

September 14, 2015

15-20

A regular meeting of the Caribou City Council was held 6:00 p.m. on Monday September 14, 2015 in Council Chambers with following members present: Mayor Gary Aiken, Deputy Mayor David Martin, Philip McDonough II, Joan L. Theriault, Shane McDougall, and Jody R. Smith. Tiffany J. Stewart was absent and excused.

Austin Bleess, City Manager was present.

Department Managers: Penny G. Thompson, Tax Assessor; Michael Gahagan, Police Chief; and Gary Marquis, Supt. of Parks and Recreation.

Chris Bouchard, representing the Aroostook Republican and Time Warner Cable covered the meeting.

No Councilors objected to Mayor Aiken decision to move Council Agenda Item #6: Abatement Request from Paven Enterprises ahead of Council Agenda Item #5: PDT Architects – RSU School Project.

Council Agenda Item #1: Public Input

None

Council Agenda Item #2: Declaration of Conflicts of Interest from the City Council regarding any agenda item.

Councilor McDougall declared a conflict of interest with Council Agenda Item #9: Airport Master Plan Update and Councilor Theriault declared a conflict of interest with Council Agenda #6: Abatement Request from Paven Enterprises.

Council Agenda Item #3: Consider authorizing the minutes of the following meetings:

- a) August 10, 2015
- b) June 11, 2015 Secession Public Hearing

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by J. Smith, to approve the minutes of the August 10, 2015 Council Meeting and June 11, 2015 Secession Public Hearing as presented. (5 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda Item #4: Consent Agenda

- a) August 2015 Fire Department Report
- b) August 2015 Library Department Report
- c) July 2015 Financials
- d) July and August 2015 Police Department Report
- e) CDBG Advisory Committee
 - 1. Designate the Business Investment Group (BIG)
- f) November Election
 - 1. Approve of an 8:00 a.m. opening time for the November 3rd election
 - 2. Appoint Jayne R. Farrin as Election Warden and Kalen Hill as Deputy Election Warden
 - 3. Sign Notice of Municipal Election

Motion made by P. McDonough, seconded by J. Theriault, to approve Consent Agenda Items with business items A-F as presented. (5 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda Item #6: Abatement Request from Paven Enterprises

Paven Enterprises is requesting an abatement of property taxes for the tax years 2012, 2013, and 2014. A clerical mistake was made by RJD during the revaluation process. The property at 24 Sweden Street was in error classified as residential rather than commercial. MMA Legal has stated that this clerical mistake by RJD would qualify for an abatement under 36 MRSA § 841, which allows municipal officers to make such reasonable abatement as they consider proper to correct any illegality, error or irregularity in assessment. The request must be filed after one but within 3 years from commitment. The 2012 date of commitment was July 1, 2012 and is outside the timeframe. The Board of Assessors recently approved the 2015 abatement request.

Motion made by J. Smith, seconded by P. McDonough, to abate the 2013 property taxes by \$2,677.30 and the 2014 property taxes by \$2,912.38 for Map 31 Lot 59. (4 yes, 1 abstention, J. Theriault) So voted.

Council Agenda Item #5: PDT Architects – RSU School Project

Lyndon Keck of PDT Architects updated the Council with the RSU #39 School Building project. The RSU #39 building project is one of the 11 given the go ahead by the State. The Building Committee's number one site for a new consolidated K-8 school is between Bennett Drive and Glenn Street. In an August 21, 2015 memo to the City Manager and City Council, Mr. Keck outlines six major issues that need to be addressed by the RSU and the City of Caribou concerning this site. Some of the 15 to 18 acres of land needed to build a school between Bennett Drive and Glenn Street is owned by the City of Caribou. PDT has completed five "test fits" for the Bennett Drive property but hasn't designed a building.

Initially ten sites in Caribou were considered with that narrowed down to six sites, then PDT ranked them using a matrix with the Teague Park site scoring the most points followed by Hilltop and a site off the Van Buren road. The architects have completed a new construction versus renovation study and they are recommending new construction because of the age of the three schools range from 55 to 89 years old. It is expected the new school will be between 115,000 to 120,000 square feet in size with approximately 65% of the total square footage is required to be on the ground floor.

Mr. Keck gave an overview of the improvements, restrictions, and conditions of use for Teague Park because of money received from the National Park Service. The RSU has reached the point where a decision needs to be made as to whether it makes sense to continue with the Teague Park site or move to the Hilltop site. Mr. Keck stated the Department of Education thinks the Teague Park site is ideal because the Department likes to see schools built in the center of communities. The Department sees a strong connection between the Wellness Center and the school which was also seen by the Building Committee.

When asked by Councilor Smith about access for the public to the ballfield and tennis courts, Mr. Keck stated that he isn't sure that a RSU can have the open access that the City can. Mr. Keck explained the scoring criteria and that Teague Park scored 257 out of a possible 330, Hilltop received 202, Lombard Road site received 167, High School site received 171, Van Buren road site received 158, and South Main Street site received 139. It was stated by Mr. Keck that cost estimates have not been done, but the new school will cost tens of millions of dollars.

