

October 19, 2015

15-22 wksp.

A Public Forum Workshop meeting of the Caribou City Council was held 6:00 p.m. on Monday, October 19, 2015 in Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Gary Aiken, Deputy Mayor David Martin, Joan L. Theriault, Philip McDonough II, Shane McDougall, and Tiffany Stewart. Jody Smith was absent.

Austin Bleess, City Manager.

Department Managers: David Ouellette, Public Works Director; Wanda Raymond, Finance Director; Michael W. Gahagan, Police Chief; Scott Susi, Fire Chief; Gary Marquis, Supt. of Parks & Recreation; Lisa Plourde, Housing Director; Lisa Shaw, Library Director; and Penny Thompson, Tax Assessor.

### **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 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>.

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.

Public attending: Gail Hagelstein, Wendy L. Bossie, Idella Thompson, Gilbert Hitchcock, Paul Theriault, and Katie Wilcox-Bosse.

Mayor Aiken opened the Public Forum Workshop.

City Manager Bleess read his prepared 2016 Budget Message. The 2016 Budget totals \$8,823,412 which is \$62,455 lower than the 2015 Budget. The Council's goal is not to have a tax increase in 2016. The Budget Message included the proposed 2016 Revenue Budget and a 5 year Capital Improvement Plan. To meet the Council's goal of no tax increase in 2016, the presented budget doesn't include the Assistant City Manager position, the Public Work's Office Manager position, and one Police Officer position. The budget does include a 2% COLA.

Discussion concerning the Ambulance Service Revenues from Medicare and how bills are having to be resubmitted multiple times before being paid, the cost of unfunded State mandates, and City's audit contract.

Questions from the Council were answered by the City Manager and the Department Managers for the following departments:

- 10 General Government – Austin Bless  
Salary line is down because of the full elimination of the Assistant City Manager position. There was a discussion about the salary line. The Election line has been increased to include the cost of a secession election.
- 17 Health & Sanitation – Austin Bless  
Manager Bless factored in a 2% increase for Tri-Community.
- 18 Municipal Buildings  
The City isn't planning to heat with pellets because of the lower oil prices. Manager Bless is asking for Council approval to get out of the "Energy Savings Guarantee" that City has with Trane. In 2016, the guarantee would cost the City \$7,220.
- 20 General Assistance – General Assistance Administrator Jayne R. Farrin  
General Assistance is up approximately 47% partly due to the rules and policies of the current state administration. Ms. Farrin requested a reactivation of the City General Voucher program and is requesting \$1,000 for this program. State reimbursement has increased from 50% to 70%.
- 22 Tax Assessment – Tax Assessor Penny Thompson  
Tax Assessment and Code Enforcement have been combined into one department. Both the Tax Assessor and The Deputy Tax Assessor have taken and passed all ten tests necessary to be certified as a Code Enforcement Officer and Building Official. The Town of Woodland has a contract with the City for code enforcement services. The Department is still correcting errors that were made during the revaluation. The Mayor asked several questions about quarterly inspections.
- 25 Library – Library Director Lisa Shaw  
Director Shaw outlined common requests and questions the staff at the Library are asked. The Library has grant-funded hotspots that can be loaned out. The Davis Family Foundation sent \$10,000 for a new microfilm machine. Volunteers are great but, Director Shaw stated the Library needs additional professional staff.  
Gail Hagelstein – Library Trustee – Ms. Hagelstein described Director Shaw as "dynamic". Ms. Hagelstein referred to the Library as the "Hub of the Community" and requested the cost for a second full-time staff person be added to the Library budget.
- 31 Fire/Ambulance Department – Fire Chief Scott Susi  
Chief Susi stated that there has been belt tightening. Emergency call are down in Caribou and throughout the state but the Department's long distance transfer numbers are up. The new doors are going in this week. The next ambulance purchase will be in 2017. Currently the City has 2.5 ambulance billers and that will reduce to 2 the first of the year. Providing ambulance billing services for other companies nets the City approximately \$2,000 a year.
- 35 Police Department – Police Chief Michael Gahagan  
The Department has 12 officers rather than 13 and this drives up the overtime. Going with one less officer will be "trying". The budget includes an additional \$500 for internet because now there is internet in the cruisers.

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- 39 Emergency Management – Police Chief Michael Gahagan  
Slight decrease overall.
- 40 Public Works – Public Works Director Dave Ouellette  
Director Ouellette reviewed many of the line items and explained any changes. There was a discussion concerning chip seal versus paving.

Gilbert Hitchcock – 10 Haines Street – asked when the City plans to pave the street. Director Ouellette stated that Haines Street was on the list for paving this year, but the paving contractor didn't show up to do the work. Director Ouellette stated that Haines Street will be on the paving list for next summer.

Workshop adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary