

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Wednesday, August 16, 2017
6:00 P.M.

Councilors: Jason Barnes, Mitchell Butler, John Herold, Melissa Libby, Scott Smith
Staff: James Risner, Darren Hanson, Ella Leighton, Tony Levesque, Billie Jo Sharpe

Citizens: Seven including Media

- I. Roll Call - Chair Jason Barnes asked that the record reflect all councilors were present.
- II. Prayer – Tony Levesque offered the Prayer.
- III. Pledge to the Flag – All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the American Flag.
- IV. Public Comment Period

Mr. Keith Letarte who lives at 105 Riverside Avenue has a complaint regarding the property located at 107 Riverside Avenue. He has brought this issue up in the past and spoke to Mr. Levesque this morning. He is aware that this issue is being dealt with currently and appreciates anything that can be done to rectify the situation.

Mrs. Letarte explained their detailed concerns. The property appearance is disgraceful with junk. There are two stovepipes coming out their windows and they do not burn clean wood, the smoke and smell come into the Letarte's property. There is loud music, all-terrain vehicles coming and going at all hours of the night along with a generator running. Mrs. Letarte wants the Town to address the issues and have them clean up their property and make sure the house is up to code.

Mr. Zackary Argraves - who lives at 103 Riverside Avenue, would also like the complaints regarding 107 Riverside Avenue to be addressed.

A. Aroostook Aspirations Award

Meaghan Everett, the 2016 WAGM Gauvin Scholar, on behalf of Aroostook Aspirations Initiative presented the members of the Town Council and the Town of Fort Fairfield with an award this year for Best of Aroostook in the category of Best Festival, to The Maine Potato Blossom Festival.

Miss Everett presented a certificate to Chair Jason Barnes.

Mr. Risner – mentioned that the Potato Blossom Festival relies on many volunteers and it is nice to see a young group be recognized for the Maine Potato Blossom Festival being the best in the County.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses and Permits – Ms. Sharpe

As of August 16, 2017 we have not received any license and permit applications.

B. Financial Report – Mr. Risner

The 2016 real estate tax lien notices were mailed on August 4. There were 229 notices for 2016; with a value of \$219,835.80. This is one less than the 230 notices; with a value of \$221,260.39; for 2015.

As of today we have received a little over \$35,000 for 2016 taxes on 36 parcels and \$5,400 for 2015 taxes on six parcels. So we are making some headway.

The Town received \$5,318 from the State veterans' exemption reimbursement, which is 6.62% more than budgeted.

The Town's Real Estate and Personal Property tax collections for July were \$89,279.41, compared to \$58,206 for July 2016.

Excise tax collections as of July 31 are \$101,140.94. This is 18.03% of the budgeted amount, which is ahead of the 8.33% expected as of July 31.

State revenue sharing as of July 31 is \$21,526.21. This is 8.80% of the budgeted amount, which is ahead of the 8.33% that is expected as of July 31.

Our expenses as of July 31 are slightly above what is expected; 8.64% compared to 8.33%. A primary reason for this is that many of the Recreation Department activities, including the pool, are in the summer months.

Cash flow is good with \$109,748.85 in checking and \$850,000 in savings after completion of Warrant #4

C. Tri-Community Landfill Report – Mr. Rogeski

Last meeting was July 28, 2017. Our financial reports were all in order and we are a little ahead of schedule at this time. If anyone has been noticing the 20-yard dump trucks coming and going from the landfill, they are bringing debris from Huber that Tri Community uses for fill.

Our wetland project which started a little over 18 months ago is now completely done. They reclaimed some old land that used to be an old gravel pit of ours and made a nice wetland pond area out of it, a lot like the one at the old pit on the Limestone Road. We received around \$94,000 in funding from the government but we only needed to match that with \$5,700 worth of labor. It's a very nice project.

We are soliciting comments on our demolition debris pricing. We lowered the price for some of our contractors in the area that are working on local peoples' homes and businesses and rather than charging the high rate of \$135 a load it was lowered down to the normal rate coming into the landfill. It doesn't hurt the landfill to do this. The demolition stuff helps us in the landfill and we like to keep it reasonable so that people don't dump the debris off in a gravel pit or somewhere on the side of the road.

The Anaerobic Digester Project seems to be moving along at a fairly steady pace. The Tri-Community Board reviewed and approved the lease agreement.

D. Fiscal Year 2017/2018 Budget Update

Overall we are going in the right direction on the deficit, as you may recall the projected deficit in the budget approved on June 21 was \$248,521. Currently that is \$164,375 a reduction of just over \$84,000. The mil rate increase to support the June 21 deficit was 1.68. Currently we are down to 1.11.

These numbers will change prior to the Commitment by Town Council at its September 20 meeting. The trend for both numbers is decreasing, based on information from the preliminary audit, MSAD #20 Board vote, and Homestead Exemptions.

The preliminary audit shows an increase of \$47,935 in the Town's surplus from Fiscal Year 2016/2017, which is approximately \$257,000 to just over \$300,000 in a surplus.

The MSAD #20 Board met on August 9 and voted to use \$65,946.80 of the \$164,867 to help the Town lower the mil rate. The remainder of that was put in their Capital Reserve which is extremely low. This lowers the MSAD #20 requirement from the Town from \$2,286,352 to \$2,220,406. The increase from last year is now \$133,842, and is approximately .91 mil instead of the approximately 1.35 mil previously. It doesn't solve all our problems, but it's a move in the right direction.

The Homestead Exemption is \$29,735 less than budgeted. The difference is caused by the State reducing; after the Town Council approved the Town's Fiscal Year 2017/2018 budget; the Homestead Exemption reimbursement to municipalities from 62.5% to 50%.

