

# *Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)*

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

## **COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 16, 2022 at 7:00 PM

*Upstairs Hall, Wood Islands Village*

### ***In Attendance:***

Council: Mayor Garth Gillis (Chair) Deputy Mayor Virginia Cooke (*by phone*)  
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: Eleven public were in attendance to speak to Budget line items.  
Total in attendance for the meeting: (20)

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### **Item      Order of Business**

*\* Prior to the start of the meeting, all participants were asked if they were OK with Live-Streaming this meeting. As Council has no current Policy, Practice or Prior Notice for public Live-Streaming; if ANYONE was uncomfortable with the idea, it would not go ahead at this time – there were some that were uncomfortable, hence the Live-Streaming did not take place.*

1. **Call to Order** – Council was called to order by Mayor Gillis at 7:00 PM
2. **Covid-19 Restrictions** – per Provincial Covid-19 restrictions: a maximum meeting room limitation of 21 people allowable with 6-foot distancing and masking required.
3. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – Three members of Council declared a conflict of interest for this meeting - All under Community Grants: **Councillor Vessey** for Firehall and Pinette Raceway; **Councillor Henry** for BAWG; and **Councillor Docherty** for Belfast Days.
4. **Approval of Agenda** – **Revised due to Privacy Issues** (*the original Agenda had names and email addresses, and in some cases or personal contact information. RMB discovered that that information was being used for phishing, harassment and bullying; hence, the original Agenda was revised to be scrubbed of that information*). No other Agenda items were suggested.

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

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

5. **Adoption of February 16, 2022 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 February 16, 2022 Council Meeting as presented.

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

6. **Business arising from the February 16, 2022 Council Meeting**
  - a. **Municipality-Wide Mosquito Abatement Program Proposal** - \$60,000 for Program expenditures and associated tax increases to cover those expenditures added to the 2022/2023 Budget Document for consideration (*on today's agenda*);
  - b. **Gas Tax Committee Meeting** - Was convened on March 2<sup>nd</sup> to deal with the \$55,956 remaining allocation amount. *Recommendation on today's agenda*;
  - c. **2022/2023 RMB Community Grants Program** - Applications closed on March 6<sup>th</sup>; the Committee met on March 9<sup>th</sup>. *Recommendations on today's agenda*; and
  - d. **Health Matter Meeting (*Presented by Councillor Carlson*)** - Was held on March 11<sup>th</sup> with the Deputy Minister (DM) of Health and the Director of Primary Care for PEI. RMB meeting participants including: Mayor Gillis, Councillor Carlson and CAO Bob Brooks elaborated on the Health Matter Issue for the Municipality, the make-up of the Municipality, services in the area, lack of access, and suggestions about improving access for the RMB area. The DM and Director, went over the Health PEI Mandate, what the Department is currently doing, and specifically talked about the Department's key priority of a new Primary Care Strategy that they are working on. Participants felt that this meeting was timely, a good start and very helpful, and both the DM and Director noted that they will now go back with this information, do some additional work, then report back about moving forward.

7. **Adoption of March 2, 2022 Gas Tax Committee Meeting Minutes (*for approval by Committee Members only. No other meetings booked at this time*).**

Moved by Councillor Vessey and seconded by Councillor Henry to adopt the Minutes of the March 2, 2022 Gas Tax Committee Meeting as presented.  
 Votes for: 4    Votes against: 0    Result: Carried Unanimously

8. **Business arising from the March 2, 2022 Gas Tax Committee Meeting (*Presented by Committee Chair – Councillor Henry*)**

- a. **Gas Tax Program Recommendation** – That Council proceed with the Gas Tax Committee Recommendation to finalize a Wood Island and Area Development Corporation proposal for the remaining 2019/2024 Gas Tax Funds for the Municipality in the amount of \$55,956.
  - i. On March 2<sup>nd</sup>, the Gas Tax Committee met to discuss how best to proceed with the remaining Gas Tax Fund allocations for the 2019/2024 Program. These funds came about as a result of the Municipal - Community Plan Project, coming in under-budget by half. After discussing the various options open to RMB, Committee ultimately recommended proceeding with a component of the Wood Islands Revitalization Plan, currently underway in our Municipality for the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 fiscal years, that would see extensive repairs to the Wood Island Lighthouse.

Moved by Deputy Mayor Cooke and seconded by Councillor Gamble to adopt the Recommendation of the Gas Tax Committee for the use of the remaining 2019/2024 Gas Tax Program Funds as presented.  
 Votes for: 6    Votes against: 0    Result: Carried Unanimously

9. **Adoption of March 9, 2022 Community Grants Committee Meeting Minutes** (*for approval of Committee Members only. No other meetings booked at this time*).

