

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call / Determine Quorum

The Caribou City Council held a regular City Council Meeting on Tuesday, May 27, 2025, in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Deputy Mayor Smith, Councilors Bagley, Kelley, Lovewell, Theriault and Watson. Mayor Boma was absent and excused from the meeting.

Department Managers Carl Grant (Finance Director), Lisa Plourde (Housing Director), Corey Saucier (Police Chief), Brian Lajoie (Fire Chief), Dave Ouellette (Director of Public Works) and Peter Baldwin (Library Director) were present at the meeting.

Penny Thompson, City Manager, was present at the meeting.

The meeting was covered by Paula Brewer of The County covered the meeting and it was broadcast via Spectrum and YouTube.

Council Agenda Item #2: Call Meeting to Order

Deputy Mayor Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

Council Agenda Item #3: Invocation / Inspirational Thought

Councilor Bagley read the invocation.

Council Agenda Item #4: Pledge of Allegiance

Deputy Mayor Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Council Agenda Item #5: Declaration of any Conflict of Interest

There were no declarations made.

Council Agenda Item #6: Public Forum

Bruce Hagelstein, Caribou Resident

Mr. Hagelstein came in regarding concerns for agenda item 12 H & I. He stated that this is something that a Code Enforcement Officer should be able to look over before implementing. He said that he is concerned that they are putting the cart before the horse.

Sandy Merritt, Caribou Taxpayer

Ms. Merritt came in regarding her concerns regarding issues she has had with attorneys, and false information.

Jim Gamage, Caribou Business Owner

Mr. Gamage came to speak in support of Richardson's Remedies. He explained that the business has been very supportive of different events, including a lobster boil and Firework shows for the community. Mr. Gamage also explained that he is looking forward to hosting events at Spud

Speedway and would appreciate the City's support with assisting with providing EMT Coverage for events and would appreciate if the Council would consider waiving fees.

Rona Hart, Caribou Resident

Ms. Hart came in to talk in support of Richardson's Remedies. She explained that she was burned in September of 2023 and with the help of Richards she does not have to use narcotics for the pain that she was encountering due to the remedies they were able to provide her with. She stated that they are not just friends there, they are more like family.

Dave Corriveau, Caribou Resident and member of the Caribou Economic Development Committee

Mr. Corriveau came in to encourage a flat funded mil rate for the 2025 tax season.

Council Agenda Item #7: Acceptance of Minutes

a. April 28, 2025, City Council Regular Meeting minutes

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to accept the April 28, 2025 minutes as presented.

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

Council Agenda Item #8: Bid Openings, Awards, and Appointments

a. Recognizing Sue Ouellette and David Ouellette

Councilor Theriault explained that tonight, we recognize the retirement of David and Sue Ouellette.

Dave has worked for 27 years with the City of Caribou in the Public Works Department. Dave started as a mechanic and is retiring as the Public Works Director.

Sue Ouellette has worked as the FSS Coordinator in the Caribou Housing Agency department for twelve years. Sue's last day was in April.

We thank Mr. and Mrs. Ouellette for their service to the City and wish them well as they start their next adventure in retirement. Dave's last day is Monday June 2 and all are invited to stop by and wish him well in retirement.

Deputy Mayor Smith presented Dave and Sue with a gift as a token of appreciation for their years of service to the City.

b. Public Works' Belanger Road Culvert Project Bids

There were no bids received for the project.

c. City Office Janitorial Contract Bid

Manager Thompson explained that one bid was received for the 25 High Street janitorial bid solicitation. This is for the cleaning of all three floors of the municipal building. The police department is cleaned more often due to it being a 24-hour facility. The bid came from B & P Cleaners, who currently have the contract for the work at 25 High Street.

The new contract is attached and proposes these rates:

City Office: \$1,100 monthly for 2025, \$1,125 monthly for 2026, and \$1,150 monthly for 2027

Police Dept: \$1,200 monthly for 2025, \$1,225 monthly for 2026, and \$1,250 monthly for 2027.

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve the contract with B&P Cleaners for the janitorial services at 25 High Street and authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to execute the same.

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

Council Agenda Item #9: Public Hearings and Possible Action Items

a. Public Hearing for liquor license approval for Jade Palace

Opened Public Hearing: 6:24PM

Manager Thompson explained that we are having a public hearing regarding the Liquor License for Jade Palace Restaurant. The business is still under the same corporation. Since the corporation has new owners, this requires a new application to be filed with the state, and a public hearing at the municipal level per the City Charter.

