

Fort Fairfield Town Council Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
Wednesday, November 28, 2012
6:00 P.M.

Councilors: David McCrea, Kim Murchison, Mark Babin, Terry Greenier and John Herold

Staff: Tony Levesque, George Watson, Mike Bosse, Mike Jalbertid Lown, Tom Towle

Citizens: 6 including media

Roll Call – Chair Kim Murchison asked that the record reflect that all councilors are present with the exception of Terry Greenier.

- II. Prayer - Councilor Mark Babin offered the prayer
- III. Pledge to the Flag - All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the Flag.

IV. Public Comment Period – Stephen Farnham of Aroostook Area on Aging, provided a report detailing services that is provided to Fort Fairfield by the Aroostook Area on Aging. A copy of this report is attached to these minutes. He was here to let us know how important it is to get support from municipalities in Aroostook County. They spent just a little over \$160,000.00 last year on services for people here in Fort Fairfield. When you work with Federal and State money there are always strings attached to that money. The strings that are attached to our money is that we are required to receive local matching funds in order to draw down on Federal and State monies. Most of the services that we provide are designed to help most people stay within their homes. We provide the home delivered meals, Meals on Wheels. Last year we provide a little over 3000 meals in Fort Fairfield. Another service that we provide is for personal care attendants for those people who would like to remain at home rather than go to a nursing home. The most time intensive area that we are involved with right now is helping people with Medicare open enrollment. There are over 70 people here in Fort Fairfield that are being help with this right now. We are faced with a lot of cuts and the local money has become very important to us.

Questions:

Dan - Do you handle the LIHEAP, is this handled through you?

Steve - We work with ACAP on LIHEAP, the way we work with them is whenever they have a person that is homebound. They do not have any workers that they can send out to do the applications, so they use our staff. The people that we use here in Fort Fairfield is Lisa Tompkins out of Easton and Brenda Barker who does a lot of the foot work here in Fort Fairfield because she lives here.

David – Aroostook Area on Aging spends approximately \$160,000.00 here in Fort Fairfield and basically all your looking for from us is \$2,000.00.

Steve – The \$2,000.00 that we are getting from Fort, goes back a long time, we haven't asked for or received an increase since 1984. We most certainly could use more, but we do a lot of fund raising and donations from private foundations. Any place we can go for a potential match we do. The most dependable source we have and the most important source is the municipalities. If we weren't there we don't know who would be.

V. Correspondence and Reports:

A. Licenses/Permits – None

B. Financial Report – Dan – Four months into this fiscal year our financial status remains in reasonably good shape. Income from revenue sharing and excise tax is consistent with this time of year. Our expenses, particularly labor, benefits and energy costs are in great shape for this time of year. We are going to see an increase over budget in workers compensation primarily due to increased salaries and rate adjustments. Also, Tri Community is raising their fee from \$40.98 to \$42.17 a ton which will add an additional \$4,000.00 in this fiscal year.

C. Tri-Community Landfill Report - Stev – We have had two meetings since the last council meeting. Opened new bunkers at the bottom on the hill, so there really is no reason for the average person to go upon the hill at all. This has been a goal of ours for quite awhile and we have worked diligently and inexpensively as possible. We decided to raise the rates on permit fees from \$5.00 to \$10.00, this should bring anywhere from \$12,000.00 to \$17,000.00 into our budget. We also passed our budget for next year. We have for a long time offered to handle sewer water, we have decided not to do this anymore. Going into the winter DEP has asked us again to open, we have decided to use a sliding rate scale. So that in the winter time people who do not come on a regular bases will pay a little higher fee per gallon.

D. Police Department Report – Dan – We do not have the chief with us tonight. He is doing a presentation for the citizens tonight on bath salts.

However, Brent Churchill is here to give us an update on the Quality of Place Council meeting that was held last night.

Brent – Very please with the direction that the council is going. At last nights meeting there was an unanimous vote to have Dr. Joseph White join the committee with your approval. He is full of energy and has a lot of good ideas for Fort Fairfield. We have begun working on the investment strategy, bringing this up to date by February. We also had the nominations of our officers and it was chosen to keep our existing slate of officers for one more year. We have also set up a new sub-committee that Steve Towle has agreed

to chair and that is to look at events that are occurring in Aroostook County.

We have the Acadia World Conference in 2014 and the 2014 World Junior Cup Biathlon. Looking at how to get Fort Fairfield on the map when people come to these events. We have also established a sub-committee for the Main Street, Phil Christensen as agreed to chair this. Looking at ways to take Fort Fairfield's main street and revitalize it. We are also working on a budget, we have decided that we are not going to set up our own account but rather work through the town.

