are not sustainable; however, they have been shown to be effective. That said, this Program will represent a 3.5% increase on your entire tax bill. By doing this Program as a Municipal-wide Program; far more residents will gain benefit.

3.b Are there other funders available that could reduce the costs to the Municipal rate-payers?

Yes; while this Program will rely on paid staff, the use of community engagement will help to keep the costs down. Additionally, the Belfast Community Development Corporation intends to Manage the Program and Staff at no additional cost.

4.a What is the effect of this Program on Pollinators?

There is no risk to Pollinators with this Program, because it targets larvae in the ponds, rather than the flying insects. Additionally, by proceeding with this Program, you decrease the need of others using the spray method, which does hurt the Pollinators.

Following the discussion and question and answer session; the two additional audience members were asked if they wanted to express their opinions:

- One member was **for** the Program citing business and tourism concerns; and
- One member was **against** the Program citing increased taxation concerns, especially on seniors.
- Council Members were also provided with four additional opinions citing various reasons; all stating that they were **for** the Program.

Council Members were then asked if they wished to proceed with this Municipal-Wide Mosquito Abatement Program Proposal for this fiscal year (2022/2023)? All of Council, including the Mayor were asked to participate.

Votes to proceed: 4 Votes against: 2 Abstention: 1

Result: **to proceed with the vote**

Moved by Councillor Carlson and seconded by Councillor Docherty to proceed with this Municipal-Wide Mosquito Abatement Program for this fiscal year (2022/2023), and include the allocation of \$60,000 into the 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan for the Program and ongoing.

Votes to proceed: 4 Votes against: 2 Abstention: 1

Result: **Motion Carried**

8. CAO Report

a. Financial/Variance Report:

i. Provincial Credit Union Account Balances at January 31, 2022 Statement:

a. Share 001	\$5.30
b. Chequing 010	\$63,920.74
c. Savings 020 (Reserve)	\$36.42
d. Savings Reserve GIC/Int. (<i>project to be determined</i>)	\$45,117.00
e. Gas Tax Acct 00011	\$47,235.63
f. Gas Tax GIC/Int. (<i>for previously-approved GT projects</i>)	\$50,383.79

(\$47,903 of previously approved GT allocations are being withheld by the Province until the remaining allocation of Gas Tax funding of \$55,956 for an approved project is determined) It was agreed that the CAO would set up a Gas Tax Committee meeting around the end of March, to discuss recommendations for moving forward.

Expenditures are on track for this fiscal year to-date; however, Revenues from Assessments are down slightly (*-\$3,984*) less than expected.

- b. **2021 Lights at Wood Islands Village** (*RMB/WIADC Christmas Tree-lighting event*): By all accounts, this first-ever event was very successful and had numerous participants, activities, businesses and volunteers involved. RMB and WIADC staff, as well as some volunteers have already started to disassemble the decorations. A call for assistance for the remaining take-down will happen once the weather conditions are more favourable - congratulations everyone.
- c. **RMB's Website:** Updating and improvements have already started and will continue ongoing.
- d. **Logo Contest Pizza Party:** The Pizza-party happened with great result on Feb. 7th. Ashley was able to get some great pictures, which will end up on our Website and Facebook sites. Again; congratulations to Ben Docherty and all those who participated.
- e. **Logo Development:** The CAO met with TechnoMedia in early February with the results from the Logo Contest call, as well as follow-up comments from the contest. TechnoMedia expects to have examples for Council to look at as early as March.
- f. **RMB Staff Training:** I am pleased to note that we have found some relevant on-line training courses for our administrative person Ashley; specifically for Excel and Bookkeeping. I'm also happy to say that these courses are provided through the Province @EFORCEPEI.ca and is provided free of charge. Ashley has already started her first course.

- g. **RMB's Facebook Site:** Of late, Ashley has focused on introducing the Facebook audience in Belfast to the Community Grants Program, the MEMP plan, the Pizza-party, and other items as they arise. The participation in this social-media site continues to grow, and to broaden RMB's reach. Ashley reported that it's not uncommon to get 500-1,000 views on various posts.
 - h. **RMB's MEMP Update** (*the January update was attached*) – Jill noted that there had been a considerable amount of work done on the MEMP Plan, but that it was now time to flesh out even more resource contacts, work on cooperation agreements, and sign up for the various training components of the MEMP Program. Jill will also send a link out to everyone, to enable them to start some of the on-line course components. A Table-top exercise could be planned for the summer of this year.
9. **2022/2023 RMB Community Grants Program** – The 2022/2023 RMB Community Grants Application/Announcements are now on the RMB Website and Facebook Page. All those organizations involved in last year's program were also emailed this year's application directly. The Firehall has notified RMB that it will be requesting \$95,000 this fiscal year for Council consideration for the Fire Services Category; and per Council's wishes, for the public category, there will be a cap of \$64,000 in Community Grants available. Deadline for applications this year is Sunday, March 6, 2022; the Grants Committee is scheduled to meet on March 9th for its deliberations/recommendation to Council; and Council will make its final decision at the Council Meeting on March 16th.
10. **Official Plan Progress** – In January, FOTENN provided a lengthy background report to Council members and asked if there were any comments or concerns, that Council wanted to raise at this time, as they moved forward in the process. Upon review, the CAO found the report to be quite detailed and comprehensive for a first draft, and was looking forward to when FOTENN would be dialoging directly with Council and the Public. That process will take place in the Spring (after the Budget Process is complete). Council agreed that the background documentation was a lot more detailed than expected, and also look forward to the public consultations.