Timeline:

On May 12, 2025, the City Clerk's office received the application from the State of Maine's Liquor Licensing division for Jade Palace Restaurant located at 30 Skyway Drive in Caribou.

On May 15, 2025, payment was received from Jade Palace Restaurant for the liquor license application to be processed and the public hearing advertisement.

Once receiving the application, City Clerk Danielle Brissette forwarded the application to Code, Police and Fire for review, and the premises were called and reminded to submit their license fees to the City.

Code Enforcement (5/14/2025) stated that they would hope that the bathrooms at the facilities would be addressed, and that would be their concern.

Police Department (5/19/2025) stated that they are good with the renewal of the license.

Fire Department (5/20/2025) stated that CFD approves.

Additionally, the City Clerk checked with the state on numerous occasions to see what staff could do to expedite the process.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:31PM

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to approve the new liquor license for Jade Palace Restaurant as presented and authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to approve the online application through the State of Maine.

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

Council Agenda Item #10: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. April Financial Reports – Finance Director

Carl Grant (Finance Director) reviewed the April Financial Report for the City of Caribou.

Mr. Grant explained the tax lien process and stated that in March they send courtesy letters. In April they send 30-day lien notices and there were 342 liens recorded at the registry on Friday.

Mr. Grant explained that when foreclosures are waived, this does not waive interest on the property.

Councilor Bagley commented that expense and revenue accounts are both low.

Mr. Grant explained that some of the lines are low because of being understaffed.

Manager Thompson explained that capital is not expensed until after commitment.

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Watson to accept the April Financial Report as presented.

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

b. Parks & Rec Foundation project- Caribou Mill Pond (CDS Funded)

Shane McDougall of Aviest Engineering explained that he has been working with Gary and the Recreation Department team on the Mill Pond Project. He explained that the money has been secured for the project and that they plan to fix the dam, dredge the pond and add a fishway. They are currently working with the DEP and other agencies to permit and executing different reviews.

Mr. McDougall explained that the project would require only minimal effort for both Gary and Penny.

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Theriault to award the contract and allow City Manager, Penny Thompson, to sign the agreement with Aviest to be paid for by the grant.

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

c. Committee Reports: Highway Protection, Municipal Buildings, Public Safety Building

Councilor Theriault explained some of the upcoming projects for the Highway department. She stated that they are putting out bids for the Belanger Road culvert project, and discussed the upcoming MIP's (Municipal Partnership Initiative's) that cost share between the City and ME Dot. They have also discussed the trailer park, which is mostly done and an update on Street lights from RL Todd.

This will be the last year for the brush removal program provided by the City in the Spring of the year.

Councilor Theriault also noted that the Fort Street bridge will be closed in 2027 for 2 months or more. The committee will need to figure out police/fire response during this time in that area.

Councilor Lovewell asked if the sidewalks along Sweden street would also be fixed.

Councilor Theriault explained that it has been quite some time since the discussion, but that she believes that it is part of the plan.

Manager Thompson stated that she would follow up with DOT regarding the sidewalks.

Councilor Kelley explained that for the Fire Department project there have been 2 firms that have placed bids, and the next step is to meet with the firms and have a conversation and compare some numbers with them.

Deputy Mayor Smith explained that there is an update in the packet regarding the Public Safety Building.

d. City Manager's Report

Manager Thompson explained that since the last City Council meeting, there have been some significant updates regarding the tax bills that will be going out this summer. The County of Aroostook has passed their budget which will result in an estimated mil increase of .333 mil. The RSU#39 has held their District Budget meeting and are proposing a budget that would result in an estimated mil increase of 1.409 mil. The accepted municipal budget has the potential to raise the mil rate by 2.5 mil.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to direct the manager to find one million in cuts from the proposed and accepted municipal budget.

Council had a brief discussion regarding the budget and possible cuts, Councilor Bagley suggested that the City look at a flat budget.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – No, T. Lovewell – No, J. Theriault – No, P. Watson – No, J. Smith – Yes (Motion fails)

Council Agenda Item #11: Unfinished Business

a. Tax Acquired property process update

Manager Thompson explained that the City Council has asked staff to bring suggestions forward for disposing of tax-acquired properties.

The current City of Caribou Chapter 19 ordinance on tax-acquired property will need to be updated to reflect the new guidance

The City will need to go out for an RFP for professional real estate services to sell the tax-acquired properties currently on the books.

Another thing to consider is the agreement between the City of Caribou and the CUD from 2010 (attached). This has been discussed again recently due to the property on North Street that the City of Caribou conveyed to the Business Investment Group with unpaid water and sewer liens.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to create an ad hoc committee for the chapter 19 re-write.

