



**Village of Belledune
Committee of Whole Council Meeting
September 2, 2025**

Time: 7:00 PM
Place: Belledune Council Chambers
Mayor, Paul Arseneault
Councillor, Lilliane Carmichael
Present: Councillor, Cynthia Robinson
Councillor, Marilyn Guitard-McDonnell
Councillor, Ron Bourque
Councillor, Dawn Hickey
Absent:
Late:
Staff Present: Clerk Treasurer, Angela Culligan
Staff Absent: Chief Administrative Officer, Landon Lee
Staff Late:

Call to Order & Welcome

- Acknowledgement of "Treaties of Peace and Friendship"
- Reaffirm Oath of Office

Adopt Agenda

M 2025/09/02-88

Lilliane Carmichael moved that the Agenda be Adopted as Amended with changes, seconded by Marilyn Guitard-McDonnell. MOTION CARRIED.

Statements of Conflict of Interest

Presentations / Petitions / Delegations

Business

Council

Mayor, Arseneault

- Council Portfolio Update

Mayor, Arseneault said that last month he brought up that he would like to see Council take on portfolios and projects because he believes that it helps move files forward and it helps to let the citizens know that council members are working on different issues.

Starting in October, Mayor, Arseneault will be giving a report each month on meetings that he has attended, community events that he has attended, and updates on portfolios that he is working on and he would like to see Council do the same. He's hoping that once Council members get comfortable doing reports that they will be able to take on specific portfolios, as this is the way that it's done in most municipalities.

Councillor, Bourque inquired as to whether these reports would be submitted prior to the meeting to be included in the meeting package, or if they would just be presented at the meeting. Mayor, Arseneault said that it's good practice to have the reports sent in prior to the meeting so that they can be included in Council's meeting package.

Councillor, Carmichael said that in the past at the Committee of Whole Meeting they used to provide a report on where they had gone and what meetings they had attended but at some point got away from it.

- Village Income Tax Program Update

Mayor, Arseneault started by saying that at the last meeting this had come up and he said that he would like to try to find a reconciliation between having the program exist and having some businesses losing clients because of it. He went on to say that we don't do this to other businesses. He acknowledged that the concept is good be allowing people who need to have this service underwritten the opportunity to do so, but we shouldn't be hurting local businesses. He believes that there needs to be a solution.

Councillor, Robinson commented that this is a volunteer program where nothing is being diverted through the Village, we only get subsidized for the office supplies used. She said that it is a volunteer program to help low income residents in the community get their income tax filed, otherwise most would not do it and they miss out on other annual subsidies. Councillor, Robinson believes that this program has served the community well for over 10 years and should continue to do so.

Councillor, Carmichael agreed with Councillor, Robinson. She believes that this program is easy for our senior citizens and does not want to complicate it for them.

Mayor, Arseneault wanted to make it clear that he is not talking about closing the program.

Councillor, Bourque commented that he had read an email from the CAO that said that there were 167 tax forms done on that program in Belledune and there are probably about 1,000 citizens in Belledune filing income taxes, which is 16%, and no business in Belledune would survive losing 16% of it's business. He agrees with the Mayor that this is not about closing the program but we need to find a compromise that would be some kind of a subsidy program or something that will compensate the businesses for the business that they're losing. He would like to know what a business in Belledune charges to complete an income tax return for an individual in this tax bracket.

Councillor, Robinson was looking for clarity asking if we would have volunteers doing the taxes while we pay the other businesses because they may have lost a potential client. She would like to know where the idea is coming from that they are losing business when they didn't have these clients before, she doesn't feel that they will have them after. Her question is where will these people have their taxes done, since they won't be paying for it?

Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell was wondering the same thing. She stated that the program has been in place for over 10 years and the clients that we service have been coming here for 10 years and she doesn't see how this is impacting local businesses. She said that she doesn't know how we can resolve this.

Mayor, Arseneault reiterated that it is not about closing the program, it's about reconciling having the citizens come here to have their taxes done and we still get that business to the local businesses. He agrees with Councillor, Bourque that maybe we need to find out what the cost is and then once we have that we can look at the next step.

Councillor, Carmichael asked if the Mayor is thinking about having the citizens bringing their taxes in here to be completed and we would pay the local businesses for the service that we are providing. Mayor, Arseneault replied that he doesn't think we've put enough thought into it. He said that we know we have a program that offers a great service, we know that we have some businesses losing clientele because if this service didn't exist, or if it existed and somehow they were getting paid for it, then they wouldn't be losing. We know that we are missing something and what the Mayor would like is for us to have a greater focus on trying to find a solution, if there is one.

