

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting Minutes
Council Chambers
Tuesday, January 23, 2024
6:00 PM

- I. Roll Call
Council: James Ouellette, Shane McGillan, Keith E. Thibeau (excused absences-Patricia Canavan and Kevin Pelletier)
Staff: Timothy Goff, Neadra Dubois, Darren Hanson, Tony Levesque, Police Chief Matthew Cummings, Fire Chief Michael Jalbert
Budget Advisory Committee: Stev Rogeski, Daniel Hapgood
Citizens: five (5)
Media: Fort Fairfield Journal

- 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 were made.

- V. Correspondence and Reports
 - A. Licenses and Permits
No licenses or permits to report.

 - B. Financial Report
Town Manager Goff reported on the Town's finances. December was a month full of highs and lows. The low point was having to dip into the TAN for about \$675,000.00, still slightly below the budgeted amount of \$700,000.00. \$450,000.00 has been paid down on the TAN within the last week. There is about \$125,000.00 outstanding on that TAN and is projected to be paid down by the end of the week. The Bete reimbursement came in at about \$20,000.00 more than projected. Heating and electricity has come in overall less than budgeted. The Town is a little bit ahead on Revenue sharing from the State.

 - C. Town Council/Budget Advisory Committee Site Visits
Town Manager Goff reports on having site visit tours with Council, Budget Advisory Committee, and the public. He states that the site visit tours will happen on February 5, 2024 at 5:30 PM. In future years, this will become part of the new Council and Budget Advisory Committee Member orientation.
Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to accept that date and time.
Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.
Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

D. Spirit of America Nominations

Town Manager Goff reports on this topic and asks Council to nominate individuals or organizations for this award to recognize their good works they are doing. Chairman Thibeau suggests that Mr. Deschesne put an ad in the Fort Fairfield Journal to have people contact the Town Office with their thoughts for a nominee. Town Manager Goff also suggests that the Town could put it out there on Facebook to get citizens involved.

E. MMA Photo Contest

Town Manager Goff reports on MMA's Photo Contest. MMA will select 52 winning photos from communities throughout the state and have them printed on a deck of cards for attendees at the MMA Convention. No significant prize for the winning photographers, but the communities with the winning submissions have a chance to go to the Annual MMA Convention for free. Town Manager Goff explains how to make submissions for the contest.

VI. Old Business

A. Nothing to report.

VII. New Business

A. Police Seizure Account

Town Manager Goff and Police Chief Cummings have come to the realization that it's probably not best practice to house everything that the police seize in the police storage locker in the evidence room. As part of the investigations that the police do, they are seizing cash and having cash just sitting on a shelf is probably not the best idea. The two sought out some best practices and came across the idea that it would be better to put it in a federally insured financial institution and to have dual control, which would be the Police Chief and the Town Manager. With the funds sitting in the Police Department, the Town becomes liable should anything happen to the funds. Town Manager Goff proposes and asks for Council's permission to add language to the Police Department's Policy 2-5 Property and Evidence Control. He also asks Council for permission for the Police Chief and the Town Manager to add funds to this account. Funds in this account would only be funds seized and given up to the appropriate person(s) when the investigation is done. Any interest gained on this account will be put in the Town's general operating of the Town.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to go along Mr. Goff's suggestion.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

B. Industrial Park Survey Work

Town Manager Goff discusses the challenges the Town is having with property at the Industrial Park. Since the decommissioning of ReEnergy, there has been a lot of changing of hands of the property, some commissioned to a solar project, some transferred to K-Pel and other folks. The challenges right now are there isn't a well-defined boundary of those parcels and there needs to be a better understanding of some of the easements on those parcels. The Town does have funds in the Industrial Park Reserve Account and Town Manager Goff suggests that the funds get used to hire a surveyor and get those properties in better shape to then be either leased, sold, or put back into development.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to allow Town Manager Goff to get the land on Cheney Grove (Industrial Park) surveyed.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

- C. Fort Fairfield Housing Authority Commissioner Appointment
The Housing Authority has reached out to the Town Clerk to ask Council to approve the appointment of Nancy Levasseur to the Housing Authority's Board of Commissioners and take over Suzanne Toussaint's term that ends June 30, 2027.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to approve the appointment of Nancy Levasseur.
Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

- D. Policy Review – Town Holiday Schedule
Town Manager Goff proposes that the Town remove Christmas Eve from the paid holiday policy. Should the Council do this, it would exempt unionized employees because this is a bargain benefit, which will have to be revisited during negotiations in the future.

Currently the Town has 14 paid holidays off and Town Manager Goff explains how having Christmas Eve off costs the Town more money to pay overtime for that extra holiday, and suggests giving the employees a floating holiday instead of having Christmas Eve as a paid holiday.

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to eliminate Christmas Eve as a paid holiday and add a Floating Holiday.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

- VIII. Minutes of the January 2nd, 2024 Special Council Meeting & Minutes of the January 9th, 2024 Budget Goals Workshop

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to accept the minutes.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

- IX. Warrants: #11 – \$ 293,325.21 #12 – \$ 391,519.44

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to accept the Warrants.

Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

- X. Other
Nothing to report.

- XI. Public Comment Period
No public comments.

- XII. Executive Session – 1 MRSA §405(6)(C) – Economic Development
Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to go in to Executive Session.
Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.
Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

TIME IN: 6:23 PM

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to come out of Executive Session.
Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.
Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

TIME OUT: 6:35 PM

No action taken.

XIII. Adjournment

Motion: Councilor Ouellette motioned to adjourn.
Second: Councilor McGillan seconded.
Discussion: None.

Vote: All Councilors present Affirmative.

Respectfully Submitted,

Neadra E. Dubois, Council Secretary