

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting  
Council Chambers  
Wednesday, March 18, 2020  
6:00 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Councilors: All Councilors are present  
Staff: Andrea Powers, Billie Jo Sharpe  
Public: Meeting closed to the Public due to COVID-19

II. Prayer

III. Pledge to the Flag

IV. Public Comment Period

Ms. Powers read a prepared statement –

Along with myself and the Fort Fairfield Town Council we are closely monitoring and following an aggressive action to fight the spread of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Situations are changing daily, sometimes hourly, and we are doing everything in our power to plan and proceed in this time of crisis. It is important that we properly prepare and do not panic.

The COVID-19 (Coronavirus) outbreak has created some unprecedented circumstances for us all to endeavor and to endure. In response, the Town of Fort Fairfield is working closely with Council and Administration to posture our community through promoting citizens and Town employee health and well-being, while sustaining Town business continuity and productivity. Keeping citizens and Town employees connected and working together is the key to sustaining our efficiency.

We encourage you to check our social media postings and our Town website for updated information. If you do not have internet access in your home the Fort Fairfield Town Library has access to the internet from outside their building.

The Town Office, Community Center, Town Library, Public Works Department, Fire and Rescue Department, and Police Department are closed to the Public however, staff will be working. If you should have a question or have Town Business to conduct that can be accomplished through email, over the phone or by mail we are happy to help you. If you have an emergency please call 911.

We encourage our citizens that may be experiencing flu like symptoms to stay home and to please call your health care provider for direction on what to do next.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses and Permits

B. Financial Report

We received February Revenue Sharing in the amount of \$42,003.48 on February 20<sup>th</sup>. Year to date we have received a total of \$275,163.29 which is 63.44% of our budget vs 66.67% expected at this time.

As of February 29 2020, total excise tax collected to date is \$404,270.02; State revenue sharing is \$275,163.29 (63.44% of budget); in February we collected \$768,111.43 in Real Estate & Personal Property bringing our total collected to \$2,529,487.65.

Loan balances as of 02/29/2020:

Jones Fuel - \$2,080.63  
Langley #5275 - \$19,016.63  
Langley #5277 - \$6,899.37  
Pelletier - \$563.91

C. AWS

Mr. Rogeski will not be here to present an AWS report due to the COVID-19 social restrictions and recommendations of the Maine CDC.

A draft copy of the February AWS Board Meeting minutes was provided to Council.

VI. Old Business

A. Animal Ordinance

The recent COVID-19 Pandemic has limited our availability to properly discuss the proposed Animal Ordinance from the Planning Board.

Recommendation: Council tables the discussion the Planning Boards proposed Animal Ordinance.

Mr. Butler made a motion to table the discussion the Planning Boards proposed Animal Ordinance.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. Update 32 Forest Avenue TA Property

As approved by Council on February 19, 2020, we advertised again the property located at 32 Forest Avenue with a minimum bid of \$5,500.

We received one bid from WJV Holdings in the amount of \$5,678.90.



The Tax Collector will have the Quit Claim Deed prepared for your signatures and acceptance on March 18, 2020.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to accept the bid from WJV Holdings in the amount of \$5,678.90.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative.

VII. New Business

A. Recreation Department Multi-Purpose Building Donation

Title 30-A M.R.S.A. §5654 states that a conditional gift for any specified public purpose offered to a municipality may be accepted or rejected by its legislative body.

Discussion: The Parks and Recreation Department inquired about a donation of a new multi-purpose building for the rec department. The goal is to replace the dilapidated warming hut located by the tennis courts with a larger, safe, multi-purpose space. We will be able to utilize the building year-round to support recreation in our community. Aroostook trusses has graciously agreed to support this project by committing to donate the plans, wall sections, and the trusses for this project. The value of this donation is \$4,000.

Recommendation: That Town Council accepts the donation of plans, walls, and trusses from Aroostook Trusses, valued at \$4,000.

Mr. Butler made a motion to accept the donation of plans, walls, and trusses from Aroostook Trusses, valued at \$4,000.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Discussion: Mr. Smith asked if we know what the cost to finish it is. "Is it fairly complete?"

Ms. Powers replied that it won't be completed when it's delivered, but we also have other donations from other service providers and contractors. We are still looking for donations for the foundation.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. CDBG Week

Ms. Powers reiterated the importance of this Proclamation for the Community Development Block Grant program and the importance that it holds for our Community.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program was established in 1974 and is a partnership of federal, state and local governments as well as private sector, non-profit and community efforts to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing, suitable living environments and expanded economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons.

The Town of Fort Fairfield has received \$11,215,617.00 in CDBG funds since 1984. Town projects funded with CDBG dollars include the clinic project, armory renovation and Monson pond dam and bridge project.

Discussion: The National Community Development Association established the National Community Development Week 34 years ago. This year, April 13 through April 18 has been designated Community Development Week.

