

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Wednesday, February 20, 2019
6:00 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Councilors: All Councilors are present

Staff: Andrea Powers, Billie Jo Sharpe, Neadra Dubois, Darren Hanson, Kevin Senal, Mitchell Dufour, Chief Newell, Chief Baldwin, Ella Leighton, Officer Eagles, Tony Levesque, Fred Everitt, Jr.

Citizens: 12 including media.

II. Prayer – Tony offered the prayer.

III. Pledge to the Flag – All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the American Flag.

IV. Public Comment Period

Tammy Deschesne, Fort Fairfield resident stated that the machine that Public Works uses to clear the sidewalks downtown is continually breaking down and has also begun to leak oil on the sidewalks. Mrs. Deschesne suggested that the Town contract this service out so that Business owners downtown don't have to pay McGillan's to come clean them out. Mrs. Deschesne said these businesses already pay taxes and shouldn't have to pay twice.

Hardie Ketch, Fort Fairfield resident commented that for the last two years road conditions near the West and Center Limestone roads "have been a catastrophe." The stop sign is almost buried and the snow blocks drivers vision coming from either road. Mr. Ketch also said that last November he was almost hit by another car head on due to slush in the roads and stated that "there should not be any slush in the roads with the plows we have today." Mr. Ketch also commented on the size of the sand that is being put on the roads stating that some of it is big enough to break a windshield and said he doesn't believe that Public Works is getting it from the guy across the line because he doesn't have that kind.

Mike Edgecomb, Fort Fairfield resident stated that he addressed Council last month and referred to McGillan Drive after Councilor Smith had asked him where he picked the rocks up. Mr. Edgecomb then said that he read in the paper the next day that the Highway reported that they don't even sand McGillan Drive. Mr. Edgecomb said that ever since that road has been there they have plowed it and sanded it. Mr. Edgecomb stated that it made him look like a liar and didn't feel that was right. There were some other articles about the screening process and Mr. Edgecomb said he has been around the screening process for fifteen years and disagrees that you can get half-inch rocks after screening sand. Mr. Edgecomb brought in a bucket of sand that he said is delivered to the Town and then also had a bag of stones that he stated is what is on our roads. Mr. Edgecomb said that a Caribou resident picked them up on their way to work in Fort Fairfield and dropped them off to him. Mr. Edgecomb said that these are burnt rocks and as far as he knew O'Neals pit has not caught fire and burnt any rock. Mr. Edgecomb also brought in a picture of his vehicle covered in a brown like mud material that he said was taken after a trip to Town from his house. He said that they have never had that here. Mr.

Edgecomb said he would like to have some answers and it needs to be addressed here and not in the paper.

Mr. Kendall Stratton, Fort Fairfield resident thanked Mr. Hanson and Public Works for doing a good job keeping the banks pushed back this year.

Mr. Stratton also showed Council a small version of an advertising banner that the ATV Club will be displaying along with a 3-D birds-eye view map of the trails on their information boards.

Council Chair Mr. Babin thanked the public for their comments and reminded attendees that if they have items they would like to be added to a future Council meeting to please contact the Town Manager.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses/Permits

As of February 20, 2019 we have received one application for renewal of Malt, Vinous, and Spirituous license for the Fort Fairfield Lions Club and an additional one-day catering permit for the Lions Club for an off-premises catering permit to bartend during the March 2, 2019 Fort Fairfield Snowmobile Club's Super Draw held in the Community Center.

B. Financial Report

The Towns' Real Estate and Personal Property total tax collections as of January 31, 2019 were \$1,845,985.31. Compared to collections for the same period last year, collections are down \$174,589.43.

Excise tax collections as of January 31, 2019 are \$370,033.00. This is 66.08% of the budgeted amount, which is 7.75% greater than the 58.33% anticipated as of January 31.

State revenue sharing as of January 31, 2019 is \$146,496.53, slightly above our budgeted amount.

Our expenses as of January 31 are \$3,128,378.00. This is 61.18 % of the budgeted amount, which is slightly above 58.33% our January budget . The excess expenses were due in part to preparation for the winter season by Public Works, e.g. sand, salt, plows and chains.

Revenues are 28.37% above budget and expenses are 2.85% above budgeted amounts for January 2019. The large increase in revenues is due to the \$235,133.00 which we received as a result of the AWS/Tri Community merger.

