

Fort Fairfield Town Council Monthly Meeting Minutes  
Council Chambers  
Wednesday, August 17, 2022  
6:00 P.M.

I. Roll Call

Council: All Councilors present

Staff: Andrea Powers, Neadra Dubois, Ella Leighton, Jennifer Gaenzle, Darren Hanson, Chief Cummings, DC Fenderson

BAC: Kevin Bouchard, Pat Canavan

Media: Melissa Lizotte (Star Herald)

Legal: Attorney Currier

Citizens: 12 citizens present

II. Prayer

III. Pledge to the Flag

IV. Public Comment Period

**Ken Stratton** – “I don’t know why I get so nervous up here. Name’s Ken Stratton, I’m a resident of Fort Fairfield. This past spring several groups here in Town used to meet at the local library. We’re told that we could no longer meet there due to an insurance company requiring that a staff member to be present. I understand that this is beyond the Librarian’s control. It’s an insurance requirement. But this got me thinking, our Library hours are 10 to 5:50, 4 days a week, closed on Sundays and Mondays and opened on Saturdays from 10 to 4. With our average citizen working 9 to 5 jobs, their only opportunity to use the library is on Saturdays. Who wants to do work related research on a Saturday? I wouldn’t. Wouldn’t it be better to have the library open from 12 noon to 7:30 pm so those that work 9 to 5 could be able to use it? This would also solve the issue of the group stuff being able to meet in the basement. So, I’m just asking the Town Council to consider changing the Library hours. Then, we wouldn’t have to hire the additional staff to man that at night. That’s it. Thank you.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Thank you, Ken. Anybody else?”

**Melissa Libby** – “I’d like to make a comment. I’m gonna do it from here because I wanna be able to address the Council as well. So, I don’t like to usually speak up or say a whole lot, but I feel like I’ve bit my tongue for long enough, so it’s time for me to say how I feel and I thought that maybe I should do it as a citizen instead of as Councilor, so that’s why I thought maybe I should come over here to do it. I wrote it down just so I don’t forget anything. So, basically I just want to take a moment to address some issues that I’m having with how the Council has been operating. Basically I’m noticing that during the meetings, not much input is being shared by the Council on different items that we’re discussing, biggest of those are the Budget Advisory Committee and the budget itself. So, basically what I’m seeing is, each month we’re kind of sitting here going through the motions, but

very little is being said in regards to how we feel about the process or what we can do to fix or change things. I don't think that a lot of direction is given to the Town Manager. I don't think a lot of direction's given to her staff. It's just not a very productive way to conduct Town business and it's not a very productive Council when we're working like that. So, I think that we should be working together with our Town Manager, with our Department Heads and I think that that's what we were voted into these seats to do. The Town Manager and her Staff bring the Council information that's necessary for the Council to make informed decisions. The Council shares our citizens voices, brings the ideas to the table and works with the Town Manager and Staff on any issues that might arise. It's then our job to make our best informed decision on behalf of the Town and the citizens. And, yes, it is nerve-wracking from this side, just saying, so I'm sorry I'm nervous. But I just I really, like, this has been weighing on me and it's this business stuff is easy for me, this stuff is not, so. My question to the Council is, if our business isn't being conducted at the Council Meetings, then where is it being conducted? I understand it's part of our job as Councilors to go outside of these walls to talk to our taxpayers, to do research, to talk to Town Managers, Department Heads, whoever we need to talk to in order to get the information that we need to make decisions, however, it's my belief, again my, mine alone, possibly others, I don't know, but it is my belief that there's a lot more work going on outside of the meetings than in Council, and I don't think that that's productive. I think that if we're doing all of this work and researching and getting all of this information and we're not bringing it to Council Meetings and sharing it, then what are we doing it for? I think we need to learn to communicate better and I think that if there is stuff going on in outside meetings and you're not sharing it, then you probably need to take a look at yourself and your efforts as a Councilor, and see if those are the best efforts and for the good of the Town, and, is, look and see if you are actually being productive. I think that we should all be working for the taxpayers, for the good of the Town citizens and not working just behind closed doors but also working during our meetings as well. Another issue that is really kind of the reason that I brought this up is that I find that with this Council there's a lot of false and inaccurate news being spread. Some of it's from the Council, some of it's from, and that's not necessarily just this year that's been for a couple of years we've had a little bit of that issue, but it's being spread and it, and I found that there was something in the paper recently that made me bring that up. Councilor Ouellette said that we voted on a budget before we had seen the figures. Now, that's not accurate. We sat here for multiple meetings and reviewed the figures with the Department Heads, so I'm not sure what figures we voted on that we didn't see, but we did actually meet on March 10<sup>th</sup>, April 28<sup>th</sup>, May 5<sup>th</sup>, May 18<sup>th</sup>, June 1<sup>st</sup>, June 9<sup>th</sup>, June 15<sup>th</sup> and June 29<sup>th</sup>. After we voted on the budget, which was not the requested amount, the Town Manager and the Department Heads have to go back and figure out what they're going to do with a lower amount than what was originally requested, so they have to reallocate the funds, remove the items that were not funded, and then the Council votes on the budget as whole, we don't vote on the line items of the budget, we review them with the Department Heads, the Town Manager works with the Department Heads to figure out if those line items are what should be in there. So, basically, my recommendation would be if you don't understand the process, first learn the process, and if you're not conducting yourself on behalf of the Town, then you're not being a productive Council. You're, what we should be doing is just for the good of the Town and the taxpayers. There should be no personal agendas, there shouldn't be any backdoor meetings. So, I just hope going forward that we can be more productive and I just kind of needed to get that off my chest. So, that's it."

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Thank you, Melissa. Anybody else? If not, we’ll move onto Correspondence and Reports.”

V. Correspondence and Reports

A. Licenses and Permits

As of August 12, 2022, the Town has received one Liquor License Club Application for the Fort Fairfield Lions Club.

Recommendation is that Council approve and sign this License Application.

Motion: Mr. Butler moved for Council to approve and sign the License Application.