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

Council created an ad hoc committee for a Chapter 19 re-write with Deputy Mayor Smith as chair, including Councilors Bagley and Lovewell as members.

b. Property Tax Abatement Request

Manager Thompson explained that Mr. Walker attended the April 28, 2025, City Council meeting to speak about an abatement of property tax on the property located at 465 Main Street. It was requested that this be an agenda item for the City Council. At the April meeting, an executive session was requested but this is an abatement request based on valuation and not for the inability to contribute to the public charges.

Since the April City Council meeting, the Board of Assessors met and an abatement of \$28,900 of value, resulting in an abatement of \$618.46 in property tax was approved by the Board of Assessors and given to the Finance Director for processing. Per state statute, the Board of Assessors may only approve an abatement for the current tax year.

Mr. Walker is requesting that the City Council exercise their ability to approve an abatement for the years that statute would allow them to process. This would be for the tax years of 2023 and 2022. Mr. Walker has not submitted a written application for abatement.

The tax rate for 2023 was 19.50 and the tax rate for 2022 was 23.55. If the City Council wishes to abate the same amount of value (\$28,900) as the Board of Assessors' abatement, the math would look like mean that : 2023 – \$28,900 @ 19.50 = \$563.55 2022 – \$28,900 @ 23.55 = \$680.60

Mr. Walker explained he began the request for an abatement in 2021, and was told that the assessment would change.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to abate the taxes for the amounts presented:

$$2023 - \$28,900 @ 19.50 = \$563.55$$

$$2022 - \$28,900 @ 23.55 = \$680.60$$

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

c. Medical cannabis caregiver retail update

Manager Thompson explained that at the last City Council meeting, members of the Caribou City Council heard from citizens about changes in the medical cannabis laws that are having a negative effect on the business operations of registered caregivers operating under the state statute.

The cannabis union is encouraging the city to complete the Maine Medical Cannabis Program Caregiver Retail Store Local Authorization Form by selecting “yes” for question three under Section 3 which would be stating that the caregiver retail store operating municipal approval in the municipality prior to December 13, 2028. However, this is not a true statement. Although businesses were operating as registered caregivers prior to December 13, 2018, there was no location that was given municipal approval for a caregiver retail store prior to December 13, 2018. Further, the City of Caribou has not passed an ordinance to allow caregiver retail stores.

There would be a lot that would need to be done to allow a caregiver retail store to legally operate in Caribou. If the Caribou City Council wants the Caribou Planning Board to take this matter up at their June meeting and work to bring forward as a possible amendment, please indicate that to staff.

Deputy Mayor Smith stated that making changes could potentially affect two municipalities in Caribou.

Jennifer Belcher from the Office of Cannabis Policy reviewed the timeline for Richardson's Remedies and their operation, stating that the business began in 2010, and that the business had been visited by assessors in 2016 for personal property taxes.

Manager Thompson explained that the visit was to assess personal property taxes, and that the assessment being taxed was an office space where they seeing patients for non-cannabis related items. They were listed as a non-retail business through Assessing.

Councilor Bagley explained that the issue is with the State not the municipality.

Motion was made by Councilor Kelley, seconded by Deputy Mayor Smith to allow Richardson Remedies to operate his business until ordinances an be amended formally.

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

d. Acceptance of deed – 49 Herschel Street

Manager Thompson explained that the property at 49 Herschel Street has been in poor repair for many years. There are four years of property taxes due on the property as well as CUD liens in the amount of \$2,764.27 (from an email dated 03/24/2025). The CUD charges would need to be paid to clear the title, and the property taxes should be abated.

The City has waived foreclosure due to the Tyler v. Hennepin County decision from 2023. The owner is offering a deed to the City. By accepting a deed, the City would not be required to go through the process dictated by the State of Maine following the Tyler vs Hennepin County to get the lot ready for development.

Staff recommended accepting the deed and then advertising an RFP for the demolition of the building, making way for new development.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to accept the deed from Greenier, Inc., pay the unpaid charges at CUD from funds generated in the Downtown TIF District and request that any liens be discharged, and abate the taxes using Account E 80-01-201-01, fees and interest and request that any liens be discharged and then put out an RFP for the building demolition.

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

Council Agenda Item #12: New Business, Ordinances and Resolutions

a. Maine DOT Greenlaw Brook Bridge #5625 detour route

Manager Thompson explained that the Maine DOT is requesting that the municipal officers sign the following agreement for the construction overlimit permit for the Slope Stabilization & Safety Improvements, Project No. 022841.00 on the Grimes Road.

