

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Wednesday, January 20, 2021
6:00 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Staff: Andrea Powers, Billie Jo Sharpe, Ella Leighton, Darren Hanson, Tony Levesque, Chief Newell, Sergeant Eagles, Chief Browning.

Councilors: All Councilors present

Citizens: 15+

II. Prayer

III. Pledge to the Flag

IV. Public Comment Period

Kevin Pelletier – Resident and business owner commented that properties have been reassessed unfairly.

James Ouellette – Resident read a prepared statement requesting that Council consider suspending the late penalty for property taxes for the remainder of 2021.

Jeff Armstrong – Resident and business owner stated that he is a “proponent of fairness” and the reassessment of properties is “totally unfair” and wants a reason why when there is no growth in Fort Fairfield. Stated that his home assessment increased 50% and his business increased over 74% and his business property land went up 300% and there is a commercial property across the street from him with the same acreage and same commercial use and that property went down by 3%. “I can only conclude that someone didn’t do their due diligence, I don’t know where they got their numbers.” “Some people’s taxes went down and other went up and I’d like to have an answer as to why that happened.” “I have talked to Tony (Levesque) and he didn’t have an answer.”

Chuck Ainsworth – Resident since 2016 commented that transparency is critical. “ I am all about our EMS service and Fire Department and Police Department, but at the same time if our expenses are going up and we’ve seen big, big expenditures in those departments and we don’t see where that extra money is coming from and we lose big tax bases like the Energy plant and we replace them with things that we can’t even get tax

revenue from then what is the point of bringing those businesses to Town. Mr. Ainsworth asked that Councilors “look” over their decision and evaluate it. “Look to the future”

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses/Permits

As of January 20, 2021, we have not received any license renewals.

B. Financial Report

Total expenses at the end of December were at 50.12% vs 50.00% budgeted.

Total excise tax collected in December was \$37,555.82; State revenue sharing \$37,510.14; Real Estate & Personal Property taxes collected \$490,968.73.

Loan balances as of 12/31/2020:

Jones Fuel - \$1,680.63

Langley #5275 - \$18,616.63

Langley #5277 - \$6,699.37

C. FFFR Snowmobile Bid Opening

On January 20, 2021 the Town Clerk, Billie Jo Sharpe, will open the bid envelope received for the Fort Fairfield Fire Rescue Department’s 1991 Ski Doo Cheyenne snowmobile in - as is, where is, condition. There was no warranty on the snowmobile. There was a minimum bid set at \$250.00. The winning bidder is responsible for pickup and delivery of the item within 72 hours of winning bid notification.

There were no other bids received and this is the third time we have put this snowmobile out to bid.

Recommendation: That Council accepts the bid received and declared at the January 20, 2021 Council Meeting.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to accept the bid received.

Mr. Babin seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Ms. Sharpe opened an envelope labeled “FD Snowmobile” received 1/5/21.

Bid received is for \$500 from Darren Hanson.

D. Aroostook Waste Solutions Report – Mr. Rogeski was not present.

E. Proclamation Fort Fairfield Rotary 2020 Spirit of America Award

The Spirit of America Foundation was established in Maine to encourage volunteerism and commendable community service. Since the first Spirit of America Foundation award was presented in 1991 on November 26th to Alma Jones by Augusta's Mayor, William Burney, well over 500 Spirit of America ceremonies have taken place all over the great State of Maine.

The Spirit of America award is presented to a local person(s), project, or group for outstanding community service. Using Fort Fairfield's criteria to honor the recipient(s). The Spirit of America Foundation has awarded the Fort Fairfield Rotary Club the honor of the Town of Fort Fairfield Spirit of America Award 2020.

Recommendation: Council votes to accept the Proclamation for the Fort Fairfield Rotary Club Spirit of America Award.

Ms. Powers read Proclamation 21-01.

Mr. Babin made a motion to accept the Proclamation for the Fort Fairfield Rotary Club Spirit of America Award.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Mrs. Libby thanked the Rotary Club for everything they do throughout the Community as did Mr. Kilcollins.

F. Resolution Second Amendment

Mr. Butler read Resolution 21-02.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Council resolves and declares its intent to oppose unconstitutional restrictions on the right to keep and bear arms for its citizens.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VI. Old Business

VII. New Business

A. Gift from the Phyllis Gulliver Charitable Trust

The Library received a memorial donation on December 23rd, 2020 in the amount of \$10,000.00 from the Phyllis Gulliver Charitable Trust.

Phyllis Gulliver was born here in Fort Fairfield in 1908 and was an English teacher at the Fort Fairfield High School for many years. She passed away in 2003, but during her life, Phyllis established charitable trusts for the Fort Fairfield High School music program, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, as well as the Fort Fairfield Public Library and others.

The library will use this money for the purchase of books and periodicals in keeping with the wishes of the gift.

Recommendation: Council accepts the donation of a memorial gift from the Phyllis Gulliver Charitable Trust in the amount of \$10,000.00.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Council accepts the donation of a memorial gift from the Phyllis Gulliver Charitable Trust in the amount of \$10,000.00.

Mr. Babin seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. Earned Paid Leave Policy

Discussion: On January 1, 2021 Maine's Earned Paid Leave Law was put into effect. (Public Law 2019 Ch. 156, "An Act Authorizing Earned Employee Leave"). This law applies to employers with more than 10 employees in Maine for more than 120 days in any calendar year. Employees accrue 1 hour of Earned Paid Leave for every 40 hours worked, up to 40 hours in a defined year. Employees can use their accrued Earned Paid Leave for any reason such as an emergency, illness, sudden necessity, planned vacation, etc.

Recommendation: Council votes to accept the new Earned Paid Leave Policy 9.1.7 to be put into the Personnel Policy.

Mr. Babin made a motion that Council accepts the new Earned Paid Leave Policy 9.1.7 to be put into the Personnel Policy.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VIII. Minutes of the January 4, 2021 Special Town Council Meeting.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve the Minutes of the January 4, 2021 Special Town Council Meeting.

Mr. Babin seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

IX. Warrants: #16: \$422,968.01

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve Warrant #16 as written.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative

X. Other

Ms. Powers read a letter she received from the Fort Fairfield Class of 1967 presenting the Town of Fort Fairfield with a complimentary hardcover edition of the recent publication, *Honoring Their Service: Stories of Fort Fairfield High School Class of 1967 Military Veterans*.

XI. Executive Session

1 M.R.S.A. §405 (6)(A) Personnel Matters

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to go into Executive Session

Mr. Babin seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Mr. Babin made a motion to come out of Executive Session.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

XII. Adjournment

Mr. Babin made a motion to adjourn.

Mrs. Libby seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Council adjourned at 7:26 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Billie Jo Sharpe, Council Secretary