Second: Mrs. Libby seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

B. Financial Report

Excise collected in July was \$93,815.41 compared to last year at \$111,757.33, the Town is down \$17,941.92. This decrease may be caused by the State of Maine giving an exemption to disabled Veterans.

As of 07/31/2022, uncollected Real Estate taxes for 2021 was \$210,159.26. The amount due for 2020 taxes for the same period last year was \$150,841.09, a difference of \$59,318.17.

The Town received July Revenue Sharing in the amount of \$105,800.81 on 07/21/2022. Total Revenue Sharing received to date is \$105,800.81. The Town is \$30,317.00 over budgeted amount.

On 8/8/2022, the Town sent out 138 lien notices for a total of \$124,469.78. Last year the Town sent out 165 notices for a total of \$143,334.70.

As of 8/17/2022, the Town has collected on 23 accounts for a total collected of \$26,644.55. This leaves a balance of \$97,825.23 uncollected. Tax payers have until 9/8/2022 to pay before liens are placed.

For the same period last year, the Town had a total of \$130,143.12 uncollected.

### C. AWS Report – Mr. Rogeski

Mr. Rogeski gives an update on AWS. There was no meeting in July, the next meeting is Friday, August 19, 2022. The contract income was down by five percent in July, it's normally down in the summertime. Year to date is up 10 percent, so they're in line with their budgets.

**Mr. Butler** – “The Leach Aid is going to Caribou. How is it going to Caribou? We're talking about going through our Utilities District, we'd have to put a pipeline in also.”

**Mr. Rogeski** – “We've done a little bit of research on that, from our site at the landfill.”

**Ms. Powers** – “We proposed it three years ago.”

**Mr. Rogeski** – “Yeah, Yeah, and we've done some research. We've done some engineering to show three different routes for the pipes to come.”

**Mr. Butler** – “But with this new facility across the river, wouldn't that be a lot easier [inaudible].”

**Mr. Rogeski** – “Depends on the route you take for it. Although, we did talk to John when we were looking at this to make sure that the underwater pipe was gonna be big enough for what we wanted to do. All that was taken into consideration by the Utilities District. It certainly is something they're interested in doing and I know John is right up to his eyeballs in the project he is in to not look at this one here, but just to remind us that we should be looking at that down the line because any potential grants or anything like that or anything that John could go after.”

**Mr. Butler** – “When they were running the pipe through Caribou, who paid for the metal and the pipe through Caribou?”

**Mr. Rogeski** – “We got a grant from the DEP.”

**Mr. Butler** – “It's most likely if we ran it this way here [inaudible]. Hopefully.”

**Mr. Rogeski** – “That depends on, Mitch, what happens with DEP. The one we rented had fuel and was based on us not having to truck it, which was an issue, now that we have the pipeline there, we may not be as eager to be able to get some stuff from DEP a second time around. But if we show that we're trying to be careful about and being conscientious about what would happen if we overdo the utilities in Caribou, we could shift it here and equal out where that gets put into the river. That may be another whole option again [inaudible]. But, we can do some further research on that and I'll bring that up to a price meeting, it's true, you know where it might be interested in it. Have a nice night.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Thank you, Stev.”

VI. Old Business

A. Budget Advisory Committee Ordinance

A Public Hearing was held for the Ordinance 22-02 An Ordinance Providing for Rewording of the Budget Advisory Committee Ordinance 22-02 in the Council Chambers of the Fort Fairfield Municipal Building on August 10, 2022 at 6:00pm. There was one (1) citizen that spoke against the Ordinance changes, there were two (2) citizens that spoke for the Ordinance changes, and three (3) citizen that spoke neither for or against at the public hearing.

The Town Manager’s Office did not receive any emails and or additional letters or any other form of communication from citizens from August 10, 2022 to August 17, 2022 regarding these proposed changes.

“An Ordinance Providing for Rewording to the Budget Advisory Committee Ordinance 22-02.”

Recommendation is that the Town Council does approve Ordinance 22-02 An Ordinance Providing For Rewording to the Budget Advisory Committee Ordinance 22-02 as written.

Motion: Mr. Butler moves to approve the Ordinance 22-02.

Second: Mr. Ouellette seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

VII. New Business

A. Public Works - Trackless Sidewalk Plow

Public Works currently uses an MT4 Trackless as a backup for the MT5 Trackless Sidewalk Plow as well as this older machine was used primarily in the summer to compact hot top during the patching process.

During recent patching operations the MT4 Trackless developed transmission issues that would cost more to repair than the machine is worth.

Recommendation is that the Town Council authorizes Public Works to use not more than \$20,000 from the Public Works Reserve Account (G 1-3064-00) to purchase a used Trackless Sidewalk Plow.

**Ms. Powers** – “And, I’m not even going to begin to know what that means, so I will ask the Public Works Director to share that information.”

**Mr. Hanson** – “Basically the MT4 was the first real sidewalk plow we had. If you guys remember, we had an old John Deere tractor that was really a nightmare and we just moved up leaps and bounds when we bought that first trackless, seeing what it’ll do and how it does it. We actually traded a V plow that was sitting at the old lot with that first trackless. And we knew the trackless probably wasn’t a long-term deal, but we did get five years out of it. But one thing that we got out of that machine is a \$10,000 snowblower that will spit on a brand new trackless today, and we can’t, we can’t go out and purchase a new trackless. They’re 160,000, but we’ve, we’ve found several what look to be good quality used ones and we’d like to travel, but when we travel, we’d like to be able to purchase one that we, if we’re able to find the right one and they’re all less than, you know, \$20,000.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “Is that for a used one, Darren, or a new one? [inaudible]”

**Mr. Hanson** – “160,000 for a brand new one. They’re, you look at them going on the sidewalk and the size of the machine and it’s hard to believe that they cost that much money, but when you, when you realize what you can do with them, they’re like a Swiss Army knife. We have a grinder head that we purchased, relatively reasonable for one, so we can go do joints in sidewalks, joints in driveways for repairs and whatnot, so they’ll really do a lot. That little machine weighs as much as a three-quarter ton pickup and it has 120 horsepower so they’re really, they’re really amazing. We, we use it, thank God we have them, the days of walking along and throwing patch out in the hole, you guys have seen our roads, I mean, it would be impossible to get through if we didn’t have that machine to compact the hot top that we use on a daily basis, just to keep our roads passible. So, what we’re looking for is, is we would buy a newer one. The one that we have, it was manufactured in the 90s, we’re looking at one that’s from the early 2000s. We would make the early 2000s one the plow machine and the other one would be a backup.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “And I’ve seen, myself, the years I was on Main Street, the amount of work that, that has done and, and I’ve seen many times the repair truck following it up and down the streets and oil leaking out of it and, and I, I’m surprised you got the use out of it that you did.”

