

May 11, 2009

09-11

A regular meeting of the Caribou City Council was held at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 11, 2009, in Council Chambers with the following members present. Mayor Kenneth G. Murchison, Jr., Christopher A.R. Bell, R. Mark Goughan, Karla M. Bell, David Martin, and Miles R. Williams. Councilor Karla M. Bell was absent and excused.

Steven R. Buck, City Manager; Roy Woods, Fire Chief; David Ouellette, Director of Public Works; and Elizabeth O'Bar, Assessor.

Also in attendance were David Hansell, John Swanberg, Jim Cyr, Louis McNeal, Freda Habeeb, Dorothy Peterson, Ken Doody, Iver Soderberg, Philip Trombley, Milo Haney, Vernon Leavitt, Carroll St. Peter, Wilfred Martin, Brian and Laura Ostlund, Romain and Jeannette Lapointe, Doug Morrell, Lawrence Albert, Howard Getchell, David Demerchant, Louise Brescia, Robert and Elizabeth Moulton, Sandy Marrett, Fred Patterson, Ben Zetterman, Wayne Belanger, Richard Learnard, and several others.

Barbara Scott, representing the Aroostook Republican; and Time Warner covered the meeting.

Council Agenda item #1: Public Input

Milo Haney – impacts of valuation adjustments and taxes

Mr. Haney asked to allow Philip Trombley to speak in his place. Mr. Trombley stated his concern about the present economy being at a low point at the same time there is the possibility of taxes being raised. He said there must be another way to deal with the issue and made several suggestions. His thought was that each department's employees should come up with cost savings for their department. He perceived plans brought forth by interest groups to serve only a few costs the City money. He thought the brush clean up program should be eliminated and that each resident should take care of his or her own debris, and, finally, he had observed snowplow trucks out appearing to be needlessly plowing on bare roads. He urged the Council to "think outside the box" to address the issue.

Councilor C. Bell wanted to address Mr. Trombley's concerns to explain that this issue was not about raising the mil rate or taxes, it was about tax assessment.

Mayor Murchison said this would be taken up in an upcoming agenda item.

Council Agenda item #2: Sesquicentennial Update

Jim Cyr announced some upcoming events: Wednesday, May 13th at 6:30 p.m. is sign up time at the Wellness Center to take part in Cary's 150 Days of Good Health program. The Thomaston Auction Galleries Road Auction will take place July 9th at the Wellness Center. Anyone may bring items (1 item \$7.00, 5 items \$30) to be appraised and or sold on consignment. The events booklet and the historic/recipe book will be available shortly. The next meeting of the committee will be Wednesday at 4:00 p.m. at the Library. The 163 trees that were sold have been delivered with planting to be done beginning the last week of May. Look online at www.celebratecaribou.com for more information.

Council Agenda item #2B: Consider authorizing the purchase of a Sesquicentennial Coin or Coin Set on behalf of the City from the Friends of Scouting.

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David Hansell thanked the Council for the opportunity to sell the commemorative coins. Anyone interested in purchasing a coin or set of coins can contact David at 498-2781 or other members of the Friends of Scouting, Duane Walton, Vaughn Keaton, John Powers, or Andrew Watkins.

Councilor Martin suggested purchasing two sets, one for display and one for the time capsule.

Motion made by M. Williams, seconded by C. Bell, to purchase two eight piece coin sets, one set to be displayed at the Library and one set to be buried in the time capsule. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #2B: Consider setting a Public Hearing date of June 8, 2009 to consider the proposed zoning change of Tax Map 5, Lot 10D from RC-2 to R-3 pursuant to a Consent Agreement authorized by the City Council on April 27, 2009.

Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by M. Williams, to set a Public Hearing date of June 8, 2009 to consider the proposed zoning change of Tax Map 5, Lot 10D from RC-2 to R-3 pursuant to a Consent Agreement authorized by the City Council on April 27, 2009. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #3: Consider authorizing the Minutes for the following:

- a. April 27, 2009 Council Meeting
- b. April 27, 2009 Council Workshop

Motion made by, seconded by, to accept the minutes of the April 27, 2009 Council meeting as printed. (6 yes) So voted.

Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by MK Barbosa, to accept the minutes of the April 27, 2009 Council Workshop as printed. (5 yes, 1 abstention, M. Goughan) So voted.

Council Agenda item #4: Presentation of a Certificate of Appreciation from the Caribou ATV Club for the City's participation in ATV trails.

Ben Zetterman, Vice President of the ATV Club, presented a Certificate of Appreciation to the City for all that the City does to help the club, especially the efforts that were made toward the development of the Lagasse Connector Trail.

Council Agenda item #5: Presentation of Board of Assessors vote to suspend valuation adjustments and request to go to RFP for Revaluation for 2011.

Elizabeth O'Bar referred to a February Council meeting when the Board of Assessors announced a plan to make adjustments to the pricing schedule, which had been developed in 1997 during the last revaluation of property in Caribou. The process revealed that the adjustments were not maintaining equity due to the outdated pricing schedule and the length of time since the last revaluation. After a review of this information, it was the consensus of the Board that a full revaluation was in order. The Assessor, on behalf of the Board, requested the Council to go to

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RFP for revaluation in 2011 in order that the 2012 commitment can be based upon the new assessment.

The City Manager confirmed that the number of home sales did drop but the prices did not go down here as they have done elsewhere and the State's valuation that the Assessor certifies against continues to drop. This is the reason why the full \$13,000 Homestead Exemption is not realized in Caribou and veterans are not receiving the full benefit of the State's veteran exemption. In answer to the concerns that some residents have voiced lately, he said that the adjustments have been suspended and valuations would remain the same as they were last year. He said that the City has been saving for the cost of the recommended revaluation and he anticipated that approximately one third of the cost would be in the CIP by the end of this cycle. The City would have two more years to save the remaining two-thirds. Pointing out that the gymnasium debt service would be gone by 2012, he anticipated possibly another \$80,000 to \$100,000 would be there to complete the process without significantly raising the level of the Municipal Appropriation.

There was a discussion about the Municipal Appropriation being some \$91,000 less than in 2008. This is a small buffer when considering possible reductions in State Revenue Sharing and URIP funding, a possible 10% reduction in the Homestead Exemption, and the unknowns of the school funding. The City Manager said he would be presenting for Council consideration further possible budget adjustments by the end of May, early June, to help offset some of the reduced State funding.

Councilor Martin asked why it has been so many years between revaluation processes. The Assessor explained that the City has been able to go about twelve years between revaluation mainly because the State certified ratio had been remaining stable up until the last three years. Various adjustments had been able to hold it until now. Postponing as much as possible has saved the City money since the cost of a full revaluation is approximately \$300,000.

Councilor Goughan suggested that the most prudent way to prepare for a revaluation would be to set aside \$30,000 each year in reserve. He pointed out that the City had failed to do this each year and now, after ten years, there is only \$100,000 available and the City must try to catch up the remainder in two years. He recommended addressing this in order to prepare for the revaluation in another ten years. Mayor Murchison noted that quarterly evaluations had been done in the past that equated to a revaluation being completed every four years. The process had fallen behind mainly because Tarr Assessing was unable to honor its contract with the City due to the illness of Mr. Tarr.

In answer to a question from the audience, the Assessor stated that the Board of Assessors answers to the State as far as meeting the required minimum ratio of 70% of market value. When the value drops below the minimum, the State can withhold various reimbursements, etc. Councilor Goughan clarified that the Board of Assessors determines the valuation but Council determines the mil rate on what is going to be taxed. The City Manager pointed out that the mil rate would be set in June; it is at that time that citizens would know whether their taxes are going up or down.

Council Agenda item #6: Consider Placing to RFP Caribou's Revaluation of Real and Personnel Property for 2011.

