



Prepared for: Dan Foster, Interim Town Manager, Fort Fairfield, Maine

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## Fort Fairfield Community Empowerment Project

### **Project Summary**

Now more than ever, Fort Fairfield's officials must be empowered to lead the community, be given an opportunity to have a voice in redefining the workplace culture of the town, and have the time and space to rebuild vital relationships and trust with one another and the community.

Fort Fairfield's leadership has an opportunity to learn from the current financial turmoil and create new guidelines for communication, collaboration, and governance. Working with the support and consent of current town employees, department heads, and elected and appointed officials CEI Consultants will help objectively evaluate the systems which lead to the town's fiscal compromise.

CEI Consultants will conduct a three-part process to involve town leadership and create innovative practices which will be shared with the public. In a variety of ways, residents will be able to weigh in on these practices and propose changes. The resulting guidelines will be used to help recruit and retain a new town manager. The new town manager will come into the role with a clear understanding of the new systems and guidelines created by leadership and the community.

### **Participate**

This process is intentionally designed to enable community members to have a say in the future of the town. This anonymous survey is the first way that you can weigh in and share your thoughts about the current situation in Fort Fairfield and what you would like to see in the future. The answers to these questions will be used to facilitate conversations in an upcoming community workshop and shared with town leadership. If you have additional thoughts or comments please email them to Catherine Ingraham at [cat@ceiconsultants.com](mailto:cat@ceiconsultants.com).

<https://forms.gle/TRQoUkxtNGPLeB2G7>

## **Project Scope**

### **Part 1:**

Internal evaluation: Town employees, and elected and appointed officials will be interviewed confidentially by CEI Consultants. These interviews will take place in person and all participants will also have the option to include more information anonymously with an online form. The interview questions will focus on Fort Fairfield's assets as well as individual opinions about how to shape new guidelines for internal systems of communication and decision-making. The responses to these interviews will be shared in aggregate with all participants.

### **Part 2:**

Internal workshop: The report generated from the interview responses will serve as the framework for a workshop where participants will discuss solutions and create a new way of doing business going forward. Collectively they will work with the assistance of a facilitator to draft statements to help inform and guide future decision-making. This workshop will provide an opportunity for town officials to speak candidly with one another in a safe setting. The objective of the workshop is to encourage asset-based solutions and come to a collective understanding of which systems caused the financial challenge and what can be done to prevent it from occurring again. The outcomes of this workshop will be shared with the public, with the approval of the participants.

### **Part 3:**

After the community at large is given ample time to read, digest, and consider the guidelines crafted by town leadership they will be given ways to weigh in. To encourage participation, residents will have the ability to submit online and paper surveys with their reactions to the statements. A community conversation open to all will be the culminating event in this process. The purpose of the event is to hear from residents about what they want from town leadership, give the community a chance to learn from one another and collectively decide on a path forward.

## **Outcomes/Deliverables**

### **Part 1:**

An aggregate report of insights from town leaders and employees about Fort Fairfield's current systems and workplace culture.

### **Part 2:**

Statements of guidance for future leadership of Fort Fairfield, created by current town officials and leadership.

### **Part 3:**

Support, evaluation, and editing of the statements by Fort Fairfield's community.

### **Final Report:**

CEI Consultants will create a summary report of the process, project, and outcomes. This final report will include statements of guidance for future leadership as well as community-generated ideas and priorities for the next town manager. If Fort Fairfield would like additional assistance in the talent search for the town manager, CEI Consultants is available for this process.

### **Risk Analysis:**

CEI Consultants anticipates a minimal risk associated with the project. The potential for uncomfortable conversation and dialogue is high. Before embarking on this process and to ensure measures of success all participants in all group meetings will establish group agreements. These will be strictly adhered to by the facilitator.

### **Timeline:**

With approval and support from town leadership, this project can launch on or after March 6, 2023, with deliverables and a final report in July 2023. The timeline will require some flexibility, as it is dependent upon collaboration and cooperation. Building trust and facilitating new processes take time. The timeline provided here is an estimation, not a commitment.

### **Part 1**

Individual interviews will begin after March 6, 2023. If all participants are cooperative and willing the anticipated final report of aggregate responses should be complete by mid to late April 2023.

### **Part 2**

Participants will have three weeks to review the report and prepare for the internal workshop. The goal is to hold this by the end of May.

### **Part 3**

After the internal workshop, the community will have three weeks and various platforms to view, react and comment on the statements. The community conversation will take place in June.

### **Final Report**

The final report, guidelines, and resident-generated solutions will be completed within two weeks of the community conversation. Hiring and onboarding of the new town manager is a dynamic process not to be included in the timeline of this project proposal.

### **Budget**

The Town of Fort Fairfield will pay CEI Consultants, LLC \$2,500.00 for the total project cost outlined in this attachment. Additionally, CEI Consultants, LLC will donate up to 50 hours or the equivalent of \$2,500.00 of time to this project.

To do this CEI will require that material for workshops will be provided by the town. Materials may include printed documents, reports, flip charts, and markers. The anticipated materials cost does not exceed \$1,000.00. Space for workshops and interviews will take place on town property and be covered by the town's liability insurance.

### **Measures of Success**

CEI Consultants will work with the Town Council, Interim Town Manager, and Town Staff to help define achievable, measurable benchmarks of success for this project.

### **Additional Requirements**

This process requires community buy-in. That starts with the leadership in Fort Fairfield. If there are hesitations, resistance, or concerns about embarking on this project please share them as soon as possible.

Table facilitators will be helpful for the community conversation. CEI Consultants will work with any community member interested in assisting with this but reserves the right to excuse volunteers that are unable or unwilling to comply with the group agreements.

***If you are interested in expressing your thoughts or concerns please click the link below.***  
***<https://forms.gle/TRQoUkxtNGPLeB2G7>***