Our cash flow is in fantastic condition. Our January 31, 2019 checking balance is \$827,747.09.

We deposited \$250,000.00 into our Machias savings on January 24, 2019 giving us a savings balance of \$505,000.00 as of January 31, 2019.

45 day foreclosure notices for 2016 RE Taxes were mailed 1/18/2018. We sent 33 notices to property owners for a total of \$27,751.59 in unpaid taxes out of 51 liens filed. The last day to pay before automatic foreclosure is March 6, 2019. Eleven of the properties belong to Dan Bourgoine who usually pays on the last day.

Compared to last year, we sent 51 notices for a total of \$28,024.68.

There is one property that falls under the new law pertaining to a home owner who was at least 65 years old on the date the lien was recorded. Mrs. Leighton has had a conversation with this home owner and he stated that he has someone interested in buying his property.

Mrs. Leighton will continue to work with the owners to get payment before March 6, 2019 and avoid having tax acquired property.

C. AWS Report - Mr. Rogeski

AWS last met on January 25. AWS has signed contracts with the Presque Isle haulers, Presque Isle has chosen not to collect their own trash and bring it to AWS in Fort Fairfield under the new merger agreement.

Truck scales were in line to be repaired next year; however AWS is going to move some reserve accounts around and have it done this year. They have worked out an arrangement with Pineland Farms to use their scales while AWS's scales are being repaired.

Mark Draper's contract was renewed with a cost of living raise for the next two years.

VI. Old Business

A. Correction to the minutes of the January 16, 2019 Regular Council Meeting

At the January 16, 2019 Council meeting, Council approved the reappointments of Mr. Dorsey and Mr. Rogeski to the Economic Development Board.

There was an error regarding the appointment date of June 30, 2018. It should have stated an appointment date of July 1, 2018.

Recommendation: Council approves the correction to the January 16, 2019 minutes as noted above.

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the correction to the January 16, 2019 minutes as noted.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. Oil Burner

The new oil boiler installation is finished within the timeline and budget involving Public Works manpower and equipment for two days and County Plumbing & Heating several days for set-up and start-up. The new boiler has several upgrades from the old model which should provide increased efficiency as well as longevity. No action necessary, this is just to inform Council of the completion of the project.

C. Generator

Tim Roix from BRSA gave an overview of the Basis of Design that was provided to Council and Municipal Officials.

Mr. Smith asked if they looked at this building. It has two service entrances. Did you look at and do a cost factor of maybe putting it all on one?

Mr. Roix replied, no this side of the building has everything in it. It keeps the boiler up and running, it keeps the Fire Department on. Mr. Roix said that they were not asked to look at the new side; but looking at it, this side (Armory) can operate and provide heat throughout the entire building.

Mr. Smith - If we lose power for a long period of time for whatever reason, Town Hall is closed. They would require their own generator source. Would it be more cost effective to put the whole building on one power source, one generator source?

Mr. Roix – Possibly, however it was not part of what they were initially asked to look at. Mr. Roix said that they are only looking at the “Armory” side of the building. The heat is the only thing common between the two sides. We would not be powering anything in the new edition.

Mr. Kilcollins stated that we should look at that.

Mr. Butler agreed and stated that the Police Department is on the new side and if we have a power outage and an emergency, they will be running back and forth.

Mr. Roix asked Council if they didn't like the numbers from the estimate. Mr. Roix said that by looking at the other side, they are just adding to the costs of the project and more investigation would need to be done.

Chief Newell said that he had discussion about having a generator hook-up called an elephant nose that if we were out of power for an extended period of time, we could provide power to the new section of the building if needed. The only problem would be the reliability of the generator. Aroostook County EMA has two generators available. One is in Van Buren and the other is in Mapleton. Chief Newell said that he may not always have access to either generator in the event of an extended outage. If we are in the middle of a serious incident, EOC (Emergency Operations Center) will be up and operating in the Armory side of the building and that's where he and his department will be and need to be. The EOC will be located in the training room in the Fire Department. Chief Newell stated this is where all staff and equipment will be located.

Mr. Butler asked if this would all be powered by the new generator?

Chief Newell responded, yes.