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Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by D. Martin, to go to RFP the full revaluation of the Real and Personnel property of the City of Caribou projected for 2011 with reviews completed prior to the 2012 tax commitment. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #7: Consideration and authorization of amendments to Caribou's Emergency Management Plan incorporating the Storm Ready requirements.

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by M. Williams, to accept the Emergency Management Plan as presented and to authorize the amendments to Caribou's Emergency Management Plan incorporating the Storm Ready requirements. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #8: Consider authorizing the purchase of three additional Power-Pro power assist ambulance stretchers and to capitalize through the Capital Improvements Program.

Chief Woods made the request to purchase the stretchers. He referred to the workshop session when the equipment was demonstrated and the funding scenarios were discussed.

Motion made by M. Williams, seconded by C. Bell, to authorize the expenditure of \$32,910 for the purchase of 3 Power-Pro model 6500 stretchers and to encumber through Capital Improvements an amount of \$10,970 each of the next three years to balance the purchase. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #9: Consider acting upon Bids for the 2009 Chip Sealing scope of works.

The following bids were received:

Aroostook Applicators	Latex Emulsion	\$1.23 per yd
	MS-22 Emulsion	\$1.13 per yd
Sunrise Materials	Latex Emulsion	\$1.30 per yd
	MS-2 Emulsion	\$1.20 per yd

After consideration of the bids and the properties of the latex emulsion additive product, which is designed to extend the longevity of the chip sealing application, it was the recommendation of the Public Works Director to accept the bid from Aroostook Applicators for the latex emulsion at \$1.23 per yard.

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by MK Barbosa, to accept the bid of Aroostook Asphalt with latex additive at \$1.23 per yard for the 2009 chip sealing program, anticipated to be 15.15 miles, pursuant to the bid specifications as presented. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #10: Consider authorizing the Financial Statements for the period ending April 30, 2009.

The City Manager reported the month of April ended with the Revenue Summary Report closing at 32.55%, or 0.78% behind in projections and the Expense Summary Report closing at 30.96%,

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or 2.37% under budget. He provided information on the various departments and the line items most impacting the final figures.

Motion made by M. Williams, seconded by C. Bell, to accept the Financial Statements for the period ending April 30, 2009, as printed. (5 yes, 1 no, M. Goughan) So voted.

Council Agenda item #11: Consider authorizing three Municipal Quitclaim Deeds for Property taxes paid in full for:

- a. Rodney Bubar, Map 33, Lot 14
- b. Rodney Bubar, Map 34, Lot 193
- c. Lew and Arlene Kidney, Map 15, Lot 15

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by MK Barbosa, to authorize three Municipal Quitclaim Deeds for Property taxes paid in full for: Rodney Bubar, Map 33, Lot 14, and Map 34, Lot 193; and for Lew & Arlene Kidney, Map 15, Lot 15. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #12: Consider the appointment of two General Assembly Board Members to the Northern Maine Development Commission for their ensuing fiscal year.

Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by D. Martin, to appoint Karla Bell and Steven Buck to the General Assembly Board of the NMDC for the ensuing year. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #13: Consider authorizing the use of the Hershel Street parking lot by the American Legion Riders for a Ride In and Dance, June 13, 2009.

Motion made by M. Williams, seconded by D. Martin, to authorize the use of the Hershel Street parking lot by the American Legion Riders from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 midnight on June 13, 2009 to hold a street dance in the parking lot during such time. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #14: Consider authorizing the renewal of Rubbish Hauler's Licenses for:

- d. Rick Chapman d/b/a City Sanitation
- e. Jack S. Herbert d/b/a McNeal's Trucking
- f. Gary Rossignol d/b/a Rossignol Sanitation

Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by MK Barbosa, authorize the renewal of Rubbish Hauler's Licenses for: Rick Chapman d/b/a City Sanitation, Jack S. Herbert d/b/a McNeal's Trucking, and Gary Rossignol d/b/a Rossignol Sanitation. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #15: Consider authorizing a Texas Hold'em Game of Chance permit for the American Legion Post 15, Sweden Street, for June 6, 2009.

