

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Wednesday, January 25, 2023
6:00 PM

- I. Roll Call
6:00PM
Council – Pat Canavan, Keith Thibeau II, Jim Ouellette, Robert Kilcollins, Kevin Pelletier (via Face Time)

Staff – Dan Foster, Neadra Dubois, Kevin Senal, Darren Hanson, Chief Cummings, Chief Jalbert, Tony Levesque

Citizens – 13 Citizens present

Media – Fort Fairfield Journal, Star Herald
- II. Prayer
Tony Levesque led the meeting in prayer.
- III. Pledge to the Flag
All attendees pledged their allegiance to the flag.
- IV. Public Comment Period
There were no public comments.
- V. Correspondence and Reports
 - A. Licenses and Permits
Mr. Foster explains that a new license requires a vote and a renewal license needs to be presented at the Council Meeting for the Council to be informed. Mr. Foster presented to the Council a renewal liquor license for the Fish and Game Club.
 - B. Financial Report
Mr. Foster gives the financial report. Mr. Foster shares that he received a letter from the County reminding the Town that there is a payment due by January 31st. Mr. Foster says that the payment is being made on January 31st. Mr. Foster sent a note to the Ryan Pelletier and the Commissioners to thank him for letting the Town make this payment three months late.
Mr. Foster talks about the financial reports for the month of December. A couple of points that he wants to make is that the Town still has the \$275,000 payment to

make to AWS by the end of the month. Mr. Foster is feeling confident that the Town will be able to do that. Mr. Foster reports that the receipts on taxes have increased fairly dramatic this week. Mr. Foster hopes that the cash flow issues are in the past. The Town has only had to use \$175,000 out of their line of credit. Mr. Foster is not anticipating that the Town will have to use anymore and it will have to be paid back to the bank by the end of February. Mr. Foster talks about receiving a call from the bank about the bank wanting to enter into discussion regarding the Town's million dollar line of credit, that was held over from last year, and what the Town's plans are for paying it back. Mr. Foster talks about having a relationship with the bank so that the Town can have a line of credit that would help out the cash flow issue when the Town needs it and he also discusses aggressively paying down loans and needing to have money to pay bills. Mr. Foster talks about the Town's expenses. As of the end of December, that's six months in, typically it would have been expected that the Town would have spent 50 percent of the money that was budgeted. What the Town has actually spent is 44.85 percent. For the Town to save the \$400,000 that they need, they need to be around 5.22 percent of the budget and the 44.85 is 5.15 percent, so the Town is pretty much in line. The Fire Chief is doing a really good job with the Fire Department and the Town is going to see more savings there. Mr. Foster is feeling confident that the Town will be able to meet the obligations that were not funded that need to be paid this year. There are some issues on the income side with money that has been budgeted that the Town will not be getting and that creates another issue but Mr. Foster believes that the Town will be able to get around that and save enough on the expense side. Mr. Foster says that there is no way that the Town would be able to do this if it weren't for the work of the Department Heads. They are the ones that are going to make it work with their departments and have been very supportive of this process and Mr. Foster is appreciative of that.

Councilor Kilcollins gives thanks to Mr. Foster for coming in during this financial status that the Town is at and do the work he has done to bring the Town where it is now.

[applause]

C. AWS Report

Stev Rogeski gives the AWS report. No financial report for January. Mr. Rogeski discusses EPA grants and asks for input from anyone on recycling rate ideas.

D. Fire & EMS Department Report

Chief Jalbert gives an update on the Fire & EMS Department. For the month of December, they did 56 EMS calls, which was 10 more than November. They did 18 Fire calls, which was up from 4 in November. For Volunteers, they are at 22 Volunteer Firemen. Chief Jalbert reports that they are still gaining, not where they need to be yet, but they're making progress. Training attendance have been

amazing and they're heading in the right direction. Chief Jalbert is taking an EMT class. He is 2 weeks in and has 14 more to go. Chief Jalbert talks about the grants that he is working on for cutting costs. Chief Jalbert talks about the Ambulance that the Department just got. The Ladder Truck has been looked at by a company in North Carolina with interest to purchase. Chief Jalbert has also been reached by another company in Virginia that might also be interested in coming to check out the Ladder Truck for purchase. Chief Jalbert says that he is making headway on selling the Ladder Truck and when he gets a decent offer, he will present it to the Council.