Councillor, Robinson said that the CAO has sent an email earlier in the day suggesting that CRA come in and do a presentation on this program to Council, as they don't see how it would impact the local businesses. She would like to understand the program from CRAs perspective and go from there.

Mayor, Arseneault agreed that if we need more information on the program then maybe that should be our first step.

Councillor, Hickey said that she doesn't understand either. She said that they have a service that's been going on for 10 years that has been working fine. and she wants to know why these two businesses are only now coming forward. And, on the other side of it as a person who gets their taxes done, she stated that each individual has a right to go wherever they choose to do their taxes, maybe they wouldn't choose to go to these businesses.

Mayor, Arseneault said this isn't the first time this has come up, there was a discussion about this by Council in 2019-2020 and the discussion at that time was almost identical to what it is now.

Councillor, Hickey asked if there is not going to be a charge, how is it affecting their business? Mayor, Arseneault replied that it is clientele that would go to their business.

- Appeals Committee Update

Mayor, Arseneault said that he thinks the citizens can feel good about the fact that we're making some inroads in terms of some of the issues that we have concerning dangerous and unsightly premises. He also wanted to let people know that there are times we talk about dangerous and unsightly premises and it's always done in a very general sense, but it has to be because you're dealing with people's property so many times the updates are quite general even though people would like more specifics.

Mayor, Arseneault feels that there has been a lot of improvement on this. He said that he was on the last Council and they struggled from beginning to end, and he feels that we are making inroads here that Council tried to make but ultimately could not.

- Summer Student/Public Works/Campground/Salmon Barrier Thank You

Mayor, Arseneault said that we had a barbecue a couple of weeks ago and it was nice to see all of the people there. It was nice to be able to thank everyone with that barbecue from our campground, salmon barrier, summer students, public works, and admin and he wanted to thank them for what he felt was a really productive summer.

Councillor, Bourque said that in the past employees were being recognized for milestone years of service and somewhere along the line that was lost. In the past employees reaching a milestone would come in front of Council at a public meeting and would be awarded with a token in appreciation of their years of service. He believes that this is something that should be looked at and that when an employee hits a milestone of service that deserves to be recognized.

- DTI Winter Maintenance

Mayor, Arseneault stated that we're heading into the fall season and it would be nice if we would take a proactive stance in trying to make sure that our winter maintenance, especially our communication with DTI, and our expectations from DTI are clearly articulated to DTI. Mayor Arseneault said that he has asked several times for us to have a liaison committee type of interaction with DTI. We had a liaison committee with NB Power that worked well. Prior to having that liaison committee there was not a point person you could talk to to get things done quickly. When the liaison committee started, right away we had a contact person we could call when there was an outage in the Village. Mayor, Arseneault hopes that in October a Council member will bring a motion forward to have a liaison committee with DTI.

Councillor, Carmichael believes that we need to start by having a meeting with either management or the supervisor at DTI.

Councillor, Bourque agrees with Councillor, Carmichael and said that there is a difference in the snow removal outside of the Village and the road conditions for some reason, and he believes this is unacceptable. He said that the people we are talking to are not listening and he believes that we do not have enough contacts or conversations with the ministers, he believes that the ministers are the key to having things moved. Councillor, Bourque stated that it is totally unacceptable, the road conditions we have during the winter months, and it is not like that in other communities and the same people who do those communities do ours. He believes that our community is in the shape it's in because we've never pressed it and agrees with the Mayor that we need a committee or a person who is going to deal with this and take it to where it needs to go to make the changes.

Mayor, Arseneault believes this would be a good portfolio for somebody to work on. And he believes that if we were to reach out to a Minister or a Deputy Minister that they would make sure that we wouldn't be ignored or minimized.

Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell said that her understanding is that in other communities they have private contractors doing their roads and they are not depending on DTI. She doesn't know how we can maintain our roads in the same way they do because we don't have the private contractors.

Councillor, Hickey commented that she had an issue with DTI last week where she called and had the supervisor come out and she was told that the Village of Belledune is responsible for the Village of Belledune and they were told by their supervisor, or higher up than the supervisor, that they were to do work to the Belledune line and Belledune is responsible for Belledune. She wanted to know why they can do half a road and leave the worst half not done.

Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell said that some of our Public Works are responsible for maintenance of some areas, but nothing extreme like repairing a road.

Councillor, Hickey said that she is waiting for a call back.

