

Item #1: Call to Order

A Workshop meeting of the Caribou City Council was held 6:00 p.m. on Monday, January 29, 2018 in Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor David Martin, Deputy Mayor Nicole L. Cote, Philip McDonough II, Joan L. Theriault, Timothy Guerrette, R. Mark Goughan, and Hugh A. Kirkpatrick.

Dennis L. Marker City Manager.

Department Managers and Staff: Gary Marquis, Supt. of Parks & Recreation; Michael Gahagan, Police Chief; Penny Thompson, Tax Assessor; Scott Susi, Fire Chief; David Ouellette, Public Works Director; Anastasia S. Weigle, Library Director; Wanda Raymond, Finance Director, and Sgt. Mark Gahagan.

Christopher Bouchard of the Aroostook Republican and Spectrum covered the meeting.

Public Input: There wasn't any public input.

Item #2: Employee Wage and Compensation Policy

Manager Marker opened discussion concerning the draft Wages and Salaries Policy

- Mayor Martin: Why the population change from 6,000 to 10,000 to 7,000 to 12,000?
Manager Marker commented that he sees the City losing employees to a community with a larger population versus one with a smaller population. He noted that the draft policy gives more weight to those communities in closest proximity to Caribou.
- Councilor Kirkpatrick: Is there anything in the policy going beyond the three year step?
Manager Marker wonders what should the basis be for being paid above the average and should that be based on merit. Currently the City doesn't have a merit program in place and steps are for longevity.
- Mayor Martin: Are the only people to get COLA are those with more than three years?
Manager Marker stated "no" and that would be corrected.
- Mayor Martin: Do the individuals' whose wages are above average get a COLA as large as the others?
Manager Marker stated that he would say "yes".
- Councilor McDonough: Read 1.a – and questioned the statement "If another, more accurate source becomes available, the city will use that other source". If we are comparing municipality to municipality then there isn't any need to go outside the municipalities' comparison.
Manager Marker did agree that most positions can be compared with other communities.
 - **Council Consensus:** Strike out paragraph:
"Some positions may be more susceptible to influence by non-municipal employment markets. The Human Resource Director may also consider information about these markets when completing a comparison analysis."
- Councilor McDonough: He was considering a population of 6,000 to 9,000.
- Councilor Theriault: How would the City apply greater weight in a comparison analysis to those communities in closest proximity to Caribou?
Manager Marker spoke about looking at the cost of living here (Caribou) and the cost of living there (down state).

- Councilor Goughan: Do we have a copy of the MMA Salary Survey? Which communities fit the population range?
Manager Marker stated that it is available online.
- Councilor Goughan: He stated that his concern has more to do with the location of the communities we are talking about. Going back to 2008, he stated that it was very unfair to compare Caribou with Camden, Rockland, Ellsworth, and Orono. Regarding his business, he knows how much hanging flowers, corn, and strawberries sell for and he can't even come close to what those items sell for in those communities. For him, location is more important than population.
Manager Marker questioned if we wanted to have a formula of proximity-based weighing factors for each of these communities. We could compare services and number of employees.
- Mayor Martin: Last time this was done by using communities with a population of 6,000 to 10,000 so it would be something that replicable.
- Councilor Kirkpatrick: Wants to see something written for beyond the year three and longevity. Manager Marker stated that the plan that was implemented two years ago, has employees receiving 2% step in years four and five so at year five the employee would be 4% above the average.
Marker questions if the City wants longevity only or a merit based system after the three year mark.
- Councilor Kirkpatrick: Suggested in the next draft that the Manager present it both ways – longevity and merit based and then the Council can decide.
 - **Council Consensus:** to use the population range of 6,000 to 10,000
- Councilor McDonough: Item #4: Suggested that COLA be capped to 3%. Item#5: Suggested that it be handled on a case-by-case basis with the Personnel Committee/Council. Regarding Item #4, the Mayor stated that the Council gives COLAs based on what the City can afford.
- Councilor Theriault: Do part-time employees start at minimum wage?
Manager Marker stated that it depends on the Department, as an example, a part-time Public Works truck driver would earn an amount similar to the other truck drivers.
- Councilor McDonough stated when this policy is ready to be implemented that he wants it to become part of the Administrative Policy and to have it reflect that is replacing the Wage & Classification program that was established in 2008.
Manager Marker agreed and stated that he wants to see it adopted and become part of the administrative code that is online with our Charter and ordinances.
Councilor McDonough wants the current policy to be kept for historical purposes.
- Mayor Martin: When the policy comes back to Council, he wants a list of the towns with population from 6,000 to 10,000.

