

**Fort Fairfield Town Council Meeting Minutes**  
**Council Chambers**  
**Wednesday, February 16, 2011**  
**6:00 P.M.**

Councilors: David McCrea, Kim Murchison, Mark Babin, Terry Greenier and Ruel Flannery

Staff: Geroge Watson, Tony Levesque and Paul Durepo

Citizens: 10 including media

- I. Roll Call - Chair David McCrea asked that the record reflect that all councilors are present.
- II. Prayer - Councilor Ruel Flannery offered the prayer
- III. Pledge to the Flag - All in attendance pledged their allegiance to the Flag.
- IV. Public Comment Period –NONE
- V. Correspondence and Reports
  - A. Licenses/Permits - one application for a special liquor permit from the Fort Fairfield Lions Club for off site privileges and one application from the Knights of Columbus to operate Bingo
  - B. Financial Report – After seven months we continue in good shape. Our department expenses remain within their respective budgets. The library will be over on labor due to the change in the department head. The Fire department has a few accounts that are either over or close, Paul is keeping an eye on that. Public Works, the Rec Department and the Police Department are in good shape. Our income remains on track, revenue sharing and excise tax are doing well, interest income is very low and the rent for Graphic Utilities is not being paid. We also will not be getting all of our homestead exemption this fiscal year, which will reduce our property tax by \$14,900.00. Our cash flow is in a good position and the line of credit has been paid.
  - C. Tri-Community Landfill Report- NONE
  - D. Chamber Report – Mike – Had our annual Chamber of Commerce supper on the 10<sup>th</sup>, where we recognized Wayne and Pat Troicke for citizen of the year, LeVasseur Backhoe for business of the year and Ruel Flannery with the life time achievement award. The Agri-Business Trade Fair is coming up March 25-27 and the booths are filling up. We are progressing with the MPBF and have two main sponsors set up. We have people already signed up for the Best of America by Horseback.
  - E. Update on Railroad Abandonment Process- The rail lines have transferred and are now owned by the State, the 8.6 miles that Fort Fairfield hopefully will transfer soon.
  - F. Update on the RFP Process for the Standard Offer – In legislative committee today is the LD 241 “An act to promote energy independence and renewable energy production”. This bill requires the Public Utilities Commission in establishing the terms and conditions, ensure that charges to customers for standard-offer service are not increased as a result of the inclusion of those renewable resources.

- G. Update on Quality of Place Council – the purpose of the Quality of Place Council is to create a business environment and a residential environment to encourage people to move to Fort Fairfield. Brent Churchill presented to the Town Council the QOPC recommendation regarding three issues. The first being charging off back taxes on real estate property owned by the estate of Lawrence Michaud as uncollectible in order to facilitate the remediation of the property located at 27 Houlton Road. The second being promote the concept of creating a residential TIF program in Fort Fairfield that would promote affordable housing and create an incentive for new residential development. The third being for the Town to create an education fund for children that contributes to their section 529 college investing plan modeled after the NexGen grant. They also will be voting on approving a memorandum of agreement, to assume ownership of the milking building that the Amish have built for storing milk that is being sold to Agrimart. Noah Yoder explained that they are not allowed to have electricity in their name or on their property. They have \$20,000 per month coming in on their milk sales, which includes all the Amish milk being produced. Agrimart has said that this milk is the best quality that they are getting.
- H. Update on CDBG Grant Applications – Tony and Mike have put a lot of hard work into this process. Applied for \$500,000.00 for infrastructure for the housing and \$350,000.00 for the clinic. There is 4 million available and 8.5 million has been requested, we should hear the first of March if we have been approved.
- I. Update on “The Meadows” Project – This project is moving forward, looking at the spring round.
- J. Community Recognition Award from Efficiency Maine –Mike Bosse has been in contact with Burgess Advertising & Marketing who are responsible for the marketing of Efficiency Maine who have chosen to give Fort Fairfield a Community Recognition Award. We will have a ceremony here at the Council Chambers on March 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am.
- K. Wood to Energy Grants Program – Dan met with Marc Gendron who has been gathering information regarding Federal Grants to convert schools and municipal buildings from oil heat to biomass. We have a grant application process that needs to be filed by March 17<sup>th</sup>. If we are to participate, we would be providing some in kind work with Public Works and the boiler would be centrally located to accommodate the two school buildings as well as the Community Center. Mr. Gendron spoke to the council presenting them with some rough estimates. The grant is from \$500,000 to \$750,000.00 and the project estimate is roughly 1.4 million. This boiler will heat the elementary school, bus barn, middle/high school and the municipal building. Limestone is in the beginning phase of putting one in, Houlton will be up and running on Friday, Caribou will be running in a month and Poland started up 6 weeks ago. The oil boilers will remain in place and can be used if necessary. Between the 4 buildings we have used 55,000 gallons of fuel oil which produced

7,612,000,000 BTU's, to produce this with chips we would need 739 tons at a cost of approximately \$60 per ton.