RSU Attorney Bill Stockmeyer of Drummond Woodsum spoke briefly about the many variables involved in the amount paid by the State for the construction of a new school. If there aren't any extra elements then the project should be a State funded project rather than a Caribou funded project. On a monthly basis, the Building Committee works with the Architects to determine what elements they want in the building, and then the Department of Education determines whether or not they are going to pay for those elements. During this process there will be two straw votes to determine if the public wants any extra elements. The City pool will not be replaced by the Department of Education, but they will pay for demolition of the buildings, rebuilding of fields and tennis courts.

Public meetings will be held in each of three communities during the first week of October. All three communities will vote on this project. It takes five to six years to complete a project of this type.

Councilor Theriault has serious reservations about the City giving up the park and the pool. She supports locating the school at the High School so everything is consolidated. Mr. Keck stated that there isn't enough at the High School site to locate a K-8 school.

The Building Committee has discussed moving the Learning Center Programs to Hilltop.

Projected timeline:

- Site selected and site design by the end of December
- Straw poll in January 2016
- Then present site to the State Board of Education
- Start design of the building in December
- Straw poll on the concept design in July or August 2016
- Referendum Election at the General Election in November 2016

If the new school is built at the Teague site there has been discussion about moving Teague students to Hilltop and the middle school during construction. Mr. Keck stated that if the Teague site is used by the time the project is completed there will be a softball field, 4 tennis courts, and 2 basketball courts. Councilor Martin stated his concern that the current plan doesn't show any land for a pool. Mr. Keck commented that more dedicated land for the City may need to be added to the project.

Mr. Keck stated that Teague site is at the top of the list and they are no longer investigating other sites and they will work as hard as they can to see if they can make this site work.

Mr. Keck asked if the National Guard could be asked to move. There haven't been any comments from the National Guard as to whether they would consider moving from their location behind the Wellness Center.

A member of the Building Committee, Supt. Marquis stated that he would prefer the RSU to build north of the Recreation Department's maintenance shed and to have the RSU purchase the land where the pool is located. South of the maintenance shed would remain the City's park.

When asked by the Mayor about the property issues with the Hilltop site, Mr. Keck commented that the site is a little tight and could use additional land. They have spoken to the adjacent property owner and he is willing to sell additional land.

Councilor McDonough stated that he doesn't want to spend any more money than what is needed whether it is State or City money.

Councilor Theriault suggest the fields on the proposed plan could be swapped for Teague Park then move the Park to the same side as the Wellness Center. This would provide land for any future expansion of the Wellness Center. Mr. Keck offered that Councilor Theriault's suggestion is a "good one" and just the type he was hoping to hear.

Mr. Keck will take what has been discussed this evening, meet with Department of Education, and then meet once more with the Council.

Council Agenda Item #7: City Hall Projects

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by J. Theriault, to do the necessary masonry work and to authorize the hiring of an individual or firm to complete a design plan for the remodeling of the first floor at City Office. (5 yes) So voted.

Council Agenda Item #8: City Owned Property

Staff has been reviewing several City owned parcels of land to see if the City still needs to own the property. Three properties have been identified.

1. Map 5 Lot 15 – off railroad tracks near Dow Siding Road
2. Map 8 Lot 20 – off railroad tracks between Route 1 and the river
3. Map 36 Lots 104 and 106 – off Limestone Street

Councilor Smith introduced Ordinance No. 11, 2015 Series, An Ordinance regarding the sale of municipal Property and to schedule a Public Hearing for October 13, 2015.

Council Agenda Item #9: Airport Master Plan Update

Motion by J. Smith, seconded by D. Martin, to approve the updated Airport Master Plan. (4 yes, 1 abstention, S. McDougall) So voted.

Council Agenda Item #10: 16 Sincock Street

Motion made by D. Martin, seconded by P. McDonough, to authorize an asbestos inspection and to go out to bid for demolition of the building. (4 yes, 1 no, J. Smith) So voted.

Council Agenda Item #11: 2016 Budget

Staff is preparing initial requests for the 2016 Budget and is requesting any guidance from Council. Manager Bless commented on estimated increases in health insurance, possible COLA for employees, and budgeting an increase allotment for vacation and sick time pay outs.

Councilors Theriault, McDonough, and Smith do not want to see a tax increase. Councilor Martin stated to bring them a reasonable budget and they will take it from there. Councilor Theriault stated to bring a budget and show what is needed and the Council will go from there.

Councilor Martin stated that when surveyed the public is happy with the services and not happy with the taxes. Councilor McDonough stated that maybe it is time to say "no". There was discussion concerning the monies that were returned to the City from Maine PERS and using some of this money

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to reduce the City's unfunded vacation and sick time liability. Councilor Martin stated that he sees no problem spending one-time funds on one-time expenses.

Council Agenda Item #12: Other Business

1. The Mayor allowed Tina Disy to speak. Ms. Disy asked how a meeting could be arranged with her, her son, and some witnesses on a matter. The Mayor suggested she speak during Public Input at the next Council meeting.
2. RSU communities meetings are being held October 6th in Limestone, October 7th in Stockholm, and October 8th in Caribou.

Motion made by J. Smith, seconded by D. Martin, to adjourn the meeting at 8:05 p.m. (5 yes) So voted.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Regular City Council Meeting October 13, 2015, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Regular City Council Meeting October 26, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

2016 Budget Public Forums October 19, 20, and 21, 2015 at 6:00 p.m.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary