

**Fort Jones Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 9, 2024**

CERTIFICATION OF POSTING AGENDA

I, JenniferJoy Cox, Town Clerk for the Town of Fort Jones, hereby certify that the agenda for the December 9, 2024 regular meeting of the Town Council was posted at the Town Hall, near the door of the Town Council Chambers, Ray's Food Place, Ace Hardware, on the front window of the Fort Jones Post Office and on the Town's website www.fortjonesca.org on December 6, 2024.

I declare under the penalty of perjury that the forgoing is true and correct.

Unavailable

JenniferJoy Cox, Town Clerk

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL:

The regular meeting of the Fort Jones Town Council was called to order in person by Mayor Mercedes Garcia at 7:00p.m. In addition to the mayor, council members present were Kathye Banks, Mark Eayrs, Alex LaRiviere, and Julia Collie-Mason.

Staff present: Cherie Stephen – Town Administrator, JenniferJoy Cox – Town Clerk, Everett Hullquist – Public Works, Joseph Hess – Fire Department, Josh Short – Etna Police Department, Andrew Jared – Town Counsel.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: Led by Mayor Garcia

NEWLY ELECTED COUNCIL MEMBERS:

1. Accept and Approve the Election Certification and Certified Election Results by Resolution 1137.

Public Comments: None
Discussion: None.

Motion: M. Eayrs moves to approve Certified Election Results by Resolution 1137.

Second: A. LaRiviere

Ayes: M. Garcia, K. Banks, M. Eayrs, A. LaRiviere, J. Collie-Mason

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

2 - 4. Administer Oath of Office, Introduce New Elected Council Members, and Seat New Members.

The Oath of Office was administered to Michelle DeCausmaker, Paula Johnson, and Alex LaRiviere by the Town Clerk. Mayor Garcia introduced and welcomed the newly elected members and asked them to take their seats at their nameplates.

5. Determinations regarding Tiebreaker.

At this time, Jim Martin formally conceded the election to Madeleine DeAndreis, citing lack of time, and making tiebreaker determination and breaking of tie irrelevant.

6 - 8. Administer Oath of Office to Appointed Council Member, Introduce New Member, and Seat New Member.

The Oath of Office was administered to M. DeAndreis by the Town Clerk. Mayor Garcia introduced and welcomed the appointed member and asked her to take her seat at her nameplate.

9. Election of officers: Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem for two-year term.

Mayor Nominations:

DeCausmaker nominated DeAndreis for Mayor, then LaRiviere nominated Garcia for Mayor.

Motion: LaRiviere nominates Garcia for Mayor

Ayes: A. LaRiviere, M. Garcia.

Nays: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, P. Johnson.

Motion: Fails

Motion: DeCausmaker nominates DeAndreis for Mayor.

Ayes: M. DeCausmaker, P. Johnson, M. Garcia, M. DeAndreis.

Nays: A. LaRiviere.

Motion: Passes.

Mayor Pro Temp Nominations:

DeAndreis nominated DeCausmaker for Mayor Pro Tem., then LaRiviere nominated Garcia for Mayor Pro Tem.

Motion: LaRiviere nominates Garcia for Mayor Pro Tem.

Ayes: A. LaRiviere, M. Garcia.

Nays: M. DeCausmaker, P. Johnson, M. DeAndreis.

Motion: Fails.

Motion: DeAndreis nominates DeCausmaker for Mayor Pro Tem.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, P. Johnson, M. Garcia, M. DeCausmaker.

Nays: A. LaRiviere.

Motion: Passes.

