

**Council Agenda Item #1:** Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a City Council meeting on Monday, December 13, 2021, in the Council Chambers with the following members present; Mayor Smith, Deputy Mayor Ayer, Councilors Boma, Goughan, Morrell, Theriault, and Willey.

Penny Thompson, City Manager was present at the meeting.

Department Managers Kenneth Murchison (CEO/Zoning Administrator), Scott Susi (Fire Chief), Carl Grant (Finance Director), and Peter Baldwin (Library Director) were present at the meeting.

David Diminno of the Aroostook Republican covered the meeting, and it was broadcasted via Spectrum and YouTube.

**Council Agenda Item #2:** Invocation

Mayor Smith read an invocation.

**Council Agenda Item #3:** Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Council Agenda Item #4:**

There were no public comments.

Mayor Smith presented Deputy Mayor Ayer with a clock and thanked him for his time and serving on the Council.

**Council Agenda Item #5:** Minutes-

a. City Council Regular Meeting – November 29, 2021

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Ayer, seconded by Councilor Boma to accept the minutes from November 29, 2021, as presented.

Roll Call Vote: T. Ayer – Yes, C. Boma - Yes, R.M. Goughan – Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - Yes, L. Willey - Yes, J. Smith - Yes, (So voted)

**Council Agenda Item #6:** Bid Openings, Awards, and Appointments

a. Ordinance No. 20, 2021 Series, Amend Chapter 13 Section 700 Subsection 6 Campgrounds

Open Public Hearing: 6:03 p.m.

No Comments were made by the public.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:04 p.m.

b. Ordinance No. 21, 2021 Series, Repeal & Replace Chapter 15 Nylander Museum

Open Public Hearing: 6:04 p.m.

Councilor Willey read the following letter:

“Dear Honorable Mayor and Caribou City Councilmembers,

The Caribou Public Library Advisory Board members would like to address the proposed ordinances concerning the Nylander Museum.

With respect to the council’s proposition to regard the Nylander Museum as a special collection of the Caribou Public Library- The CPL Advisory Board disagrees that this is an appropriate use of this designation. The designation of a "special collection" is frequently afforded to collections that are not freely open to the public, whereas the Nylander Museum was established to ensure the collections would be maintained for the use of the public and area school children, per chapter 15 of the city charter.

With the dissolution of the Nylander Museum Board, the City of Caribou will be losing significant expertise in programming, especially youth programming, and there would be no expectation that the current outreach and education opportunities provided by the Nylander Museum Board will be maintained.

It has historically been the work of the CPL Advisory Board to assist the library in its objectives to provide Caribou residents with appropriate technology and resources, continually identify community needs and provide programming appropriate to meet these needs, and serve as a community center for reliable information. The preservation of northern Maine natural history is outside the scope of the work of the library. The current Library Board and Director have found great success this year in achieving the Library’s vision of serving the residents of Caribou. Recently expanded community programming such as the Tech Talk Program with Age Friendly Caribou, new outreach programs to aid families in addiction and recovery, and a developing alliance with the Central Aroostook Chamber of Commerce have contributed to the Library’s recent recommendation to Bendable Maine to designate the Library as a Hub library, which will further increase Caribou Public Library’s footprint in the community. The addition of the Nylander special collection to the Library would significantly change the scope of the library board’s functions. The time presently spent on expanding our community reach would be diverted to the detriment of our current and future programming.

There would be budgetary complications resulting from the implementation of either of the proposed ordinances due to the fact that the Friends of the Nylander group funds are unavailable to the Library and Friends of the Library groups, and even the maintenance of the museum building at this critical time of recovering the water-damaged collection would be mired as these two entities work to establish a collaboration. The scope and duties of these two funding groups do not have a natural overlap of responsibilities.

The CPL Advisory Board members wholeheartedly believe that Library Director Peter Baldwin is capable of taking on the additional duties proposed in these ordinances, but it is of note that Mr. Baldwin is still in his probationary period of employment with the city, and as such should be considered disempowered to deny the additional job duties proposed. It is the opinion of the CPL Advisory Board that assuming a second directorship exceeds the scope as written in his current job description; the addition of the Nylander directorship is not covered by “develops cultural initiatives with the Nylander Museum”, nor “other duties as assigned by the City Manager.”