Councillor, Bourque said that the Village of Belledune is responsible for the roads that it has. We have A, B, and C roads with Highway 11 being an A road, Highway 134 being a B road and the side roads being C roads. When we have a storm, they start by clearing the A road, then the B road and then they get to the C roads. He went on to say that the guardrails through the Village have been hit by snow plows and DTI wants the Village to repair the guardrails because they are on the shoulder of the road, which the Village is responsible for. He believes this is where a liaison committee would be strong in dealing with the minister because we never get a straight answer

- Vandalism in Jacquet River

Mayor, Arseneault brought up the vandalism that had taken place at the Jacquet River ball field over the weekend.

Mayor, Arseneault believes that in terms of policing in general that it has been a really good summer. It's been relatively quiet and the communication between the RCMP and Council is good. Sargent Dulac shared some data with Mayor, Arseneault that indicates that the Village of Belledune is doing quite well in terms of policing and the number of cases they are receiving. However, this weekend was a setback if anyone saw pictures on Facebook of the Jacquet River baseball field. Mayor, Arseneault said that it was very disappointing to see the fence damaged and demolished in some places and the field used for doughnuts. Mayor, Arseneault said that he is not going to stand by and allow the progress that we've made with policing that we've made in the last few months diminish because some people don't respect anything or anyone. Mayor, Arseneault plans on having a conversation with Sargent Dulac to say that this is the kind of stuff that needs to be stopped because if it's stopped in its tracks then others who are thinking of doing something similar will think twice and maybe not do it. Another thing that bothers him is that he feels that this summer there was a sense of security for our senior citizens and when something like this happens it affects our senior citizens in a negative way. It is his hope that

these people are brought to justice and this kind of stuff stops because there is no place for it in our community.

Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell said that if there were witnesses that they would hopefully contact the RCMP. And that if someone knows something it will get around by word of mouth.

Councillor, Bourque

Councillor, Carmichael

▪ Housing Update

Councillor, Carmichael attended a session regarding housing and she got people's cards but said that we are having a hard time. She said that meetings were set up that had to be cancelled because of scheduling and things happening. She wanted Council to know that she's still trying to set that up and trying to meet up with these people but that it's hard to get everyone lined up.

▪ Budget Discussion

Councillor, Carmichael wanted to know what the Clerk/Treasurer's plan is for starting budget sessions.

Clerk/Treasurer, Culligan said that she has started some stuff in the background, but has not received any numbers yet from the province. She indicated that she has a meeting the following day with the Chaleur Regional Service Commission regarding their budget, and a lot of the numbers in our budget are pushed down to us from them. Clerk/Treasurer, Culligan indicated that there would likely be meetings starting toward the end of September and the budget is generally due around mid-November. She mentioned to Council that she needs them to start thinking about changes they would like to have in the budget, things like tax rates, different services, or projects, to figure out where they want to allocate the funds that they have.

Councillor, Bourque said that the budget is a document that Council is accountable for but there a lot of line items that are non-flexible. Councillor, Bourque would like to see the line items identified that are not flexible, and would like to see numbers populated in the budget because Council can not make decisions unless they know the bottom line. Clerk/Treasurer Culligan said that she can color code the amounts that are out of Council's control but there are other numbers that are hard to determine. She said that things that would be helpful from Council before going into the first meeting would be things like what are they thinking in terms of staffing like adding people, making cuts, pay increases, what kinds of projects were looking at and those sorts of things. Otherwise she plans on having the budget pretty much populated and then depending on where we land we will have to look at things and decide what goes up or down

Councillor, Guitard-McDonnell

▪ Food Bank Update and Discussion

Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell said that herself and Councillor, Carmichael have been up to Campbellton to visit with the RCVA representatives and they have been to our local food bank and she feels that it needs to be relocated. They have gone to every avenue possible to see where it can be relocated to and they have hit road blocks everywhere. She would like to ask that if anyone knows of a

location for the food bank she would like them to come forward with it. She said that where it's located is not safe. Through many conversations with the RCVA and she has spoken with different levels of government but she can't seem to get a window to open anywhere. So she is putting a call out to the residents in the Village if they can think of a location where they can move the food bank before the winter to come forward with suggestions. She also mentioned that the people don't want to have to travel too far from the food bank's current location, they are used to having it in that area.

Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell also wanted to say that there is a committee for the food bank and we do not have a representative from Belledune on it. They are looking for a representative from our Village who would be interested in sitting on the committee for the food bank. She believes that they meet three times a year. If anyone is interested, please reach out to Deputy Mayor, Guitard-McDonnell or CAO, Lee and they can provide information on what is required.

Councillor, Hickey

Councillor, Robinson

Administration

CAO, Landon Lee

Clerk/Treasurer, Angela Culligan

Closed Session

Adjournment

M 2025/09/02-89

Lilliane Carmichael moved that the meeting adjourned at 8:13pm, seconded by Marilyn Guitard-McDonnell. MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor

Clerk Treasurer