

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Wednesday, August 19, 2015
6:00 P.M.

Councilors: David McCrea, Jason Barnes, Susan LeVasseur, John Herold
and Robert Kilcollins

Staff: Tony Levesque, Ella Leighton, Jennifer Gaenzle, William Campbell,
Cody Fenderson, Rebecca Hersey, Tim Goff and James Risner

Citizens: 35 including media

- I. Roll Call - Chair Jason Barnes asked that the record reflect all councilors were present.
- II. Prayer – Tony Levesque offered the prayer.
- III. Pledge to the Flag - All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the Flag.
- IV. Public Comment-

Rick Shepherd stated that about one year ago we had a public crisis; a lot of people showed up and made their concerns known to the Town Council. The Council reacted by creating the moratorium, at the same time they created a twelve member committee and to quote the minutes of the a council meeting, “The 12 people selected are known to be fair-minded individuals, known to share views in a respectful way and have a high level of integrity”. He went on to say that he attended many of the meetings, he saw this and he agrees with this statement. They have literally put in 100’s of hours in drafting this ordinance and I certainly wouldn’t like to see that die here tonight. Thank you very much.

Carl Young, Fort Fairfield Resident, made a comment about agenda item “10-A” Wind Energy Briefing. Stated that he thought this was an interesting title being he was part of the Wind Energy Development Committee. The title implies that maybe this information could have been used by the committee during its deliberations as far as preparing the ordinance. He questioned the time of any Wind Energy Development briefing, the committee started its work back in November 2014 and just finished its work in early August. There is an eight month period where the Town Council was holding regular meetings at which point such a briefing could have been given. Seems that a more appropriate time for that would have been at one of those eight Council meetings or at the Public Hearing. So the purpose of speaking this evening is to ask that when the Council arrives at agenda item “10- A”, they consider tabling that item and rescheduling that briefing to be combine with the Public Hearing or some other time.

- V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses/Permits – None

B. Financial Report -Mr. James Risner – All personal property taxes were collected in full as of July 31st, this includes uncollected personal property taxes in the amount of \$11,342 for the years of 2010-2013. This is the first time in recent memory that all personal property taxes have been collected in full and is the result of diligent work done by Ms. Leighton, the Town’s Tax Collector. The 2014 real estate lien notices

were mailed on August 7th, there were 225 notices in the amount of \$204,370.00. Our expenses are in line with our budget. On the revenue side is looking good as well, State revenue sharing for July was \$31,199 which is up from last year by \$19,975. Excise tax for July was \$89,734, up from \$46,630 last July. The preliminary audit results for year ending June 30, 2015 show a surplus of \$11,645, which is \$113,335 less than the projected surplus of \$125,000 in the FY 14/15 budget. We are continuing to work with our auditors and expect to have the complete audit report no later than September 15th. Also, the Treasurer appointed Ms. Billie Jo Sharpe as Deputy Treasurer, she will join Ms. Hersey the current Deputy Treasurer.

- C. Tri-Community Landfill Report – Mr. Rogeski- The last meeting was held on July 17th, this was the annual meeting and held at the Land Fill. There are two new board members and this meeting was used as their orientation and showing them around the facility. They also had their annual DEP inspection and there were no issues. Mark is also doing the best job he can with keeping up on the reimbursements that we get from the DEP. One minor change is customers who are bringing their trash loose in cans are now being asked to take this trash to the top of the hill rather than dumping it in the bunkers. By dumping it in the bunkers a lot of the trash is being caught by the wind. Also, last year we introduced a new policy regarding mixed construction demolition debris to go onto the hill rather than separate it. By the end of July we had met our annual budget with what we were bringing in for revenue on this, it looks like we are going to more than double our budget amount on this.
- D. Introduction of New Police Officer – Chief Campbell – Introduced Cody Fenderson as the new full-time Police Officer, his first duty day was August 15th. He has been a reserve officer since March 2014 and he has several years of law enforcement experience. He will need to complete the State Police Academy in the Fall of 2016. The estimated cost associated with sending him to the academy that will need to be budgeted in FY 16/17 is \$11,267.00. On another note, we have had the traffic sign out on different roads throughout Town. This is being used to make people aware of the speed limit and how fast they are going. When school starts next week, it will be set up on Brunswick Ave going into the Elementary School. We will have this until the 30th, when we have to deliver it to the next town.
- E. Department Report – Library – Ms. Gaenzle - The library continues to be very busy, we have had several author visits this summer. The numbers of the patronage uses continues to raise, an increase of 25% in circulation of the library, 14% in patron use and 40% in computer usage. Started a pre-school story telling for children under the age of five, which is held every other Thursday at 10:30. A story telling hour for children 6-9 will be started later this fall. On the 22nd we will be have a “Digital Citizenship and Internet Safety” class for children and their parents. On October 30th, Tim Caverly will be at the Library presenting an “Allagash Haunting” at 4:00 PM. A thank you to the Fort Fairfield Lions Club for their donation and an award from the Mraz Grant. The Joan of Arc statue restoration was schedule for September 19th, but due to a scheduling conflict it is now changed to October 6, 2015.