Moved by **Councillor Carlson** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to adopt the Minutes of the March 9, 2022 Community Grants Committee Meeting as presented.  
Votes for: 4 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

10. **Business arising from the March 9, 2022 Community Grants Committee Meeting** (***Presented by Committee Chair – Councillor Gamble***)

- a. **Community Grants Program Recommendation** - Proceed with Committee Recommendation to allocate a \$95,000 for the Fire Protection Grant; \$8,500 for a GPEI Rink Grant, and \$64,000 for Community Grants (*as listed*).

- i. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the Community Grants Committee met to review the 2022/2023 Community Grant Applications. Upon review of each of the applications submitted, and in accordance with **Bylaw 2018-02 - Grants Bylaw** and **Community Grants Program Policy**, and in-keeping with Budget parameters; the Committee Recommends the following allocations:

1. Belfast Rural Fire Dept (Firehall Grant)	\$95,000
2. Belfast Rec Centre (GPEI Rink Grant)	8,500
3. Bar Vela (Com. Grant)	1,200
4. Belfast Rec Centre - Operations (Com. Grant)	26,500
5. Belfast Area Watershed Group (BAWG) (Com. Grant)	4,100
6. Belfast Days (Com. Grant)	3,000
7. Belfast Disc Golf (Com. Grant)	1,200
8. Belfast Historical Society (Com. Grant)	3,700
9. Belfast Minor Hockey (Com. Grant)	3,000
+ One-Time Com. Grant for Half Boards	2,500
10. Pinette Raceway (Com. Grant)	2,000
11. Point Prim Lighthouse (Com. Grant)	3,000
12. WIADC - Lighthouse Operations (Com. Grant)	3,000
13. WIADC - Village Operations (Com. Grant)	9,600
14. Sandstone Equestrian Inc. (Com. Grant)	<u>1,200</u>

**Total: \$167,500\***

*\* See attached Tally Sheet for Detail*

Councillor Vessey stepped out for this item (*in Conflict*) - Following some discussion and prior confirmation with the Firehall, the following amendment was presented:

Moved by **Councillor Gamble** and seconded by **Councillor Docherty** to amend the Firehall allocation to **\$100,000**, which revises the total Grants allocations to **\$172,500**.  
Votes for: 5 Votes against: 0 Result: **Carried Unanimously**

and

- b. **Additional Community Grants Committee Recommendation** – that Council start the process to reconsider Bylaw 2018-02 – Grants Bylaw, and our Grants Policy, to be in place, prior to the next Community Grants Program in 2023/2024.
- i. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, Committee also discussed the evolution of the Community Grants Program and noted, that while not specifically stated, the intent of the Program was to assist Not-for-Profit Organizations to assist in the Betterment of the Municipality. Committee felt it was time to review the Program Parameters, before the Program becomes overwhelmed. If the process started in late summer, the new Program Parameters (if any) would be in place for the 2023/2024 funding cycle.

Moved by Councillor Vessey and seconded by Councillor Docherty to adopt the Recommendations (2) of the Community Grants Committee, and inclusion of the allocations of the Grants for the 2022/2023 Community Grants Program as amended, into the 2022/2023 RMB Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan.  
Votes for: 6 Votes against: 0 Result: Carried Unanimously

11. **CAO Report**

a. **Financial/Variance Report:**

- i. Provincial Credit Union Account Balances at February 28, 2022 Statement:
  - a. Share 001 \$5.30
  - b. Chequing 010 \$81,023.70
  - c. Savings 020 (Reserve) \$36.42
  - d. Savings Reserve GIC/Int. (*project to be determined*) \$45,139.44
  - e. Gas Tax Acct 00011 \$47,232.63
  - f. Gas Tax GIC/Int. (*for previously-approved GT projects*) \$50,399.22  
*(\$47,903 of previously approved GT allocations are being withheld by the Province until the remaining \$55,956 in Gas Tax allocations are determined)*Expenditures are basically on track for this fiscal year to-date.
- ii. **Logo Development:** The CAO met with TechnoMedia in February with the Logo Contest results, and follow-up comments from Council. TechnoMedia produced a Logo concept in early March. Council Members liked the Logo that was presented, so TechnoMedia is proceeding to finalize. *See provided Logo.*

12. **Notice of 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan** - Notice was given in January, February and March, 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 Plan. Public input was welcomed, although, due to Covid restrictions, personal attendance is limited. That said, the public was also encouraged to submit any comments by email (*comments received to-date by email, were already forwarded to Council for their information*). Notices were placed on RMB's Website, the Belfast Newsletter, RMB's Facebook Page, the Belfast Community PEI Facebook Page, the Municipal Bulletin Board, and the WIADC Bulletin Board. As a heads-up; this budget/financial plan/capital plan will represent a culmination of this Council's 4-year transition plan/term.