**Mr. Hanson** – “I was too. Like I said, we, we were able to, we probably got \$12,000 worth of implements on that first trackless and we had almost nothing into it, so it owes us nothing. The engine still runs good, if we could repair it we would, but it’s just cost worthy at this point. It will become a parts machine, there’s still a lot of parts machine parts off that, that will fit on the new one, so there’s still money to be had in that little machine.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “It’s got a lot of hours on it. It’s got an hour meter on it.”

**Mr. Hanson** – “Yes, it has an hour meter but it’s been replaced about three times before we got it. But I, I think since we’ve had it, it’s, it’s up there, you know, like 1200 hours. When it goes in the summer, when it goes out patching for a day, it goes for 10 hours. You put a vibratory roller on it, I mean, they really are [inaudible]. Any questions?”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Nope. Thank you, Darren.”

Motion: Mr. Butler makes a motion to authorize Public Works to don’t use more than \$20,000 from the Public Works Reserve Account to purchase a used Trackless sidewalk plow.

Second: Mr. Pelletier.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

#### B. Police Department - Cruiser Bids

A 2013 Ford Taurus police cruiser was advertised out for bid with a minimum bid of 1,000.00 on July 26, 2022. On August 10, 2022 at 12:00 PM Town Clerk Neadra Dubois, D/C Cody Fenderson and Chief Cummings opened the 4 bids that were received on the cruiser. The bids were as follows:

1. Brett Patti \$1,268.18
2. Curtis Seeley \$2,150.00
3. Lori Hodsdon \$2,251.13
4. Kelvin Forsman \$1,050.00

It is the Chief’s recommendation that the Town approve the high bid by Lori Hodsdon of \$2,251.13, provide Hodsdon with the title and a bill of sale. Upon payment, the \$2,251.13 will be placed in the police department equipment purchase/maintenance line E-01-03-30-05.

Motion: Mr. Butler motioned.

Second: Mr. Pelletier.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

#### C. Fire Department – Ambulance Fee Waiver Request

**Ms. Powers** – “So, this is our first one. We’ve talked about this, I believe three months ago, that this may happen at some point in time. So, that’s the very first one so we are

trying to get through this. Again, we've done a bit of research on what we need to do, and we're pretty sure this is how we do this, so."

On August 14, 2022, Acting Fire Chief Cody Fenderson received notification from Comstar Ambulance billing that the Fort Fairfield Fire/Rescue Department had received a hardship application. This patient is a resident of Fort Fairfield and income is less than the standardized annual guidelines of \$27,180.00 to be considered for hardship. The patient was not transported by the Ambulance. They received a \$100, non-transport fee for the assessment and care provided on scene, as is standard for all no transporting calls. Their insurance does not cover, no transports, and they are requesting the balance of \$100 be waived.

Council will need to determine if they wish to continue to seek the \$100 that is due, or if they would like to grant the hardship waiver, and write off the debt.

Motion: Mrs. Libby makes a motion to approve the waiver and grant the hardship.

Second: Mr. Butler.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

#### D. County Proposal for Change of Fiscal Year

The Aroostook County Commissioners will be holding a public meeting on November 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm at the Caribou Courthouse to discuss the process and hear comments from municipalities on the proposal to change their fiscal year.

The County develops three budget proposals (general fund; jail budget and unorganized territory budget). While the jail and unorganized territory budgets are on a July-June fiscal year, the general fund budget has remained on a calendar (Jan-Dec) fiscal year.

This requires their budget process to begin in early summer and conclude in late fall to accommodate adopted budgets before year end. Municipalities typically receive their County tax bill in February/March and by state statute are required to pay the County Tax by September 1, with interest beginning to accrue after November 1. This creates a cash flow problem that requires the County to borrow funds in anticipation of taxes and further increases the amount of County Tax necessary to collect from each of the municipalities.

The County Commissioners will be discussing the options of changing their fiscal year, the timeline involved, the impact that such a change will have on their budget process, as well as, the impact to the municipalities through the first year of that change.

The County Commissioners are open to ideas and suggestions from the municipalities and invite and encourage participation at this meeting. The meeting will also be available via Zoom.



**Mr. Butler** – “How is that gonna affect our budgets, or are they just discussing it?”

**Ms. Powers** – “I don’t know, but I would encourage attending that meeting to find out how it will affect. Generally they would have to send out an 18, like, 18-month billing, so an additional half year billing, but I’m not certain. Until then, [inaudible] we’ll know more after November 16<sup>th</sup>. But I would encourage Council to attend or get on the same list so we can watch it and if you have comments, questions or concerns, you’ll be able to address that with the commissioners.”

VIII. Minutes of the July 20, 2022 Regular Council Meeting, Minutes of the August 10, 2022 Public Hearing for Amended Ordinance 22-02

Motion: Mr. Butler made the motion to accept the Minutes as written.

Second: Mrs. Libby seconded.

Discussion:

**Mr. Ouellette** – “I don’t think Attorney Currier was present at that meeting. I’m assuming that on the minutes of the Meeting that you’re saying that he was present.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “So, was the information?”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “If he wasn’t here, it’s inaccurate.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “It’s corrected it already.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “So they’ll have to be a correction verifying the difference.”