- L. Update on State Revenue Sharing – The appropriation Governor LePage is recommending for revenue sharing for the next fiscal year cuts \$42.4 million from what otherwise would be distributed which equals a 31% reduction. We will be seeing less monies in CDBG grants.
- M. Update on Storm Ready Meeting – This is an annual preparation, we are meeting with NOAA to go over our plan. Will be meeting on March 1<sup>st</sup> with area businesses such as Maine Public Service, school department, Fort Fairfield Housing, Fire Dept, Public Works, Police Dept. Everyone will need to know their role and who needs to be contacted in case of an emergency.
- N. Update on MEMA Storm Declaration - The Town received some damage during the December thaw, between \$33,000 and \$35,000.00. We are hoping to be reimbursed some of our costs.

VI. Old Business

- A. Consider Request From Quality of Place Council –  
First request is for the Town to charge off back taxes owed by the Estate of Lawrence Michaud as uncollectible in order to facilitate the remediation of the property located at 27 Houlton Road. It is recommended that the liens are not discharged until the clean up work is verified.

Comments: Jim Ireland stated that a few years back he approached the Town to waive all the taxes on this property because he was interested in purchasing it and he was told that this could not be done. Doesn't think its right that its going to be done now.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve the charge off of the Lawrence Michaud property taxes after the garage is torn down and cleaned up, then tires are to be cleaned up.

Second: Kim Murchison  
four councilors voted for  
Mark Babin Abstained

Second request is for the Town to promote the concept of creating a residential TIF program in Fort Fairfield that would promote affordable housing and create an incentive for new residential development.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve the recommendation to allow Tony, Dan and Mike to put together a proposal or plan to bring to the council for consideration at a later date.

Second: Mark Babin  
Vote: All affirmative

Third request is for the Town to create an education fund for children that contributes to their section 529 college investing plan modeled after the NexGen grant.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve the recommendation to allow Tony, Dan and Mike to put together a proposal or plan to bring to the council for consideration at a later date.

Second: Mark Babin

Vote: All affirmative

- B. Consider Request from Jim Ireland – In November the Town acquired all of the assets of the former Bangor & Aroostook Railroad in Fort Fairfield. Some of the property had commercial buildings on them and the B & A had lease with the owners of the buildings. These leases were transferred to the Town along with the property and we have been collected lease payments every year. One of those buildings is the Pollack Building where Jim Ireland has his Redemption Center. In October of 2006, Dan contacted Pollack to see if they would be interest in selling their building to Jim & Tina... They were paying an excessive amount of rent at their old location, Dan helped them negotiate the terms of the purchase and had hoped that they would have been able to use some of their savings from the move to tear down the worst part of that building and stabilize the rest, that has not occurred. Tina and Jim were given a lease in December of 2007 where we waived the lease payment for 2007 in order to help them get started in their new location. They never executed the lease and have never made a lease payment. We have never exercised our rights under the lease agreement and evicted them because our hope was that they would be able to make this business work and eventually be able and willing to pay the lease.

Comments: Jim Ireland: Everything was in his ex-wife's name he does feel he should have to pay the back lease. He has only owned the property legally as of April 2010. He is willing to work something out to pay the back taxes, he just can't do it before March 2<sup>nd</sup>; is there any way to waive the foreclosure?

It was a general feeling that this process should keep going the path it is going, foreclosure will happen on March 2, 2011 unless the 2008 taxes are paid prior to March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

There was no motion

## VII. New Business

- A. Consider Amendment to Zoning Ordinance – Wayne and Pat Troike are asking the Town Council to initiate the process to amend the Town of Fort Fairfield's zoning ordinance to allow for the conversion of a retail establishment in the Highway Oriented Zone to a Mixed Use Establishment to include a single family residential rental unit.

Motion: Kim Murchison moved to direct Tony to prepare an amendment to the existing ordinance to allow mixed in the Highway Oriented Zone

Second: Ruel Flannery

Vote: All affirmative

## VIII. Minutes: January 19, 2011

Motion: Mark Babin moved to approve Minutes of January 19, 2011 as written.

Second: Ruel Flannery

Vote – All affirmative

IX. Warrants: #14 - \$121,209.33; #15 - \$311,699.39

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to accept warrant #14, #15 as presented.

Second: Terry Greenier

Vote – All affirmative

X. Other - NONE

XI. Executive Session - move into executive session at 7:17 pm.

MRSA 405(6)(C) – Economic Development

MRSA 405(6)(D) – Labor Negotiations

No Action Taken

Out of executive session at 7:20 pm

XII. Adjournment at 7:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Council Secretary  
Rebecca J. Hersey