Item #3: New Public Safety Building Study

The Municipal Building Committee has met with Councilors Theriault and Kirkpatrick in attendance along with Chiefs Susi and Gahagan and Sgt. Gahagan. Areas of discussion included:

- Which way to go, only Fire Station, only Police Station, or a new Public Safety building.
- There is more need for a new Police Station.

- Availability of grants – there is one available that might help with 55% of the cost – Sgt. Gahagan has spoken with Jay Kamm at NMDC about grants and whether the City might qualify.
- Costs – Estimated to be \$8 million
- Location
- When and how to place a question about a public safety building on the ballot. How to word the question.
 - **Building Committee Consensus:** To work on the entire Safety Building rather than build or try to find a location for the Police Department. To apply for a grant.
- How to get the information out to the public, including tours of the facilities and online.

The Mayor stated that he personally sees June as being too early to place this on a ballot. He stated that we need to back up a step; in addition, to the current committee members, we should expand the committee for this one purpose and ask townspeople to attend. He suggested holding a meeting or two in the evening or a Saturday and that an ad be placed in the Aroostook Republican making the public aware of the meetings. The Mayor stated that the public needs to be educated.

Chief Gahagan offered that Council permission is needed to even apply for a grant and the grant process is at least a six to nine month process. It was suggested that the Council could give permission to apply for a grant doesn't mean that the Council would be required to accept any grant awarded. It was noted by Councilor McDonough, that any time restraints on a grant usage depends on where the grant is from. When asked, Chief Gahagan stated that he would prefer to know if the City has been awarded a grant prior to having the public vote.

Councilor Goughan isn't ready to have the City apply for a grant.

Discussion about whether this would be ready to place on the November election. The Chief doesn't want to rush the public, he wants voters to understand what they have been working without, and it is an educational process.

Councilor McDonough stated that the original need was the Police Department, and when they originally went into this they were under the impression that the Police Department couldn't apply for any grants, and that there was a stronger possibility that if they were combined then there was a stronger opportunity to receive a grant. Now it has been learned that the Department can apply independently of the Fire Department, then maybe that's the way we should look at it – the "need" versus the "want" or the "nice to have". The Councilor ended that he doesn't mind applying for the grant. He suggested that there might be structures available if they aren't combined.

Manager Marker spoke about setting up links to information from prior studies and the prepared FAQs so it is accessible to the public. There is a need for education.

- **Council Consensus:** to apply for a grant

Discussion about dispatching.

Item #4: City Policy on Disposition of Surplus Property

The Manager with the Department Heads have reviewed the draft policy. The Manager reviewed the draft policy. The Manager noted that he has concerns and second thoughts with:

6. Proceeds from the sale of any surplus item shall be put into general equipment reserves for the respective department from which the surplus item was received.

Discussion about disposing all surplus equipment by bid, how value will be determined, and how receipting will be done so the money can be tracked.

Councilor Kirkpatrick wonders how we would keep someone from sniping, if items valued under \$500 are sold on a first come basis as outlined in Item 2.b. He stated that a bid process with a reserve would prevent sniping. Public Works Director Ouellette suggested that each item, that is to be sold, would be assigned a “fair market” value and that would be the starting point. Councilor Theriault suggested keeping items for the City Wide Yard sale. Manager Marker commented that the intent was not to have a bid process, but rather to assign a “fair market” value and sell, so the City would be able to move items faster and not have to store.

For Item 6, Councilor Cote stated that any money received should be placed in general revenue, and if there is a need in different departments then it can be moved to another department. Manager Marker stated that with larger pieces of equipment that the item would often be traded-in and that would come to the Council. When that occurs, then it would directly benefit the department that is doing the trade-in, but with other items Marker stated that the money could be placed in the general revenue.

