

# *Rural Municipality of Belfast*

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

## **COUNCIL MEETING - MINUTES**

Wednesday, March 18, 2020 at 7:00 PM – Belfast Firehall

Council: Mayor Garth Gillis (Chair)  
Councillor Lynn Docherty  
Councillor Andy Henry  
Councillor Joanne Vessey  
Administration - CAO Bob Brooks

Regrets: Deputy Mayor Virginia Cooke  
Councillor Billy Gamble  
Councillor Audrey Shillabeer

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### **Item      Order of Business**

1. **Call to Order** – Council was called to order at 7:00 PM by Mayor Garth Gillis. With 4 of 7 Council members in attendance, there was a quorum to be able to proceed with the meeting. Council also welcomed one member of the public, also in attendance.
2. **Declarations of Conflict of Interest** – Three members of Council in attendance at today's meeting are in conflict with Agenda Items #10 and 12; as follows:
  - Councillor Docherty – Belfast Days Community Grant,
  - Councillor Henry – Belfast Area Watershed Group Community Grant and Pinette/Flat River Mosquito Program, and
  - Councillor Vessey – Belfast Rural Fire Department Fire Protection Grant.Councillors not in attendance, also in Conflict with Items # 10 and 12 include:
  - Councillor Shillabeer – Belfast Historical Society.

*(Council Members involved in any Community Grants on today's Agenda will need to step out during any discussion about their individual Community Grant Application, but may remain and vote on the Community Grants Recommendations as a block).*
3. **Approval of Agenda** – There were two additional suggested Agenda Items for today's meeting by the CAO; added as Items 3.1 and 3.2 below.

**Moved** by Councillor Henry and **Seconded** by Councillor Docherty to approve the Agenda as amended.

Votes for:   3        Votes against:   0  

Result: Carried Unanimously

- 3.1 **Excused Absences** – Due to warnings by PEI's own Public Health Officials, concerns for one's parents and grandparents, recent travels, and/or health concerns; three Council members decided it would be best to skip today's Council Meeting. All three Council Members noted that they would be available to attend the meeting by phone if the office had the capacity, or if required to meet quorum. In keeping with the desire to accommodate as much as possible, it was suggested that an excused absence would be appropriate as related to COVID-19 concerns.

**Moved** by Councillor Vessey and **Seconded** by Councillor Docherty to provide an Excused Absence for Councillors Cooke, Gamble, and Shillabeer, for today's Council Meeting of March 18, 2020, due to various COVID-19 concerns.

Votes for: 3 Votes against: 0

Result: Carried Unanimously

3.2 **COVID-19 Update** – As per warnings by PEI's own Public Health Officials, and numerous Canada-wide warnings and suggestions; the Rural Municipality of Belfast CAO took the following steps for today's Council Meeting:

- Everyone noticed the smell of bleach when they entered the room, due to every meeting table, chair and piece of equipment being wiped with a Clorox Bleach Disinfectant;
- There was no Hand Sanitizer to be found; however, a Sanitized washing station with Soap and Hot Water was immediately available in the adjoining washroom and spray Peroxide was also available;
- The Room was set up for social distancing for all attendees and participants for approximately six-feet of separation;
- While the phone system that the Municipality currently has is not set up for Conference Calling, I did make arrangements for some Councillors to be available on a single line, if required for quorum;
- Moving forward, I will look into a new phone system, suitable for multiple or complete Conference-Called meetings, and/or larger meeting venues, for guaranteed social distancing, and will work with the Mayor to only call meetings as required. The Municipality has made announcements for 10 regular Council Meetings for 2020; however, may only hold 6 regular Council Meetings as per the *Municipal Government Act* (which also may be adjusted moving forward).

4. **Adoption of February 19, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes** (*previously distributed*) (*comments/changes received to-date by Council, incorporated into attached Minutes*)

**Moved** by Councillor Henry and **Seconded** by Councillor Vessey to adopt the Minutes of the February 19, 2020 Council Meeting as presented.

Votes for: 3 Votes against: 0

Result: Carried Unanimously

5. **Adoption of March 11, 2020 Community Grants Committee Meeting Minutes** (*previously distributed*) (*for approval at this meeting, as there will be no Grants Committee meeting expected until 2021 – approval by Committee Members only*)

**This Item was deferred as three of the Community Grants Committee Members were not in attendance.**

6. **Business arising from the February 19, 2020 Council Meeting Minutes –**

- a. **Community Grants Committee** – the Call for Public Submissions went out as a result of Council approving the Community Grants Documents – the result of that call is on today's Agenda under item # 10.