- F. 68th Maine Potato Blossom Festival Update – Mr. Goff – This year’s festival was very successful, exceeded our goals. We expanded the musical lineup, brought in good crowds. We have had a festival organizing committee meeting already, we had a few new faces at the table and members came up with some new ideas for next year’s event.
- G. Internet Access Survey – Mr. Goff has been working to better understand the challenges our community is faced with when it comes to access to high speed internet and seek solutions to improve access and speeds for residents. Many areas of Fort Fairfield have limited-to-no access to the internet, while much of the rest of the community has access to low-speed service. One of our biggest barriers is our rural setting, which makes the investment of ten to thirty thousand dollars a mile for fiber optic cable, the backbone of high speed internet infrastructure, cost-prohibitive. We need to actively seek out any available grants for broadband access improvements and work to develop public/private partnerships in order to make this substantial investment in our communications infrastructure a reality. We have crafted an internet access survey that we encourage all residents to participate in. The responses gathered will be used to help craft our grant proposals and provide data to companies interested in investing in our community. This survey can be found on the Town Website, or can be completed in person at the Town Office and we also have plans to do some door-to-door survey work during the week of August 24th through the 28th.
- H. Wind Energy Technical Review Committee – Mr. Langley – Thanked the Town Council for their patience and thanked the committee itself. The committee consisted of Dick Langley, Jim Everett, Carl Young, Heather Cassidy, Tim Goff, Brent Churchill, David McCrea, Phil Christensen, Todd Maynard and John Herold. Everyone came to the table free of bias with no predisposition, the votes were not unanimous, but there was a pretty strong consensus with every issue. We put together a strong ordinance, I hope you have all read it and I hope you endorse it. Mr. Langley invited the Council to the Public Hearing and extended an open invitation to meet with the Wind Energy Technical Review Committee any time.

Ms. Susan LeVasseur – Thanked the committee for their hard work.

VI. Old Business

- A. Ordinance for Acquisition of Commercial Property - The owners of a parcel of land on Main Street, (parcel 28-66) have offered to sell the property to the Town of Fort Fairfield for \$5,000.00. Councilor John Herold introduced ordinance 15-03 for the acquisition of commercial property at the July 15, 2015 regular Town Council meeting. A public hearing was held on August 12, 2015 with those minutes being attached along with the deed. This is to be paid from account G-1-3330-00.

Motion: Mr. David McCrea moved to approved Ordinance 15-03 for the acquisition of commercial property located on Main Street, Fort Fairfield being part of Map 28 Lot 66 from T & G, LLC in the amount of \$5,000.00.

Second: Mr. John Herold

Vote – All affirmative

- B. Puddledock Roofing Project, Results of Bids – The Town received two bids on this project. The lowest responsive and responsible bid was from NicCait Construction, Inc., of Presque Isle for the amount of \$7,250. All work to be completed by September 30, 2015. This will be paid from account G-1-3330-00.

Motion: Mr. John Herold moved to approve awarding the Puddledock Roofing Project to NicCait Construction in the amount of \$7,250.00.

Second: Ms. Susan LeVasseur

Vote – All affirmative

- C. Disposition of Tax Acquired Property, 19 and 21 Richard Street – Mr. James Risner – The Town Council at its June 17, 2015 regular meeting signed a quitclaim deeds and real estate transfer tax declarations for the tax acquired properties at 19 and 21 Richard Street. The successful bidder failed to complete the purchase in the time slated and therefore the bid acceptance was voided. Melissa and Tyler Libby expressed interest in possible acquiring both properties. They were in the process of getting estimates on bringing each property to a livable condition at the time of the July 15, 2015. The Town received on August 3rd, a proposal from the Libby's in the amount of \$3,667.94. This is a \$5,590.90 less than what is owed on the properties. As of August 15, 2015 the amount owed on the two properties was \$9,258.84. It is recommended that the councilor's considers selling 19 and 21 Richard Street to the Libby's for \$5,150.75 in AS IS WHERE IS condition with no guarantees expressed or implied, plus any cost incurred between now and closing.

Motion: Mr. David McCrea moved to approve selling 19 and 21 Richard Street to the Melissa and Tyler Libby for \$5,150.75 in AS IS WHERE IS condition with no guarantees expressed or implied, plus any cost incurred between now and closing.

Second: Mr. John Herold

Vote – All affirmative

VII. New Business

- A. Ordinance for Wind Energy Development – Mr. James Risner - The committee has completed its work on preparation of a Wind Energy Development (WED) Ordinance and voted at its August 10, 2015 meeting to forward the ordinance to the Town Council. The committee was established in October 2014. It consists of twelve members made up of councilors, citizens, Quality of Place Council members and Town staff and was charged to formulate a Wind Energy Development Ordinance for the Town of Fort Fairfield. They met on a bi-weekly basis for over 10 months in order to write the WED ordinance. Once the ordinance is introduced a Public Hearing will be scheduled for Tuesday, September 8, 2015 at 6:00 PM in the Gym.

Motion: Ms. Susan LeVasseur introduced Ordinance 15-04 for Wind Energy Development.