- E. Update on Coal Furnace Installation – Dan – The furnace at Public Works still is not installed. Still waiting for the plumber who won the bid to come and do the work. Jeff Murchison has agreed to help.
- F. Update on Senior Citizens Housing – Cement has been poured. We have had three meeting with TD Bank and Maine State Housing for their inspection process, everything is running smoothly. There are 19 qualified individuals on the waiting list and we anticipated 35 – 45 to be on this waiting list. We are in good shape.
- G. Update on Clinic Project – Construction is going well, trusses are in place and they are shingling the roof. Attached is a breakdown of pre-construction expenses as well as ledge excavation, which was \$21,280.00. Originally we had budgeted the Town's exposure on this project to be up to \$76,410.00. Additional costs are a short extension of three phase power by Maine Public Service, an outdoor sign and a short electrical run for lighting of this sign. Expectation is that Pines will be operating the Clinic by June.
- H. Update Sudden & Severe Disruption Adjustment – Due to the loss of ACP Tony has applied to the State Revenue Office for a reduction in our State valuation. We have been notified that the Revenue Service has approved the adjustment and has requested the Governor's Office to signoff on it.
- I. Update on Graphic Utilities – About a month ago Mike Bosse sorted through the items that was left by Graphic Utilities. We are in hopes to be able to sell the good produce and apply those funds to the outstanding back rent that is due. We have shown the building to numerous potential renters but now that it is cleaned up it should be more appealing.
- K. Update on School Board Meeting – The School Board would like to meet with the Town Council in December to continue a dialogue regarding the ongoing demands that our respective organizations are dealing with.
- L. Update of New Fire Department Ladder Truck – Paul has been able to obtain a 1992 Pierce Ladder Truck with low hours and miles. Currently it is at NMCC having the motor rebuilt. Estimated value of the truck is approximately \$500,000.00 and our cost associated with getting it on the road

is around \$12,000.00, which will be shared with Limestone.

- M. Update on New Health Insurance Premium Increase - The increase for 2013 is 7.5% which goes into effect on January 1.
- N Update Jeffrey Higgins Law Suit – This is a case of discrimination, because of the cost of going to trial the insurance company has decided to settle.
- O Update on MSAD #20’s Bio’Mass Boiler Open House –There was a short presentation on the new heating system and a tour of the facility. The highlight was a surprise dedication to Jimmy Everett for all the work that he did to see this project to completion.
- P. Update on 21st Century Program – The Advisory Committee meeting was held November 8th. This program is a collaboration program between the town and the school. The Town has provided minimal funding but as federal funding ceases, both the town and the school will need to share in the cost of this very worthwhile program.
- Q. Thanksgiving Dinner & Service Excellence Award – We had our annual employee Thanksgiving dinner last Tuesday and at that time we recognized Chris Gamblin for the great work that he has been doing on behalf of this community. He received a plaque and a \$35.00 gift certificate to the IGA.
- R. Update on LED Street Lights Failure – There have been some failure with some of the bulbs, fortunately they do have a 5 year warrant. Sylvania has gotten involved and they are testing the lights to see what may be causing the problems. George and Jim Everett are in constant contact with Sylvania. We have approximately 200 bulbs at \$500.00 each.
- S. Update on Alpha One Grant – For the pas five years Fort Fairfield has managed the CDBG grant to Alpha One that facilitated the construction of handicapped ramps throughout the State Tony has managed the paperwork and seen that disbursements were appropriately handled.
- T. Skating Rink – The amount of use when the rink is available continues to decrease with minimal participation. The costs associates with creating and maintaining the ice is significant particularly when you factor in that the rink is rarely used.

Tom – Back in the spring the department heads were asked to look at their budgets and find ways to save. At that time, because of the little use and the labor cost of putting in the rink and maintaining it, it was thought that it wasn’t worth doing it this year. A discussion followed and it was decided not to do the rink, but to purchase some tickets to the indoor rink in Presque Isle to give out to Fort Fairfield citizens who may want to skate.

VI. Old Business –

- A. Approve Funding for Aroostook Area on Aging in the amount of \$2,000.00 for this year.

Motion: John Herold moved to approve to funding for Aroostook Area on Aging in the amount of \$2,000.00

Second: David McCrea

Vote – All affirmative

VII. New Business

- A. Approve a Change in Personnel Policy Regarding Holidays – the employees would like to delete Martin Luther King Day and add the Friday after Thanksgiving.

Motion: Mark Babin moved to approve a Change in Personnel Policy Regarding Holidays deleting Martin Luther King day and adding the Friday after Thanksgiving.

Second: David McCrea

Vote – All affirmative

- B. Approve Renovations to the Pole Barn at FARM Park – Stev Rogeski has a lease with the Town for the use of FARM Park for his two Blue Grass Festivals. Periodically he has requested to improve the site so as to enhance the experience of his events. The lease allows for him to make improvements at this cost and with the Council’s consent be reimbursed through a credit off his lease payment for the use of the facility.

Motion: David McCrea moved to approve Renovations to the Pole Barn at FARM Park

Second: John Herold

Vote – All affirmative

- C. Approve Dr. Joseph White as a new member of the Quality of Place Council

Motion: John Herold moved to approve Dr. Joseph White as a new Member of the Quality of Place Council

Second: David McCrea

Vote – All affirmative

VIII. Minutes: October 19, 2012

Motion: David McCrea moved to approve Minutes of October 19, 2012 as written.

Second: Mark Babin

Vote – All affirmative

IX. Warrants: #8 - \$397,475.00; #9 - \$320,123.12; #10 - \$290,580.14

Motion: John Herold moved to accept warrants #8, #9 and #10 as presented.

Second: Mark Babin

Vote – All affirmative

X. Other – NONE

XI. Moved in to executive session at 7:32 PM

Economic Development 1 MRSA 405(6) (C)

No action taken

Out of executive session at 8:17 PM

Adjournment at 8:18 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca J. Hersey
Council Secretary