Chief Newell said while also providing power to Emergency services during an extended outage, they can now use the Community Center as a shelter rather than the Elementary School which does not have a generator and this is why we didn't initially look at both

sides of the building. If we need to run the Town Office we can try to grab a generator, get it hooked up and they will have lights, and computers as will the Police department. The Armory side was the area of focus as Public Safety Officer.

Mr. Smith – If we are going to upgrade and do it right, then let's do the whole thing right and make sure that the bids are put out consistent so it's fair for all competition. It would be inconvenient for taxpayers and staff for the Town Office to be closed and or move.

Mr. Smith recommended that it be one generator and run it all or at least consider it.

Mr. Babin - In the event of a power outage the new side loses lights and outlets but it's already heated?

Ms. Powers responded that it's heated by the boiler which is in the other side of the building.

Mr. Babin asked what the entrance is in the new section.

Mr. Rogeski commented that it is three-phase.

Recommendation: That Council accepts BRSA's design agreement for the generator project for the Town of Fort Fairfield from the G-1-3300-00 line. (As of 2.14.19 has \$538,760.77)

Mr. Kilcollins said that he thinks that they can still move forward with the recommendation but include information for additional power on the new side.

Ms. Powers said it is her understanding that we can use a portable generator for this side of the building and we can look into the cost of purchasing one.

Mr. Babin commented that they should look at getting the proper size generator to rectify the loss of lights and outlets on the new side in the event of a power outage.

Mr. Powers - Yes

Mr. Smith commented that you should be able to hook that second generator into the additional propane source so that you're not always out there filling it every few hours and it would be automatic if the whole building goes out.

Mr. Rogeski said that that would be an option.

Mr. Kilcollins – We can move forward with the recommendation.

Mr. Smith - Just change the design a little bit and with some additional costs for the second generator and work.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Roix if moving the panels in the Fire Department bays was part of the plan.

Mr. Roix replied yes, that they have already begun to move some of it for multiple reasons.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Council accepts BRSA's design agreement for the generator project for the Town of Fort Fairfield from the G-1-3300-00 line. (As of 2.14.19 has \$538,760.77)

Mr. Butler seconded.

Mr. Smith would like to make an amendment to include the second generator and to include the work that's required for doing it so that the whole building is powered in case of an emergency.

Vote – All Affirmative

VII. New Business

A. Central Aroostook Chamber

Ms. Powers has been meeting with LaNiece Sirois, the new Executive Director of the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce, to formulate what benefits would be afforded to our businesses in Fort Fairfield if we were to join the Chamber.

Ms. Powers found that being active in the Chamber of Commerce is an effective business strategy overall with an increase in consumer favorability, awareness, reputation and future growth.

Membership brings credibility to a business. There is an increase in positive perception among consumers and business owners when they are identified as a member of a Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's most fundamental mission is to generate more business activity for the community. The chamber initiates more business-to-business commerce and more opportunities for networking and connecting local professionals than is available through most other local organizations.

Every day, the Chamber receives calls from individuals and businesses looking for potential vendors, and chamber members typically recommend chamber members. With the opportunity to increase visibility in the community, as a new member of the chamber of commerce, they will be listed in the chamber newsletter, e-newsletter, the Chamber's website, on the Chamber's Facebook page and have the opportunity to be highlighted in other chamber publications. They can also grow their business by advertising with the chamber and their various events. The chamber may also promote our local businesses grand opening/ ribbon-cutting ceremonies and assist with any public relations efforts.

The Chamber creates networking opportunities for our businesses. Chambers often have numerous committees and serving on one of them provides numerous networking opportunities as well as professional leadership development. They would be able to build their business while promoting developments of keen interest to local businesses and the community at large.

Joining the Chamber would help businesses gain a voice in government. The Chamber takes on the tough issues and opposes new regulations, taxes, fees, assessments and costs directed at small businesses. It also helps protect the principles of free enterprise and aids businesses in being treated fairly.

Recommendation: That Council accepts the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce's offer to join them at \$1,800.00 a year for the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Council accepts the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce's offer to join them at \$1,800.00 a year for the 2019/2020 fiscal year.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Butler asked if Mrs. Sirois had asked any local businesses how they would feel about joining the Chamber.

Mrs. Sirois responded that she had refrained as she was waiting for Council's approval first.