The proclamation proclaims the week of April 13 through April 18, 2020 as Community Development Week throughout the Town of Fort Fairfield and gives special thanks and recognition to all the participants whose hard work and devotion to the neighborhoods and their low and moderate income residents to help insure the quality and effectiveness of the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Recommendation: Town Council sign Proclamation 20-01, Community Development Week.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Town Council sign Proclamation 20-01, Community Development Week.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

#### C. Tax Acquired Property for 2017 Taxes

The following is a list of properties that became Tax Acquired on March 09, 2020 for 2017 taxes and total amount due on each property as of 3/10/2019:

- (A) TROMBLEYS & FULLER  
327 Houlton Road – Total Taxes Due \$973.78  
Assessed Value - \$10,200
  
- (B) TROMBLEYS & FULLER  
135 Riverside Avenue – Total Taxes Due \$611.05  
Assessed Value - \$5,900

The recommendation is that we offer both properties back to the original owners for the total taxes due plus interest and fees to be paid in full BEFORE April 01, 2020. The Tax Collector have been contacted by one of the original owners who states that they want to keep both properties. If they pay the taxes before April 01, 2020 the properties would be on our 2020 tax roll and we would collect 2020 taxes from them.



If the original owners do not pay before April 01, 2020, the recommendation is that we offer the properties to the abutting owners with a minimum bid for (A) of \$1500, and a minimum bid for (B) of \$800. These amounts would include estimated taxes for 2020.

Recommendation: Town Council authorize the Treasurer to offer both properties back to the original owners with all taxes, interest & fees paid in full before April 01,2020; or to offer the properties to abutting owners for the amounts stated above if original owners have not paid before April 01, 2020 in AS IS WHERE IS condition with no guarantees expressed or implied.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Town Council authorize the Treasurer to offer both properties back to the original owners with all taxes, interest & fees paid in full before April 01,2020; or to offer the properties to abutting owners for the amounts stated above if original owners have not paid before April 01, 2020 in AS IS WHERE IS condition with no guarantees expressed or implied.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

#### D. Interest Rate for 2020 Taxes

Delinquent Tax Rate has been set by the State of Maine at 9% maximum for 2020 Real Estate and Personal Property taxes. This rate would become effective on March 01, 2021

The higher rate often encourages tax payers to pay taxes in a timely manner versus having to pay a high interest rate. At this time, I am asking the members of the Town Council to approve the new interest rate of 9% for the 2020 Real Estate and Personal Property taxes.

Recommendation: Town Council approves the delinquent tax rate set by the State of Maine at 9% maximum for the 2020 Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes effective March 1, 2021.

Mr. Smith made a motion that Town Council approves the delinquent tax rate set by the State of Maine at 9% maximum for the 2020 Real Estate and Personal Property Taxes effective March 1, 2021.

Mr. Butler seconded.

Discussion:

Mr. Kilcollins asked about potentially offering some sort of “incentive” or reduction in percentage of interest for those who may have difficulty paying within the interest free months because of how they receive income. Mr. Kilcollins referenced mostly farmers that could benefit from this type of incentive.

Ms. Powers replied that since it is a State Mandated fee, the only thing that we are allowed to do is if they paid before taxes are due, offer a 1% or 2% discount. But then we would have to go back through our budget and account for that.

Mr. Kilcollins asked if it would be a financial benefit to the Town to offer such “bonus” to those larger tax payers if they paid earlier?

Ms. Powers – Taxes are only committed at a certain time, which is October; and then they have from then until taxes are due to pay.

Mr. Butler stated that the interest rate is set for delinquent taxes.

Mr. Kilcollins asked Ms. Powers if she notices many of the larger tax payers coming in late?

Ms. Powers responded “No”

Mr. Smith commented that everybody has the advantage by joining the Tax Club where they can start paying early and avoid that 9%. Plus, that helps the Town out because they get a fair amount of tax money up front.

Mr. Babin - “So there are options.”

Vote: All Affirmative.

VIII. Minutes of the February 19, 2020 Regular Council Meeting

Mr. Butler made a motion to approve the Minutes of the February 19, 2020 Regular Council Meeting.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

IX. Warrants: #21: \$335,386.67; #22: \$265,790.64

Warrant #21 in the amount of \$335,386.67 was completed on 03/03/2020.

Checking account balance as of 03/04/2020 was \$1,243,515.04; Machias Savings balance \$5,000.00 and a combined balance of CDARS and ICS of \$881,593.00.

We now owe a balance of \$300,000.00 on our TAN loans.

We received March Revenue Sharing in the amount of \$16,363.88 on 3/18/2020. Total receipts for revenue sharing are now at \$291,527.17 which is 67.21% of the amount budgeted.



Warrant #22 in the amount of \$265,790.64 was completed on 03/18/2020.

Checking account balance as of 03/18/2020 is \$1,117,303.06; Machias Savings balance \$5,000.00 and a combined balance of CDARS and ICS of \$881,593.00.

We now owe a balance of \$300,000.00 on our TAN loans.

Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve Warrants #21 and #22 as written.

Mr. Smith seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

X. Other

Ms. Powers informed Council of a CDBG Public Service grant that was awarded to a local Community in 2018 that was not used. This has now been opened up to other area Communities and in order for Businesses to take advantage of this program the businesses need to contact Joella Theriault of NMDC at 551-5812. This program has in the past paid for courses at NMCC including Human Resources, Safety, Water Treatment, and Plumbing. This is an opportunity for our local Businesses to send their employees to NMCC for professional development.

The Central Aroostook Chamber has also put that information on their Facebook page.

XI. Manager's Report

XII. Adjournment

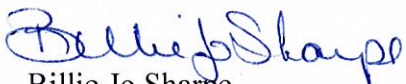
Mr. Butler made a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Kilcollins seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

Council adjourned at 6:21 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Billie Jo Sharpe  
Council Secretary