- b. **Future Municipal Office Space** – Spoke to John at Wood Islands – John said he would come back with two offers: (1) An offer if we were to start renting in October 2022; and (2) an offer if we were to start renting much sooner. The space is currently available now. It was also suggested that we might consider sharing the space with the local Constituency Office (whomever they are, and whichever party happens to require it) – typically they only require the space one or two days per month. It would be a way to save money on the monthly rent. Is Council open to that idea? *Council agreed that the CAO should continue to look into the matter, including the option of sharing the space with the local Constituency Office.*
- c. **Belfast Newsletter** – Spoke to Coordinator: asked about the idea of an annual contribution or the possibility of a monthly advertisement to promote attendance and viewing of Rural Municipality of Belfast Meetings and Website. Placing a monthly advertisement would support the organization and promote the Municipality at the same time. A monthly advertisement would cost \$18/month x 12 = \$216.00/year. Would Council like to do a \$200 Contribution, or a \$216 Monthly Advertisement? *Council agreed that they would like to proceed with the monthly advertisement option.*
- d. **New Bylaws to Municipal Affairs** – All 3 recently approved Bylaws (2020-01, 2020-02, and 2020-03) have now been provided to Municipal Affairs; which completes the immediately required Bylaws of the *Municipal Government Act*.

7. **CAO Report**

a. **Financial/Variance Report:**

- i. Provincial Credit Union Account Balances at March 04, 2020:
 

a. Share 00001	\$5.29
b. Chequing 00010	\$46,249.38
c. Gas Tax Acct 00011	\$72,166.09
- ii. Projected Revenues and Expenditures to March 31, 2020: *(Still on Budget within \$800).*
- iii. The Government of Prince Edward Island (GPEI) provided the Municipality with new Assessment #s as of February 20, 2020. The new Assessment #s resulted in an increase to the projected Tax Assessment Revenues for the Budget by approximately \$1,647 annually *(Now reflected in the DRAFT Budget for Consideration)*. Those new #s were provided to the Grants Committee, along with the savings of \$2,000 due to the withdrawal of the Pinette Raceway Application for their consideration when drafting its Recommendations to Council – on today’s Agenda under item # 10.
- iv. Council also asked for an update on the Gas Tax approvals – *the CAO noted that once his computer is back in operation, the only thing left is to create contracts for the 2019-2024 Gas Tax Recipients. Recipients will be required to submit receipts to the Municipality (within their spending parameters, and HST should be included on the receipt). The Municipality would then pay that receipt back to the Gas Tax Recipient within one-two weeks, for reimbursement. The CAO will contact the recipients when the contracts are ready.*

8. **Correspondence:** – Three Members of Council received a letter from James and Patricia Mayer from Sparta, New Jersey, USA; asking for help to get their clogged culverts dealt with, as was promised by the GPEI back in 2017. The CAO is looking into the matter with the GPEI, unless someone else knows something about this issue?  
*Councillor Andy Henry gave a brief background on the situation. Council agreed that Councillor Henry would look into the matter with Sherry Pelkey of the Belfast Area Watershed Group and report back to the CAO. The CAO will then follow-up.*
9. **New Business for the Agenda** – New business was placed as Items 3.1 and 3.2 above.
10. **Community Grants Committee Recommendation** – Following the February 19, 2020 Council Meeting, which approved the 2020/2021 Community Grants Process and Forms; Applications went out to all previous 2019/2020 Community Grant Recipients and Notices were placed in the Belfast Newsletter, our Bulletin Board, and on our Website. Deadline was March 7, 2020. The Community Grants Committee then met on March 11, 2020 to deliberate and develop recommendations for Council consideration.

Committee evaluated each Application; took into consideration the Municipality Grants Bylaw and Grants Policy; took into consideration the grants received last year and what was requested this year; discussed the additional monies that could be available to Council within this year’s Budget (\$1,647 in Assessments and \$2,000 from Pinette Raceway Withdrawal); discussed ideas for change to the current Grants Policy for future fiscal years; and took into consideration, the overall Council fiscal situation leading to 2022.