E. County Broadband Report

Mr. Foster discusses the County Broadband Report and says that he would like to get Quality of Place Council involved in this. Tim Goff, President of Quality of Place, spent a lot of time on Broadband when he was the Economic Development Director for the Town. If Mr. Foster can get Tim Goff to be reengaged, Tony Levesque would be the liaison between the Town and Quality of Place. Mr. Foster and Tony are going to be meeting with the Quality of Place Council on February 1st to discuss this. He wants to spend some time talking about this and also getting the Town reengaged with them. Mr. Foster discusses the falling of the Quality of Place from the Town by the hand of previous management, Jim Risner. Mr. Foster also reports that the Quality of Place is a non-profit organization that works with no support from the Town and anything they do is in the best interest of Fort Fairfield. Mr. Foster questions why the Town wouldn't use their resources to help them do that. Mr. Foster wants to welcome them back into the folds of Fort Fairfield and wants to say to them when they meet, "We are here to help you to help us." Mr. Foster is not up to speed on County Broadband, but wants the Town to be involved in this. Mr. Foster says that hopefully, through Tony Leveque and Tim Goff's efforts on this, he will have a something to bring to the Council for consideration on how the quality of broadband in Fort Fairfield can be improved.

Councilor Kilcollins states that there was a lot of work that went into that and he was on the Council when that all started.

F. Little League Donation

Mr. Foster talks about Kevin Senal's efforts in Rec Department, searching for Grants and Donations to help his Department run their programs. Mr. Foster reports on a donation from the Fort Fairfield Little League of \$921 to help the Rec Department purchase pitching screens for the Varsity Softball Field.

G. Pines Health Clinic

Mr. Foster reports on the damage that was done at the Pines Health Clinic during the windstorm that happened the week before Christmas. Mr. Foster contacted

Rick Nadeau from A&L Construction to fix the damage. The cost of the repairs, \$1,300, was significantly less than the Town's deductible. The Town has paid that out of the Administrative Reserves Account. Mr. Foster reports that Pines is back open in Fort Fairfield. Mr. Foster thanks Pines and Cary Medical Center for helping get healthcare providers back into the Town of Fort Fairfield.

H. Resilience Grant

Mr. Foster reports on the Resiliency Grant. It's a Grant that was started by Ms. Powers and she was working with Caribou and Washburn, along with the Governor's Office. It has to do with finding ways of dealing with climate change and how it's impacting us. Darren Hanson has also been involved in this as well. Grant has been received by the Town in the amount of \$28,000 and it's in a Reserve Account. \$4,000 of that is going to NMDC because they are helping administer this and are getting this set up. This partnership will continue and there will be more money allocated for this program and the partnership. Fort Fairfield is getting \$8,000 for this partnership and will be using this money for the Sutron(sp) on the Dike. The Town has received a quote from Mike Greenlaw to put that in. It will be happening sometime in the spring, hopefully before the ice-out. Mr. Foster states that he wanted to make everyone aware that the Town is moving forward with this and is now able to disburse the funds.

I. Library Grant

Mr. Foster discusses another Grant that he and Tony have been working on together with the Library. The grant is worth around \$20,000 and a lot of that will be going towards the salary of Lynn Cote at the Library. This grant will be a big help with the Town trying to save money. The problem that they're running into is that they have to have a specific identification through the government in order to access government funds and it is not a simplistic process. They are diligently working at it. Mr. Foster states that Mike Jalbert has some experience with this because he just went through this with the Fire Department and has said that he will help Mr. Foster get through this. Mr. Foster is hoping to be able to say at the next Council Meeting that they got the money.

J. Walgreens Closure

Mr. Foster and Chief Cummings met with Terry Greenier to discuss the concern about what's going on with Walgreens. Mr. Foster asked Chief Cummings to talk about the discussion they had with Terry. Chief Cummings states that the Town will be losing Walgreens on February 23rd and he heard that news on Facebook. There are concerns because the elderly rely on the pharmacy for their prescriptions. Chief Cummings talks about he and Mr. Foster meeting with Terry Greenier. They spoke about Terry's business being able to assist the residents of Fort Fairfield for their pharmacy needs. Terry stated that he is equipped to pick up

Walgreens' customers here in Town, so that way the residents do not need to go out of Town. They take all insurance providers, so that won't be an issue. They also deliver prescriptions via US Mail and they have a pick up location right at their pharmacy and they are having a counter installed soon to be able to take on the customer base. They also spoke about Terry offering forward facing options like over the counter medications and such. Terry said that he would like to get a feel for what people need before bringing inventory in. Information can be obtained online on their website and social media. Chief Cummings and Mr. Foster are taking the closure of Walgreens seriously. They will be engaging in conversations to make sure the building doesn't stay vacant for long. Chief Cummings hopes they can get something in there that can suit the needs of the community.

K. PD Report

Chief Cummings gives a brief rundown of the Police Department over the last few months. 2022 was a busy year for the Police Department, handling 2,579 total incidents. These incidents range from mental health related calls, domestic violence, drug issues, thefts, burglaries, assisting the public in any way they can, traffic enforcement and property checks. Out of the 2,579 incidents, 153 cases were deferred to criminal prosecution by either arrests, summons or warrant issues. In October of 2022, Officer Cody Fenderson, former Fire Chief, has moved into a full-time position in the Police Department. He was successfully able to crack open a series of burglaries with local farmers and local construction companies being the victims of theft of high dollar tools. Because of Officer Fenderson's efforts the suspect is still incarcerated and a large amount of the tools were recovered and returned to the owners. Chief Cummings states that Cody should be commended on that. Also in October of 2022, Officer Lance Ferguson was able to arrest a suspect who had broken into the Rec Center and stole a television. The television was recovered and returned to the Rec Center. The suspect was charged with burglary and theft. On December 23, 2022, a severe wind storm passed through Fort Fairfield, causing multiple downed trees, utility poles and power lines. Many residents were without power for several days. During that storm, Fort Fairfield's Public Safety Departments responded to over 20 calls in just a few hour period for downed trees, utility poles and power lines. There were so many calls for service that the Police and Fire Departments had a hard time to keep up with them. Police Officers and Fire Fighters came in on their own time to help clear the roadways as there were safety issues for residents and motorists. Chief Cummings thanks Sgt. Cormier, Officer Isaac Wipperman, Fire Chief Mike Jalbert, Jack Shannon, Darryl Doughty, Lon Cyr, Rob Hedrick, Andrew Lagasse, Danny Gahagan and Justin Crocket for their hard work and dedication during this incident. Chief Cummings states that he will be adding letters of positive performance to each of their personnel files. The following day the Rec Center was opened as a warming station for those without power and was manned by Dan Foster. Chief Cummings states that this is a great example of the Town employees all coming together to get the job done for the citizens and the community and this should be commended.

VI. New Business

A. Approve Public Comment Period Policy

Mr. Foster submitted a Public Comment Period Policy to Council for their approval. This policy is meant for the Council Meetings to have structure and help the meetings to be run better. Mr. Foster states that citizens deserve and should have the right to speak to the Council if they have a concern. The policy will be handed out with the agendas at every meeting if Council approves it. Mr. Foster reads off the policy and explains it so everyone knows what the Council is voting on. Public Comment Period will be up to 30 minutes unless Council decides it should be longer. It's a period of sharing, not engagement. Each person speaking will have a time limit of 3 minutes and at the discretion of the Council it can be extended. Mr. Foster states that if anyone has a concern that they want to discuss should contact him directly to have that discussion.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette made the motion to approve the Public Comment Period Policy.

Second: Councilor Pelletier seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmed.

B. Appoint Technical Advisory to Central Aroostook Soil & Water Conservation District

Mr. Foster speaks about Randy Martin wanting to put together a Technical Advisory Committee and wants someone from Fort Fairfield to be involved in it. Mr. Foster had a conversation with Tony Levesque about it and Tony has agreed to do it. Mr. Foster asks Council to approve that appointment. Tony shares what this project is about. The locations of this project are in the Lower Fort Fairfield Water Shed and there has been an identification of a phosphorus problem.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to have Tony Levesque on the Advisory position.

Second: Councilor Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VII. Minutes

A. Special Council Meeting January 3, 2023

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to accept the Minutes from the January 3rd Meeting.

Second: Councilor Pelletier seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VIII. Warrants: #13 - \$462,656.31; #14 - \$325,011.49; #15 - \$289,787.28

Motion: Councilor Kilcollins motioned to approve Warrants 13, 14 and 15 for the amounts stated.

Second: Councilor Ouellette seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

IX. Other

Nothing to discuss in this section.

X. Executive Session – 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) Personnel Matter
1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(C) Economic Development

Motion In: Councilor Ouellette motioned. 6:48 PM

Second: Councilor Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Motion Out: Councilor Ouellette motioned. 7:30 PM

Second: Councilor Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

XI. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: Councilor Kilcollins motioned.

Second: Councilor Ouellette seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Council adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neadra E. Dubois, Council Secretary