- B. Retirement of Public Works Director- Mr. Watson has given formal notice, effective September 10, 2015. He has been in this position for 15 years. Advertisement for the position have been placed in the Aroostook Republican, Star Herald and posted on the

Town's website and the Maine Municipal Association's website. Applications will be accepted until August 28th. Council, by consensus, accepted Mr. Watson's retirement.

VIII. Minutes: Council Meeting July 15, 2015

Motion: Ms. Susan LeVasseur moved to approve Minutes of July 15, 2015 as written.
Second: Mr. David McCrea Vote – All affirmative

IX. Warrants: #1 in the amount of \$424,673.44, #2 for \$146,069.23 and #3 for \$353,460.67

Motion: Mr. Robert Kilcollins moved to accept warrants #1, #2 and #3 as presented.
Second Ms. Susan LeVasseur Vote – All affirmative

X. Other

A. Wind Energy Information Briefing – Mr. Robert Dorsey, President of Aroostook Partnership for Progress, stated that he cares deeply about the County and Fort Fairfield. We have approximately one billion dollars currently going into wind development in Aroostook County, with the potential of four billion in the future. Natural resources are our biggest potential, three million acres of forest, and nine-hundred acres of tillable land. In the last three years there have been over 350 million dollars and over 440 jobs created in Aroostook County. Not very much of that has happened in Fort Fairfield, I sure would like to see more of it in the future. Fort Fairfield has over 5000 acres of under-utilized land, I hope you can keep the door open for future opportunities. He then introduced Katie Chapman of EDP Renewables.

Mr. John Herold – Stated that he would like to make reference to Mr. Young's statement, I believe what we are seeing here is not an information session, could very well have been presented to the Council or to the WED committee. The WED committee offered to put a presentation on this evening to describe the ordinance to the public and Council and were told, "No that is not the appropriate time to do it, do it at the public hearing". I would respectfully request that Mr. Dorsey and Mrs. Chapman postpone their presentation until the public hearing.

Mrs. Katie Chapman – Stated that in her opinion this is not new information, it is information that was already available to the committee, and I would respectfully request the opportunity to present it.

Mr. Jason Barnes – I am not opposed to hearing, and would very much like to hear what they have to say this evening. We have put a limitation on the time, it needs to be brief.

Mr. Robert Kilcollins - I think personally on such a big agenda, on such a short time frame we are on, to be fair I think they should get all the time they would need, the public hearing really should be the place that they do it. Because at this time all we really needed was to recognize the ordinance.

Ms. Susan LeVasseur – I would like to hear what they have to say, it doesn't matter when I hear it.

Mr. James Risner – The public hearing is only going to address the ordinance, it's not going to address how we think we should address this or that. So if someone comes in and wants to talk about wind power in general they should be told that is not the forum to do it. If Council wants to do that at their September meeting that is their prerogative. But I think it is very important to let the public know the public hearing on the 8th is just on the ordinance, we need to keep the comments brief.

Mr. David McCrea – It is not a place for debate at the public hearing it is a place for everyone to make their comments that will be recorded and will be information for this Council to digest and help us make up our mind. I think if there is information that anyone would like to share now, I wouldn't have an issue with 10 – 15 minutes.

Mr. Jason Barnes – I would like to proceed.

Mr. Phil Christensen – I am offended! You asked Mr. Shepherd to keep it quiet, keep it cool and not say much. Now I apologize for this outburst, but you asked him not to say much. Now what possess you to want these people to give us a speech about pros of wind power?

Mr. Jason Barnes – Public comment period was just that, this was on the agenda and planned for and these people were given up to 15 minutes to present a brief summary and I would very much like to proceed.

Mrs. Katie Chapman of EDP Renewables passed out a handout, which is attached to these minutes. She stated that she is available to answer any questions. She gave an overview of who EDPR is, they currently operate 30 wind farms in the US. They employ over 300 people and they are the third largest US operator of wind power in net megawatts. They anticipated 16 permanent jobs in Aroostook County. Community engagement is key to them, they are committed to communities. Local regulations benefit both the developer and the community with clear expectations such as, where should a project be located, what size is appropriate, what other elements would the community like the developer to take into account. The key is really what questions the developers may have coming in should be answered in the onset of the ordinance. Such that we know what our risks are and we are also able to design the project with the community in mind. In the Townships that they are working in that do have an ordinance is actually a benefit to us, because it very clearly defines the communities concerns and how we should address them. The key to ordinances and zoning or some combination thereof, is that we really have to have clear standards that are achievable. I was a little surprised by the amount of trepidation that I hear about a wind project. In my view an ordinance, zoning or local regulations should address those concerns on the onset so that it is clear to developers that this is a kind of project that will fit well with our community and this is where we want it and here is the criteria that we want you to take into account. I do not see an ordinance as a bad thing, I see it as a benefit to everyone. They are also donating two million dollars to the Aroostook energy efficiency program.

XI. Executive Session - No executive session

XII. Adjournment

August 19, 2015

Fort Fairfield Town Council Meeting Minutes

Motion: Mr. David McCrea moved to adjourn adjourned at 7:25 PM

Second: Mrs. Susan LeVasseur

Vote – All affirmative

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca J. Hersey
Council Secretary