

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a City Council meeting on Monday, January 22, 2024, with the following members present; Mayor Boma, Deputy Mayor Theriault, Councilors Bagley, Kelley, Lovewell and Smith. Councilor Morrill was absent and excused.

Manager Thompson was present for the meeting.

Department Managers Carl Grant (Finance Director), Lisa Plourde (Housing Director), Brian Lajoie (Fire Chief), Michael Gahagan (Police Chief), Gary Marquis (Director of Parks and Recreation), and Peter Baldwin (Library Director) were present for the meeting.

Melissa Lizotte of the Aroostook Republican covered the meeting, and it was broadcasted via Spectrum and YouTube.

Council Agenda Item #2: Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Boma led the Pledge of Allegiance

Council Agenda Item #3: Public Forum

Mayor Boma read an email submitted by Michelle Smith:

“City Council Members:

1.11.24

I was pretty surprised with the change to the Council meetings where the ‘invocation’ was abruptly halted and the Council members did not appear to even know. The ‘invocation’ wasn’t specific to any denomination and it did not seem to be provocative in the least.

We are ‘one nation under God’ as the United States of America. That is part of the ‘pledge’ that is stated during each council meeting, at schools, and throughout our country. A pledge is a ‘commit’ a ‘solemn promise’, so it seems a bit odd to have pledged and then forsaken the pledge by booting God out of the meetings.

It’s a dark world we live in and it gets darker as the days go by, it would be good for our city, our state and our country to remember and put forth the Light, lest we find ourselves fighting against God Himself. “For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their reasonings, and their senseless hearts were darkened.”

I hope that you all will reconsider re-implementing the ‘invocation’ prayer as our city, our state and our country need help, and that help is only going to come from God.

*Thank you,
Michele Smith
Caribou, ME”*

Council Agenda Item #4: Minutes

There were no minutes submitted for approval.

Council Agenda Item #5: Bid Openings, Awards, and Appointments

a. Appointment to the RSU#39 Strategic Planning Committee

Mayor Boma presented the information to the Council and asked them to think if they would like to be appointed and that appointments would be made at the next meeting.

b. 2024 Appointments to Caribou Congregate Housing Development Corporation

Motion made by Councilor Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to appoint Danielle Brissette and Lisa plourde to the Caribou Congregate Housing Board.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

c. Tenant appointment to Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners

Motion made by Councilor Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to appoint Matthew Perreault to the Caribou Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

Council Agenda Item 6: Public Hearings and Possible Action Items

a. Dangerous Building Public Hearing – 273 Sweden Street, Map 37 Lot 60

Open Public Hearing: 6:12 p.m.

Penny Thompson, City Manager, and acting Code Enforcement Officer provided information to the Council and audience regarding the hearing for 273 Sweden Street, Map 37 Lot 60. The packet of information provides details regarding establishing ownership of the property and a timeline of events that started on January 25, 2023, with a fire at the residence in which the roof and chimney collapsed. Following the fire, the property assessment was reduced to 700 for the buildings on the property which is just for the sheds on the property. She presented information such as the tax information sheet showing that the taxes were still being billed to the same owners, Michael Quimby and Ashley Thomas. Ms. Thompson also provided copies of letters from Code Enforcement, the City Attorney, notices of hearing and the advertisement that was in the newspaper. The information was all sent to the owners of record by regular mail and certified mail.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:21 p.m.

Motion made by Councilor Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor theriault that based on the evidence and testimony presented, it is the decision of the Caribou City Council that the building at 273 Sweden Street (Map 37 Lot 60) is a nuisance or dangerous building because it meets the definition of a building adjudged a nuisance or dangerous under the standard in 17 MRSA §2851 (2-A) because it is structurally unsafe, unstable and unsanitary; constitutes a fire hazard; is unsuitable and improper for the use or occupancy to which it is put; constitutes a hazard to health and safety because of inadequate maintenance, dilapidation, obsolescence, abandonment and is

otherwise dangerous to life and property and therefor, this building must be disposed of by demolition. Therefor, pursuant to 17 MRSA §2851 the property owners are ordered, within 30 days of service of this order, secure the building, pay app property taxes in full and present a plan and timeline for demolition of the structure. Pursuant to 17 MRSA §2851 the owners are hereby ordered to complete the demolition of this building in accordance with all applicable City of Caribou ordinances, within 90 days of service of this order. Regular project updates shall be given to the City of Caribou Code Enforcement Department.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

Council Agenda Item #7: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. Update on MainePERS agenda item from last meeting (Chief of Police)

Chief Michael Gahagan of the Caribou Police department explained that the Police Department will not be going forward with the dispatch position and that the resolution can be discontinued.

b. Funds to be reserved for 2024 Tax Relief (Finance Director)

Carl Grant (Finance Director) explained that at the January 8, 2024 meeting he was asked to put together a number for tax relief for 2024 from lapsed appropriations for 2025. The city has additional revenue to budget in the revenue sharing of \$182,431, homestead of \$208,327 and BETE of \$217,740 totaling \$608,498.

