

**Fort Fairfield Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Council Chambers**  
**Wednesday, March 16, 2011**  
**6:00 P.M.**

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

Staff: Mike Bosse, Billie Jo Sharpe, Tony Levesque, Brady Henderson, George Watson and Tom Towle

Citizens: 13

- I. Roll Call - Chair David McCrea asked that the record reflect that all councilors are 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 –
  - A. Stephanie Fields Beaulieu started out with a request that a street light be put in on the corner of Forest Ave and Roosevelt Ave. She believes that it is a safety issue for people who walk or run after dark. Dan gave her an application of request to complete and submit to Tony.
  - B. Jim Ireland asked that the issue of the Michaud property be re-addressed, there are a few interested people here tonight with questions. Jim doesn't believe anything to do with the sale of and reversal of taxes was done legally. He believes that vital information was kept from the Quality of Place Council regarding this sale. Believes that Stev Rogeski bought the property, Dan got involved therefore there is a conflict of interest. Dan knew three weeks prior to the QPC meeting that Stev bought this property and did not say anything about it. What the Council does for one they should do for all.

Comments:

Stev Rogeski – I still do not own the property, nothing has been done.

Dan stated that the Quality of Place Council got involved because a year and half ago, 125 citizens came together with concerns on how to move the town forward. Out of that group of citizens 12 were selected to make of the QPC. Dan then read the QPC recommendations as to the Michaud property:

“It was moved by Phil and seconded by Garrett to recommend to the Fort Fairfield Town Council to charge off back taxes owed by the Estate of Lawrence Michaud as uncollectible in order to facilitate the remediation of the property located at 27 Houlton Road. It is further recommended that the cost of the clean up effort be equal to or greater than the amount of the back taxes being charged off and that the liens are not discharged until the clean up work is verified. This recommendation is deemed consistent with the Fort Fairfield Economic Development Investment Strategy.”

Sonny Michaud made the decision to sell this property the Town had nothing to do with it. This information is not accurate, I have not gotten involved with the sale of this property, and I did not withhold any information.

- C. David McCrea – On another note I would like to make a comment regarding the Chapman Building on Main Street. It was an eye sore for many years, but now that a couple of businesses have moved into it and have done so impressive renovations and it is now looking great.
  
- V. Correspondence and Reports
  - A. Licenses/Permits – Three Liquor License applications, one for the Fort Fairfield Lions Club, Boondocks Grille and of for the VFW.
  
  - B. Financial Report – Revenue continues on track, excise tax is a little behind but is consistent for this time of year, revenue sharing continues to lag. The only other line item in our income budget that is lagging is the rent due to Graphic Utilities and this is slowly being addressed. Our expense for the most part are in line with the budget, salaries at Public Works are going to be an issue due to the amount of overtime that these guys have been working. Our cash flow remains strong and in good position.
  
  - C. Tri-Community Landfill Report- Went out to bid for the pipeline installation, budget was set at 1.4 million. A bid came in from Soderberg for 1.2. Also scheduled a review date for the Solid Waste Director, Mark is doing a great job.
  
  - D. Chamber Report – Mike – The Agri-Business Trade Fair is next week, the 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>. Booths are 75% full, would like to encourage everyone to attend, it should be a fun time. Best of America by Horseback is fully funded, 3 sponsors have stepped in.
  
  - E. Update on Railroad Abandonment Process- State now owns the rail in Aroostook County, there are three companies vying to operate the rail system and we should know by the end of April which one will take over.
  
  - F. Presentation of FY 11/12 Budget – On the property tax side the State is holding back \$20,000.00 on the Homestead Exemptions; we should get this after July. Overall looking at a reduction in income of \$40,000.00. Expenses are up with the price of diesel, gas and insurance.
  
  - G. Update on CDBG Grant Applications – We have submitted the application and should have heard the first of the month, however, with everything going on with legislation everything is on hold until the State has their budget approved.

