

Fort Fairfield Town Council Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
Wednesday, January 19, 2011
6:00 P.M.

Councilors: David McCrea, Kim Murchison, Mark Babin, Terry Greenier and Ruel Flannery

Staff: Tony Levesque

Citizens: 6

- I. Roll Call - Chair David McCrea asked that the record reflect all councilors present.
- II. Prayer - Councilor Ruel Flannery offered the prayer
- III. Pledge to the Flag - All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the Flag.
- IV. Public Comment Period –

Dan remarked how nice and wonderful it is to have Ruel back

Jim Ireland – I would like to discuss 3 issues. The first being the back taxes and foreclosure notices on the redemption center, the lease and the roadway. First of all I don't feel that I should have to pay the back taxes that were in Tina's name, my divorce papers, which are enclosed in the packet, clearly states that I get the business but doesn't say anything about the taxes that she owes. As for the lease there is an issue of safety, I have put \$4,000.00 in repairs, \$5,000.00 in back depts., and \$4,000.00 in back lease payments. I took over the business April 4, 2010 and I don't feel I should be responsible for Tina's back taxes and back lease payments. As for the roadway I feel it is town owned therefore the town should be plowing this out.

Chair McCrea said that the council will meet and take under consideration and will get back to Jim at a future date

Ruel thanked everyone for their prayers, cards and support while he was in the hospital.

David also stated that it was nice to have Ruel back and he also welcomed the two new councilors, Mark Babin and Terry Greenier.
- V. Correspondence and Reports
 - A. Licenses/Permits- One – VFW for application to operate bingo
 - B. Financial Report – We are now half way through this fiscal year and we continue in relatively good financial health. We have a few expense items that are over budget due to a variety of reasons. The salary line in administration is slightly over budget due to Mary's retirement and settling her sick and vacation pay also she worked an extra month due to Becky's surgery. Workers comp is a little bit higher due to a small settlement from last year's audit. Library wages are over budget due to the unexpected change in Librarians with associated costs. Our income continues on track, with excise tax and revenue sharing consistent with our budget. Our cash flow is very good for this time of the year and we have been able to pay back \$150,000.00 on our line of credit last month, which leaves a balance of \$150,000.00 still owed. This will be paid next month.

- C. Tri-Community Landfill Report – Disposing of garbage has become big business. These costs represent a significant investment in maintaining environmental integrity while providing the citizens of Fort Fairfield a reasonable cost to handle waste. The Leaschate Pipeline Project has received the necessary environmental permits and we are preparing to go out to bid.
- D. Chamber Report – The Chambers annual meeting is schedule for February 10th everyone is invited. Mike is working with RFD TV Best of America by horseback, they will be here during the festival filming, and this will get Fort Fairfield out there nationally. The applications are set up on the Towns Web site and we are taking pay pal payments.
- E. Update on Railroad Abandonment Process - The rail lines have transferred and are now owned my the State, this will eventually include the 8.6 miles that Fort Fairfield has, they will be responsible for its maintenance.
- F. Update on the RFP Process for the Standard Offer – New Brunswick Power is negotiating with Boralex to use their electricity; PUC goes out to RFP every 2- 3 years.
- G. Update on Fort Fairfield’s Quality of Place Council – next meeting is scheduled for February 15th. The council has in place the Articles of Corporation, insurance is in place, 501c3 has been submit to the IRS we are slowing moving forward.
- H. Update on CDBG Grant Applications - Tony – Dead line for application is 4PM Friday the 21st, it went out in the mail yesterday. Requested more information regarding engineering issues. BR Smith did a great job, as well as Tony and Mike. We should hear something in 45 days.
- I. Update on “The Meadows” Project – This is a project which includes citizens input. Grant application sent in for infrastructure for the housing and clinic.
- J. Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner – scheduled for February 10th here at the Community Center
- K. Maine Wind Energy Conference - Mike and Dan will be attending the Second Maine Wind Energy Conference next week, January 24th & 25th. Mike and Tony will be attending an economic development seminar next week as well.
- L. Unemployment Compensation Fund Contribution – unemployment insurance will be higher than what was budgeted for this year We had budgeted \$3,000.00 but it appears that our cost will be around \$4,600.00. Last year with our rebate our expenses were \$278.00.
- M. 2011 World Cup Biathlon - This is taking place in Presque Isle the first week of February. This is a huge undertaking and Tony, Dan, Mike and Tom are all going to be participating. There may be the possibility of the need to haul snow if the weather doesn’t cooperate. They may be asking Fort Fairfield to help out with this, this will be done during regular working hours with no overtime.
- N. Update on Snow Storm Event with MDOT - December 27th we had a

snow storm with high winds. At approximately midnight our fire dept. was call to a house fire on the Houlton Road and was unable to get out due to drifting in the road. Mike Cyr of Public Works came in and plowed and sanded the road. Apparently due to budget cuts within MDOT they would not respond to this need.

