

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a regular City Council Meeting on Monday, June 16, 2025, in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Boma, Deputy Mayor Smith, Councilors Kelley, Theriault and Watson. Councilor Bagley was present via Zoom, and Councilor Lovewell was absent from the meeting.

Department Managers Carl Grant (Finance Director), Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation), Peter Baldwin (Library Director), Corey Saucier (Police Chief), Eric Sanderson (Economic & Community Development Specialist)

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

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

Council Agenda Item #2: Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Boma called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

Council Agenda Item #3: Invocation/Inspirational Thought

Deputy Mayor Smith read the invocation.

Council Agenda Item #4: Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Boma 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

Michelle Smith, Caribou Resident

*“About 3 hours and 30 minutes into the May 27th Caribou City Council meeting, the subject of EMS Fees began. *Due to the length of the meeting and no official bio-break, multiple councilors got up and left while the Fire Chief was speaking. Several councilors got into side conversations throughout his time at the podium, this should be avoided since it comes across as either a lack of respect or a lack of relevance to the person speaking and bordering on sketchy to those who are watching. This is against Robert's Rules.*

The sarcastic remarks about the wages of the Fire Department came across as very disrespectful not only to the first responders themselves, but also to the community that supports them.

While the Chief was letting the council know that they are understaffed by 3 people, and how many hours per week the remaining crews are working, the smirks and comments about

essentially forcing the first responders to volunteer for yet more time away from their families came across as if nothing that was stated about the current situation mattered.

This all took place during a council meeting that included a charge that the budget be cut while preserving 'essential services' which caused a rather lengthy conversation on employee morale. Was this in reference to all employees? Or dependent upon which department they work for?

In my opinion, something significant has changed when a council shows more respect and fight for those that sell drugs than for those who are the front lines of dealing with the ramifications of a drug epidemic. Who medically intervene in overdoses for those where it may or may not be successful. Who also provide life-saving measures to folks in various environments and transport them to medical centers both in Caribou and beyond, as well as put out fires under a variety of circumstances in Caribou and the surrounding communities, see things that you and I would not be able to sleep if we saw, sleep away from home for 3 or more nights a week, and miss out on a lot of their own family celebrations.

They are here for this community regardless of the day, regardless of the time, to do what they can to preserve lives and property. I'm ashamed of the way things came across during the May 27th meeting and I wanted to state publicly that the tone of the council in no way represents the majority of the public, and that the same level of respect should be given to the Fire Department as is given to all other departments in Caribou.

Secondly, to clear up what 'essential services' are, which have nothing to do with the people that do them - if there were a 3-week or more power outage, possibly even due to one of those albatross solar fields tied in to the grid catching fire, what services would still be necessary to protect and assist the citizens of Caribou? And do those service personnel have what they need to do so? The answer to this question is the answer to what services are essential. I can assure you that the bookmobile will not be on the front lines.

Consider the latest school budget vote as a call from the citizens to be more fiscally responsible. Between the continuous raising of State and City taxes to the 'market value' assessments (which are actually unrealized capital gains and I believe technically illegal under most, if not all circumstances), citizens cannot afford to continue dishing out more monies. If the trajectory continues, the council's desire to have a land grab, I mean land bank, will definitely come to pass, but the question remains on how that will be sustainable when no one able to afford to pay taxes.

Hard times call for hard decisions and sometimes City Officials need to do what City Officials need to do in order to limit the burden placed on the people.

**REFRAINING FROM DISTURBING THE ASSEMBLY. During debate, during remarks by the presiding officer to the assembly, and during voting, no member should be permitted to disturb the assembly by whispering, walking across the floor, or in any other way. The key words here are disturb the assembly. This rule does not mean, therefore, that members can never whisper, or*

walk from one place to another in the hall during the deliberations of the assembly. At large meetings it would be impossible to enforce such a rule. However, the presiding officer should watch that such activity does not disturb the meeting or hamper the transaction of business. (Robert's Rules of Order, page 261)"

Dave Corriveau, Caribou Resident

"I'm Dave Corriveau and you appointed me to the Economic Development Committee. In light of what transpired in this community regarding a "Budget" I urge you to fund no more than last year's dollar amount. I believe no jobs will be lost and Caribou will survive flat funded department budgets. Following this course of action accomplishes two very critical components. The first allows existing commercial businesses some breathing room to weather out of control inflation and rising costs of doing business, and secondly it shows any prospective business looking at Caribou that we are fiscally responsible and live within our means. We care deeply about taxing our property owners and all suffer a little bit more."