Motion made by Councilor Smith, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to appropriate \$608,498 from 2025 lapsed to a new reserve account to be used for tax relief in 2024.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

c. March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary (City Clerk)

Danielle Brissette (City Clerk) explained that she is asking for the Council to set the start time for the March 5th election at 8:00 AM and to appoint her as the Election Warden and Kristina Drinkall as the Deputy Warden for the election.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Smith to set the start time as 8:00 a.m. and to appoint Danielle Brissette as Election Warden, and Kristina Drinkall as Deputy Warden for the March 5, 2024 Presidential Primary Election.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

d. City Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the City Manager's report dated January 22, 2024.

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

a. Discussion of Invocation / Inspirational Thought agenda item

Manager Thompson explained that at the last regular meeting the invocation and inspirational thought was not added as an item on the meeting agenda. This brought questions and comments from members of the City Council. Ms. Thompson provided some history for the Council and stated that at a regular City Council meeting held on January 13, 2020, Mayor Goughan announced that there would be a couple of new policies in 2020. The first was a reminder about silencing cell phones and the second was that there would be an invocation. He introduced the speaker who read the prayer that Fort Fairfield reads before their meeting. After that time, a minister or layperson would offer an invocation or inspirational thought, or the Fort Fairfield prayer would be read prior to the beginning of the meeting.

At the beginning of each year, after a Mayor is elected, I have asked the Mayor if he/she wanted to continue the practice. It is not in the charter or otherwise required.

Information from Legal Services, Maine Municipal Association was also provided to the members of the Council.

Council had a brief discussion regarding their thoughts of opening with an invocation/inspirational thought and of the possibility of having a policy in place to accompany having it as part of the meeting.

Motion made by Councilor Smith, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to continue to have the invocation at the beginning of the meetings.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – No, C. Boma – No. (So voted)

b. 2024 Municipal Budget – Overview of 2024 Municipal Budget

c. Presentation of Nylander Budget (Department 12)

Peter Baldwin (Library Director) reviewed the proposed 2024 budget for Department 12.

d. Presentation of Library Budget (Department 25)

Peter Baldwin (Library Director) reviewed the proposed 2024 budget for Department 25.

e. Presentation of Police & EMA Budgets (Department 35 & 39)

Chief Michael Gahagan (Police Chief) reviewed the proposed 2024 budgets for Departments 35 and 39.

f. Presentation of Recreation, Parks & Snow Trail Budgets (Departments 50, 51 & 52)

Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation) reviewed the proposed 2024 budgets for departments 50, 51 and 52.

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 Bagley wanted to introduce two new initiatives, the Caribou Horizons Youth Council – this would be to give the youth a voice in the community, it would be a formal advisory board made up of Juniors and Seniors selected by the school and appointed by the Council.

Councilor Bagley also wants to discuss land bank options and or possible ordinance changes.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley seconded by Councilor Smith to discuss the Caribou Horizons Youth Council at the upcoming meeting on February 26th.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

Motion made by Councilor Bagley seconded by Councilor Smith to discuss land banking at the regular council meeting scheduled for March 25, 2024.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

Mayor Boma stated that they have recently held a meeting regarding the Police Station and fundraising goals. They also discussed possibly trying to partner with the Rotary and Kiwana’s clubs, having rooms/features sponsored and to display plaques like at Cary Medical Center. There are also talks of having a trash and treasure sale event to raise money as well.

Council Agenda Item #11: Next Regular Meetings: February 12 & 26, 2024

Council Agenda Item #12: Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under MRSA, Title 1, § 405.6)

a. Discussion with the Nylander Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Kelley to enter into executive session at 7:44 p.m. for a discussion with the Nylander Museum of Natural History Board of Trustees under MRSA, Title 1 §405.6.A.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Abstain, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

Councilor Smith did not stay for executive session.

Council exited executive session at 8:45 p.m.

Council had a brief discussion centered around giving feedback to the City Manager regarding duties and priorities.

Council Agenda Item #13: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to adjourn the meeting at 9:24 p.m.

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Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, J. Theriault – Yes, C. Boma – Yes. (So voted)

Danielle Brissette, Secretary