

Report of the Town Manager
Dan K. Foster



It is my pleasure to present to you the annual report of the financial status of our community as prepared by David N. Felch, for the year ending June 30, 2008. In reviewing this year's financial position, Fort Fairfield's income for this fiscal year was \$4,696,722.00, which is \$136,901.00 over the budgeted amount. This was due, in large part, to an increase in property tax received and states revenue sharing. Total department expenses were \$48,272.00 under budget despite the significant increases in fuel and heating oil costs. With the budgeted overlay this has created a surplus of \$219,132.00. A portion of this surplus is being used to offset an increase in property taxes with the balance being added to our reserve accounts to help with next year's loan payments and any infrastructure upgrades.

Fort Fairfield continues to grow and develop infrastructure to meet the needs of its citizens. Our move to the new Town Office is complete and the new swimming pools were a big hit this summer. Our new Town Clock was dedicated in the memory of Dolly Reed during our Annual Potato Blossom Festival. We continue to enhance FARM Park allowing for increased activities at this venue.

Sarah Ulman and Rayle Ainsworth took on the task of heading up our Sesquicentennial Festivities. This year long project has been extremely successful, highlighting the lifestyles of our past while bringing together the citizens of today. Many thanks to all who participated in this exciting endeavor.

Our challenges are many; school consolidation has been a significant issue for the overall well being of this community. Fort Fairfield continues to depend on significant funding from the State to maintain this educational system and they are unwilling to continue at this rate of compensation. Considerable time has been spent by the Fort Fairfield Planning Committee, which consists of the Town Council, the School Board, the Superintendent, the Town Manager and four citizens at large, to create a partnership with other communities that would meet the needs of our schools. Central Office functions can be consolidated with minimal impact on the education of our children and should create savings for all participating communities. Many other factors including how costs are shared, facility

ownership and governance have been much more complicated and we are being very careful in how we participate in this endeavor.

Healthcare availability in our community has become increasingly a challenge as TAMC announced the closure of our clinic. Though we have been able to extract a reprieve from their initial position, it may only be temporary as the fiscal restraints on our local hospitals make such clinics very difficult to maintain. We need to continue to work with TAMC, Cary and other health providers to ensure quality healthcare in our community. We also need to explore appropriate uses for Community General Hospital as it continues to be underutilized and an expensive building to heat and maintain for the hospital.

In the midst of these challenges is a ray of light. Wind power has found Aroostook County and Fort Fairfield has a unique opportunity to take advantage of our many acres of cleared farmland and abundant wind. This industry is poised to make a significant investment in this community, allowing for a substantial increase in our tax base, provide lucrative leases to our landowners and some great job opportunities for our citizens.

Though this is a few years out it behooves us to seriously consider the unique opportunity that this provides us to create a more “livable” community. Quality of place is an important attribute as people decide where they want to live, raise their children and hopefully retire. I firmly believe that this community has the vision required to positively impact our future, the collective wisdom to recognize this opportunity and the will to grow and mature into the 21st century as a leader in Aroostook County.

We are very blessed to have active organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce and the Frontier Heritage Society whose loyal members continue to provide leadership in our community. The Chamber remains very active in three successful festivals and Frontier Heritage has wonderful dreams of developing a community from our past, which will highlight the industries, businesses and lifestyles of our ancestors.

We strive to find innovative ways of meeting the needs of this community, to work at increasing its tax base while maintaining a reasonable cost for those who live here. I personally want to thank all those who participate in making Fort Fairfield a more valued community. The citizens, the Council, Department Heads and employees who continually strive to make this a community of choice. Please do not hesitate to contact either the Council or myself with your concerns, your hopes and your aspirations for a better Fort Fairfield.

All the Best.