

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting
Council Chambers
Tuesday, April 13, 2021
6:00 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Staff: Ms. Powers, Billie Jo Sharpe, Kevin Senal, Sgt. Eagles, Chief Browning, Jennifer Gaenzle, Ell Leighton, Tony Levesque

Councilors: All Councilors are present with the exception of Mark Babin

Citizens: 19+/-

II. Prayer

III. Pledge to the Flag

IV. Public Comment Period

Mr. Butler commented that he has seen a letter floating around to the taxpayers about the increase on our budget, which we haven't received. There is a lot of misinformation, rumors floating around Town. Its just atrocious that they think this Council does not represent the tax payers, when we do. We've got our Town Manager that has been put through the grind over and over again. She (Ms. Powers) presents the budget; we approve the budget and she sees that the budget stays within the realms of what we approve. The Town Manager got us together and presented the current budget. Every one of the budgets presented were under budget. There is no wasteful tax payer money being spent. That being said, she needs support from the Town Council. I've seen her (Ms. Powers) "raked over the coals" for somethings and she has been accused of doing stuff that she has not been doing.

She (Ms. Powers) came to the Town of Fort Fairfield at a bad time and we had to have a Reval, which hasn't been done for twenty some years. Had we had a Reval done when it was supposed to be done, we wouldn't have these problems we are having. We would have lost State funding so we had to do the Reval. Some people's taxes went up, that's what taxes usually do, they go up. Some people's taxes went down. The ones that went down, I think we should all thank them for paying more taxes than they should have been paying. For the people whose taxes went up, you should thank the people that were paying more than they should have been paying.

It's been fifteen years, things change. We lost our Ambulance. We started our own Ambulance service. The Town Manager and former Fire Chief decided to hire both Ambulance, Fire and EMT personnel. When we have an accident or fire and we only have a part-time Chief, he can't go on that call. We have to wait for help to come. Now we have full-time staff. "We have to bite the bullet somehow." We're not trying to waste tax payer money, we haven't been, but the Town Manager see that all budgets are spent the way they are supposed to be spent and she really needs the support of this Town Council because I've been there with the phone calls she has received. She (Ms. Powers) has been called a liar.

She (Ms. Powers) has given out the information that people want and if they don't like it, they do what they want with the information. She (Ms. Powers) has been straightforward so, Ms. Powers, you've got my support.”

Mr. Butler, then opened the floor to Public Comments. Hearing none, the meeting continued.

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses and Permits

As of April 13, 2021 we have received one liquor license renewal from Boondocks Grille.

B. Financial Report

We received March Revenue Sharing in the amount of \$33,052.53 on 03/23/2021. Total revenue sharing received to date is \$371,999.61. This puts us at 78.68% of budget versus 75%. We are now \$17,418.00 over our budgeted amount.

Checking account balance as of 03/31/2021 is \$1,975,075.97 which includes the promissory note with AWS; Machias Savings balance \$5,000.00.

Total excise tax collected in March was \$59,835.68; State revenue sharing \$33,052.53; Real Estate & Personal Property taxes collected \$201,109.06.

As of March 31, 2021, our revenue is at 81.71% versus budget of 75.00%; tax collections are at \$3,103,410.70 compared to \$2,696,642.84 for the same period last year which shows an increase in tax collections of \$406,767.86 compared to last year.

Expenses as of March 31, 2021 are at 73.10% versus our budget @75.00%.

Loan balances as of 03/31/2021:

Jones Fuel - \$1,680.63

Langley #5275 - \$18,616.63

Langley #5277 - \$6,699.37

C. AWS Report

Stev Rogeski gave an updated report since the last AWS Board meeting. Councilors were given a copy of the draft minutes of the March 19, 2021 AWS Board of Directors meeting.

VI. Old Business

A. Tax Acquired Property

On Wednesday, March 18, 2021, Council approved we put out to bid property located at 41 Center Street and 107 Riverside Avenue with a minimum bid of \$2,500 for each property.

We received the following four bids on property located at 41 Center Street:

Ryan Eagles bid \$5,001.99; Rose Walker bid \$4,000.00;
Jack Shannon bid \$3,200.00; Danny Dufour bid \$2,601.00

We did not receive any bids on the property located at 107 Riverside Avenue.

After discussion with the Town Manager, Andrea Powers, our recommendation is to sell the property at 41 Center Street to the highest bidder, Ryan Eagles for \$5,001.99, and to offer the property at 107 Riverside Avenue to abutting property owners for a minimum of \$2,500.00.

Buyer(s) of any tax acquired property are responsible for any outstanding utility bills connected to said property.

Motion: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to sell the property at 41 Center Street to the highest bidder, Ryan Eagles for \$5,001.99, and to offer the property at 107 Riverside Avenue to abutting property owners for a minimum of \$2,500.00.

Second: Mrs. Libby

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative.

VII. New Business

A. Good Morning Program FFR Department

On March 25, 2021, Fort Fairfield Fire Rescue responded to two 9-1-1 Emergency calls for elderly people in the community who had fallen and needed help getting up. On both calls, it was made apparent that the support for our elderly community is lacking. The individual had no family around and relied on neighbors to be there when the individual needed it. On calls like this it is hard because it ties up the only staffed ambulance at our department. If something such as a Cardiac Arrest came in during the time of the lift assist, we would be unable to respond until another licensed provider came to the station, got the second out ambulance, waited for a partner, and responded to the incident. Most patients when calling for a lift assist do not want to be transported by ambulance to the hospital, they just want help up. Legally, we cannot leave the patient until we have signed them off through the hospital, tying up the only staffed ambulance at Fort Fairfield Fire Rescue. Through this incident in the community, I recognized that we needed a way to not only support our elderly, but also keep our ambulance open for emergency calls. Through some help with Deputy Chief Fenderson, we established the Good Morning Program.