10. Appointment of Commissioners

Mayor DeAndreis invited council members to volunteer for a commission role, and ascertained approval from the council when the roles were filled. The commissions are as follows:

Water and Sewer: A. LaRiviere.
Streets and Roads: M. Garcia.
Public Safety: P. Johnson.
Parks and Buildings: M. DeCausmaker.
Administration: M. DeAndreis.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Several members of the public welcomed the new council members, and it was expressed that they hope the future moves forward in a positive manner. Adam Filippone expressed concern over the museum roof. He grew up here and his family has made several contributions to the museum. He is part of a non-profit that would gladly assist in that and other projects and carry their own insurance. Another concerned citizen asked about the bus on Bridge Street. Chief Short responded that they have been in contact with the owner, they are violating no ordinances, and that they are keeping an eye on the situation. G. Kuraner of the Gem and Mineral Society expressed concern over the cost of the hall rental. A concerned citizen discussed the condition of Moffett Creek with its drainage and deadfall, that there is a major tree issue.

DISCUSSION/REPORTS CORRESPONDENCE: NON-ACTION ITEMS

A. Police Department Monthly Report

Written report appears in the agenda packet. Chief Short said they have been busy with PAL and that the department is getting ready for the Christmas parade this coming Saturday.

B. Fire Department Monthly Report

Written report appears in the agenda packet. Chief Hess said that they have been very busy, atypically, there have been more calls in town than outside of it. They have been working on grants and have hired Breanna Buker for the recruitment and retention position.

C. Public Works Monthly Report

Written report appears in the agenda packet. E. Hullquist welcomed to the new council and let them know his door is always open. The council asked if the backflow device testing has been happening, if Public Works must go on customers property this, and if they were performing plumbing work. E. Hullquist responded that they are waiting for the release of liability from the Town's legal counsel, but for most of the properties the customer's property does not need to be entered, and that no plumbing work will occur.

D. Administrator/Accounting Monthly Report

Written report appears in the agenda packet. C. Stephen reported that she has been working on CDBG items, getting money back, tackling discrepancies, and working on CalPERS. She has submitted the information, and it is at their management. LaRiviere asked what kind of discrepancies. Stephen asked legal counsel if she could answer since it might involve specific customer accounts. Speaking generally, she reported that they were involving interest rates fluctuating without back up approval process, deferments, and expressed concern about knowing the legal boundaries of what she was and wasn't

allowed to say publicly. LaRiviere asked if there could be a closed meeting, to which legal counsel replied they might be able to hold one. C. Stephen said that if so, the auditor should participate.

M. DeAndreis asked for an update on the transition to a new water utility billing company. The town clerk explained that the company the Town used previously had closed, but that a new company has been obtained that was willing to expedite the process. The proceeding well, even after having to manually input over 7000 pieces of data due to poor data records and integrity.

CONSENT CALENDAR:

1. Consent Calendar
 - a. Approval of Minutes
 - i. Regular Meeting November 12, 2024
 - b. Ratification of Disbursements: November 01 through November 30, 2024
 - c. Review Budget vs Actual July 1, 2024, through November 30, 2024

Public Comments: None

Discussion: Garcia stated that a correction is needed in the November minutes. The correction is to change the consent calendar month to October.

Motion: Garcia moves to approve the consent calendar with the correction to the consent calendar month to October in the November minutes.

Second: LaRiviere

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

PUBLIC HEARING: ORDINANCES:

2. Review, discuss, and approve second reading and possibly take action to adopt Ordinance 2024-1 regarding amending Title 13: Public Services and Title 18: Zoning.

Motion: M. DeCausmaker moves to table this item until January so that new council members may become better familiarized with Ordinance 2024-1 regarding amending Title 13: Public Services and Title 18: Zoning.

Second: A. LaRiviere

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: M. Garcia

Motion: Passes

DISCUSSION / REPORTS: ACTION ITEMS:

3. Discuss and take action to approve new bank signers and remove old signers on the Town's accounts at Mechanics Bank.

Public Comments: None

Discussion: M. Garcia says there should be three signers from the council, plus the administrator C. Stephen and there is a specific form needed and the motion must be detailed for the bank. M. DeAndreis stated she would like to be a signer. M. Garcia stated she would like to remain as such, and P. Johnson volunteered.

Motion: M. Garcia moves to remove former signers K. Banks, J. Stanshaw, and M. Eayrs and add C. Stephen, M. DeAndreis, and P. Johnson to the Town of Fort Jones bank accounts at Mechanics Bank.