- H. Update on “The Meadows” Project – This is also on hold. We are looking to get into one of Maine State Housings programs, but bonds are going to be approved by the Governor and will need to go through referendum.
  - I. Community Recognition Award from Efficiency Maine –On March 4<sup>th</sup> Efficiency of Maine recognized the Town of Fort Fairfield with an award for the towns work on the new street lights. It is the first time a Community has received this type of award.
  - J. Wood to Energy Grants Program – Its not in the best interest for the community center to change over. The boiler will be housed in the High School not in the barn and installing the pipeline from school to community center would be to expensive. However we have done a resolution to support MSAD#20 in changing over to wood energy.
- VI. Old Business - NONE
- VII. New Business
- A. Approve Resolution #11-01 for SAD#20 – Tony, Mike and Dan met with Marc Gendron and some consultants to review the wood to energy project that SAD#20 is proposing and the ability for our community to participate. It appears that it is not financially practical to attach the community center to this boiler. The costs would far out weigh the potential savings in heating costs. It would make more sense for the town to look at putting in a pellet furnace if we wanted to get away from oil. This resolution though endorses this project and recognizes that it does make sense for SAD#20 and for the taxpayers of this community.  
Motion: Terry Greenier moved to approve Resolution #11-01 as written.  
Second: Kim Murchision Vote – All affirmative
  - B. Approve FY 11/12 Budget Timeline – The schedule for the budget process involves two additional meeting for the Council, the first one is March 22<sup>nd</sup> for the Department Head presentations and the first public hearing which will be held on May 4<sup>th</sup>.  
Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve the FY 11/12 Budget Timeline as presented.  
Second: Mark Babin Vote – All affirmative
  - C. Approve Process for Disposition of Tax Acquired Property – We have six residential homes, three are vacant and three are occupied and we have a tax bill of \$122.34 due on a trailer that has been moved from this community.  
Vacant properties are:
    - 65 South Caribou Road
    - 178 Main Street
    - 109 Riverside Ave –

The property on Riverside is in dilapidated condition and is a blight on the neighborhood and would recommend having the structure torn down and the land sold to the abutters. The other two properties should be put out to bid. The other three properties are:

John Russell at 26 Forest Ave - taxes due of \$3,270.05

Marion Wortman at 292 West Limestone Road - taxes due of \$1,553.34

Ralph Taggett at 8 Thomas Ave – taxes due of \$2,661.59

What we have traditionally done in the past is provide these folks with the enclosed letter allowing them the opportunity of paying these taxes and next years in full over time to be able to keep their homes. If they are unwilling to work with the Town then we would have no alternative but to put these buildings out to bid. Its important to note that if that were to come to pass we would not be evicting anyone, that would become the responsibility of whoever bought the property from us.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve putting out to bid the 65 South Caribou Road and the 178 Main Street properties, demolish the 109 Riverside Ave. property and allowing the last three property owners to make payment arrangements with Ella on behave of the Town.

Second: Terry Greenier

Vote – All affirmative

We also had a trailer relocate from this community leaving an unpaid tax bill of \$52.20, with lien costs and interest the bill is now \$122.34. The owner now lives in Presque Isle and it is recommended that we send one more letter requesting payment and if we do not receive this take her to small claims court and incur an additional cost of \$50.00 in court fees.

Motion: Terry Greenier moved to approve writing off the \$52.20 and associated costs on this account.

Second: Kim Murchison

Vote – All affirmative

- D. Approve Vehicle Replace for Public Works Director – At this time Public Works has an existing pick-up that needs replacement, it is a 2000 GMC 4 x 4 with around 180,000 miles. This was purchased in 2001 with 30,000 miles for \$16,500.00. Since then we have had to replace the motor and at this time it is leaking, using and now burning oil. Each spring the State of Maine, Surplus Property holds an auction of State of Maine vehicles being up-graded. In reviewing the list there are a few 2005's and 2006's with high mileage that could work as a replacement.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve George spending up to \$6,000.00 towards a new vehicle purchased from the State of Maine surplus Auction.

Second: Terry Greenier

Vote – All affirmative

VIII. Minutes: February 16, 2011

Motion: Mark Babin moved to approve Minutes of February 16, 2011

as written.

Second: Kim Murchison

Vote – All affirmative

IX. Warrants: #16 - \$77,682.20; #17- \$289,517.64

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to accept warrant #16, #17 as presented.

Second: Mark Babin

Vote – All affirmative

X. Other - NONE

XI. Executive Session -

Motion: Ruel Flannery to move into executive session at 7:06 pm.

Second: Terry Greenier

MRSA 405(6)(C) – Economic Development

MRSA 405(6)(D) – Labor Negotiations

MRSA 405(6)(A) – Personnel

Out of executive session at 7:35 pm

It was moved by Mark Babin and seconded by Kim Murchison to approve a memorandum of agreement and a promissory note with Graphic Utilities regarding the past due rent owed to the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Approved unanimously

It was moved by Ruel Flannery and seconded by Mark Babin to retain the services of Jim Park to complete a summary appraisal on the Graphic Utilities building to determine fair market value.

Approved unanimously

XII. Adjournment at 7:40 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Council Secretary  
Rebecca J. Hersey