Even with that reduction we were able to decrease our deficit and the tax assessor is still working on the calculations on the mil rate and this information will be available for Council at the September meeting.

E. Community Bandstand Update – Mr. Risner

Mr. Risner spoke to Mr. Pelletier from K-Pel this morning; he will be finished with his work this week. The main thing left is to seal the concrete. Mr. Hanson and Mr. Risner spoke to Mr. Greenlaw, the electrician. He plans on starting his work after K-Pel finished next week. Council will be kept informed as things move forward.

F. Maine Potato Blossom Festival Mark – Mr. Risner

A Mark may be a series of words, symbols or design (or a combination of these elements) that uniquely identifies a business, trade, or product. The Maine Secretary of State, through the Bureau of Corporations, Elections and Commissions, serves as the registry for all Marks filed in Maine. Filing a Mark with the Maine Secretary of State protects the Mark from use by others within the State of Maine.

The Fort Fairfield Chamber of Commerce held the Mark, and agreed to assign the Mark to the Town of Fort Fairfield.

The Town Council; at its July 19, 2017 regular meeting; authorized the Town Manager to accept the assignment of the MPBF Mark from the Fort Fairfield Chamber of Commerce.

Discussion: The assignment of the Mark to the Town has been approved by the Maine Secretary of State. The Mark expires on January 16, 2025. The Town should apply for renewal of the Mark immediately after the 2024 MPBF.

VI. Old Business – none

VII. New Business

A. Tax Anticipation Note – Mr. Risner

As is customary to aid the Town with cash flow during the 2nd and 3rd quarters of the Fiscal Year (FY), we put out to bid the interest rate on a \$600,000 line of credit.

Mr. Risner received responses from Katahdin Trust Company and Machias Savings Bank

Katahdin Trust Company presented an interest rate of 1.69%. Machias Savings Bank presented an option #1 at 1.15% and an option #2 at 1.65%. Option #1 requires the Town to have its primary operating account with Machias Savings Bank.

The Town's primary operating account has been with Katahdin Trust Company for 28 years. Mr. Risner does not believe it is in the Town's interest to move its banking in order to take advantage of the interest rate under option #1 from Machias Savings Bank. The interest rate under the Machias Savings Bank's Option 2 is less than Katahdin Trust Company's interest rate, and it is in the Town's best interest to take advantage of Machias Savings Bank's Option #2.

Recommendation: Town Council authorize the award of the FY17/18 TAN to Machias Savings Bank per the terms of Option #2 at 1.65%.

Mr. Herold made a motion to authorize the award of the FY 17/18 TAN to Machias Savings Bank per the terms of Option #2 at an interest rate of 1.65%.

Mr. Butler seconded.

No discussion.

Vote: All Affirmative

B. Public Works Garage Roof Loan

The public works garage roof is in desperate need of repair. The cost to repair is approximately \$70,000. The approved Fiscal Year 2017/2018 budget includes \$25,000 in the Highway Garage Reserve account for the first year's work.

Discussion: My initial approach was to repair the roof over a three year period. That approach would cost approximately \$15,000 more due to the set up and take down costs for each year. There are also concerns about possible problems with tying each annual roof segment into the previous year's segment, as well as the assurance that the same contractor would be available over a three year period.

An alternate approach, and one that the Public Works Director and I recommend, is to secure a loan for the full amount and repair the roof this year. This approach reduces the overall cost to the taxpayer and provides a new roof this year, instead of 1/3 this year and 1/3 in each of the following two years.

Mr. Risner contacted Katahdin Trust Company, Machias Savings Bank, and The County Federal Credit Union for information on the terms of a loan of \$75,000 for a term of three years.

Katahdin Trust Company presented an approval letter that when accepted and properly signed provides an interest rate of 2.71%. Machias Savings Bank presented a Term Sheet which proposes an interest rate of 3.29%. The County Federal Credit Union presented a Term Sheet which proposes an interest rate of 2.74%.

Recommendation: Town Council accepts; and authorizes the Council Chair and Town Manager to sign; the letter from Katahdin Trust Company to secure a loan in the amount of \$75,000 to repair the Public Works garage roof, with a fixed interest rate of 2.71% per annum for a term of 3 years and any other terms and conditions as stated in the letter.

Mr. Butler made a motion to secure a loan in the amount of \$75,000 to repair the Public Works garage roof.

Mr. Herold seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Smith asked what will be done with the \$25,000 that was planned on being set aside this year.

Mr. Risner – Once the loan is in place, so if it is in place in October, the intent is to take the remainder number of months divide it by 25 and pay that amount this year. Year #2 the expectation is Council authorize \$25,000 and we will spread that over twelve months. Year #3 the expectation is Council authorizes \$25,000 and we will pay off the loan at the beginning of the year which will reduce the interest rate

Mr. Butler asked if the roof would be all done in one year.

Mr. Risner said yes.

Vote: All Affirmative

VIII. Minutes of the July 19, 2017 Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Butler made a motion to accept the minutes of the July 19, 2017 regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Smith seconded.

No Discussion.

Vote: All Affirmative

IX. Warrants: #2; \$277,993.89 #4; \$203,477.20

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve Warrants #2 and #4 for the amounts shown.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Herold asked where Warrant #3 is. Mr. Risner explained that there was a computer glitch and after talking with TRIO, it was determined to just allow the system to continue with the numbering as is. This did not affect any money.

Vote: All Affirmative

X. Other – None

XI. Manager's Report – Mr. Risner submitted this to the Council for informational purposes only.

XII. Executive Session – There was no Executive Session.

XIII. Adjournment -

Mr. Butler made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Meeting adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