Second: M. DeAndreis.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

4. Review and discuss possible action to approve the library's request for signage.

Public Comments: Leslie Tharp, head librarian for Fort Jones Public Library, spoke discussing options and quotes obtained, one from Medford and one from Redding.

Discussion: Council discussed styles of signs, if painted or a sign, and placement of these signs. Leslie Tharp responded that it could be something on metal, but that she preferred the individual letters like Etna Elementary. M. DeCausmaker said she would like to be involved.

Motion: M. Garcia moves to table the library's request for signage until January so council member DeCausmaker can get more sign details and additional quotes.

Second: A. LaRiviere.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

5. Review and discuss possible action to approve a set of standards and guidelines for the establishment of town committees.

Public Comments: None

Discussion: M. DeAndreis asked if the clerk could get information on different forms of committees and options, with examples from comparable towns.

Motion: M. DeAndreis moves to table this agenda item until January's meeting so that information may be gathered.

Second: A. LaRiviere.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

6. Discuss and possibly take action to re-establish the Fort Jones Economic Development Committee and appoint new members.

Public Comments: K. Banks presented her experience as part of the FJEDC as ineffective and that we have a relationship and MOU with the Siskiyou Economic Development Council already. J. Collie-Mason stated that with her experience with them, it was frustrating as they were not able to accomplish anything due to the audits not being completed. J. Cox said she thought both the SEDC and the FJEDC had value, as they have different scopes and areas of focus.

Discussion: M. DeAndreis said, "We can't just tread water until the audit gods bless us." Administrator Stephen said that she is concerned about becoming cash poor, that without the audit many grants are not able to be completed. It is important that the town stays solvent, and that the town still has several grants out there that are incomplete due to the audits not being done. The council and staff discussed some of the grants that are being worked on, such as chip sealing and Horn Street, and that the park grant would have to be rewritten and approved. E. Hullquist pointed out that some grants may not require an audit, and Chief Hess is getting good at grants that do not require an audit.

Motion: M. DeCausmaker moves to table this agenda item until January.

Second: M. Garcia

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

7. Review and discuss possible action to approve the early closure of Fort Jones Town Hall on Christmas Eve.

Public Comments: A citizen said, "Just do it." Another said, "Let them." One asked if there was a limit to the number of times the handbook was allowed to be amended.

Discussion: Discussion ensued between staff and council. M. Garcia pointed out that the handbook would have to be changed, and that the town cannot accommodate every staff member. Admin. Stephen stated this should be handled internally and that she would work to give the office staff the time off. Town Clerk Cox stated that both herself and customer service clerk wanted this afternoon off and as department head she should be the one to work to give the customer service clerk the afternoon off, but that her children are her priority and that she would quit if she did not get it off. LaRiviere said he did not see what the big deal was, let us close early so that employees can spend time with their families. Public Works employee, E. Hullquist stated he didn't want to take it off as it is not paid time off.

Motion: A. LaRiviere moves to close Town Hall at noon on Christmas Eve, as a non-paid holiday.

Second: P. Johnson.

Ayes: M. DeCausmaker, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: M. DeAndreis, M. Garcia.

Motion: Passes

8. Review and discuss possible action to approve the disbursement of schooling, testing, licensing, and fuel fees for Kevin Hullquist's Wastewater 1 license.

Public Comment: None

Discussion: E. Hullquist explained that legally, for K. Hullquist to even be present for many necessary activities this license is required. Council member M. Garcia brought up a potential conflict of interest with M. DeCausmaker having a personal relationship with this employee. M. DeCausmaker said she would abstain from voting.

Motion: M. DeCausmaker moves to approve the disbursement of schooling, testing, licensing, and fuel fees for Kevin Hullquist's Wastewater 1 license.

Second: A. LaRiviere.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. Garcia, P. Johnson.

Nays: None

Abstain: M. DeCausmaker, A. LaRiviere.

Motion: Passes

9. Review and discuss possible action to approve the disbursement of licensing fees for Everett Hullquist's Wastewater 2 license.

