

Fort Fairfield Town Council Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
Wednesday, May 18, 2011
6:00 P.M.

2nd Public Hearing
FY 11/12/Budget

Dan started with the 2nd Public Hearing for the 11/12 budget. The purpose of this hearing is to allow for public comments on the Town of Fort Fairfield 2011/2011 budget. The first budget hearing was held on May 4, 2011.

Some adjustments have been made to both expenses and income to determine our surplus for this fiscal year. This surplus will be used to help balance the budget for next year. An estimated surplus of approximately \$150,077.00 of which we have already allocated \$85,000.00 towards next years budget. If numbers hold true we would have an additional \$65,077.00 to be applied against the \$81,732.00 shortfall for next year.

There were no comments or question, the public hearing adjourned at 6:02 pm.

Regular Council meeting opened at 6:03PM

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

Staff: Mike Bosse, Tony Levesque, George Watson, Brady Henderson, Joe Bubar, Mike Jalbert, Paul Durepo, Sharon Nadeau

Citizens: 9 including media

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 – Dan started out thanking everyone for coming tonight, and acknowledge that there are a few farmers here tonight to discuss the posted roads. He emphasized that it is not our intent to hinder their business and it is important for them to share their concerns with us.

Kyle Blackstone: Understands that the roads are broke up due to heavy traffic and larger equipment, also realizes that Fort Fairfield has a small budget to work with. The farmers all know that we need to be careful, but the secondary roads all need more work.

John Griffeth: If we are shipping for our business, lime, fertilizer or seed potatoes the limit is 23,000 lbs.

Dan: Correct

John Griffeth: This really puts the farms in an economic crises, because of the weight limit we would have to order our lime and fertilizer in small loads, which means we would have to pay more per ton. We are the biggest industry in Fort Fairfield, we pay our property taxes, excise tax and we never ask for discounts. The letter sent to us states that we need to run legal and to do that we need to keep our weight down. Is the town exempt from this for their emergency vehicles and plow trucks?

George Watson: The Town is exempt for emergency vehicles only, town trucks have to abide by the same laws and are given fines just like everyone else.

John Griffeth: Last summer George and Tony looked at the secondary roads and discovered that there was damage being done by the tractors using the edge of the road as a turn around. I don't think the farmers are doing the damage and as a collected group we should be more supported.

Randy Leavitt: I agree with John, the only other thing I would like to say is that we begin planting in April. It's not really good for us to have this weight limit during this time.

Dan: Are there any questions or concerns?

Terry Greenier: Just one question for John. When you get your fertilizer and lime (from Canada) is it dumped on your farm in one location or do they run on the secondary roads to each field?

John: It is dumped and we spread it, it cost us over \$300,000 last year to follow the weight limit. Being over the limit is so easy to do but the fines are high.

David McCrea: Could the lime and fertilizer be dumped before the roads are Posted?

John Griffeth: No because we can not get into the fields yet?

Troy McDougal: Could there be an exemption for them, for example if they know which week they are going to be in a certain field can they be exempt that week for that particular road?

Dan: The issue isn't being exempt, it is that in the spring of the year the roads are soft and with the heavy equipment it is tearing up the roads. Our roads are in terrible shape, we just can't afford to put monies into them – it is too cost prohibited.

Kyle Blackstone: I don't hold myself responsible for the damage on Greenridge, it is heavily traveled by State and Municipal vehicles. I just feel that the roads could use a little more work.

Terry Greenier: This has been a good opportunity to come together with information and to see how we can we can come up with alternatives. Everyone's suggestions are welcome.

David McCrea: Thank you for coming, we need to hear this so we know what is going on and what is needed to avoid this in the future.

Kim Murchison: This wasn't an easy decision for us to send these letters out. This is what we need, is to hear your suggestions and concerns.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses/Permits – None

B. Financial Report – We continue on track with our budget as energy costs, fuel and overtime with the Public Works Department have taken their toil. We are over budget this year on heating oil by \$10,380.18. We have off set these increases with the reserve account that was established four years ago. Overall our departments are in good shape with their budget. Our income remains on track with the exception of revenue sharing.

C. Tri-Community Landfill Report- next meeting is schedule for Friday the 20th.

D. Update on CDBG Grant Applications – We had applied for two grants, one for the clinic and the other for infrastructure for a total of \$850,000.00. These applications were not approved. There was a total of 17 applications and only 6 were funded. Dan, Tony and Mike went to Augusta and went over the applications and the belief is that since the infrastructure and facilities are tied together if one didn't past the other didn't pass either. Resources continue to get tight.

