



Rural Municipality of Belfast (RMB)

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

ANNEXATION SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING - MINUTES

Wednesday, November 21, 2023 at 7:00 PM
RMB Office, Wood Islands Market

In Attendance:

Sub-Committee: Councillor Katherine Bryson – Chair (voting)
Councillor Billy Gamble (voting)
Mayor Garth Gillis – Ex-officio (voting)
Administration: CAO Bob Brooks (non-voting)

This Sub-Committee meeting is open to the public.

Item Order of Business

1. **Call to Order** – The Annexation Sub-Committee (ASC) Meeting was called to order by Chair – Councillor Bryson @ 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 declared a conflict in today’s agenda.
3. **Approval of Agenda** – One additional item was suggested and placed under item 9.

Moved by **Mayor Gillis** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to adopt the agenda as amended.

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

4. **Public Presentations** – There were none with no members of the public in attendance.
5. **Adoption of the November 1, 2023 ASC Meeting Minutes** (*previously distributed; all changes incorporated*).

Moved by **Mayor Gillis** and seconded by **Councillor Gamble** to approve the Minutes of the November 1, 2023 ASC Meeting as presented.

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

6. **Business arising from the November 1, 2023 ASC Meeting Minutes** (*already addressed in today’s agenda – no other items*).
7. **Guest Speaker** – Mayor Helen Smith-MacPhail regarding the Municipality of West River experience/pitfalls of Annexation/Amalgamation. *Deferred to another meeting.*

8. **Action Items out of the November 1st ASC Meeting:**
 - a. Find out **Process for Annexation/Timelines (Completed)** – CAO: *Bob did receive the process from Municipal Affairs, who also confirmed that the process is one of Annexation, not Amalgamation for the exercise that RMB is undertaking. Danny Jenkins confirmed that he would be the contact for the Annexation process. Regarding timelines, the process could take as little as 18 months (if everything goes smooth), or as much as 2-3 years (if the process is more challenging). It is unlikely however, that this Annexation exercise will be in place in time to affect the next Municipal General Election for RMB. If this Committee and Council decide to proceed with an Annexation process for RMB following ASC's initial work on this file, then ASC and Council will follow the process as provided by Municipal Affairs.*
 - b. Identify the **Boundaries of the Four Options** – CAO:
 - i. With Maps (**Completed**) (**attached**).
 - ii. Identify **Community Names** within the option areas.
 - A. Kinross (partial), Newtown Cross, Grandview (partial), Bellevue (partial), Iris, Lewes, Hopefield (partial), Little Sands (partial).
 - B. Kinross (partial), Newtown Cross, Grandview (partial), Bellevue (partial), Lewes.
 - C. Glencoe, Uigg, Orwell, Alberry Plains (partial).
 - D. Vernon River, Vernon Bridge (partial), Earnscliffe, Cherry Valley.
 - c. Identify the other environmental group with possible funding avenues - Chair Bryson (**Completed**) (CLIM-Atlantic).
 - d. Invite **Helen Smith-MacPhail – Mayor of West River**, to attend an ASC meeting to discuss previous experience/pitfalls with the Annexation/Amalgamation Process – Chair Bryson (**Deferred**). Mayor Smith-MacPhail did accept the invitation. Chair Bryson will continue to work with the Mayor to find a mutually suitable date to attend an ASC meeting.
9. **Other Agenda Items from Item 3 above:**
 - a. **Murray River and Murray Harbour Annexation/Amalgamation Exercise** – CAO: Earlier today (Nov. 21st) the CAO spoke with Interim-CAO of Murray River - Jill Walsh, about a meeting they were having that afternoon, to present an idea to the residents of Murray River and Murray Harbour about Annexation and Amalgamation. What's being discussed, is a plan to hire a consultant to look into Annexation and Amalgamation between the two municipalities and surrounding unincorporated communities. The two CAOs agreed to touch base with each other to see if the RMB process and the "Murray's" process, could be complimentary. The CAO will update ASC at our next meeting.
10. **To Be Determined (list from previous ASC meeting).**
 - a. **Suitable 'Rural' communities/areas** that surround RMB borders that RMB might be interested in for Annexation:
 - i. What type of infrastructure do those communities/areas already have in place?
 - A. Who owns it? (Not-for profit? Business? Individual? Etc.);
 - B. What financial arrangements do they currently have?; and
 - C. What would be the RMB responsibility if annexed?
 - ii. What Fire-Map region (**map attached**) do those communities/areas already belong to?
 - A. Would the Belfast Fire Department need to expand its reach?

