

Fort Fairfield Town Council Special Work Session Minutes
Council Chambers
Tuesday, January 9, 2024
5:30 PM

I. Roll Call

Council: James Ouellette, Keith E. Thibeau II, Patricia Canavan, Shane McGillan, (over the phone – Kevin Pelletier)

Staff: Timothy Goff, Neadra Dubois, Police Chief Cummings, Fire Chief Jalbert, Tony Levesque

Budget Advisory Committee: Billie Jo Sharpe

Citizens: two (2)

II. Prayer

Town Manager Goff provided the prayer for the meeting.

III. Pledge to the Flag

All attendees pledged their allegiance to the flag.

IV. Public Comments

Tom Towle thanked Robert Kilcollins for all his years on the Council. He also welcomes Shane on as a Councilor.

V. Budgetary Goals Discussion

Councilor Ouellette mentions the Reserve Accounts is something they should be discussing. Town Manager Goff discusses the Town financial situation. The Town's current short-term debt is \$675,000 (TAN), the current TAN interest rate is costing the Town \$112.00 a day; there is \$825,000 in long-term debt from Katahdin Trust that equals a \$8,300 monthly debt payment for another ten years. That long-term debt is from start-off costs of the ambulance service and other items. The other outstanding debt is for the municipal building. This loan was taken out in 2007 and will retire in 2027. The outstanding balance on that is about

\$150,000.00-200,000.00 which is a \$51,000 yearly payment for three more years. Long-term debt adds up to \$975,000.00. Current savings is \$0.00. Town Manager Goff discusses Reserve Accounts and Capitol Investment Repairs and Improvements. He invites Council, Budget Advisory Committee, and the public to do a walk-thru of all the Town Departments to see what they are dealing with for repairs and needs of the Departments for their maintenance for services they provide. Councilor Pelletier and Town Manager Goff discuss comp insurance and Town Manager Goff states that he is looking into MMA's Risk Pool. Town Manager Goff states there are many benefits that go with that program. Town Manager Goff states that the Town has gone so far off the rails that it's going to take a while to get back. He also says that he looks forward to taking Council, the Budget Advisory Committee, and the Town people that want to join, through the departments to see first-hand the deficiencies and conditions that staff are working with. Town Manager goes on to talk about not having the County Budget and the School Budget, which won't be available until February. He has invited the Superintendent to present at the February Council Meeting. Town Manager Goff and Council discuss more on the Department walk-thru. Councilor Pelletier states that if the Town keeps doing what they're doing now, eventually it will get better. Councilor Ouellette questions whether or not the Town should continue to have Reserves and states that they need to decided if Reserve Accounts are kept in the budget. Council and Town Manager Goff discusses Reserve Accounts. Town Manager Goff discusses the Mil Rate and the effective tax rate. He also states that it's going to be a difficult budget season. Councilor Canavan discusses economic development. Council Chair Thibeau suggests that instead of putting surplus department budgets into the General Fund, it could be put into Reserves for that department. Town Manager Goff explains how difficult it is to differentiate the funds and he doesn't want the Town to have 32 different bank accounts. He explains that there needs to be a better definition of where those funds are, where they sit. He also mentions that the Town really needs to be aggressive with money management. The thought process is to invest funds that haven't been used in the budget year into a CD. Theory is great, it's the practice that is going to be the challenge.

VI. Adjournment

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to Adjourn the meeting.

Second: Councilor Canavan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Council Work Session ended at 6:27 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neadra E. Dubois, Council Secretary