**Ms. Powers** – “Well, if, if you’ve already made the motion, you, I can suggest that you just with the corrections of the Minutes.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Right. That’s, yeah, add with the corrections to the Minutes.”

Motion: Mr. Butler motioned to accept the Minutes with the discussed corrections.

Second: Mrs. Libby seconded.

Discussion: None

Vote: All Affirmative.

IX. Warrants #2: \$373,086.83 #3: \$402,517.96

Warrant #02 in the amount of \$373,086.83 was completed on 07/19/2022. This amount included SAD #20 payment in the amount of \$183,619.25.

Warrant #03 in the amount of \$402,517.96 was completed on 08/04/2022. This amount included SAD #20 payment in the amount of \$183,619.25.

Motion: Mrs. Libby made the motion to approve the Warrants as written.

Second: Mr. Ouellette seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

X. Other

**Ms. Powers** – “I have some Department Heads who have some information to share with Council.”

**Chief Cummings** – “Good Evening Council. I wanted to share with you some of the work that the Officers of the Fort Fairfield Police Department have done since the beginning of 2022. I think it’s important that we keep you updated regularly on, on our efforts and the efforts of our Officers. For the first time since 2020, I’m proud to report that since May we are fully staffed with three full-time Officers, plus myself and six part-time Officers, who work on an as needed basis to assist with covering open shifts and vacations. It was essential for us to hire this many part-time Officers in this manner because they all work full-time jobs and have limited availability. The part-time Officers save us on overtime that would normally be back filled by full-time Officers. On, on Monday, August 14. Officer Isaac Wiperman, who some of you have met, started a base, a 42<sup>nd</sup> Basic Law Enforcement Training Program. I heard through the grapevine that he was chosen as a class leader out of the 70 cadets for the first week. Officer Wiperman will graduate on December 18 and this will give us a fully certified crew of full-time Officers. This makes us short-handed while Officer Wiperman graduates, but I’ve been utilizing our part-time Officers as much as possible to fill in the gaps. We are still in the Academy Waiver process for Officer Lance Ferguson, our third and final full-time Officer, who had a full-time certification out of Tennessee. The Academy Board of Trustees will likely approve his full-time certification here in Maine in September at their next board meeting with a couple of Maine Conversion courses. Officer Ferguson comes with, comes to us with numerized, numerous specialized trainings he has received out of State and he’s been a good fit for us here at the Police Department. So far this year, we have responded to 1497 calls for service. These calls for service range in severity from domestic violence assaults, strangulations, threatening, stalking, drug arrests, rapes, child abuse, elder abuse, aggravated assaults, robbery, thefts, burglaries, assault on law enforcement, assault on EMS and mental health related calls. We have over 60 criminal arrests and prosecutions so far this year, not including warrant requests and arrests. We field numerous traffic complaints and conduct traffic enforcement as time permits between calls for service. It is common misconception

that once we have left a call, we are done with it. The paperwork that follows these calls can be extensive and takes a lot of time to complete. Our Officers are busy and they do their best to field these complaints in a timely manner and do their best by those in our community. We find the majority of the calls lately have prompted a two-person response as those we are dealing with are under the influence of a substance and seem to be ever more aggressive towards law enforcement. This has been problematic for us as other local agencies such as the State Police, Sheriff's Office and Border Patrol are all short-handed and sometimes do not have anyone to assist us. Normally they do, sometimes they don't. We've had to call out a second Fort Fairfield Police Officer to assist with these calls at times which can adversely affect the overtime line, but worth it for the safety, because the safety of our Officers is paramount. We recently received a 2017 Ford Explorer SUV, which is fully equipped with radio, lights, siren, laptop stand, which will be used to replace our station spare Ford Taurus, which is being used to travel to the Academy by Officer Wipperman. We were able to obtain this cruiser from the Sheriff's Office at no cost of the Town of Fort Fairfield. It's brown. Public Works will paint it white. It should service us for a couple of years and will be a reliable spare for us. Although it has high mileage, it is in great shape and I would like to thank Sheriff Shawn Gillan for seeing the need, Shawn Gillan for seeing the need and helping us out. Budgets are tight and we're doing what we can to hold the line on this. I estimate the value of the cruiser and equipment to be about \$12,000. We continue to deal with overcrowding at the jail. The jail has been holding a population of about 40 more inmates in their maximum capacity for a while now and we are limited in what we can take down to the jail due to the overcrowding. We're also dealing with the lack of services for those suffering from mental health, mental illness and trauma. We find often that we often transport people from mental health evaluation to local hospitals, which in turn involuntarily commits or blue paper these individuals. They often sit in the ER for three to five days because of the lack of bed space and more availability Statewide for inpatient care. They are then released back into the community, starting the cycle over again. I would like to thank the Town Manager of the Town Council and the citizens of the Town of Fort Fairfield for the continued support of the Police Department. As Always, if there are any questions, comments or concerns, I'm available to address these. Thank you."

**Council** – "Thank you."

**Mr. Hanson** – "Public Works' biggest issue here in the recent past has been staffing and one of the biggest reasons why we were light on staffing was burnout throughout the winter season. We were working seven days a week. It's been constant. We've all seen the changes in the weather patterns, the wind, the freezing rain, everything. One good thing about that is we're seeing more frequent storms but smaller storms. You didn't see a storm over six. Five, six, seven inches last year. So, we, we've come up with a good way to, you know, alleviate that issue and by the way, we've been fortunate enough that we have restaffed with, with some really good quality people that have Public Works experience. One of them comes from, he was a former employee in Fort Fairfield Public Works, and two of them are from another town in their Public Works Departments. We've been really fortunate that way and we have a couple more potential employees. One of them is a mechanic, which we sorely need, a Master Mechanic, you know. Anyway, moving forward, this is what we plan to do throughout the winter months from the end of November until the end of March, we're going to go to seven day a week staffing and what we're going to do is we're going to run seven ten-hour days. Basically, three and a half men on one crew, three

and a half men on the other. It'll be three full-timers and a part-timer that'll be on call. You'll have a smaller amount of staffing, but what that will do is that allows another three guys to probably at least get two of those three days that they're on, off, and three guys, potentially four, can run around and take care of the majority of the issues that we have on a weekend, which is drifting, that sort of thing. If you have a major event, you call in the other three guys so you, you're fully staffed on that major event. I am, I am a hundred percent sure that taxpayers of Fort Fairfield are going to see better service out of this and we're going to save on overtime and we're gonna be able to keep staff. Any questions?"