Public Comments: Citizens congratulated E. Hullquist on his prior certificates. One citizen said, "Go for it."

Discussion: M. Garcia said this certification isn't necessary. A. LaRiviere asked what certificates he currently holds. He said: Wastewater1, Distribution 2, Treatment 2, BackFlow, Class A, and has passed the Wastewater 2 exam, just needs to pay the license fee, as this certification is required by the job description of the Director. M. Garcia stated that he was not the Director.

Motion: A. LaRiviere moves to approve the disbursement of licensing fees for Everett Hullquist's Wastewater 2 license.

Second: M. DeAndreis.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: M. Garcia

Motion: Passes

10. Review and discuss possible action to amend the Job Certifications and Continuing Use Policy.

Public Comments: A. Filippone commented that contracting out gets expensive, and that in his experience having employees with experience, training, and knowledge is everything.

Discussion: M. DeAndreis said it is important to be pro-growth. Chief Hess says he pays for his own classes and certs himself. Discussion between council and the legal counsel ensued, asking if there were legal examples of this policy. There was some debate over whether the policy passed in November regarding this agenda item conflicted with town ordinances regarding whether it should be at the Town Administrator's discretion or that of the Town Council. Also, whether or not there should be a 3-certificate cap as it applies to pay raises. M. DeAndreis says she is a big fan of having legal approval or that it has been tried and true in other communities. The town legal counsel said they could work on this. E. Hullquist said that accurate job descriptions are needed.

Motion: M. DeCausmaker moves to table this item legal counsel can determine the content is legal.

Second: A. LaRiviere

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes.

11. Review, discuss, and create a plan of action to address the blockage and obstruction of Moffett Creek Drainage.

Public Comments: None.

Discussion: A. LaRiviere said the Department of Fish and Game and other agencies want to do an environmental study first, and tag plant life that shouldn't be disrupted. E. Hullquist said Janae Scruggs would come do a presentation, and she was open to chopping and trees and removal or slash and burn. A permit might be needed as well. The council discussed having E. Hullquist contact Charna Gilmore and start there to figure out what needs to be done.

Motion: M. DeCausmaker moves to have E. Hullquist contact Charna Gilmore and other agencies and find out what needs to be done.

Second: A. LaRiviere

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

12. Review and discuss possible action to approve signing the MOU for the FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant.

Public Comments: A citizen asked 5% of what? Chief Hess responded that is 5% of the total amount, so if we were awarded \$100,000, the town would have to pay \$5,000.

Discussion: Chief Hess said they were applying for thermal imaging cameras, gas detector, hose and nozzles, and probably looking at \$125,000 - \$150,000 in federal funds. The grant reviews at the FEMA level would be in March. This grant opened early this year. Then they start putting up rewards every week over several months, starting in June. E. Hullquist asked if the audit would hold up this grant. Chief Hess replied no, public safety seems to be a big deal and doesn't follow a lot of the same qualifications. M. DeAndreis asked if this is something the town can afford. Admin. Stephen said that the department does has the funds.

Motion: M. DeCausmaker moves to approve signing the MOU for the FEMA Assistance to Firefighter's Grant.

Second: M. Garcia

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

13. Review and discuss possible action to approve signing the MOU for the Community Development Block Grant for the Siskiyou County Protein and Produce Program.

Public Comments: None

Discussion: M. Garcia asked if this was new. The Town Administrator and Town Clerk responded affirmatively.

Motion: A. LaRiviere moves to approve signing the MOU for the Community Development Block Grant for the Siskiyou County Protein and Produce Program.

Second: P. Johnson.

Ayes: M. DeAndreis, M. DeCausmaker, M. Garcia, P. Johnson, A. LaRiviere.

Nays: None

Motion: Passes

STAFF COMMENTS: None

COUNCIL COMMENTS: None

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 9:51 p.m. The next regular town council meeting is scheduled to be held on January 13, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Attest:

Unavailable
JenniferJoy Cox, Town Clerk

Approved:

Madeleine DeAndreis
Madeleine DeAndreis, Mayor