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by MK Barbosa, to authorize a Texas Hold'em Game of Chance permit for the American Legion Post 15, Sweden Street, for June 6, 2009. (6 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda item #16: Updates

The City Manager presented information on several topics, including:

- Lions Center – Most programs to be transferred to the Recreation Center by the end of June – Some programs to relocate elsewhere – Scheduling issues for Girl Scouts still being addressed – Renovations for EOC continuing
- H1 N1 Virus – Downgrading in Maine to level 5 – Cases in US increasing modestly and are mostly under control – Daily conference calls no longer necessary – CDC will not be closing schools unless a dramatic number of cases are present
- Fire Dept – May 16th at 8:30 a.m. Cold Water Rescue Training Program to take place at Lions Center – Aroostook River or Collins Pond to be training sites
- Bob Albert - May 19th at 7:00 p.m. at the Fire Department – Dedication of Christmas tree in memory of Bob – Plaque to be part of dedication – Councilors invited to attend – Julie Albert to be present
- Howes Corner – Final negotiations underway with PRP's and the performing parties – Performing parties (those not allowed to cash out) include General Electric, Military, and others - Steve to be part of negotiations representing PRP's through Eaton Peabody – State is working with FAME to satisfy the liabilities of the PRP's - Facts on settlement to be known by end of June
- Housing Dept – HUD has reached High Performance Status – 96% performance rating for Section 8 Management Assessment Program (SEMAP) – Recent compliance training should result in an even higher rating next year – High rating insures continued funding of Section 8 - Three new building permits issued this year - \$2,600 taken in permit fees through April
- Public Works – Brush pick-up completed successfully – Revised program anticipated to become more acceptable as public continues to be educated in process – Downtown painting and repair, street and crosswalk painting to be underway – 2,500 cubic yards or less to be hauled to tennis courts site – Chip Sealing to begin 2nd week of July
- Police Dept – New Harley motorcycle has arrived – Better equipped than the first one – Lease amount per year for past three years of \$1,750 has increased to \$2,000 per year for next three years – Fuel savings realized with use as compared to cruisers or the Yukon
- Safe Routes to Schools Grant funding has been delayed – Purchase of 3 solar powered flashing yellow lights, 1 at each end of Glenn and 1 on Park Street – Lights to be installed shortly by Public Works

Council Agenda item #17: Other Business

c. Next Meeting Dates:

- i. Airport Committee Workshop – 6:00 p.m. Airport Municipal Hanger Pilots Lounge, May 12th – Minimum Standards, Hanger Construction Standards
- ii. Council Meeting – 7:00 p.m. Council Chambers Tuesday, May 26th – Workshop to concentrate on Budget adjustments
- iii. Schedule a Building Committee Workshop Date – Scheduled for May 20th at 6:00 p.m.

Council Agenda item #17: Executive Session: Consider moving to Executive Session for the consideration of a Poverty Abatement, pursuant to MRSA Title 1 Section 405 (6)(F).

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9:00 p.m. Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by MK Barbosa, to move to Executive Session for the consideration of a Poverty Abatement, pursuant to MRSA Title 1 Section 405 (6)(F). (6 yes) So voted.

9:23 p.m. Returned from Executive Session.

Motion made by C. Bell, seconded by MK Barbosa, to deny the Poverty Abatement request at this time pending the fulfillment of the following actions:

1. That the applicant file for the Maine Circuit Breaker Program for the 2008 taxes outstanding and apply for any benefit received towards the outstanding tax liability.
2. That the applicant be notified that the Council will further consider the requested abatement of the 2008 taxes outstanding after the Circuit Breaker filing for any outstanding balance remaining.
3. That the applicant is notified that a new filing of a Poverty Abatement would need to be filed at such time based upon the outstanding balance and the financial status of the applicant at that time. (6 yes) So voted.

The City Manager indicated that a notice of the decision will be sent to the applicant within 30 days and the Council will be informed of any change in status or secondary filing.

9:25 p.m. Meeting adjourned.

Judy-Ann Corrow, Secretary