VI. Old Business - NONE

VII. New Business

- A. Consider Establishing A Process to TIF New Residential Homes- At our Community Advisory Committee meeting last week, Gary Sirois requested that as an incentive for new residential development, the Council consider establishing some kind of a tax incentive. Gary spoke to the Council with his ideas, he said Fort Fairfield has become a bedroom community, we have not attracted much businesses. Would like to propose to the council that we give some kind of incentive to people moving to Fort Fairfield and building new homes that their taxes could be waived for a year or two. Give Dan and Tony the direction to look into this just to see if it can be done. Also there is a program called Next Gen which gives \$500.00 to a qualified child towards a college fund. May be the council would consider matching that to give incentive for young couples to move into town. He spoke with Susan Vigue with FAME, she stated that a survey was done and they found that children with college funds are 7 times more likely to attend college then those without. We need to do something to grow our community, fill our schools and this needs to be done on the residential side.

Motion: by Kim Murchison to direct Dan and Tony to present ideas to the Quality of Place Council who would make a recommendation to the town council.

Second: Ruel Flannery Vote – all affirmative

- B. Appoint New Member to the Planning Board – Peter Hunt, Jr. has resigned from the Planning Board, the board has requested that Jim Everett who is currently serving as an alternate be appointed to finish Peter's term.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve Jim Everett finishing out Peter Hunt Jr's term.

Second: Mark Babin Vote – all affirmative

- C. Approve Agreement with The Chamber of Commerce – we have drafted an agreement with the Chamber outlining the sharing of Mike's time and the responsibilities that he is assuming on behalf of the Chamber.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approving the contract between the Town of Fort Fairfield and the Chamber of Commerce

Second: Kim Murchison Vote – all affirmative

- D. Approve Waiver of Foreclosure on Lawrence Michaud Property – This

has been an ongoing issue due to environmental concerns. It was recommended by legal council that we not allow these liens to go to foreclosure, keeping us out of the chain of title.

Motion: Kim Murchison moved to approve filing the Waiver of Foreclosure on the Lawrence Michaud Property

Second: Ruel Flannery Vote – all affirmative

- E. Agreement for Services Police Department Dispatching - For years we have used the Maine State Police in Houlton, the fees went from \$10,000 to \$32,000 and we felt that was excessive. We then went to Caribou for our dispatching for a fee of \$10,737.00. However, there have been some issues, service isn't at the same level as in the past. Part of the problem is the equipment and they will be doing some upgrading. Spoke with Steve Buck and they are leaving the rates as they are, dispatching for both Police and Fire. Dan asked that the council approve the agreement for the 2011 year.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve the contract with the Caribou Police Department to dispatch for the Police and Fire Departments.

Second: Mark Babin Vote – all affirmative

- VIII. Minutes: December 15, 2010; January 3, 2011 -

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve Minutes of December 15, 2010 and January 3, 2011 as written.

Second: Mark Babin Vote – All affirmative

- IX. Warrants: #12 - \$84,639.33; #13 - \$336,837.36

Motion: Kim Murchison moved to accept warrant #12, #13 as presented.

Second: Terry Greenier Vote – All affirmative

- X. Other - NONE

- XI. Executive Session - Motioned by Kim Murchison to move into executive session at 7:18 pm.

MRSA 405(6)(C) – Economic Development

MRSA 405(6)(D) – Labor Negotiations

It was moved by Mark and seconded by Kim that the Town evict Graphic Utilities, Inc. due to non payment of rent. The Town Manager is authorized to take what legal action is necessary to have them removed from the Spec building.

Voted all in favor

It was moved by Terry and seconded by Mark

That the Town enter into a memorandum of agreement with Stev Rogeski. The Town will abate the 2005 through 2009 taxes on the Lawrence Michaud property and charge off all interest and penalties if all tires associated with the abandoned business are properly

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disposed of, that any contaminated soil is properly disposed of and that the shop is torn down and properly disposed of.

The taxes would be abated and the liens released once this work has been completed.

All voted in favor

XII. Adjournment at 8:15 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Council Secretary
Rebecca J. Hersey