Mr. Smith commented that he is very pleased with this and feels that businesses will and do need the Chambers help.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. Mailbox policy

Ms. Powers stated that it had been brought to her attention that the Town does not currently have a mailbox policy. Ms. Powers has been working with the Public Works Director on formulating a mailbox policy for the Community and they have found that the State of Maine's Mailbox Policy is conclusive.

Recommendation: Council accepts the State of Maine's Mailbox Policy as our own Mailbox Policy for the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Mr. Smith made a motion that Council accepts the State of Maine's Mailbox Policy as our own Mailbox Policy for the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Mrs. Libby asked if the Town knows how many mailboxes are not within the guidelines and how many people are going to have to move their mailboxes.

Mr. Hanson responded no, that they have not gone around or done any study on this.

Mrs. Libby said it's a good idea but worries about the expense to the residents to move their mailbox and asked if there would be fines, etc. if they could not.

Mr. Hanson said that they would not require they be moved now, but if they were damaged in the future, we would hand them the guidelines.

Mrs. Libby – So existing mailboxes that are not in the guidelines don't have to be moved at this time, but if a new mailbox is put in or a damaged one is being replaced, then it will have to be by the guidelines.

Mr. Hanson – Yes.

Mr. Smith – What if a person is in compliance and there are still issues?

Mr. Hanson – The policy states that if you put a mailbox in the right-of-way, then it's on "you." The Town will always look at it on a case by case basis as we do now. It would be hard to come down on a driver for damaging a mailbox during a blizzard event while they are doing all they can to keep the road open. Damage to a mailbox on a clear day would be handled differently.

Mr. Hanson – We needed a policy and this is a starting point.

Mr. Babin – Who is liable if people are compliant, follow the measurements from the guideline and the mailbox is clearly on their own property and it still gets hit?

Mr. Hanson – We are liable if it's outside the right of way.

Mr. Hanson – I feel it's the right thing to continue to monitor it on a case by case basis.

Vote – All Affirmative.

C. Public Works Trackless

Background: Public Works currently uses an 850 John Deere tractor as a backup for the Trackless Sidewalk Plow and during a recent heavy snow event while repairing a minor breakdown to the Trackless we tried to use the John Deere only to have the four-wheel drive fail.

Discussion: It is time to put the John Deere out to bid and purchase a newer Trackless which will become our primary sidewalk machine while keeping our old Trackless which is still in good shape for backup sidewalk plowing and summer patching operations.

Recommendation: Town Council authorizes Public Works to use not more than \$15,000 from the Public Works Reserve Account (G 1-3060-00) to purchase a used Trackless Sidewalk Plow.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Town Council authorizes Public Works to use not more than \$15,000 from the Public Works Reserve Account (G 1-3060-00) to purchase a used Trackless Sidewalk Plow.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

D. RCM Communications – Ms. Powers

To protect our citizens our law enforcement and fire departments must be able to communicate effectively and communication interoperability has been a persistent problem for them, with issues of in-building coverage, poor infrastructure, and failing standards. The propagation study Ms. Powers requested of RCM during the preliminary phase has shown that a solution can only be achieved by recognition of the problem and cooperative efforts for its resolution.

Interoperability is the ability of public safety agencies to talk to one another via radio communication systems to exchange voice and/or data with one another on demand, in real time, when needed. Ms. Powers assumed that public safety was already interoperable here in Fort Fairfield and have found that our law enforcement officers cannot even talk to their own officers via radio.

An effective emergency response system requires swift and reliable communications. That's why it's so important that the devices used by police radios and radios for firefighters, are updated, properly set up and maintained so that they're ready to meet the demands of the future. Two-way radios, particularly digital two-way radios, will continue to serve as the backbone of disaster response and emergency communications. Ms. Powers encouraged the Council to work together for the common good of our law enforcement officers and fire department to plan, fund, build, and govern an interoperable public safety communications system.

Chief Newell and Chief Baldwin presented Council with the propagation study that showed what they currently have and what the new system would provide. Officers have zero portable communications when out of their vehicles. The only time we can call for back-up is while sitting in our cruisers. It's not acceptable to have to use a cell phone to dial for help. Chief Newell has been working with the Town of Fort Fairfield to get this

changed. It's an incredible safety issue for our Firefighters on the ground. The PD is "one step above a soup can and a string."