**Mr. Pelletier** – "It'd be nice if we could predict the weather."

**Mr. Hanson** – "It sure would. And that is becoming more difficult by the year."

**Mr. Kilcollins** – "No, I think that's a great note from you."

**Mr. Hanson** – "So, if anybody can see any flaws in that plan, we'd love to hear about them. I've thought it through, we've thought it through inside out over several months and I can't see any. It's gonna take some planning, it's gonna put some work on myself and the deputy director part, but I think we're gonna make this work and work really well with the taxpayers [inaudible]"

**Mr. Butler** – "You'll have a crew on the weekends?"

**Mr. Hanson** – "Yes, sir. One crew will work Wednesday through Saturday, one crew works Sunday through Wednesday. Wednesday will be an overlap day where we automatically have the whole crew, any big, bigger projects like cleaning up ditches with the loaders and whatnot, we'll try to overlap on that day."

**Mr. Pelletier** – "That overlap will allow the other guys to get their forty in, right?"

**Mr. Hanson** – "That's correct. Everybody will get a minimum of forty hours."

**Mr. Butler** – "Can you just have a snow storm adjusted on Wednesday too?"

[laughing]

**Mr. Hanson** – "I would love for that. We could be all cleaned up by Friday. I'm really looking forward to it. I, I haven't looked forward to a winter in 25 years, so if that tells you anything. Thank you."

**Mr. Kilcollins** – "Thank you, Darren."

**Ms. Dubois** – "So, I wanted to touch base again on the excise tax that we collect. So, because the State of Maine is giving an exemption to disabled veterans, we are losing a big

amount of money, I mean, \$17,941.92. I know that seems, in comparison to our entire budget, that seems like pennies, however, in my Department, that's a lot for us to lose out on. So, I understand it's a great thing to give to disabled veterans and I'm all for it. It's a great thing that the State is doing, but it is at our expense."

**Ms. Powers** – "And they did that after the budget."

**Ms. Dubois** – "Yeah, so that wasn't nice."

**Mrs. Libby** – "It's too bad the State couldn't supplement communities for what they'd be losing."

**Ms. Dubois** – "Right. Especially for small towns like us. I mean, for big cities, you know Portland or Augusta, that's not going to bother them."

**Mrs. Libby** – "Right. But just think how much bigger the amount will be."

**Ms. Dubois** – "True."

**Mr. Pelletier** – "Well, they have a lot more people, so they would be losing a lot more."

**Ms. Dubois** – "I don't know."

**Mr. Kilcollins** – "Well, hopefully, they may envision something somewhere along the next, you know, even two, three, four months, six months that may compensate that."

**Ms. Dubois** – "Yeah."

**Mr. Kilcollins** – "After they get the numbers in to see what the effects are in all these communities, hopefully it will help."

**Ms. Dubois** – "True."

**Mr. Butler** – "But, with Revenue Sharing being \$30,000 more, I know we can't depend on Revenue Sharing, but at least that'll help take low points out of it, wouldn't it? Because right now, it looks, I mean, I understand you're problems, well your thing, but we got Revenue Sharing's up a little bit, so hopefully it'll help adjust and help you with that."

**Ms. Dubois** – "Right. Yeah. So, now, onto something more positive. This year we're gonna try something new with Elections. The Town has always hand counted local ballots and this year we're going to, we're gonna order ballots from the same company that prints the ballots for the State. So, there won't be anymore hand counting, this year anyway, we'll see how it goes. So, we won't have to count votes by hand and having the tabulator count the votes will make the count more accurate and it will take less time, my time and volunteer

time, because we all know how hard it is to find volunteers. So, with this being a November Gubernatorial Election and a Local Election, for two Councilors and one School Board Member, it's expected that we will have more voters come in than we did in June or even the last November Election. So with that being said, I plan on hiring five Election Clerks to help me during the Election, and if anybody here would love to join me, call the town Office and leave us your name and phone number and we'll get back to you about that."

**[interruption] Citizen** – "I'm sure there's quite a few out there [inaudible] and they'd be more than happy to do that."

**Ms. Dubois** – "Yes. And, I'm still gonna use staff that we can. It all depends on if we plan to keep the Office open or not. I think it's a good idea to keep the Office open because we did still get business in, so that would be a good idea to do."

**[interruption] Citizen** – "[inaudible]"

**Ms. Dubois** – "Yeah, we have a list. Okay. Well, it's not really, it's not really applying, just, yeah, so just call the Office, leave your name and phone number, and we'll look at our list and see what we can do, because we do need and want to have more people involved. It's a good deal, like it's a good day. Thank you."

