

# **Town of Fairfield**

## **Selectboard Minutes- Special Meeting**

December 17, 2025

Selectboard in Attendance: Tom Howrigan, Gavin Ryan, Ronald Bocash, David Persons and Brian Dubie (Zoom)

Road Foreman: Maurice Jettie

Town Clerk: Linda Hodet

Town Administrator: Cathy Ainsworth

Treasurer: Amanda Forbes

**Brian made a motion to revise the agenda to include a discussion of Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP) draft, sections 1-4, at the beginning of the meeting. Ron Seconded. All in favor.**

Cathy provided the SB copies of the HMP draft sections 1-4: Introduction, Purpose, Planning Process and Community Profile. Brian reviewed the sections and explained that much of the work of Fairfield's previous plan is solid. He said the document incorporates a new format based on FEMA requirements and updated research on Town information. He explained guidance he received from the Town of Sheldon's contractor, who drafted that town's HMP, as well as the NRPC Emergency Management Director while updating these sections. The Selectboard discussed the update. Brian requested that the SB members read the sections prior to the next meeting, for further discussion.

Cathy provided each Selectboard (SB) member with a comparison report document of 2024 and 2025 budgets and actuals, along with 2026 planning column. She worked with them on an excel, budget-planning worksheet, with embedded formulas.

The SB walked through each revenue budget line. They discussed tax collection amounts with Linda. Cathy noted the increased checking interest with the new Intrafi account at Peoples Trust Company. She reminded the SB that grant accounting takes place in funds separate from the General Fund so the line for grants revenue in the general fund is the portion left to offset grant-project-related labor costs. Based on previous years, for the 2026 budget, the SB increased Del. Tax Revenue, Del. Tax Penalty and Interest Checking lines. The SB decreased 2026 expected revenue in the grant revenue, surplus and miscellaneous lines.

The SB walked through each expense line, without changing staff pay. They discussed and made expected adjustments to the 2026 budget based on increased costs and predicted expenses for 2026. At the end of this process, the tax request had already increased by 4.75%. The SB talked about their concerns with increasing taxes. They discussed how the slow rate of housing development in Fairfield is a challenge when costs of the Town continue to increase; considered alternate strategies for equipment financing and debt retirement; reviewed how previous year surplus amounts balance out town's tax anticipation loan process; and stressed the importance of adhering to road capital improvements. Then they revisited the previously budgeted expense lines and identified that a decrease of about \$40,000 would bring

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the tax request increase to 0%. They decided to resume the discussion after considering salaries.

**Brian made a motion to enter executive session to discuss personnel, with board only. Ron Seconded. All in Favor. Brian made a motion to exit executive session. David seconded. All in favor.**

The Selectboard took a break for lunch at 12:00 PM, then reconvened at 1:00 PM, to discuss next steps. They requested that Cathy tentatively calculate COLA adjustments for employees at the rate of 3%. They tentatively decreased expenses in equipment, capital, debt retirement, and the common school. They tentatively increased revenue in surplus. These changes brought the tax request increase to about 3%. They tabled the discussion to continue at their next regularly scheduled meeting. Cathy will double check calculations and numbers.

**David made a motion to adjourn. Ron seconded. All in favor.**

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