Chief Newell pointed out the areas on the maps from the propagation study where portable radios do not work. It was noted that the Town of Fort Fairfield lies in that area.

The study shows that a new tower on top of Harvey Hill to be the best location to provide the best portable radio communication and will allow communication with the Houlton Barrack directly.

The State of Maine has permitted the Town of Fort Fairfield to join their network, which will put us on our own channel on our own panel at the Houlton Barracks.

Mr. Butler - In the past repeaters were put in the trunks of the cruiser so we wouldn't have these problems. What has changed since then?

Chief Newell – It was explained to him by Mac McNight that it's just something else that fails and doesn't last a long time. It's \$2200 per repeater and doesn't guarantee reliable service.

Mr. Kilcollins – Will this benefit Public Works as well?

Chief Newell responded No, they have a better system than ours.

Mr. Smith – I spoke with Chief Baldwin yesterday and was surprised at how antiquated the system is. New Hampshire had a better system forty-five years ago.

Chief Newell – The Fire Department's system is better than the Police Departments.

Chief Baldwin – responded "basically because they don't have the equipment at all." The Fire Department has the equipment, but it's not a repeater based system. It's a UHF to VHF link. In-car repeaters are good but you have to have the total infrastructure to make it work.

Mr. Smith – Would putting the tower on Kings Castle be a better location where as the Water Company, you're going have little dips and holes that you're not going to hit.

Chief Newell – When Mr. McNight returns from vacation he can check that area out very easily.

Mrs. Libby – Thank you to whoever brought this to the attention of the Council. Mrs. Libby said she was completely unaware that the system was like this. It is completely unacceptable that Officers have to use their cell phone to call for back up or not be able to communicate with people outside when you are in a fire.

Recommendation: It is my recommendation to the Council to accept RCM's Phase 1 Public Safety communications Project for the Town of Fort Fairfield from the G-1-3300-00 line. (As of 2.14.19 has \$538,760.77)

Mr. Butler made a motion that Council accepts RCM's Phase 1 Public Safety communications Project for the Town of Fort Fairfield from the G-1-3300-00 line. (As of 2.14.19 has \$538,760.77)

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Vote – All Affirmative.

VIII. Minutes of the January 16, 2019 Regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 16, 2019 regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

IX. Warrants: #15: \$383,989.00; #16: \$794,653.97; #17: \$492,663.85

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve Warrants #15, #16, and #17 as written.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

X. Other

A. **Dick's Sporting Goods Sponsorship*

Background: Title 30-A M.R.S.A. §5654 states that a conditional gift for any specified public purpose offered to a municipality may be accepted or rejected by its legislative body.

Discussion: The Parks and Recreation Department applied for a sponsorship opportunity through Dick's Sporting Goods, for our upcoming baseball season. This sponsorship gives the rec department funds in the form of Gift Certificates to use for equipment, and coupons to hand out to participants.

The value of this contribution is \$500.00 in certificates for product.

Recommendation: That Town Council accepts the Dick's Sporting Goods sponsorship donation to our baseball program, in the amount of \$500.00.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Town Council accepts the Dick's Sporting Goods sponsorship donation to our baseball program, in the amount of \$500.00.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. **Community Room Rehab – Electrical Work*

Background: Title 30-A M.R.S.A. §5654 states that a conditional gift for any specified public purpose offered to a municipality may be accepted or rejected by its legislative body.

Discussion: The Parks and Recreation Department asked Greenlaw Electric LLC for a quote on electrical work for the Community Renter rehab. After looking at the room and hearing our request for work to be done, Mr. Greenlaw said they would like to do the

work at no cost to the Town of Fort Fairfield, covering all parts and labor. He stated that they try do at least one project per year as a donation to the community.

The value of this contribution is \$1,232.51, as noted on the given invoice, printed on the back of this memorandum.

Recommendation: That Town Council accepts the donation of electrical goods and services, valued at \$1,232.51, to the Town's Parks and Recreation Department. Mr. Butler made a motion that Town Council accepts the donation of electrical goods and services, valued at \$1,232.51, to the Town's Parks and Recreation Department.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

XI. Manager's Report – Given to Council for informational purposes only

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Butler made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Council adjourned at 7:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted

Billie Jo Sharpe
Council Secretary

**Added prior to Council Meeting.*