

Special Meeting of Council
Mayor's Remarks at Swearing In Ceremony
Brundage Point River Centre
June 7, 2021 at 6:00 PM

This town – our town – is a special place.

There is truly no place like it.

On one side of us, we have the mighty Saint John River – first named the Wolastoq River by the Wolastokiyik and Maliseet people – a word that means “beautiful and bountiful river.”

On the other side of us is the abundant forest on the ridge, and a strong connection to the pristine wilderness of Loch Alva and Musquash natural protected areas.

In between, and against that glorious backdrop, a wonderful and welcoming people are nestled into neighbourhoods and schools and churches and shops – sharing their views on the world and their vision for this town, as neighbours do.

Our new Town tagline captures this reality perfectly – **“Neighbours By Nature”**.

My name is Brittany Merrifield, and I am so proud to be the 2nd Mayor of Grand Bay-Westfield.

Our Town is a Beautiful, supportive, and caring community.

It is a privilege it is to live here.

As a community, we owe a giant thank you to our outgoing Mayor, the indomitable Grace Losier.

Six terms as mayor and 28 years in politics shows an extraordinary dedication to our town.

We also owe our gratitude to outgoing members of council for their efforts and commitment to our town: Deputy Mayor Mike Likely, Councillors Stephen Evans and Ryan Snodgrass.

Our success is built your decisions.

Thank you.

Today is a fresh start, with a great mix of both experienced and brand-new faces on council – united by their enthusiasm for our community, and by their desire to create positive change for us all.

Welcome.

Welcome is a word I'd like to use often in the next four years.

Welcome is about knowing what we have to offer and making sure we deliver on that promise for visitors to our town, and for newcomers interested in making Grand Bay-Westfield their home.

That means we need to celebrate:

- our unique restaurants,
- our renowned bakery,
- incredible wildlife,
- unparalleled views,
- amazing trails for hiking, biking, and four wheeling,
- spectacular river kayaking and watersports,
- secret fishing holes,
- splash-tastic splash pad,
- thrills at Tailwhip Skate Park,
- community gatherings at the Brundage Point River Centre, and
- world-class entertainment at Unity Park.

But welcome isn't just for new neighbours.

Welcome is also about earning and re-earning the goodwill and loyalty of those who already live here:

- The talented artists,

- visionary entrepreneurs,
- world class athletes,
- business owners,
- employees,
- union members,
- families and friends who make this community home are our first and best ambassadors.
- You are the fabric of our town – and our Council and Administration will work at making your experience as residents the best it can be.

As I assume the responsibilities of your Mayor, I promise to serve you with authentic and courageous leadership. I promise to bring urgency and energy to this job, and to strive to make positive change happen in every part of our beautiful community.

Four years is not a long time, but I firmly believe that as we work together, Council and Administration, we can set the stage for this decade and beyond.

To our new Deputy Mayor Erin Toole, and my colleagues and our Councillors, Stephanie McIntosh Lawrence, Bev Day, John Balemans, and Jim Balcomb: we share a lot in common. Our common desire to see the abundance of our Town grow and mature, to see our neighbours in the north and south flourish, and pride in our manmade and natural infrastructure. I am excited about working together with you to see our Town blossom.

To Administration, we appreciate the work you do. On behalf of Council, we are looking forward to working with you because our success is your success, and your success is our success.

As a council we will work hard and:

- celebrate what we have
- shine a light on our successes
- build our relationships
- take time for gratitude
- think big
- and aim high.

And if we do that, Grand Bay-Westfield will stand tall, and be the perfect kind of small town.

One that welcomes everyone.

I would like to take a moment to thank my parents and my children for their love and support, and for inspiring me every day.

I would like to thank my amazing sister, for her never-ending support and kindness.

Thank you to my friends who are always there to root for me.

Today we turn to the future.

I am looking forward to leading our town toward growth, success and joy. We will go forward and go better.

Together we will make our town a safe place to discuss our challenges, incubate ideas and try new things – all while we respect each other, lift each other up, and celebrate collaboration.

I will say this often to Council and our Town Team, and I'll say it again now to you.

I've got you. You've got me. And we've got each other.

And that's it.

But that's all we need.

Thank you.