E. Update on “The Meadows” Project – We have three banks willing to finance this project, however this is still on hold. We are looking to get into one of Maine State Housings two grant programs, a 4% round or the 9% round in the fall.

F. Review Community Center Renovations – Mike has already received a commitment from the Chamber of Commerce for \$10,000.00 and will be making a presentation to the Rotary Club this week. Tony will be sharing this with the K C's and we plan on mailing out a brochure to the citizens for individual donations as well. The public works department has started working on cleaning the ceiling and changing tiles Mike will be meeting with the Fire Marshall regarding the stove.

G. Update on Riverside Park Project – George is getting quotes on building, waiting for the lot to dry out. Received \$5,000.00 from the Rotary Club.

H. Review Posted Roads Ordinance – discussed at beginning of meeting during

the Public Comment Period.

- I. Update on Town Wide Clean-Up – Tony and George canvassed Fort Fairfield street by street and found 37 violations compared to 47 last year. An initial letter will go out and if Tony isn't contacted within 7 – 10 days a more aggressive letter will go out from the Police Department.
- J. Update on FEMA Disaster Assistance – The Town has qualified for disaster assistance for damages received on our roads as a result of the December 12 - 19, 2010 storms and flooding. The first authorization for payment is in the amount of \$7,155.60 and we are still working on an additional authorization.
- K. Workshop on Wind Power - The Maine Municipal Association is sponsoring a workshop on wind power on Thursday, July 14th from 9:00 am to 2: pm. Tony and Mike are unable to attend, so Dan is requesting one or two of the Councilors to attend this with him if at all possible.

VI. Old Business -

- A. Approve Bid on Tax Acquired Property – At last months meeting the Council approved awarding the Lower Main Street property to William Browning for his bid of \$8,100.00. He has decided that he is unable to assume this responsibility and has not exercise the purchase. The next bid was from Graydon McCrum for \$5,000.00, asking the Council to approve that bid.
Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve to except the bid in the amount of \$5,000.00 from Graydon McCrum for the Lower Main Street property and provide a Quit Claim Deed.
Second: Kim Murchison Vote – All affirmative

We also put the property located at 292 West Limestone Road out to bid and received two responses. One from Warren Robbins in the amount of \$507.77 and another from Palmyra Developments, LLC for \$2,012.34. It is recommend to the Council to approve the bid from Palmyra Developments, LLC.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve to except the bid in the amount of \$2,012.34 from Palmyra Developments, LLC for the 292 West Limestone Road property.
Second: Mark Babin Vote – All affirmative

VII. New Business

- A. Approve Vision Benefits – Dan met with Susan Smith, MMA health care provider last week and she shared a new program that they have just started to offer to their participants. It is a vision benefit that covers optometrists' visits, glasses, contacts and laser vision correction surgery. The cost per employee is only \$63.72 a year with annual benefits potentially far exceeding this cost. The cost to the community will be \$1,784.16, something that I believe we can

afford.

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to approve obtaining this insurance for the non union employees.

Second: motion did not pass due to the lack of a second

- B. Approve Installation of Coal Furnace in Community Center – Tony, George and Dan have been working on a proposal to convert the Community Center from oil to coal. Working with Bruce White of Center Farms in Easton who is providing us with a quote to install a coal a coal fired furnace and provide the coal. At the current \$4.00 a gallon we could recoup our costs in less than two years. Asking the Council to approve us moving forward on this project with a final approval on a prepared contract from Center Farms.

Motion: Terry Greenier moved to approve moving forward with the project of converting the Community Center from an oil to coal furnace.

Second: Kim Murchison Vote – All affirmative

- VIII. Minutes: April 20, 2011 and May 4, 2011

Motion: Terry Greenier moved to approve Minutes of April 20, 2011 and May 4, 2011 as written.

Second: Ruel Flannery Vote – All affirmative

- IX. Warrants: #20 - \$67,065.60; #21- \$261,261.08

Motion: Ruel Flannery moved to accept warrant #20, #21 as presented.

Second: Kim Murchison Vote – All affirmative

- X. Other - None

- XI. Executive Session -

move into executive session at 7:06 PM

MRSA 405(6)(C) – Economic Development

MRSA 405(6)(D) – Labor Negotiations

MRSA 405(6)(A) – Personnel

No action taken

Out of executive session at 8:02 PM

- XII. Adjournment at 8:05 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca J. Hersey
Council Secretary