Comment or Concerns to-date? Council only had a couple items that FOTENN should look at while moving forward with the plan: There was a concern with some of the ***Deforestation*** that was happening, and that related to the second concern about the disappearing practice of ***Hedge Rows*** between the farm fields. Council can speak more on those during the Council consultations.

11. **Health Matter** – Some progress to report in regards to consulting with Health PEI regarding a possible Health Clinic for our area, or some other possible solutions that would improve access to medical care in our municipality: A meeting has been set for Wednesday, March 2nd at 2:00 PM with the Deputy Minister MacDougall, Mayor Gillis, Councillor Carlson and myself – CAO Bob Brooks. An update will be provided.
12. **Notice of 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan** – Notice was given in January 2022, that RMB would be holding public meetings on February 16, 2022 and March 16, 2022 to discuss and ratify the 2022/2023 RMB Budget, Financial Plan and Capital. Public input was welcomed and the public was also encouraged to submit any comments by email (*none received to-date*).

13. **Public Input/Presentations regarding the 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan** (*five minutes is allotted for each speaker*) – No requests for presentations were received.
14. **2022/2023 Rural Municipality of Belfast Budget/Financial Plan** (*attached*) - **Presented for Discussion and 1st Reading** – The DRAFT Budget document was sent to Council Members on February 9th and provided to the public on February 11th. The CAO presented the DRAFT in a line-by-line manner and provided clarifications throughout the process. The CAO talked about the new Assessment figures provided by the Province that would add approximately \$19,900 to revenue projections. With that increase in assessment revenues, the CAO recommended a \$.02/100 increase instead of \$.03/100. The CAO also noted that the Draft Budget would now have to be amended to also include the Mosquito Program inclusion and wanted to include the Swearing-in of the New Council under the Pivotal Dates section. Following the presentation and discussion, Council moved to First Reading. Second Reading is scheduled for March 16, 2022.

Moved by Councillor Henry and seconded by Deputy Mayor Cooke to adopt the 2022/2023 Rural Municipality of Belfast Budget/Financial Plan as presented for First Reading.

...with Amendment:

Moved by Councillor Vessey and seconded by Councillor Docherty to amend the 2022/2023 Rural Municipality of Belfast Budget/Financial Plan to include:

- The updated Assessment figures,
- The reduction of the Municipality increase from \$.03/100 to \$.02/100
- The inclusion of the Mosquito Program expense of \$60,000 and associated tax increase of \$04/100,
- The resulting required total tax increase calculations of \$.06/100, and
- The inclusion in the Pivotal Dates with the Swearing in of the New Council.

Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0 Result: **Motion Carried Unanimously, as Amended.**

15. **New Business for the Agenda** (*as per Item 4 above*)
- **Wood Island Revitalization Plan** – Jill Harris, with her Wood Island Area Development Corporation (WIADC) hat on; introduced Council to WIADC's latest project. The Plan is intended to enhance local quality of life, bring enhanced destination stature to the Wood Islands area, including: the Lighthouse, Provincial Park, Sustainable Shorelines, Harbour/Port, a connection to the Confederation Trail, and a replacement for the previous Fishing Village. Council members were also invited to a Planning Meeting, that will take place on February 24, 2022 at 7:00 PM. Council agreed.

16. **Next Meetings:**
- a. **Community Grants Meeting** – the next meeting of the Community Grants Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, March 9, 2022 at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Hall at Wood Islands Village;
 - b. **Regular Council Meeting** – the next regular meeting of Council is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Hall at Wood Islands Village; and
 - c. **Gas Tax Committee** – a regular Gas Tax Committee meeting will be called around the end of March (to be determined), to take place in the Upstairs Hall at Wood Islands Village.
17. **Adjournment** – As there was no further business...

Moved by **Councillor Henry** to adjourn the meeting at: **10:04 PM**

...Ashley/Bob

Approved on: **March 16, 2022**

Signature and Seal on file

Mayor – Garth Gillis

Signature and Seal on file

CAO – Bob Brooks