13. **Public Input/Presentations regarding the 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan** (*five minutes were allotted for each speaker/presentation, followed by Council questions*). All Eleven public participants either spoke, made a presentation and/or participated in the public discussion, either for or against the proposed Mosquito Abatement Program, and whether it should be included within the RMB 2022/2023 Budget.  
**Participants included:** Kevin Ryan, Sherry Pelkey, Brian Stewart, Brian Gillis, Merrill Gillis, Jean MacRae, Diana Halliday, Maggie Morrison, Karen Overall, Mark Booth, and Lloyd MacDonald.

14. **Public Input received by email due to Covid-19 Room Limitations regarding items contained within the 2022/2023 RMB Budget and Financial Plan:**  
**Tally at March 15<sup>th</sup>\*** (*all related to Mosquito/Tax Issue*) - **NO:** 32 *did not* support Mosquito Program and associated Tax Increase; **YES:** 22 *did* support Mosquito Program and associated Tax Increase. **\* Emails no longer listed due to Privacy Issues**

15. **Facebook Petition** – Administration found a Petition on Facebook regarding the Mosquito Abatement Program stating: “***Petition against the proposed mosquito program for the Belfast area***”. At time of printing the agenda (March 15<sup>th</sup>), 43 people electronically signed the petition. The Petition was not actually presented to Council. Council accepted the Petition for Information Only; then discussed the entire Mosquito Abatement Issue later under item 16 in today’s Agenda.
16. **2022/2023 Rural Municipality of Belfast Budget/Financial Plan/Capital Plan (as Amended) - Presented for Discussion, Amendments and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Approval** – The DRAFT Budget document received 1<sup>st</sup> Reading, with proposed Amendments during the February 16<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting. The CAO presented the Amended Budget document and provided clarifications.

**CAO presentation and clarifications:**

- Of the 2022/2023 Budget with the Amendments that are already included;
- PEI Taxation requirements to pass the Budget in March;
- Tax examples (3) of what the cost of the Mosquito Program ‘***Only***’ can look like on a tax bill; and
- Implications of today’s Amendments on the Budget.

Council then discussed the Budget at length; the presented three additional Amendments, prior to moving to Second Reading/Approval as Amended.

**Amendment - 1: Community Grants Program for 2022/2023**

Per the acceptance of the Community Grants Recommendations as Amended, the Budget will require an amendment to incorporate those Grants.

**Moved by Councillor Carlson and seconded by Councillor Henry to accept the Community Grants Program allocations as discussed and amended, into the 2022/2023 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan.**

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

**Amendment - 2: Delay of Proposed Mosquito Abatement Program**

Given the input received from the public, expressing concerns in regards to the inclusion of the mosquito abatement program into the budget and possible adoption of that program; I would like to make a motion to amend the budget to not include the mosquito program in the budget until more consultation and public input can occur.

**Moved by Councillor Gamble and seconded by Councillor Vessey to delay the Proposed Mosquito Abatement Program until more consultation and public input can occur; and not include this Program into the 2022/2023 RMB Budget.**

Council members discussed the Mosquito Abatement Program; the ramifications of proceeding or not proceeding with the Program; the impact on the budget; and the desire for a more fulsome public consultation on the Program itself.

Votes for: 4 Votes against: 2 Result: **Carried**

**Amendment - 3: To remove the Equalization Grant from the Budget**

On the morning of March 16<sup>th</sup>, the CAO received a phone call from the Province about the fact that the Municipality no longer qualified for the Provincial Equalization Grant Program. A more detailed letter of explanation will be forthcoming. The Provincial Equalization Grant is currently showing as a \$600 revenue line item for 2022/2023. That amount should now be shown as \$0.00.

**Moved by Councillor Gamble and seconded by Councillor Vessey to reduce the Provincial Equalization Grant Line Item to \$0.00 in the 2022/2023 Budget.**

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

Having had 1<sup>st</sup> Reading of the Budget; and having had acceptance of various Amendments; the Budget is now ready for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading as Amended for approval.

**Moved by Councillor Henry and seconded by Councillor Docherty to approve **Second Reading** of the Rural Municipality of Belfast 2022/2023 Budget, Financial Plan and Capital Plan, as amended.**

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

**17. Next Meeting:**

- a. **Regular Council Meeting** – the next regular meeting of Council is scheduled for Wednesday, April 20, 2022 at 7:00 PM in the Upstairs Hall at Wood Islands Village.

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

**Moved by Councillor Henry to adjourn the meeting at: 10:22 PM.**

.../Bob

**Council Approval: March 22, 2022**

**Signature and Seal on file**

Mayor Garth Gillis

**Signature and Seal on file**

CAO Bob Brooks