Based on all those considerations, the Community Grants Committee made the following two Recommendations for Council consideration:

**A. That Council approve the following recipients/amounts for the 2020/2021 Community Grants Program:**

1. Belfast Rural Fire Department (Fire Protection Grant)	\$90,000
2. Belfast Rec Centre (GPEI Rink Grant)	\$8,500
○ <b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$98,500</b>

**Community Grants:**

3. Belfast Rec Centre (Community Grant)	\$26,500
4. Belfast Area Watershed Group (Community Grant)	\$3,855
5. Belfast Days (Community Grant)	\$3,000
6. Belfast Historical Society (Community Grant)	\$5,000
7. Belfast Minor Hockey (Community Grant)	\$3,000
8. Belfast Minor Soccer (Community Grant)	\$500
9. Pinette/Flat River Mosquito Program (Community Grant)	\$750
10. Pinette Raceway – <i>Withdrawn for this year</i>	
11. Point Prim and Area Mosquito Program (Com. Grant)	\$1,000
12. Point Prim Lighthouse (Community Grant)	\$3,000
13. Wood Islands and Area Dev. Corp. (WIADC) (Com. Grant)	\$7,000
14. WIADC Lighthouse (Community Grant)	\$3,000
○ <b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$56,605</b>

○ **Total funds for 2020/2021 Community Grants** **\$155,105**

and

- B. That Council review the Community Grants Program Policy, prior to the 2021/2022 Community Grants Season; specifically, to consider whether it is appropriate to continue to include: Mosquito Abatement Programs, within the Community Grant Program Mandate.

*(Council Members in Conflict of Interest were not required to leave the meeting, as there were no discussions of individual applications).*

*Council Members started the discussions with Recommendation B; many comments about the appropriateness of the recommendation, especially as the Mosquito Abatement Applications only serve a very small area of the Municipality. Some environmental concerns were also expressed. It was noted that the item would be brought forward for a public meeting and discussion as part of the review process for any council policy, probably in the Fall of this year. Council also agreed with Recommendation A – The generosity of the Pinette Raceway Organization was also commended for willingly stepping out for this year, to have more funds available for the other Municipal organizations.*

**Public input regarding individual grant applications?** – *No public presentations for this item, just a clarification that the Pinette Raceway withdrew for this year, because they received Gas Tax funds already. The organization was thanked for its municipal spirit.*

**Moved** by Councillor Docherty and **Seconded** by Councillor Vessey to adopt the Community Grants Committee Recommendations as presented.

Votes for: 3 Votes against: 0

Result: Carried Unanimously

11. **Public Input/Presentations regarding the Rural Municipality of Belfast 2020/2021 Financial Plan/Budget** – No requests for presentations.
12. **Rural Municipality of Belfast 2020/2021 Financial Plan/Budget (attached) - Presented for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading** – The CAO presented the Draft Financial Plan/Budget for the 2020/2021 Fiscal Year. Council made suggestions for the initial draft and approved the document for 1<sup>st</sup> Reading as discussed. Since that time, the Municipality received new Assessment #s (as of February 20, 2020) from GPEI. The new Assessment #s resulted in an increase to the projected Tax Assessment Revenues for the Budget by \$1,647 **(Now reflected in the DRAFT Budget for Consideration)**. Additionally, the actual Community Grants Recipient amounts have now been included within the Draft Financial Plan/Budget document, and all formulas confirmed. Specifically, the attached DRAFT 2020/2021 Financial Plan/Budget figures, assumes:
- The Community Grants Committee Recommendations are adopted;
  - The Budget Increase of \$0.03 is adopted; and
  - The Projected Budget Expenditures are also adopted, which would result in:
    - The Projected Budget Surplus would be **\$80,344**, by the end of the 2020/2021 Fiscal Year, instead of the earlier expected surplus of **\$74,761**. (as discussed on February 19, 2020).

- Additionally, it was noted that there will be no Capital projects for the Capital Plan, and won't be, until a decision is reached as to when and where a new Municipal Office may (or may not be) required.

Discussion?

*Council clarified the new Assessment dollar amounts; the projected surplus toward the 2020 target; and confirmed the Expenditures projections.*

**Moved** by Councillor Vessey and **Seconded** by Councillor Henry to approve the Rural Municipality of Belfast 2020/2021 Financial Plan/Budget for second reading as presented.

Votes for:   3   Votes against:   0  

Result: Carried Unanimously

13. **Public Input/Presentations (Other)** – No requests for presentations.
14. **Next Scheduled Meetings:**
  - a. **Regular Council Meeting** – the next regular meeting of Council is scheduled for Wednesday, April 15, 2020 at 7:00 PM at the Belfast Firehall; however, due to the current COVID 19 situation, and as discussed in Item 3.2 above; whether this meeting goes ahead as scheduled has yet to be determined. The Public will be informed, once a decision is confirmed by the Mayor.
15. **Adjournment** – As there was no further business...

**Moved** by Councillor Henry to adjourn the meeting at: 8:20 PM.

Minutes Approved on: June 17, 2020

Signature and Seal on File

Mayor – Garth Gillis

Signature and Seal on File

CAO – Bob Brooks