In his short time as Library Director, Mr. Baldwin has brought the library to new recognition in the community, and it should be expected that if he were to assume the duties of the Nylander Director, he would bring the same energy that he brings to the library. As such, the Nylander would be expected to

quickly become a very active museum, and the volume of work serving as the director of both entities would quickly outpace what is achievable with a single full-time position, contributing to burnout. Passing either proposed ordinance would ultimately put both the Caribou Public Library and the Nylander Museum at risk of losing a highly qualified, motivated, community-oriented director. These proposed ordinances also create a future logistical challenge in which any future hiring for the Library Director position will require a person qualified both as a librarian and as a museum director and curator. This would be a difficult position to fill.

It is for the reasons stated above that The Caribou Public Library Advisory Board members would like to respectfully voice our opposition to both of the proposed ordinances modifying Chapter 15 Nylander Museum.”

Gail Hagelstein explained that the majority of the Nylander Board of Trustees only have one thing to say regarding the ordinances and the respective public hearings. They strongly suggest that the Council help resolve any issues that have been plaguing the Nylander Museum and its board for years. That is the lack of funding and communication from the former Friends of the Nylander now known as the Olaf O Nylander Foundation. There is an obligation to protect and understand what has happened to the donations given to the Friends of the Nylander to be used for the programming and growth of the City Department as stated in assorted interviews, letters, and Facebook posts. Donors live in our community in our area, in our state and across the country. There is approximately \$35,000 and multiple thousands in memorials to be used for display cases. There has not been even with multiple funding requests any monies received from this group for almost three years even with multiple funding requests. It is time to learn why there has been no activity not communication with a group now known as the Olaf O Nylander Foundation. Questions are being asked by donors wanting to know what has happened to their donations since they are not being used as promised. We have no information to give. With this possible transition, now is the time to let everyone know what the rights of donors are regarding their donations. This needs to be resolved before any action is taken regarding these ordinances. As other 501C 3 make public their financials in minutes, we request full transparency from the former friends by making the bank statements and their minutes public so everyone can see the activities if there are any that have occurred, otherwise we strongly suggest they answer donor’s questions in these chambers as to why no funding happened in almost three years from the former friends group. We don’t believe that getting rid of the board or not and moving the administration to the library or not will resolve the issue. It is not in the best interest of anyone involved to have this matter given to our Library Director to resolve. It has plagued us for years, now is the time to get this taken care of. We need your help Councilors, and now is the best time. Respectfully the majority of the Board of Trustees of the Nylander Museum.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:14 p.m.

c. Ordinance No. 22, 2021 Series, Amend Chapter 15 Nylander Museum

Open Public Hearing: 6:14 p.m.

No comments were made by the public.

Closed Public Hearing 6:15 p.m.

a. Ordinance No. 20, 2021 Series, Amend Chapter 13 Section 700 Subsection 6 Campgrounds

Motion made by Councilor Morrell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Ayer to approve Ordinance No. 20, 2021 Series, Amend Chapter 13 Section 700 Subsection 6 Campgrounds as presented.

Roll Call Vote: T. Ayer – Yes, C. Boma - Yes, R.M. Goughan – Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - Yes, L. Willey - Yes, J. Smith - Yes, (So voted)

b. Ordinance No. 21, 2021 Series, Repeal & Replace Chapter 15 Nylander Museum

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Ayer, seconded by Councilor Morrell to abolish the Nylander Board.

Councilor Theriault expressed concern and does not think anything should be voted on tonight. She believes that they should hire a director and or an employee and continue with the board. She stated that she worries that if the board is abolished it may be the end of the Nylander.

Councilor Willey stated that she agrees with Councilor Theriault and that the board is a working board, she believes that we should protect what they have.

Roll Call Vote: T. Ayer – Yes, C. Boma - No, R.M. Goughan – Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - No, L. Willey - No, J. Smith - Yes, (So voted)

c. Ordinance No. 22, 2021 Series, Amend Chapter 15 Nylander Museum

There was no discussion or action taken on Ordinance No. 22, 2021 Series, Amend Chapter 15 Nylander Museum

**Council Agenda Item #7:** Reports by Staff and Committees

a. Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the Manager's Report dated December 10, 2021.