**Mr. Kilcollins** – "Thank you."

**Acting Chief Fenderson** – "Thank you all for letting me give you an update on how we're doing over here. 2022 continues to be a much busier year than 2021. So far this year, we've had a total of 452 EMS calls and 122 non-EMS calls for a total of 574 calls for service. For the same period in 2021, we had 358 EMS calls and 83 non-EMS calls for a total of 441. 133 more calls this year than last. In addition to our calls for service, we continue to work on our weekly trainings with both paid call and career staff. We are currently hosting a Firefighter One and Two Program with members participating from Easton and Washburn Fire Departments, as well. This course is scheduled to be completed in early November. We continue to incorporate mutual aid departments in trainings whenever possible, especially with Easton as their automatic mutual aid town. In addition to our Fire Training, we continue to work on our EMS training. All of our career staff is enrolled in taking courses to advance their EMS licenses. We continue to host the EMS Continuing Education Training, in-house at least once a month to maintain our EMS skills, and we've partnered with the U.S. Border Patrol and Homeland Security Investigations to train collaboratively and share resources to maintain and increase our EMS skills. We are seeing great improvement in our reimbursement from medical billing since switching our service to ComStar Medical Billing. I communicate with them on a weekly basis and their customer support is second to none. In the month of July, we received \$102,761.52 worth of reimbursement. This month's, as of this morning, we have received \$32,370.11. So, this brings our total collection, since switching to them at the beginning of July, to \$135,131.63. And they are continuing to work with us to recuperate some of the money that Maine Billing should have billed, but did not. Staffing continues to be a large concern for our Department. In the last month, we have lost three career members and three called, Paid-Call members. With increasing call volume, this is a very serious concern. We have posted

the career positions, which we're all budgeted for and the budget that we presented, but have received zero applications. I have been working diligently to recruit members for the Paid-Call Department, specifically those that live in our town. I have had some success, but if again, any of you would love to come and work with us on a Paid-Call basis, we can train you, don't worry about that. We continue to have extremely limited Paid-Call response to emergencies that occur during the week and during the daytime hours due to members having other jobs and other responsibilities. While staffing has continued to be great concern, we continue to respond to emergencies and work with our mutual aid partners to achieve the best outcomes. Within the last five days, we even responded to do two different fires that were stopped from causing serious damage because of fast response by our extremely limited crews. Another major concern for the Department is fire apparatus readiness status. We recently received pump maintenance on both of our engines from K&T Fire Equipment. While both engines require significant repairs, both fire pumps have been deemed to be serviceable. There are numerous other issues that we will need to continue to work on getting corrected on the chassis to ensure that they are safe to operate. These repairs are estimated to be costly, as there are no replacement parts being manufactured for these vehicles. The compressed air foam systems and the onboard air generators on both of the engines are out of service. The cost to repair this system on one truck is in excess of \$15,000 and that's how much it cost 10 years ago when K&T did their last repair of this type of system and that is because, again, those parts are no longer being manufactured. Both engines in the and the towers were pump tested today and they passed their pump tests, so all the fire pumps are certified for another year of service. I am currently working on grant applications for several different areas. We are looking for grant funding to create and improve the fire training area, the old Public Works area. This area would include a fire training building, fire training props, an area for vehicle and hose training as well as classroom area. This area would be usable for all Police, Fire and EMS, both in our town and our other local agencies so we can learn to work better together. We're also working on a grant to Inland Fisheries and Wildlife for an update and rescue sled that can be used both in the winter and summer for harder to reach patients. And I plan to reapply for the Forestry Grant we were awarded last year, the matching grant. And, as always, I continue to look for any opportunity for Fire Truck Replacement or Improvement Grants. We recognize that our department has been the center of attention in Town for some time now and I understand the reasons that may have some frustrated with the situation. We are working towards providing the Fire and EMS Service that Fort Fairfield needs, while attempting to find ways to lower the tax burden to our citizens. If you have any questions, I'd be happy to answer."

**Mr. Pelletier** – "So, a couple meetings back, you mentioned that we've gone over the period of time, billing time, billing cycle and some of that, a lot of that wasn't gonna get paid because it went over and you were digging into that to see where that was, where that's at. Have you heard anything back from them?"

**Acting Chief Fenderson** – "I haven't heard any more since the last time we talked. We haven't had any more blatant refusals since then, so that's, that's a good sign. But they, they continue to update me. Once a week they go and bill all the new things and usually during that process is when they send me updates on anything that's been refused or isn't going to be paid and I haven't had any more since the last time we talked about it."

**Mr. Pelletier** – "That was a fair amount of money, wasn't it?"

**Acting Chief Fenderson** – “That’s, there were two that were about a thousand dollars or twelve hundred dollars just in one day, so I, I don’t know the exact total of all the ones that we’ve received so far, as they are keeping a list of that and then in about a month or so, they should have a pretty good idea of what’s gonna be paid and what’s not gonna be paid. So, as I mentioned last time, some of the insurance companies will straight up say, no we don’t have to pay, like the Federal Government and the federal insurances, they say, no we’re not gonna pay. Some of the private insurance companies say, no we’re not gonna pay and then ComStar can submit a request for a reduced payment or present a reason why it was submitted late and sometimes they make a partial payment after that. There’s usually three chances or so to try to recuperate some of that and they, they have said they have been doing that process with everyone that they can to try to get us something.”

**Mr. Pelletier & Mr. Kilcollins** – “Thank you.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “If that’s it for Other?”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “No. I’d like to bring something up. July the 9<sup>th</sup>, the night of July the 9<sup>th</sup>, something took place here in Town that really shouldn’t of happened the way it did. And, there was a lot of people there, and a lot of people seen what happened. And I’d like to just read this. During the recent Maine Potato Blossom Festival, there was an incident at River’s Edge Variety, involving the Town of Fort Fairfield employees and other, other, and the other of the establishment. The Town employee had a verbal altercation with the owner of River’s Edge Variety concerning it’s [inaudible] Festival activity at his establishment around 10pm. The employee threatened to disperse the people in attendance using a highly inappropriate method. The incident was, he was very public and witnessed by many people. The Town of Fort Fairfield apologizes to the staff at River’s Edge as well as members of the public for this unfortunate occurrence. I’d like to make a motion that the Town Manager be directed to write a letter of apology to the owner of River’s Edge Variety and also the public, detailing the remedial actions taken by the Town to ensure that such incidents do not happen in the future. That the public letter should go to Fort Fairfield, Caribou, Presque Isle newspapers and that the draft of the letter be submitted to the Town Council for their review and approval before sending it out. There’s been a lot of talk about this. Melissa, you were there, you saw it.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “Yeah, actually I was there and I spoke to the owner of River’s Edge last night. He called me at home and I don’t think there was an altercation that was that type of, basically what happened is, from what I was told from the owner and what I saw, is that they were told that, you know, they needed to shut down, there was a noise ordinance. I think it was communicated to them there was a noise ordinance. I don’t know if there is or not honestly, I’m not 100 percent sure, but, then the Town employees went across the street, stood at Walgreens and just kind of observed. I think it was a little bit of an aggressive stance, like, maybe some arms crossed and stuff like that. But there was nothing, I didn’t hear any verbal altercation. I didn’t hear or see any, I mean.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “You were there, I wasn’t there.”



