

October 18, 2016

16-27 Wksp.

A Public Forum Workshop meeting of the Caribou City Council was held 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 18, 2016 in Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Gary Aiken, Deputy Mayor David Martin, Joan L. Theriault, Philip McDonough II, and Shane McDougall. Timothy Guerrette was absent and excused. Jody R. Smith was absent.

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

Department Managers: Scott Susi, Fire Chief; David Ouellette, Public Works Director; Lisa Plourde, Housing Director; and Wanda Raymond, Finance Director.

Time Warner covered the meeting.

Members of the Public attending:

Nylander Board Members: Nelson Ketch, Deborah Nicholas, Gail Hagelstein, and Kimber C. Noyes.

Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce: Shawn Lahey, Floyd Rockholt, Miles Williams, Shelley McAtee, and Theresa Fowler.

PUBLIC FORUM WORKSHOP

The Public Forum Workshops are a requirement of the 2012 City Charter. This change is to allow a better understanding of the budgets and to allow discussion between the Council, Department Managers, and the Public. Other Public Forum Workshops will be held October 18th and 19th.

From the adopted City Charter:

Expense Budget. 5.06 [a](3)(ii) On or before November 1st: The City Manager will have each City Department Head present a written detailed Expense Budget Report to both the City Council and the City's citizens in a public forum where both the City Council and Caribou's citizens can ask questions and provide input to the City Manager and each Department Head.

Capital Expense Budget. 5.06[b](3)(ii) On or before November 1st: The City Manager will have each City Department Head present their written detailed Capital Expense Budget Report to both the City Council and Caribou's citizens in a public forum where both the City Council and Caribou's citizens can ask questions and provide input to the City Manager and each Department Head.

Mayor Aiken opened the Public Forum Workshop.

Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce:

CACC President Shawn Lahey stated that the Chamber is requesting \$12,000 from the City for 2017. During the past six months, the Chamber has sent out 12 relocation packages and average about 10 calls per day specific to Caribou.

- 122 Chamber members from Caribou
- \$150 is the basic membership fee
- Chamber website receives over 10,000 hits a month

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- Chamber by-laws have been changed to reflect the addition of Caribou and other area communities
- Chamber participated in Thursdays on Sweden as a vendor and the Chamber members served as judges for a parade held in Caribou
- Chamber Breakfast will be held Wednesday, the 19th
- Annual dinner will be held in Caribou on January 26, 2017
- The Chamber hopes to promote and create new events for Caribou

Councilor Martin has no problem with the \$12,000 request. The Mayor requested a more complete breakdown of activities and events and which ones are held in Caribou.

Nylander Board member Gail Hagelstein read an annual report for the natural museum.

- Months cleaning and organizing and still isn't done
- Attendance has increased with visitors from Aroostook County, downstate, several other states, and other countries
- Nylander participated in Thursdays on Sweden
- Items were loaned to New Sweden
- Completing the paperwork for the 501(c)(3) and once done this will allow for the acceptance of donations and applying for grants
- The Board has completed a great deal but there is more that needs to be done

Kimber Noyes, President of the Nylander Museum, stated during the past 4-1/2 months attendance at the Nylander has increase over 500% over 2015 which amount to nearly 400 visitors since the end of May. During the same 4-1/2 months, the 6 member board members and volunteers have put in over 2000 volunteer hours.

- Currently open Sundays 1-3 p.m.
- Loring Job Corp helped to repaint
- Museum has approximately 40,000 shells
- Some home school groups have gone through
- Looking to update their software - \$900
- Looking to change the display cases
- Looking to repair the handicapped ramp

Board member Deborah Nicholas is in the process of sending out letters to schools outlining what is available to see at the museum. She is working to get others to visit; such as, Scouts, Cooperative Extension, and church groups.

Mayor opened discussion about wage adjustments and 3.5% COLA. Councilor Theriault doesn't agree with the inclusion of some of the towns on the wage list because their property values are higher. She wonders how benefit packages differ between communities. She wants to see the "total package".

The original Wage & Classification was 40 communities and only looked at wages. The new list of communities is those with a population between 6,000 and 10,000.

Councilor Martin stated that the City can't afford to bring everyone up to 100%. It was stated by Councilor McDougall that many individuals do two and three jobs and that should be factored in, plus he wants good people working for and providing good services to the City and that cost money.

A Personnel Committee meeting will be set up.

Discussion points:

- Heating fuel costs
- Increase in General Government Office Supplies
- Computer maintenance fee for Trio is due in November
- 3.5% retirement contribution is factored into the budget for everyone
- Not all employees participate in the City's retirement plan
- The City is on a four year cycle for replacement of computers per recommendation of the City's IT vendors – the old computers are given to other employees – computers are purchased through Oak Leaf

Councilor Martin is not comfortable with the proposed number but he would go with a mil increase. Councilor McDonough proposed the City lower the mil rate down to 22.5. To accomplish this, he would look at the CIP as that could probably be cut and still meet the City's needs. Additionally, the Councilor wants to see subcategories within those otherwise board categories; such as, Municipal Buildings. When asked by the Mayor, Chief Susi responded that the City may need a new fire truck before 2018. The front of Engine #1 is rotting out and is the department's only pumper and responds to every call. The unit is a 1988 and has 27,000 hours and will not last 25 years. The projected ending negative balance in Municipal Buildings is a result of less revenue received from the City tree harvesting project. The harvesting revenues had been designated for Municipal Buildings.

The Lions Building roof has been leaking for nearly a year. The roof is the original roof so it is around 50 years old.

The Mayor questioned why \$5,000 is going into the Parking Lot reserve.

Councilor McDonough referred to the proposed CIP as a summary rather than the detailed plan that the Charter references. To get back on track, he suggested that we sit down some evening and discuss the Charter and what is said about the CIP.

Councilor Theriault wants to know what the City's anticipated needs are. She also noted that it is easier to increase the mil a little over time rather than hit the taxpayer with something that is unacceptable but which the Council doesn't have a choice. This year the City may have to have a mil increase not sure how it can be avoided.

Councilor McDonough stated that it is inevitable that there will be an increase in the mil this year.

The Mayor referred to the reserve as taxpayer money. He does not agree with leaving the money there and raising everyone's taxes. Further the Mayor suggested that by the end of this year the City will have taken in an amount as high as \$400,000 to \$450,000 more than was spent. It is beyond the Mayor that they will increase taxes rather than using any of this money. He stated that taxpayer moneys need to be

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used for taxes. He would rather have moneys received from sales of buildings, such as, Sitel and timber harvesting put into the reserve rather than spent on special projects.

The Budget Forum for Wednesday the 19th was cancelled as all Councilors are unable to attend.

The Personnel Committee will be held following the October 24th Council meeting.

Workshop adjourned.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary