

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

I. Roll Call

Councilors: All Councilors are present with the exception of Mrs. Libby
Staff: Andrea Powers, Billie Jo Sharpe, Darren Hanson, Ella Leighton, Tony Levesque,
Mitchell Dufour, Vince Baldwin, Tim Browning, Fred Everitt, Dale Keegan.
Citizens including Media: 8.

II. Prayer

III. Pledge to the Flag

IV. Public Comment Period

Tony Levesque thanked Council for the time of service recognition at the recent employee Thanksgiving gathering.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses and Permits

As of November 20, 2019 we have not received any license renewals.

B. Financial Report

We have received October revenue sharing in the amount of \$42,740.61.
YTD receipts are \$139,948.53 @32.16% of budget.

Checking account balance as of 10/31/2019 is \$35,271.11; Machias Savings balance \$5,000.00; CDARS balance \$813,860; ICS balance \$67,733. We have used \$800,000.00 From TAN.

Total excise tax collected to date is \$281,358.26 (45.02% of budget vs 33.33%); State revenue sharing \$139,948.53 (32.26% of budget) Real Estate & Personal Property taxes collected to date are \$317,053.45.

Loan Balances as of 10/31/2019:

Jones Fuel - \$2,280.63
Langley #5275 - \$19,016.63
Langley #5277 - \$6,899.37
Pelletier - \$788.91

C. ORD 19-07 Tabled Indefinitely

Public Hearing Ordinance 19-07 Animal Ordinance had no one speak for the ordinance; three residents spoke against as well as one resident providing written objection to the ordinance, one resident speaking neither for or against had a comment on some language in the ordinance.

Ordinance 19-08 will need to go to public hearing, and that Council introduces the attached ordinance during the November 20th Council meeting and direct staff to hold a public hearing on the ordinance on December 2, 2019 at 12:00pm in the Council Chambers of the Fort Fairfield Municipal Building.

Mr. Smith commented that this appears to be a land use issue and made a motion that Town Council direct Town staff to send the Animal Ordinance 19-08 to the Planning Board for review. The Planning Board can review the current Ordinance and compare it to the new Ordinance 19-08. They can make recommendations to the Council or chose to decide this issue on their own. They can also chose to hold a public hearing to gather more information.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

D. Aroostook Waste Solutions – Mr. Rogeski

Board of Directors last met on October 25th. The preliminary draft 2020 budget looks good as they are at a balanced budget at this time.

New scales are working well.

Proposed solar project has been tabled.

The Board reviewed a proposal from CES, Inc. to complete a route analysis for a potential leachate pipeline to FFUD.

The Board considered adding direct primary care to the AWS benefits package.

VI. Old Business

A. Full Time Fire Based/EMS Service

Ms. Powers - Per Council directive I have presented to you Chief Baldwin's new budget numbers for one ambulance and two ambulances.

Recommendation: Town Council approves two ambulances in the Full-Time Fire Based/EMS Service for the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Council approves two ambulances in the Full-Time Fire Based/EMS Service for the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Mr. Butler commented that the response around Town has been that we need two ambulances.

Mr. Babin said that he has heard the same.

Mr. Smith stated that he had asked at the workshop, what this was going to cost on the mil rate and he never got an answer. Mr. Smith commented that they are requesting \$1.37 million and the revenue coming in is \$346,000.

Mr. Smith – it looks like with the second ambulance, you are looking at doing transports out of Limestone and Caswell?

Mr. Smith commented that “We need to take care of the residents of Fort Fairfield first.”

Mr. Smith asked why there is a need for two administrators in the fire department for 6 individuals.

Chief Baldwin responded - The budget numbers to date given to Councilors only pertain to service within Fort Fairfield. No Contract with Limestone or Caswell. Those numbers are there, but the focus has been on the Town and the citizens of Fort Fairfield. The deputy position although it is labeled as an administrative position, it is in fact a working position. This position is going to help us to staff up. We have an EMS and a Fire Protection issue in our Town that we are addressing. This whole plan is to build the department and services.

Ms. Powers commented that she cannot do anything with the Mil rate information until the Council decides collectively budget wise what they'd like to see. This amount does not get paid immediately. That is why we are borrowing the money, so we are responsibly setting this department up for success instead of going to the community and asking them to raise the money to move forward. Slowly over time it will be paid for. “It is overwhelming to look at these numbers.” “These are start-up numbers.” “This is not the working budget numbers year after year.”

Mr. Smith – Chief Baldwin’s comments on the Limestone and Caswell subsidies. “They’re not going to do that and that changes the numbers.” (revenue)

Chief Baldwin – The spread sheet bottom line revenue is only Fort Fairfield.

Ms. Powers – That doesn’t change the bottom line. Those were just to show you that’s what they possibly would look like.

Ms. Powers commented that she has spoken to Limestone and Caswell and they are moving forward immediately because their concern is the December 31st deadline. “We

are not ready for the December 31st deadline.” “We need to focus on setting our department up.”

Mr. Smith- stated that he looked at the cost of the ambulance with your budgets whether we voted versus two. The difference is \$170,000 for start-up costs. “Is it your plan to buy it outright?”

Ms. Powers – Lease to purchase, which is what we talked about at the workshop.

