

Council Workshop

Date: February 18th, 2010

Time: 5:30PM

Council Chambers, 25 High Street, Caribou

Councilors Present: Ken Murchison, Karla Bell, Chris Bell, David Martin, Mary Kate Barbosa, John Boone

CCC&I Board Members: Joseph Sleeper, Jim Cyr, Mae Martin, Richard Solman, Shawn Pelletier, Craig Staples, Try Heald, Shawn Anderson

Others: Steven Buck, City Manager, Barbara Scott, Aroostook Republican

Mayor Ken Murchison called the Workshop to order at 5:30PM. A discussion ensued as to whether the workshop should be held in Executive Session. Manager Buck discussed this matter with Attorney Solman and it was concluded that unless personnel and or personnel performance was to be discussed the Workshop should remain in open session. All concurred.

Materials distributed were the Contract for Services between the City and the CCC&I for the year 2009 and a letter from the City Council to the CCC&I Board of Directors dated February 23, 2009. Elements of the current Contract for Services were discussed as well as the key points outlined within the Council's letter expressing their expectations in conjunction with the Contract.

CCC&I Board members discussed their development of the Work Plan, or Matrix, that was developed over the past year. General consensus was that functions generally associated with traditional Chamber functions were fairly well executed through out the year, especially in light of the City's 150th celebration Year and associated festivities. The work and contribution of the 150th Committee was also noted as being a key contributing factor to this success. The economic development portion of the Contract and Matrix was discussed. Several persons noted the lack of economic development and loan activity during the past year. Several others noted it was a difficult year and that no viable loan clients were able to present business plans that could be supported during the past year. It was generally concluded that economic activity was difficult over the past year followed by discussion on what defines success in economic development.

The Group examined the role of economic development and how this interrelates to the historically delivered functions of a Chamber of Commerce. Numerous examples were given of how the Chamber supports elements such as welcome to the community, property listings, advertisement, first point of contact, and others and how this should be considered economic development as well as a Chamber's function.

The structure of the CCC&I was discussed at the last Board meeting and a summary of that discussion was related. A general feeling was that far too much time continues to be consumed overseeing and discussing the status of existing loans. A renewed Loan Committee had been implemented over the past year and many saw this as a positive development. How the time to work on economic development rather than overseeing the status of loans was further discussed.

CCC&I board member Mae Martin then presented a copies of a paper outlining the value of the loan portfolio that has been implemented and maintained by the CCC&I and how this relates to the Community as a whole. The total amount of all loans since inception, the amount of property taxes paid by these loan clients, gross sales estimated originating from these clients, estimated payroll and FTE equivalents were related. The numbers were prepared in support of the importance of the role executed by the CCC&I. A business survey was also distributed showing results of the surveys gleamed in November of 2009. The survey was taken under advisement.

Numbers related to the business activities of the CCC&I were given; 10,000 visits per year in person, 250 phone calls per month, 1,000 calls per (?) for general inquiries about Caribou, and 50 – 75,000 website hits per month were referenced as the general activity of the Chamber. Other activities included 1,500 to 2,000 packages sent via UPS/FedEx per year. A question was asked as to who else could do the loan administration if not the Chamber? General discussion returned to Chamber activities pursued by the CCC&I.

Mae Martin started to present the resumes of the Staff now employed by the CCC&I. CCC&I President Joseph Sleeper asked where she had obtained the resumes and why they were being presented at this time. General consensus was that such distribution and presentation was neither appropriate nor germane to the discussions of structure and operations. The resumes and staff were not discussed further.

The administration of the current loan portfolio was again discussed. It was noted that it is only a single part of economic development activity and perhaps too much focus has been placed on this singular development tool. The Manager inserted that Community Development had also been too focused on the use of grant funding to sustain development and that self-sustaining initiatives such as Tax Increment Financing, and the leveraging of combined public and private resources should be broadened. All of these elements were recognized as components that need to be combined and coordinated for future success. The Matrix developed in 2009 was again referenced. The Matrix was noted as being very comprehensive and perhaps needing to be further refined and focused to ensure both short term and long term success. The CCC&I cannot be successful if tasked with too many duties if not having the right mix of staff and numbers.

The Community's need for a strong Chamber was noted and discussed. All concurred that there is no intention to not have a strong Chamber within Caribou. Again, the matter of too little Board time at the CCC&I being focused on the important functions of a Chamber was noted. The Strategic Plan (Matrix) developed in 2009 should be re-examined to separate the Chamber activities from the Economic Development activities. Concerns were again expressed that the economic objectives were not achieved in 2009. Others expressed opposition to such statements as the Board has invested literally thousands of hours towards development in the past year.

The discussion turned back to the combined structure of three functions; Community Development, Economic Development, and chamber related Services. Currently available resources, tools to effect both economic and community development were listed and structure was again raised. The number of staff currently filling these positions was raised and the names

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associated with each. The conversation was stopped as the Council and Board discussed the need and ability for each to respectively go into Executive Session. It was determined that due to the discussion of Community Development and the associated City personnel that the City Council should go to Executive Session. Members of the CCC&I Board also determined the same as for their personnel and so called an Executive Session.

City Councilor Karla Bell moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters, pursuant to Title 1 MRSA §405 (6)(A).

Second by Mary Kate Barbosa

Voted by City Council 6-0

Time in 6:55PM

Time Out 8:27PM

No further discussion resumed after exiting from the called Executive Session. A general consensus to resume such discussions in the near future as necessary was expressed.

All adjourned the Workshop at 8:28PM

Steven R. Buck