

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a special City Council meeting on Monday, November 18, 2024 with the following members present; Mayor Boma, Deputy Mayor Theriault, Councilors Bagley, Kelley, Lovewell, Morrill, and Smith.

Manager Thompson was present for the meeting.

Department managers Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks and Recreation), and Carl Grant (Finance Director), were present at the meeting.

Councilor elect Paul Watson was present at the meeting.

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

Motion made by Councilor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Kelley to make the November 18, 2024 meeting a regular meeting.

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

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Kelley to cancel the November 25, 2024 City Council Meeting.

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

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

Council Agenda Item #2: Invocation

Councilor Lovewell read the invocation.

Council Agenda Item #3: Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Boma led the Pledge of Allegiance

Council Agenda Item #4: Declaration of any Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations made.

Council Agenda Item #5: Public Forum

There were no comments made by the public.

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

a. Consider the results of engineering RFQ, “Caribou Pond and Park Rehabilitation Project”

Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation) explained that the Caribou Parks & Recreation Foundation has received RFQ’s for Project manager. The project manager will be working on the Caribou Pond project, which the foundation received 4.59 million dollars from a community project funding grant. Mr. Marquis explained that he is here tonight asking for approval of the recommendation for a project manager.

Councilor Bagley stated that he would like to have the information in the packet.

Mr. Marquis explained that this project began in August of 2019, then we had the COVID pandemic. There is now funding available from other places as well to help with the project.

Councilor Morrill asked if the project could go farther towards the Aroostook River.

Mr. Marquis explained that there are lots of different ideas, such as a concrete fishway versus rocks.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to approve the Recreation Foundations for a project manager.

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

Council Agenda Item #7: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. Presentation of 2023 Audit – Felch & Company

Gisele MacDonald from Felch & Company, LLC reviewed the 2023 Independent Auditors’ Report

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to accept the audit results as presented.

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

b. October Financial Report

Carl Grant (Finance Director) reviewed the October Financial Report.

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to accept the October Financial report as presented.

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

c. Report by City Clerk on November 5, 2024, Election Results

Danielle Brissette (City Clerk) presented the council with the results from the November 5, 2024 election.

d. City Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the City Manager's report dated November 18, 2024.

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

a. Waivers for properties to be acquired through the automatic lien foreclosure process (2022 Tax Year)

Carl Grant (Tax Collector) explained that this is the meeting that the Council would need to approve Waivers of Foreclosures.

There are currently 68 unpaid, and it is believed that about half will be paid by the foreclosure date of November 26th. At this time of the 19 waivers that were given last year only 9 properties are left unpaid with under \$10,000 outstanding on over a 9-million-dollar commitment.

Mr. Grant explained that at the MMA Convention in October, there was a presentation by a legal firm stating that they anticipate the law changing again in 2025 when the new legislation assembles. They recommended that municipalities continue to waive all foreclosures until the new law is passed.

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to move the slate to waive the foreclosures through the automatic lien process.

Council expressed their concerns with not being able to foreclose on the properties due to blight.

Manager Thompson explained that at this time there is no answer if demolition can be reimbursed to the municipality if a property were to be town down then resold. She also explained that an appraiser would have to evaluate the property to see if it is in a saleable condition and what types of violations/hazards are present at the property, then there is also the chance that the property is not saleable because of the conditions at the property.

Councilor Smith explained that previously when a property was tax acquired were sold the overage of the sales were able to go to blight removal.

Manager Thompson explained that it was a great tool to assist in blight clean up but it is a tool that they no longer have access to.

Councilor Bagley stated that this hasn't been tested yet and that he does not feel comfortable with moving the slate. He suggests waving all the properties listed in Orange and test the law.

Councilor Kelley stated that she doesn't know what will end up costing the taxpayers to test the law.

Councilor Bagley stated that its not an experiment, and waving the slate is not responsible.

Councilor Smith explained that we are following the path that's been set by the state.

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

b. Maine Paid Family & Medical Leave program mandator employer participation

Manager Thompson explained that on July 11, 2023, Maine governor Janet Mills signed a Paid Family and Medical Leave program into law. The program provides wage-replacement benefits to eligible private and public sector workers who will be able to take up to 12 weeks of family and medical leave for reasons such as illness and the birth of a child.

The program is funded by employer and employee premium payments remitted to the State that begin January 1, 2025, and will be 1% of wages. Starting in 2028, the Maine Department of Labor will set the premium for the coming calendar year, but it will be set at 1% in 2025, 2026, and 2027. Claims will be processed starting May 1, 2026. The MEDOL will be providing more guidance in 2025.

Employers with 15 or more employees may deduct up to 50% of the premium required for an employee from the employee's wages.

You may recall that this new mandate was cited as a reason for the budget increase at the RSU and the County.

According to the Finance Director, his estimate of the City's 2025 payroll is \$4.8 million, so a 1% premium would be equal to \$48,000.

Manager Thompson stated that it is her recommendation for the city to pay the full 1% premium in 2025.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Smith, for the city to pay 50% of the MFML premium for the 2025 budget year.

Councilor Morrill asked if the unions that were not in collective bargaining would be eligible.

Carl Grant (Finance Director) explained that two unions would be in and two would not be.

Councilor Kelley explained that she believes the city should pay 1% to keep the unions at bay.

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

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to pay the full 1% MFML premium for the 2025 budget year.

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

Council Agenda Item #9: Reports and Discussion by Mayor & Council Members

Councilor Bagley noted that there was going to be a Development Committee meeting on Wednesday.

Councilor Lovewell stated that she is excited about all the plans for Christmas in Caribou.

Councilor Smith thanked the citizens for re-electing him into office and welcomed Council elect Paul Watson.

Mayor Boma encouraged everyone to check out some of the local winter sports in the area.

Council Agenda Item #10: Next Regular Meeting: December 16, 2024

Council Agenda Item #11: Executive Session(s)

a. Executive Session for hardship or poverty abatement pursuant to 36 MRSA, §841(2)(E)

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Councilor Smith to enter into executive session at 7:30 PM to discuss a hardship or poverty abatement pursuant to 36 MRSA, §841(2)(E).

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

Council exited executive session at 7:52 PM

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to deny the application for abatement for Application 2024-02.

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

b. Executive Session for union negotiations pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.D (Fire Department Union)

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Councilor Bagley to enter into executive session at 7:55 PM to discuss union negotiations pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.D.

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

Council exited executive session at 8:28 PM

No action taken.

Council Agenda Item #12: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Morrill, seconded by Deputy Mayor Theriault to adjourn the meeting at 8:15 PM

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

Danielle Brissette, secretary