A list of elderly people in the community would be acquired and then each morning at 8 A.M., a call is made to the individual. If they do not answer, a well-being check will be made to the address provided. As well the morning calls, the station phone number will be provided to the individual in case they needed help at home or another assist. Once the list has been established, we will be reaching out to the members on the list to educate them on when to call 9-1-1, and when to call the station.

Any interested individuals in the community will be able to call the station asking for myself, or Deputy Chief Fenderson. They will also be able to email myself at sbarnes@fortfairfield.org to sign up. All members on the list will provide the following information: name, address, medical history, emergency contact and where we can find a spare key to their house. All the information will be kept confidential.

B. Fort Fairfield Solar LLC Final Lease Agreement

The Fort Fairfield Solar, LLC has been granted their Site Location of Development Act (SLODA) by the Maine DEP. We now have approval to move forward with the solar array project. The signing of this lease proceeds over the prior Letter of Intent (LOI) Council had me originally sign on October 10, 2019.

Recommendation: Council votes to allow the Town Manager to sign the Lease Agreement with the Fort Fairfield Solar Company and the terms of the solar array installation agreement at the Town Office Building.

Motion: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to allow Town Manager to sign the Lease Agreement with the Fort Fairfield Solar Company and the terms of the solar array installation agreement at the Town Office Building.

Second: Mr. Smith

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative

VIII. Minutes of the March 17, 2021 Regular Council Meeting

Motion: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 17, 2021 Regular Council Meeting as written.

Second: Mrs. Libby.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative.

IX. Warrants

Warrant #21 in the amount of \$149,265.19 was completed on 03/17/2021.

Warrant #22 in the amount of \$95,916.44 was completed on 03/29/2021.

Expenses are again in line with year-to-date expenses at 73.10% versus budget @75%. Expenses have been below budget for the past three months.

Warrant #23 in the amount of \$441,667.99 was completed on 04/12/2021. Checking account balance as of 04/12/2021 is \$1,597,943.56 and Machias Savings is \$5,000.00.

Motion: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to approve Warrants 21, 22, 23 as presented.

Second: Mrs. Libby

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative

X. Other

A. Spring Clean-up

Ms. Powers read the Spring Clean up flyer for informational purposes.

B. *Lease Agreement Fort Frontier ATV Club/Town of Fort Fairfield*

The Fort Frontier ATV Club has requested to renew the lease of a parcel of land located off of Cheney Grove Road and further identified as being Tax Assessor's Map 11, Part of Lot 16A in the Town of Fort Fairfield.

The Lease agreement states that the renewal of this lease would be for a three (3) year period from March 1, 2021 through February 29, 2024.

The proposed lease is attached. Both the Town and the Fort Frontier ATV Club must agree to the renewal of the lease.

The terms and conditions of the lease will be the same for the renewal, with the exception that the rent amount may be renegotiated at the time of renewal. The proposed rent for the 1st three years was \$1.00 per year.

Recommendation: Town Council allow the Town Manager to sign and renew the Lease Agreement between the Fort Frontier ATV Club and the Town of Fort Fairfield for three years with rent to remain at \$1.00 per year.

Motion: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to the Town Manager to sign and renew the Lease Agreement between the Fort Frontier ATV Club and the Town of Fort Fairfield for three years with rent to remain at \$1.00 per year.

Second: Mr. Smith.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative.

XI. A.1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(D) Labor Negotiations

Motion in: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion to go into Executive session regarding 1M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(D) Labor Negotiations

Second: Mrs. Libby

Vote: All Affirmative

Time: 6:25 pm.

Motion out: Mrs. Libby

Second: Mr. Smith

Vote: All Affirmative.

Time: 6:48pm.

Action taken: Voted 3 – 1 (Mr. Kilcollins: Yes, Mr. Smith: Yes, Mr. Butler: Yes, Mrs. Libby: No) to approve 1% increase, renegotiate 3-year contract after this year.

B.1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(G) CEO

Motion in: Mr. Smith made a motion to go into Executive Session regarding 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(G) CEO

Second: Mrs. Libby

Vote: All Affirmative

Time: 6:53 pm.

Motion out: Mr. Smith

Second: Mrs. Libby

Vote: All Affirmative.

Time out: 7:12 pm.

Action taken: Mr. Kilcollins made a motion that Town Staff hold a Public Hearing to review the dangerous buildings on Fort Hill Street. (specifically, 125 and 128 Fort Hill St)

Mrs. Libby seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative.

C.1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A) Personnel Matters

Motion in: Mr. Smith made a motion to go into Executive Session regarding 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A) Personnel Matters

Second: Mrs. Libby

Vote: All Affirmative

Time: 7:14 pm.

Motion out: Mr. Smith

Second: Mrs. Libby

Vote: All Affirmative

Time out: 7:46 pm.

XII. Adjournment

Motion: Mr. Smith made a motion to adjourn.

Second: Mrs. Libby

Vote: All Affirmative

Time: 7:46 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Billie Jo Sharpe, Town Clerk
Council Secretary