Chief Baldwin – “These prices that you see are lease to purchase five year plan with maintenance.” “We will own them eventually.” “If they last ten years, then we will have owned them for five years, get another five years out of them.” We should have a plan to be putting money away and have investments of that nature. The process of leasing will save the Town every year. “Yes, we are still spending the money; however it’s in amounts rather than all at once.”

Mr. Kilcollins – “And you’re saving lives.” “That’s the main focus.” “I’m getting that from people in our Community.” You have to look at the bottom number, but at the end of the day what matters is saving our Community and lives. “Numbers definitely matter, but what’s \$170,000 when you’ve lost your loved one?” “Looking at what you’ve done so far, I think you’ve done a wonderful job.” “I think the numbers will take care of themselves at a certain point.” “We as a Community need the protection.”

Chief Baldwin – commented to Mr. Smith, there are no guarantees with any of this. “The revenue that you see is conservative projected revenue for the Town of Fort Fairfield for the best numbers that we have to use available to us.” “The numbers are never going to pay for this service and I’ve never told you it would.” “To be totally honest, there are no mirrors here.” “This is about, public service to this Town and how we better provide that.” “These numbers will not ever equal out.” “As a business you will always try to improve and do better and try to increase, with in mind; our citizens first.” “In my opinion and experience, we need to keep our Citizens and Town in check first.” Sometimes that may come at an expense, for example, maybe not responding to Limestone and Caswell, because we need to focus on our Town and our Citizens. On a bigger scale in the region we’re still going to have to help each other out. We require mutual aid from all our surrounding Towns when we have a structure fire when we have large incidents and so will they and the same on the EMS side. “It’s all about working together.”

Ms. Powers – commented that as the Tax Assessor has pointed out, “We will be unable to estimate the impact on the Mil rate until the reval is completed.” I can give you my best guestimate, but we won’t have a definitive answer on the Mil rate until after that is done.”

Mr. Smith – “I’d like the guestimate.”

Ms. Powers – “I can do that certainly after you tell me what you’d like.”

Mr. Smith – We were just talking about going from \$160,000 budget for the Fire Department. I understand we need an ambulance. There is no question. We need to

increase our Fire service personnel. It's what it is. One ambulance or two ambulances might not be enough. From experience two guys sometimes can't take one patient. Logistics have to be worked out. I understand how the mutual aid system works and we do have a responsibility to help our neighbors. If we add them, I'd just like to see a bigger piece of the pie. It is my understanding that Caribou provides service to Connor and the citizens in Connor pay less than the citizens of Caribou pay for a service because "that's all they want to pay." "That seems unreasonable to me."

Chief Baldwin – Are you discussing if we do a service to another Town costs? "Is that what you are asking?"

Mr. Smith – You're looking at \$27,000 for 377 billable calls. I think we should get more up front.

Chief Baldwin – "If we are looking at estimated revenues from Caswell and Limestone, these are estimate estimates of where I thought we might be at."

Ms. Powers – "Based on the calls."

Chief Baldwin – when I say estimates the one thing I've always been concerned about, just like Caribou is in the same situation now and their Councilors are saying the same thing. No longer are the days when any Town can carry the burden of the costs associated with going to another Town for EMS coverage.

If Council ever decides to provide service to another Town we have to make sure that we are looking after the taxpayers; that we are not paying for that service in (Limestone) that they aren't paying for what is rightfully theirs.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VII. New Business

A. Monetary Donation– Mr. Senal

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 received an anonymous donation of \$100 from a local resident. The donation is to be used towards recreation programs and supplies.

The value of this contribution is \$100.00.

Recommendation: That Town Council accepts the anonymous donation to our department, in the amount of \$100.00.

Mr. Butler made a motion that Council accepts the anonymous donation to our department, in the amount of \$100.00.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. *Town Office December Closure

The annual Christmas Dinner for Town Staff and guests is scheduled for Thursday December 12, 2019. The snow date will be December 13, 2019. I am requesting we close the Town office and all departments at 1:00pm that day so that all town employees may enjoy the dinner together.

Recommendation: Town Council approves the closing of the Town Office and all Departments on December 12, 2019 at 1:00pm.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Council approves the closing of the Town Office and all Departments on December 12, 2019 at 1:00pm.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

C. ORD 19-08

Council made a motion under Old Business.

D. Winter Carnival

Fort Fairfield had a fine history of Winter Carnivals that were about fun and community. We would like to re-introduce Winter Carnival here in Fort Fairfield for the 2020 season. With our new skating rink coming soon we could provide for a wonderful day of activities for our community.

Recommendation: Town Council approves Winter Carnival February 15, 2020, for the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Mr. Butler made a motion that Council approves Winter Carnival February 15, 2020, for the Town of Fort Fairfield.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VIII. Minutes of the October 16, 2019 Regular Council Meeting, October 31, 2018 Special Council Meeting

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2019 regular Council Meeting, October 31, 2018 Special Council Meeting

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative

IX. Warrants: #10; \$404,956.19 #11; \$73,526.45
#12; \$237,456.00 #13; \$329,153.89

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve Warrants #10, #11, #12, and #13 as presented.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative.

X. Other

XI. Manager's Report

The Managers report is given to Councilors for informational purposes only.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Butler made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Council adjourned at: 6:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Billie Jo Sharpe,
Council Secretary

*Added at Council Meeting