**Mrs. Libby** – “Yeah, I was there and I talked to the owner of River’s Edge last night and he said I, I got a phone call on this and I feel like someone was digging for information, but there really wasn’t anything that I’m aware of that went on, so I think that needs to be clarified.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “He told me, he told me that when, well, he was confronted, he was told that if the crowd didn’t disperse they were gonna get wet and they were pulling a hose off the fire truck.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “I don’t know because I didn’t hear the discussion, so.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “Well, I’m telling you what he said, that if they didn’t disperse, they were gonna get wet. I mean, you don’t, you don’t pull hoses out of fire trucks and charge them and just [inaudible].”

**Mrs. Libby** – “I didn’t see any hoses pulled out or anything like that.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “He said that he was told that they were gonna get wet.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “Yeah, that I don’t know, so I would think that we should discuss that with him first. Maybe the Town Manager should reach out to him.”

**Ms. Powers** – “We shouldn’t be having this discussion openly like this period. This is a Personnel issue. This is not the proper procedure for presenting that information. This is highly inappropriate.”

**[interruption] Citizen** – “Gotta be brought up some way.”

**Ms. Powers** – “Highly inappropriate. Our Town Attorney is here, he can address that with us in a few minutes.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Yeah, we never, but I don’t believe we had any concerns directly from him. I mean, as acting Town Manager did he come speak to you and was angry and upset with anything that happened?”

**Ms. Powers** – “No.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “Well, what he did is he approached me having lunch one day and started talking about he was all upset about it and it was like [inaudible].”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “I think, I think from what I pucker up on it, there was a few misled.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “I think it was a miscommunication and I don’t know what was said between people.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Yeah, and everything at that time was, he was happy, everybody was pretty much settled with it. Yeah, I haven’t, you know. Alright, if not, we got.”

**[interruption] Citizen (Stev Rogeski)** – “Motion. You didn’t settle the motion.”

**Mr. Butler** – “There was no second.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “There was no second. No second, it’s dead, so.”

**Mr. Butler** – “Mr. Chair, I make a motion we go into Executive Session 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) Personnel Matters.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “Are we done with all Other? ‘Cause I’m not done.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “I asked, no one said anything prior to what he did, yeah.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “I have concerns about the Town Council not being given adequate [inaudible] Town financial information. We’ve gotten quite a bit tonight, more than we normally get. I’d like to see the Town Councilors get a printed financial report as of the last day of the previous month to the Councilors, at least five calendar days prior to the monthly meeting and include at least the following: customary financial information, which is all bank and other financial institution account balances, excise taxes collected and real estate taxes collected, Revenue Sharing, revenue and expense status, general ledger summary of the end of the month and includes the year-to-date monthly income expenses report for the previous month of physical year-to-date including the budget items that were approved by the Council. The format would include the line items, the budgeted amount, the amount received or spent that month, the balance and the percentage received or spent. Request format, I have a request format for that. I think we need to be getting that each month. The only way we’re gonna know where we’re at, at the Town. Since I’ve been on the Council, we haven’t gotten any.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “Well, it’s not necessarily the Council’s job to manage the budget. It’s the Council’s job to hire a Town Manager who manages the budget. We approve the budget and it’s her job to make sure that the budget is kept in line and that we’re only spending what’s been approved. So it’s not our job to manage.”

**[interruption] Citizen (Gary Sirois)** – “How do you know if that’s the fact if you don’t get the information? How do you know [inaudible]?”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Gary.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “We can go in at any time and request information. We can go in at any time and request that information. So if that was something that you wanted to get monthly then you could go in and request that.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “But it should be standard to us.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “But it’s causing extra work for the staff to do those things, to print those reports and get that information to us, when they could be spending time looking for, you know, ways to lower the budget or cut spending, or you know, all the things that we want them to do, but when we’re making them do all of this extra, then they’re not having time to do that stuff. That’s just my thought on it. I’m not opposed to having the information, I just think that if you want the information, you go in and ask and get the information. Anyone can get the information, is that correct?”

**Ms. Powers** – “Correct.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “Any citizen, at any time?”

**Ms. Powers** – “Yes. Correct.”

**Mr. Butler** – “All you have to do is ask.”

**Ms. Powers** – “It’s public information.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “I would think it would be the best use of everybody’s time if it was automatic done, and we wouldn’t need to bother the Town Manager in her office.”

**Mr. Butler** – “Well, you’re bothering the Town Manager, making her do the reports.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “And all this extra when it’s other time, time could be better spent. It’s not that they’re, what are you looking for?”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “You just made a statement up there that we oughta be working together. I think we should be working together. If what he’s asking for, if we were to get it, we’d have time to look at it together, we could make calls and work together and try to work through some of this stuff.”