- B. What price tag comes with that?
- C. Is there some other financial effect on RMB?
- D. What are the Tax implications?
- iii. What would the Municipal/Provincial tax-rate change be for those communities/areas and RMB, with an annexation with RMB?
 - A. Would they see a drastic tax increase?
 - B. Would RMB ratepayers see a drastic tax increase?
 - C. Or just a change in distribution?
- iv. **Options Maps** – ASC had a preliminary discussion to create Options Maps (areas to look at to help generate ASC findings). Four initial options were discussed that might be suitable/beneficial to both the GPEI and RMB to add unincorporated areas in RMB, which still allow the current RMB structure to stand, (*maps attached*); namely:
 - A. **A** – immediate areas to the east of RMB boundaries;
 - B. **B** – smaller section of areas to the east of RMB boundaries;
 - C. **C** – immediate areas to the north of the RMB boundaries; and
 - D. **D** – immediate areas to the north that includes Earnscliffe and the Vernons).
- b. **Can/Will these Annexations take place in a timeframe that will affect the 2026 RMB Municipal General Election?**
 - i. Will those amalgamated residents now be voting in the RMB Election?
 - ii. Will the election process for RMB change? And if so how?
- c. **Are there other sources of funding** to help get the required larger RMB municipal office infrastructure established, before any Annexations take place? (Preliminary estimates are that RMB will need approximately double the space for more office equipment and more staff - to be determined). Possible other sources suggested:
 - i. Infrastructure Secretariat
 - ii. PEI Emergency Measures Organization (Reception Centre Resiliency Fund)
 - iii. Rural and Regional Development
 - iv. Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency
 - v. Municipal Affairs
 - vi. FCM Green Funds
 - vii. CLIM-Atlantic (depending on initiatives)
- d. **What will be the financial, infrastructure and human resource implications to RMB be** with the Annexations?
 - i. Financial _____
 - ii. Infrastructure _____
 - iii. Human Resources _____
- e. **Which communities/areas are NOT Suitable** for Annexation into the RMB current boundaries?
 - i. Preliminary ASC discussions suggest that the areas to the far east of the current RMB boundaries (all those communities east of the County Line Road – RTE 325) would not be suitable candidates for the following reasons:
 - A. A number of communities in that area have municipal infrastructure (RMB would have to make a significant and expensive change to its operations/staffing systems to take on those communities and would require a complete overhaul to the RMB operations);
 - B. Historically, that whole area noted that neither they or RMB wanted to amalgamate; and
 - C. Taking on only pieces of that area, would make that areas' own annexation plans unworkable.
 - D. Adding the *Murrays communities and surrounding* would make the RMB Municipality too geographically large to be effectively managed

- without major changes to RMB’s operational system/infrastructure, and the distances that RMB would have to take in, too large.
- E. Would there be significant Fire-Map concerns with this addition?
- ii. Additional preliminary ASC discussions suggest that the areas to the far north of the current RMB boundaries (**Option/Map D**) would not be suitable candidates for the following reasons:
 - A. A number of communities in that area have municipal infrastructure (RMB would have to make a significant and expensive change to its operations/staffing systems to take on those communities and would require a complete overhaul to the RMB operations);
 - B. Adding Option/Map D would make the RMB Municipality too geographically big and distances too large to be effectively managed without a major overhaul to RMB’s operational system/infrastructure.
 - C. Would there be significant Fire-Map concerns with this addition?
- f. **Proposal to Council** and ultimately to the Government of PEI for consideration.
- g. Does the **Town of Three Rivers** already have a plan for further Amalgamation/Annexation?

It is the intension of the CAO, to turn this **To-Be-Determined To-Do List** into an Excel Spreadsheet, so that we can keep track of the **Action Items**, to completion of the list. The Excel Spreadsheet will be ready for the next ASC meeting.

11. **Next Action Items to be completed** (*within a two/three-week time period*).
 - a. Create an **Action Item Excel Spreadsheet**, to track items that need to be accomplished in this initial Annexation Exercise (CAO).
 - b. Confirm with the **Murray’s, what their Annexation/Amalgamation Plans** are and see if there are complimentary roles between the two jurisdictions (CAO).
 - c. Confirm with the **Municipality of Three Rivers** if they have any Annexation or Amalgamation Plans (CAO).
 - d. Get Complete Fire-Map Areas for RMB, Murray River and Three Rivers (with the list of the communities that they cover) (CAO).
 - e. Identify **Infrastructure within the Option A Communities** (*Chair Bryson*).
 - f. Identify **Pros and Cons for Annexation**, specifically for the Community of **Little Sands** (*Councillor Gamble*)
 - g. Take a picture of the Fire-Map located at the Belfast Rural Fire Department Office (*Councillor Gamble*)
 - h. Identify **Pros and Cons for Annexation**, specifically for the Communities in **Option D** (*Mayor Gillis*)
12. **Next Meetings:**
 - a. **Next ASC Meeting** – Wednesday, December 13, 2023.
13. **Adjournment** – As there is no further business...

Moved by Mayor Gillis to adjourn the meeting at: **8:08 PM**

Bob

Minutes Approved On: _____

Chair – Councillor Bryson

CAO – Bob Brooks

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