Councilor Goughan stated that he has several concerns. Under the proposed policy, he noted that the Department Heads would have discretion to dispose of items, he would prefer that they made recommendations to the City Manager and the City Manager would need to sign off on them. Because, even though it’s indirect, the Council would still have some kind of say as this process goes forward. Councilor Goughan doesn’t know if this is a job description that the Department Heads should have. Furthermore, he stated that the City Manager is hired to run the show, and he doesn’t believe there should be seven to ten individuals out there conducting business for the City. All his concerns could be eliminated, if we have one person with the authority for final approval. The Manager agreed that the language in Item 1 could be changed from “Department Heads” to “City Manager”.

Item #5: City Policy on Returned Checks

Finance Director Raymond spoke about her leaving her position with the City and her goal to keep things as smooth and seamless as possible. She suggested that the Council will see more of this sort of things come their way, with formal policies for what the Finance Department is already doing. This is so the next person that steps in doesn’t have any questions as to the handling of returned checks.

Councilor Kirkpatrick asked about Item C. Vehicle Registration and whether it was rather punitive. Ms. Raymond suggested that a vehicle registration isn’t valid if the return check was used to register a vehicle. The ten days, in the policy, is sort of a grace period with the City before it is reported to the State.

Item #6: Presentation on 2017 Budget – Year End Report

- The City spent \$374,137 less than budgeted expenses
- Received \$40,622.73 more than anticipated revenues
- Totaling \$434,759.73, that can be applied to fund balance
- The City may choose to use some of this to lessen the impact of the 2018 budgeted expenses

Councilor McDonough commented that this is the third or fourth year that we have had a rather large excess at the end of the year and suggested that Council should be scrutinizing the budgeting a little bit more. He continued that we need to start watching our overages too. There was a discussion about the meanings of rainy-day fund versus undesignated fund balance, plus determining the amount that needs to be retained and what could be used to reduce taxes.

Item #7: Draft 2018 Budget Revenues

In their packet, the Council had received a spreadsheet titled Appendix B: Revenue Summary that shows 2017 year end plus the anticipated 2018 revenues. The Manager pointed out that 2018 estimated revenues are lower than the 2017 budgeted were. The largest percentage increase is the Airport revenues, because of the new leases for the t-hangar project. According to the Manager, it is projected that property taxes will remain the same. Marker noted that historically there aren't any revenues for Health & Sanitation, but occasionally Tri-Community does give to the owners a disbursement. In 2017, the City received \$260,000, which right now the City has only reserved so that a discussion can be held with the Council for the purpose of this funding. As of now, the City hasn't shown it as a revenue on the 2018 Budget. There has been discussion of letting the money stay in reserve and helping offset a future increase to the cost of landfill use. Councilor McDonough had questions about the \$260,000 as to where it is and the tracking of it. Manager Marker noted that the City will be receiving approximately \$140,000 from RSU #39, this is to be used to offset the mil rate or for educational purposes. As of today, the City has received one-half of that amount with the other half coming later in the year. So the City needs to decide what to do with these monies.

Item #8: Other Discussion Items by Mayor and Council Members

- a. When asked by Councilor Goughan as to whether the 2018 Expense Budget had been voted on, Manager Marker noted that it was back in December. Councilor Goughan requested a copy of the year end information for 2017, plus a copy of the 2016 Audit.
- b. The Mayor stated that he has been asked by community members as to whether there is a policy for cell phone use by Councilors during meetings. He stated that there isn't any policy and asked other Council members if there is a need for one. The Manager commented that part of the discussion for the concern is any dialogue that happens in a Council Meeting particularly where it is being broadcast should be open to the public and public knows what's going on. Councilors could be texting each other asking how they are going to vote or members of the public texting the Councilors. What standard does the Council want? The Mayor requested that the City Manager write a policy.

Item #10: Next Council Meeting – February 12, 2018

Deputy Mayor Cote will be running the February 12th meeting as the Mayor is unable to attend.

Item #9: Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under Maine Revised Statutes, Title 1, Chapter 13, §405.6)

7:18 p.m. Time in: Motion made by P. McDonough, seconded by J. Theriault, to move to executive session under 1 MRSA §405.6(E) legal issue and 1 MRSA §405.6(A) personnel issue (7 yes) So voted.

The Council moved out of executive session at 8:50 p.m.

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No action taken.

Item #11: Adjournment

Motion made by P. McDonough, seconded by T. Guerrette, to adjourn the workshop at 8:50 p.m. (7 yes) So voted.

Jayne R. Farrin, Secretary