**Mr. Butler** – “We don’t make calls. We’re not supposed to discuss budgets or anything amongst ourselves until we get here.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “And I’m not opposed to getting or having the information, I’m opposed to needing to get it every single month. Like, if someone wants that information, I feel, like, at any time, any of us should be able to get that. If we have questions, we should ask and definitely get answers to them. I’m, I’m just saying to make it required that every time we come to a Council Meeting they need this, and this, and this, and this, it’s causing additional work that could be time better spent elsewhere, but that’s, again, just an opinion, so.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Yeah, I mean, it’d be, it’d be one thing if that information was subject to one or three but if public knowledge and if the finance committee wants it.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “I understand what you’re saying, it is public knowledge, but imagine if everybody, all five of us go in and ask the Town Manager for that same information, everyone. How much time is that gonna take her? I think it should be automatic.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “I mean, there’s different.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “If I, sorry, go ahead.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “I, I, I think, at this time we vote on the budget, we instruct her to do what she’s doing. I have no reason, unless somebody asked me a question to research that information directly because it is a lot of information and I can’t subject that all myself. I, I just don’t feel at this time, unless it’s a specific item, line item, that somebody or a Council Member wants to know, can easily, you know, you can, you can get it. The research can be done. But to offer it to the table every month. I, I as a, I mean unless I have somebody that is circling a certain line item, that, that really has to have the information to, to research it would be the only reason I would personally, unless things were way out of line that as, as, you know, we, like, for instance, we just had an audit, and our audit is I, I don’t think the words perfect, there’s nothing perfect, but close to being perfect, if we had an audit done, there was a bunch of things that was way off, then, hey we should maybe request that every month, but our audit is to be almost perfect. I, I, that’s my opinion on it I guess. Just because it’s public information anyway. It’s public information not only us as Councilors, anybody that’s a taxpayer can walk in and get that information.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “Aren’t these numbers all brought up current once a month anyway?”

**Mr. Kilcollins & Ms. Powers** – “Yes.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “What’s the, what would be the big deal? Printing them off and providing that, what’s the big deal?”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Well, they have been, it is. It’s information that’s there anytime anybody wants it.”

**Ms. Leighton** – “Excuse me, may I say something?”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Yes, Ella.”

**Ms. Leighton** – “Thank you. Those figures are prepared every month. The Department Heads get them every month. In order for me to prepare them each month for each Councilor that is going to be, I’m going to have to print them seven times and you’re talking about, just off the top of my head, probably.”

**Mr. Pelletier** – “But you only do it one time, right? You only do it one time.”

**Ms. Leighton** – “Wait just a second, please. For me to provide them to you each month, you’re talking approximately 50 to 60 pages a month, that’s printing, that’s paper. You’re talking a ream of paper, you’re talking time to copy or print and you’re taking toner and electricity. Now, you’ve already cut our budget, that is cutting into supplies. So how do you propose that we pay for all of this extra printing?”

**Mrs. Libby** – “If the reports are already being done and sent out, can they not be sent electronically? Like, does that solve the problem?”

**Ms. Leighton** – “No.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “How is it sent to the Department Heads?”

**Ms. Leighton** – “Paper.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “Paper. And it cannot be sent out electronically?”

**Ms. Leighton** – “So, what I do for the Department Heads, is I give them each just their, their information. They don’t have to have all of them, all the information. I use one set of reports and I give each of them their information. I also report the totals to the Town Manager and the Town Councilors once a month. You have the totals of total revenue, total expenses, percentage year-to-date, you have all of that once a month.”

**Ms. Powers** – “And, I asked Ella, starting last year, to give comparisons from the year before to the current year each month as well so we could see the difference.”

**Ms. Leighton** – “Thank you.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Thank you, Ella. Well, at this, at this time, as long as information that is, it’s not only able to be printed, it, it’s electronically, if it’s in the computer, correct?”

**Ms. Powers** – “It’s in the computer but I don’t know if it’s set up through the program that we use. I’m not sure it can be done that way, but we will look into it.”

**Ms. Leighton** – “We don’t have the capacity to send it electronically.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “I mean, it’s already done and it can be sent electronically, then it doesn’t hurt anything to send it, like why not, but if it’s causing extra, then.”

**Ms. Powers** – “We could certainly look into it.”

**Mrs. Libby** – “It could be on an as requested basis kind of thing.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “If they could receive it electronically and want to go in and review it once a month, you’d be alright with that, right?”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “Yeah.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “I mean, I don’t think we need a motion at this point. I think just instructions would, would work. Okay.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “[inaudible] I’m concerned about the deadline for the Election Nomination Papers. The deadline for passing in the Nomination Papers to elect new Councilors was posted on the Town of Fort Fairfield’s website as September 23. Yesterday, a new deadline was posted on the Town of Fort Fairfield Facebook page as September 9<sup>th</sup>. The Town Charter states that the signatures be filed between 90 days and 35 days before the election. The Election is on November 8<sup>th</sup>, you could make a deadline October 4. Could we have some clarification about that.”

**Ms. Powers** – “That would be Neadra.”

**Ms. Dubois** – “It’s, it’s my mistake, the statute does say 60 days, we have to have the signatures in 60 days before the Election. That’s in my manual for Elections.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “And our Charter says what I just read. I think the Town Charter supersedes the State rules. But if you change, you’re changing [inaudible] that the 23<sup>rd</sup> and now you’re saying the 9<sup>th</sup>, that’s two weeks difference.”

**Ms. Dubois** – “Yes. Like I said, I made a human error.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “Okay, well.”

**Ms. Dubois** – “Exactly. I got the, there’s a timeline for 45 days and the 23<sup>rd</sup> would have been the 45 days, I got that mixed up with the 60 days.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “So, are we saying we’re back to the 9<sup>th</sup>?”

**Ms. Dubois** – “Yes, the 9<sup>th</sup>.”

**Mr. Ouellette** – “Okay. Thank you.”

**Mr. Kilcollins** – “Anything else? If not.”

**Mr. Butler** – “Mr. Chair, I move we go into Executive Session again.”

Motion: Mr. Butler moves to go into Executive Session.

Second: Mrs. Libby seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: All Affirmative.

I. Executive Session 1 M.R.S.A. §405(6)(A) Personnel Matters

Motion in: Mr. Butler motioned.

Second: Mrs. Libby seconded

Vote: All Affirmative.

Time into Executive Session: 7:12 PM

Motion out: Mr. Pelletier motioned.

Second: Mr. Ouellette seconded.

Vote: All Affirmative except Mr. Butler.

Time out of Executive Session: 9:01 PM

No Action taken.

II. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn: All

Second: All

Vote: All Affirmative.

Council Adjourned at 9:01 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Neadra Dubois, Council Secretary