Michael Wright of Maine DOT is requesting verbal approval for using the Madawaska Road and Thompson Road, which are town roads, as the official signed detour route for the project to replace the Greenlaw Brook Bridge #5625 on West Gate Road over Greenlaw Brook in Caribou-Limestone, Maine. This will allow the contractor to start work immediately to get detour signs in place. The contractor can start work in the water starting June 15, 2025.

In the next few months, Maine DOT will finalize a written agreement for using the Madawaska Road and Thompson Road, which are town roads, as the official signed detour route with Caribou city officials. Please see the attached draft detour agreement.

Troy Haney asked if there would be signage placed for the detour.

Mr. Wright explained that there would be signs in place provided by the State.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to give verbal permission to the Maine DOT to use the Madawaska and Thompson roads as a detour for the Greenlaw Brook Bridge #5625 project on the West Gate Road.

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

b. Maine DOT Slope Stabilization & Safety Improvements on Grimes Road

Manager Thompson explained that the Maine DOT is requesting that the municipal officers sign an agreement for the construction overlimit permit for the Slope Stabilization & Safety Improvements, Project No. 022841.00 on Grimes Road.

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Watson to sign the agreement for the construction overlimit permit for the Slope Stabilization & Safety Improvements, Project No. 022841.00 on the Grimes Road.

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

c. Library Policy Manual

Peter Baldwin, Library Director explained the need for the update of the Caribou Public Library Policy Handbook. The original policy book was last updated in the early 2000's and several sections have been removed or updated.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to accept as presented.

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

d. Police department schedule change, adoption of MOU

Police Chief Corey Saucier explained that the Police Department would like to try adopting a 'Pittman' schedule change for a 12-week trial

basis. This would not result in additional hours or wages, this would change the schedule so that the officers have every other weekend off.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to sign the MOUs with the patrol union and the sergeants to adopt a 'Pittman' schedule for a trial 12-week basis.

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

E. Fee Schedule for EMS event support when requires

Councilor Bagley explained that a cost-based fee schedule using estimated costs that are more realistic as to cost to the municipality.

Chief Lajoie explained that looking back to 2015 Chief Susi had a rate \$150/hour with a 3-hour minimum, and \$22 per hour for a fire fighter with a minimum of Firefighter 1 training.

Full-time staff are currently \$32 per hour cost to the station at the overtime rate. This does not include benefits, just the hourly wage.

Council had a brief discussion regarding setting a fee schedule for the year for event support.

Troy Haney, owner of Spud Speedway explained that in 2009 when he purchased the track there was no cost to have the coverage. Later on there was a fee of \$150/hour charged for events.

Chief Lajoie explained that this is one way for his department to earn revenue. He also explained that the department is currently short staffed, and it poses obstacles to cover special events.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to set the 2025 fee schedule for event support at \$60/hour for EMS Support, \$35/hour for fire support, and \$40/hour for police support.

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

f. Auditor letter to be reviewed and accepted by City Council

Manager Thompson explained that in the years past it was never asked for the elected officials to sign off, it was always something that was signed off by the manager.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to accept the terms of engagement, and authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to sign on behalf of the City.

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

g. June 10, 2025, RSU #39 Budget Validation Warrant

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to countersign the warrant for the June 10, 2025 RSU #39 Budget Validation Election.

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

h. Introduction of Ordinance 1, 2025 Series, Anti – Blight Ordinance

i. Introduction of Ordinance 2, 2025 Series, Anti – Nuisance Ordinance

Councilor Watson introduced Ordinance 1, 2025 Series, Anti – Blight Ordinance, and Ordinance 2, 2025 Series, Anti – Nuisance Ordinance.

Resolution #3, 2025

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to accept the agreement as written and presented by Councilor Bagley for attendance and absences.

Councilor Bagley clarified that the motion was to approve Resolution #3.

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

Council Agenda Item #13: Reports and Discussion by Mayor and Council Members

There were no comments made by the Council.

Council Agenda #14: Next Regular Meeting: June 16, 2025

Council Agenda Item #15: Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under MRSA, Title 1, §405.6)

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

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to enter into executive session at 9:53 PM to discuss union negotiations pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6. D, Fire Department union.

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

Council exited executive session at 10:22 PM

Deputy Mayor Smith presented what was discussed during mediation. There was discussion during the meeting about the direction but there was no formal motion. Just discussion.

No action taken.

Council Agenda Item #16: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to adjourn the meeting at 10:23 PM

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

Danielle Brissette, Secretary