

The monthly meeting of the Caribou Utilities District was held Wednesday November 13, 2024 in the City Council Chambers located at 25 High Street, Caribou, Maine.

Trustees Present

Gary Aiken, President
David Martin, Treasurer
Philip McDonough, Asst Treas./Absent
David Belyea, Trustee
Jay Kamm, Trustee

Others Present

Jonathan Helstrom, General Manager
Sue T Sands, Office Mgr, District Clerk
Penny Thompson, City Manager

President Gary Aiken opened the meeting at 6:00 PM. David Martin moved and David Belyea seconded the motion to accept the minutes of the September 18, 2024 meeting as presented. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

The budget and financial reports were discussed. Manager Aiken had several questions regarding line items listed in the budget either being way under budgeted amount or way over. Sue explained that the accounts with a budget figure attached for the year showing a zero balance to date, are accounts which were used at one time for different projects but not used in 2024. This included some of the labor accounts, 501-10 and 601-10 for wastewater and water. During the summer two interns worked at the District through an ACAP program where the employee was paid directly by ACAP @ \$15.00 per hour for a total of 200 hours for each employee. This amount helped the District tremendously with labor cost. Account # 641-50 was questioned on the water budget in the amount of \$12,000.00. This amount represents the annual payment made by water to wastewater for the loan to build the water garage in 1994. Another account similar to #641-50 will be set up for sewer as well for reimbursement of funds borrowed from the wastewater division for the roofing project on the water garage and office, as well as the siding on the office. President Aiken also was concerned about accounts that are over the budgeted amount for the year. There always is a reason why this happens, and normally there is no way to determine day to day what might be needed in an aged system such as CUD. Another reason there is so much concern regarding the budget this year is the fact that several items were not budgeted correctly at the beginning of the year. Manager Helstrom passed out draft budget reports and profit and loss statements for the year for reviewing, and if Trustees had any comments, they are to advise Mr. Helstrom. Dave Belyea moved and Jay Kamm seconded the motion to accept the reports as presented. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Manager Helstrom discussed the 2025 budget with the trustees and asked if he could present the new draft for 2025 after the completion of 2024. By doing this, Mr. Helstrom would be able to review the 2024 budget and make necessary changes for 2025. All Trustees were favorable of this request.

The Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) is offering Lead Service Line Capitalization Grants for equipment to look for the presence of lead service lines. This is part of a Federal law requiring all public water systems to catalog the material of every customer service line. CUD has been offered an excellent grant/loan package. The grant would cover 55% of the truck's cost with a ten-year 0% loan from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank. The current Jet-Truck/Vacuum has recently had several repairs and it is time for a replacement. The grant has been awarded to the District, and MMBB requires permission from the District to submit the loan application for the remaining 45% cost of the purchase of the truck. David Belyea moved and David Martin seconded the motion to authorize Caribou Utilities District to purchase of a new Vacuum/Jeter Combo truck and to proceed with the Grant/Loan

application with MMBB for the Lead Service Truck with a ten-year 0% loan on the remaining 45% balance of the cost. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Manager Helstrom recently met with Jonathan Judkins, CEO of Loring Development Authority and the Madawaska Dam Water Plant regarding an interest of LDA connecting to Caribou. After the initial meeting, LDA was amendable and Mr. Judkins could see the benefit of an interconnection. If the LDA were to connect to the District, CUD would still have capacity for future growth. Manager Helstrom is moving forward with a capacity study to see if this idea is feasible for CUD. The Drinking Water has a grant that would cover 75% of the cost of a study up to a maximum grant amount of \$30,000.00. By capping the cost of the study at \$40,000, LDA has agreed to split the unfunded portion of the study with the District, or a cost of \$5,000.00.

Mr. Troy Haney contacted Manager Helstrom October 10, 2024 regarding property at 30 North Street, Caribou, Maine. The City acquired the property through tax foreclosure and has since transferred the deed to the Better Investment Group. The house has been demolished and the BIG, (Better Investment Group) plan to place a tiny home on the property which they will sell. Mr. Haney has asked the District to release the liens that have accumulated on the property over the years and abate the balance of \$1,416.45 which is owed on the account. This property would ultimately benefit the City and Utilities by adding back a new home to the tax roll and CUD would gain a new customer.

City Manager Thompson was asked to review the process of acquiring property through tax foreclosure. President Gary Aiken stated it is a policy of the District not to write off any liens or abate any charges that have accrued for water or sewer. The District would be happy to discuss a Promissory Note between the Better Investment Group and Caribou Utilities District that would protect the District if the liens were discharged, then water and sewer charges on the property would be paid to the District once the new house has been sold.

David Belyea moved and Jay Kamm seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:05 PM. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED. The December meeting will be held December 4, 2024 due to the MRWA conference in Bangor.

Sue T Sands, Office Manager, District Clerk