

February 23, 2015

15-7

A workshop meeting of the Caribou City Council was held 7:53 p.m. on Monday February 23, 2015 in Council Chambers with following members present: Deputy Mayor David Martin, Philip McDonough II, Joan L. Theriault, Shane McDougall, Tiffany J. Stewart, and Jody R. Smith. Mayor Aiken was absent and excused.

Austin Bleess, City Manager was present.

Department Managers: Penny G. Thompson, Tax Assessor; Scott Susi, Fire Chief; Michael Gahagan, Police Chief; and Gary Marquis, Supt. Of Parks & Recreation.

Time Warner covered the meeting.

Item #1: Shared dispatching between police and fire

City Manager read his memo with the following points:

- Currently the Fire Department does not dispatch 911 calls for medical emergencies as they go to either Penobscot or Houlton.
- Fire Department staff could not be reduced resulting in any cost savings if the Police Department took over dispatching.
- Fire Department staff would need additional training to dispatch for the Police Department.
- Moving Police dispatching to Fire Station may allow three police positions to be eliminated resulting in first year savings of \$166,722 and would see the local jail being closed and prisoners being transported to Houlton at a cost of \$30,600.
- Citizens would no longer be able to walk into the police station and speak with a police officer

Council questions were answered by the Police and Fire Chiefs. Chief Gahagan noted that throughout the State of Maine, there aren't any Fire Departments that do Police dispatching. The new Comprehensive Plan includes the plan to join the Police and Fire Departments in a new public safety building. The Caribou and Houlton County jails are the only two in Aroostook County. The Police Chief sees the need to keep Caribou's jail open. Over the years, the Police Chief has seen other types of dispatching tried and in his opinion the current system works the best.

Council discussion.

Item #2: Utilizing Basic EMTs

City Manager read his memo with the following points:

- Wages: The difference between a basic EMT versus a paramedic is \$141.02 or \$7,333.04 per year.
- Switching to only having 3 paramedics on each crew could see the City's ambulance license drop from ALS to a Basic License.
- ALS calls are paid at a higher rate than Basic resulting in a loss of \$96.00 per local call or approximately a loss in revenue of \$122,800 per year.
- The switch to Basic would mean the City could no longer do ALS Transfers resulting in approximate loss in revenue of \$569,563.70.
- Switching to 6 Basics would save \$43,998.24 but result in a loss of revenue of \$692,443.70.

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Fire Chief answered Council questions. The Chief commented that it is getting to be more difficult to hire paramedics as the training is longer than that of nursing and the pay is less.

Council discussion.

Item #3: Cary Medical Center

City Manager read his memo with the following points:

- During the budget process there was discussion regarding Cary Medical Center and speaking with them about a Fee For Service agreement.
- Cary Medical Center is a department of the City and not a non-profit like that other organizations the City has service agreements with.
- If Council is interested in approaching Cary, then the City Manager recommends a letter be sent to the Board of Directors.

Council discussion. The City Manager noted that Cary Medical Center is one of a few hospitals around the nation that are municipal owned. Pines Health Services is a non-profit. The Fire Chief stated that Cary Medical pays the cost of flight nurses.

Item #4: Building Permit Fees

There was discussion of changing the fee from construction cost estimates to square footage. The City Manager noted that there is great deal of work that needs to be done to make such a change. Demolition permit fees were discussed. Council discussion.

Council Consensus: For staff to do further in-depth analysis and report back.

Item #5: Other Areas

None.

Motion made by T. Stewart, seconded by J. Smith, to adjourn the meeting at 8:40p.m. (6 yes) So voted.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Regular City Council Meeting March 9, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Regular City Council Meeting March 23, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary