

November 28, 2016

16-33 Wksp.

A workshop meeting of the Caribou City Council was held 5:00 p.m. on Monday, November 28, 2016 in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Gary Aiken, Deputy Mayor David Martin, Philip McDonough II, Joan L. Theriault, Shane McDougall, Jody R. Smith and Timothy C. Guerrette.

Austin Bleess, City Manager and Jim Chandler, Assistant City Manager

Department Manager: Penny Thompson, Tax Assessor

Others: Bob Sowers, Michael Quinlan, John Swanberg

Item #1: Discussion with Caribou Broadband Coalition

Over the past several months, members of the Caribou Broadband Coalition have been meeting. During this time they have conducted a survey. They are requesting that the Council authorize a broadband study with Tilson. The study will help the City gain more knowledge surrounding broadband, and the options that exist to make it available to all Caribou citizens.

The study will look at four different governance and ownership strategies:

- Open-Access versus closed-access networks
- Municipality agreeing to “anchor” a privately owned and operated network
- Municipally owned but operated by a third party
- Municipally owned and operated

RSU #39 has internet speeds of 100 mbps download and upload. The provider is Maine School Library Network which provides for the City’s Library. This service is provided through the State.

When asked by Councilor Theriault, John Swanberg spoke about ACFS&L and how they with their partner have a dedicated line. This is used to transfer within their organization. Councilor Theriault noted that fiber optics are available on High and Main streets within Caribou.

What does it mean to “anchor” a privately owned and operated network? An “anchor” refers to a big user of the network.

The stated goal of the Broadband Coalition is 100 mbps for all citizens.

Currently there is general information concerning Broadband available in the public sector, but Tilson would develop information specific to Caribou including what is available here, what would it cost to build out, governance, and ownership strategies.

Michael Quinlan stated that the City doesn’t have enough information to know what is best for the City of Caribou and that is the point of a study.

Several minutes discussing City of Ammon, Idaho and their building an internet network.

The Mayor questions why the Committee hasn’t met with the three internet providers that presently service Caribou.

Discussion centered around whether there is a need or not for higher internet speeds than are currently available. With individual Councilors questioning whether there is a need and members of the Coalition

stating that the City doesn't have enough information and that is why a study needs to be completed. Councilor Theriault stated that Council has a moral responsibility to take care of the taxpayers' dollars, that TIF money still comes from taxpayers' dollars, and that they have a moral obligation to guard that money. Mr. Quinlan questioned whether there is strategic plan to use TIF funds. Councilor Martin noted that the City just finished a three year deal at \$50,000 a year for economic development and really \$50,000 isn't that much for economic development. The Mayor has been looking at this opportunity but he doesn't consider it's viable.

Several minutes were spent discussing the project at Sandy, Oregon.

Mr. Quinlan asked the Mayor his vision for the City for the next five, ten, and fifteen years. The Mayor responded that he doesn't have one and that he imagines the Manager does as a paid employee. If this had been handled in a different way the Mayor might have been more agreeable. He cannot believe the local providers haven't been spoken to by the committee to see what can be done, and if they say that there is nothing that can be done, then maybe you could be talking about what other possibilities there are and how it can be handled.

The Mayor stated that the Committee should keep going, talk with some of the people out there right now and see what they can do for us.

Meeting adjourned at 5:55 p.m.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

Regular City Council Meeting Monday, December 12, 2016 at 6:00 p.m.

Organization City Council Meeting Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Regular City Council Meeting Monday, January 9, 2017 at 6:00 p.m.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary