

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Wednesday, March 20, 2024
6:00 PM

I. Roll Call

Council: Keith E. Thibeau, Patricia Canavan, Shane McGillan, James Ouellette, Kevin Pelletier absent.

Staff: Timothy Goff, Neadra Dubois, Tony Levesque, Police Chief Cummings, Shannon St. Pierre, Fire Chief Jalbert, Ella Leighton.

Citizens: Six (6)

Media: The Star Herald

II. Prayer

Mr. Levesque provided prayer for the meeting.

III. Pledge to the Flag

All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the flag.

IV. Public Comment Period

No public comments made.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses and Permits

Nothing to report.

B. Financial Report

Town Manager Goff provided the financial report on February's finances. Savings in fuel is offset by a failure of a fuel pump monitoring system. Savings and costs tend to be a see-saw battle. Wages, utilities and insurances continue to be the "Big Three" expenses for the Town. Savings for the Town include putting about \$1.3 million of tax revenue to work in high yield savings accounts in the last month

and has accrued a couple thousand dollars in interest. Overall, expenses are on target with the budget and revenues remain on point.

C. Aroostook Waste Solutions Report

Stev Rogeski gives the monthly AWS report. Their last meeting was March 1st and their next meeting is March 29th. Revenue for last month was ahead of schedule at 1.6% and expenses were below by 6.2%, so they are right on track without any surprises. They may fall behind when they get the bill from Caribou for leach aid. The landfill has the largest collection of eagles in Aroostook County. There is also a large collection of people who like to take photographs of those eagles at the landfill. People are welcome to go to the landfill to take pictures of the eagles, but they must check in at the gate so they can make sure everyone has gotten out before they close for the day.

D. Superintendent of Schools – ‘State of the Schools’ Report

Superintendent Tanya Staples provided a report on MSAD 20’s budget and new programs being implemented at FFES and FFMHS. She provided Council with a handout of the topics that she covered in her report.

E. June Meeting Date Change

Town Manager Goff requests to move the Town Council Meeting date for June. The regular scheduled date, the third Wednesday of the month, lands on a holiday, Juneteenth. He requests that the date be moved to the week before on June 12th. Council Chair Thibeau gives Town Manager Goff permission to move the Council Meeting date as requested.

F. Fort Fairfield Revitalization Project Update

Councilor Canavan reports on the Fort Fairfield Revitalization Project Committee’s last meeting and their discussion on their plans for this summer. Jessica Babin is the newest member of the committee and she wants to be the lead in establishing a Farmer’s Market. There is lots of interest from the community and vendors for this type of event. Councilor Canavan suggests that they use the green space between Acadia and Katahdin Trust for the Farmer’s Market. She is looking at some grants to help fund landscaping that area so that it would be more welcoming. They also talked about getting volunteers to do a Town-wide clean-up. The committee is also working on a Flag Day event, a Garden Bridge and starting plans for Friday’s in Fort.

VI. Old Business

A. Nominations for the Spirit of America Award

Two nominations have been made for outstanding community service: Mike Greenlaw and Justin Hersey/J&J's Redemption. Town Manager Goff states that Council had expressed that they would discuss it then vote on it at next month's meeting.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motions to table this item until next month's meeting.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

B. Maine Housing Annual TIF Report The Meadows

The Legislative Body of the Town of Fort Fairfield is required to file an annual report with Maine Housing on all Affordable Housing Tax Increment Financing Districts. Town Manager Goff recommends the Council to approve and allow him to sign the report created to be submitted to Main Housing.

Motion: Councilor Canavan motioned to approve and allow the Town Manager to sign the report.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

VII. New Business

A. Versant Pole Permit – Green Ridge Rd

Versant Power is seeking to add a power pole in the Town's right-of-way near the intersection of Green Ridge Rd and Route 161. Town Manager Goff recommends that Council approve Versant Power's application to install one new pole and related hardware as presented.

Motion: Councilor Canavan motioned to approve Versant Power's application for a power pole replacement.

Second: Councilors Ouellette and McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

B. Municipal Pool Pumps

It appears the water to the municipal pool had not been turned off in the fall, due to a miscommunication between Town Staff and the Utilities District, which caused the pump room at the municipal pool to flood. Protocols have been put in place to ensure this doesn't happen again, but the damage has been done. The estimated cost to replace the pump is \$10,000. Given this large, unexpected cost, other options have been investigated and it has been decided to have the pumps removed and inspected by Roger's Electric Motor Service in Madawaska. They believe the pumps may be able to be salvaged. Town Manager Goff recommends that Council give conditional approval to spend \$10,000 from Administrative Reserves to replace the damaged pumps at the municipal pool should the pumps not be able to be repaired.

Councilor Canavan asks if the guy in Madawaska has any idea how long he expects to have the pumps repaired. Town Manager Goff states that it should be fairly quick.

Motion: Councilor McGillan motioned to follow the Town Manager's recommendation.

Second: Councilor Ouellette seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

C. Sale of 8 Pool Drive

The property at 8 Pool Drive has been in disrepair for some time, and after several years of non-payment of taxes, the property became tax acquired by the Town on March 9, 2021 for taxes owed in 2018. The Town has attempted multiple times to sell the property, but due to its condition, had been unable to find a buyer. Earlier this year, the Town was approached by Jordan Smith and his partner, Adam Bindar, who are working to renovate a nearby property on Presque Isle Street. They have offered the Town \$7,900.00 for the property. Town Manager Goff recommends that Council approve selling the Town-owned property at 8 Pool Street to WhiteOut Properties LLC (Jordan Smith) and Adam Bindar Real Estate LLC (Adam Bindar) for \$7,900.00 and sign the Quitclaim Deed and Real Estate Transfer Tax Declaration for 8 Pool Street.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to approve the Town Manager's recommendation.

Second: Councilor Canavan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

D. Library Grant/346 Main St

Dan and John Foster, Deb Dall, and the three librarians, Lynn Cote, Robin Gagnon and Barbara Wells-Alexander have been having discussions about using some funds they are administrating in memory of Beth Pfeiffer to benefit the community. They have been exploring options to expand library programming outside the walls of the physical library building and having a space to use for education on gardening. Things have started to move quickly, and planning is underway to build a Children's Garden on the Town-owned land at 346 Main St. There are approximately \$10,000.00 - \$14,000.00 in donations being pledged towards this project in memory of Beth Pfeiffer. Town Manager Goff recommends Council approve the acceptance of the donations for the construction of a new Children's Garden at 346 Main St.

Motion: Councilor Canavan motioned to accept the donations for the new Children's Garden.

Second: Councilor's McGillan and Ouellette seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

VIII. Minutes of the February 21st, 2024 Council Meeting

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to approve the minutes from the February 21st Council Meeting.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

IX. Warrants: #15 – \$133,148.13 #16 – \$401,564.26

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to accept Warrants #15 and #16.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

X. Other

Nothing to report.

XI. Public Comment Period

No public comments made.

XII. Adjournment

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to adjourn.

Second: Councilors Canavan and McGill seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present, Affirmative.

Council Meeting ended at 6:57 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Neadra E. Dubois, Council Secretary

DRAFT