**Council Agenda Item #8:** New Business, Ordinances and Resolutions

a. Broadband discussion and presentation by Simon Thorne of Consolidated Communications

Simon Thorne of Consolidated Communications gave a presentation about Fiber to the Home that they have currently going on within the state. They are using a new name for the Fiber to the Home product called Fidium. Currently Consolidated has over 46,000 fiber route miles, they are a top 10 provider with over 3,600 employees. He explained that they do build the dense population areas first and build out. He explained that lots of times they like to partner with the towns to build out to the rural areas.

b. Revision of Downtown Tax Increment Financing District

No action taken.

c. Shawn Pelletier of CS Management – Update on 60 Access Highway CEA Request

He explained that at the time of purchasing the location he didn't have lots of plans for the location. He was approached by an individual that had been looking at doing a bowling alley and was not able to make it happen. It was in the planning stages for about a year. The facility will be state of the art, it is about a 4.3-million-dollar project. It will employ 60 people and will be a PBA sanctioned 121-lane 10-pin bowling alley. It is going to have a 3,000 sq ft arcade in it, 74 TV's, an 8 by 15 TV wall that can be made into one large TV or 10 TV's. It will have a 40 by 50 patio outside with a built-in propane heater and a 16 by 50-foot glass wall that will look outside. It will have 2 inside propane fireplaces with seating areas.

There will also be an outside fenced in cornhole area, and there would be actual leagues in the summertime, just as there will be bowling leagues in the wintertime. It has been a difficult project so far due to COVID and the cost of building, and the availability of labor. There has also been shortage of building supplies. They have had to expand the building because there was not enough room for the freezer and refrigerator. He stated that the projected opening date is July 1, but it is constantly a moving target. This is the goal that has been set.

Manager Thompson explained that there had been talk regarding taking the Light Industrial Park out of the current downtown TIF District and creating a new TIF District with those boundaries. If that happens the clock restarts at 30 years. There has been interest in the Light Industrial Park that people have shown interest in and that is where the tax base can be grown. This program is to help to offset some of the development cost.

Councilor Theriault explained that this is a project that she is in favor of it is a big investment, but it is a good investment.

d. Consideration of 2022 contract with Oak Leaf Systems, Inc.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Ayer, seconded by Councilor Theriault to renew the contract with Bob Sowers at Oakleaf Systems, Inc.

Roll Call Vote: T. Ayer – Yes, C. Boma - Yes, R.M. Goughan – Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - Yes, L. Willey - Yes, J. Smith - Yes, (So voted)

e. Business Investment Group – Broadband materials proposal

John Swanberg from The Business Investment Group (BIG) explained that they have finally gotten a number to run the dark fiber from one end of the town to another. The cost of the fiber came in at about 1.2 million plus some other components. The lead time on the fiber is somewhere around 54 weeks or longer and other components could take longer. Tonight they want to plant the seed, as they continue to work through the CUD process and the Charter change, would it be possible for the BIG to be the proxy for the CUD and be able to take some of the three million dollars that are sitting in the CD and provide a loan to BIG for up to a million and half dollars up to one percent, interest only for a period of a few years as they continue to get the funding in place. He said that he believes that what everyone wants to achieve is to have broadband available to every household in the community. At this point broadband for our people to communicate with the outside has become a public good from an economic standpoint.

Councilor Willey asked who would perform the installation if the product was ordered.

It was explained that Pioneer Broadband would do the installation.

**Council Agenda Item #9:** Old Business

There were no items scheduled for discussion.

**Council Agenda Item #10:** Reports and Discussion by Mayor and Council Members

Councilor Morrell would like information regarding monies spent for detainees, dates removed, the towns they were from and the amounts that were invoiced to the towns that brought them in.

Deputy Mayor Ayer stated the with the abolishment of the Nylander Board all the members need to turn in their keys with in 48 hours of the closure of the Board.

Councilor Boma explained that they are planning to have a Public Safety Building Committee Meeting on Monday.

Councilor Goughan wanted to give a shout out to John and Erica Raymond of Gary's Yamaha for their 28 years of service to the community. He explained that they have made a substantial investment and they are better today then yesterday and that it is great to have them.

**Council Agenda Item #11:** Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under Maine Revised Statutes, Title 1, §405.6)

Council did not enter executive session.

**Council Agenda Item #12:** Next Regular Meeting: January 3, 2022

**Council Agenda Item#13:** Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Willey, seconded by Councilor Boma to adjourn the meeting at 7:57 p.m.

Roll Call Vote: T. Ayer – Yes, C. Boma - Yes, R.M. Goughan – Yes, D. Morrell – Yes, J. Theriault - Yes, L. Willey - Yes, J. Smith - Yes, (So voted)

Danielle Brissette, Secretary