Safe Alternatives email received and read into meeting by Deputy Mayor Smith.

"Caribou City Council,

It has been brought to our attention by our patients and community that there has been miscommunication, the use of incorrect terminology, rumors and overall confusion regarding our city's current ordinance within which Safe Alternatives complies on an annual basis. Unfortunately, none of our officers will be in northern Maine during this meeting, so we offer this letter in hopes of clarifying what Safe Alternatives works hard to maintain regarding both our state and city licensing, since our business has been mentioned during recent public discussions relating to the operating status of Richardson Remedies.

On a State of Maine level, medical marijuana caregivers and dispensaries are not the same with respect to licensing. Both entities are in the Maine Medical use of Marijuana program rules but have different sections under the state's rules and regulations. Some differences between these entities are as follows; there is an annual registration fee for a dispensary, which may not be less than \$5,000 or more than \$12,000. There is an annual registration fee for caregivers based upon plant canopy, the fee may not be less than \$50 or more than \$1,500. Dispensaries must be audited annually by Office of Cannabis Policy (OCP) for renewal. Caregivers do not always have annual State audits for renewal. OCP also outlines that dispensaries must have regulations for policies, procedures, and records including but not limited to personnel files, business records, daily inventory counted by two employees, all THC products being under double lock and key, harsh security measures, background checks for officers, and tax compliance which is all audited annually by OCP at renewal. Caregivers do not experience these checks.

Currently, the City of Caribou allows registered cultivation caregivers, which are caregivers that can only grow cannabis at that location, and

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Currently, the City of Caribou allows registered cultivation caregivers, which are caregivers that can only grow cannabis at that location, and non-profit dispensaries. Safe Alternatives is the only non-profit, state-licensed dispensary located in Caribou. This City application comes with an annual fee of \$500, an annual inspection by City Code Enforcement, Fire Chief and Police Chief to ensure that the non-profit dispensary or registered cultivation caregiver is complying with city ordinance language.

Last week, one of our officers requested a copy of Richardson Remedies' annual city application from city officials for what has and is currently allowed at this time. The officer was informed that there is no application on file for any previous years for Richardson Remedies.

Safe Alternatives does not benefit from having a dispensary license any longer, as we no longer have a growing operation or C1D1 lab outside of Caribou, but must still maintain the heavy burden of an expensive licensing process simply to remain compliant with our city's ordinance. By not also carrying this burden, Richardson Remedies in its current retail operation has not only benefited competitively but has been and continues to operate with disregard to the city's ordinance entirely.

Safe Alternatives welcomes the presence of medical cannabis businesses in Caribou, but we all must participate equally and lawfully on both city and State levels. Currently, this is not the case. We encourage the board to fully understand the difference between the compliant operation of Safe Alternatives and the non-compliant operation of Richardson Remedies, and how Safe Alternatives does not benefit, despite the rhetoric from that business and its supporters, from allowing exceptions to be made for them to continue to operate as they are currently structured. It is our position that any other medical marijuana businesses who want to operate with Caribou city limits may do so, as long as they are following the language in the ordinance put forth by the City Council.

SAFE ALTERNATIVES IS UNDER MRS Title 13-B. MAINE NONPROFIT CORPORATION"

Council Agenda Item # 7: Acceptance of Minutes

There were no minutes to review for the meeting.

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

Deputy Mayor Smith explained that the City of Caribou is fortunate to have many employees who have devoted much of their career to the citizens of Caribou. The Caribou City Council traditionally recognizes lengths of service in five-year increments on an annual basis. Tonight,

the City Council would like to thank the following individuals for their hard work and contributions over the years:

Kyle Scott	Caribou Police Department	5 years
Peter Baldwin	Caribou Public Library / Nylander Museum	5 years
Cassie Germain	Caribou Public Library	5 years
Holli Doody	Caribou Finance Department	10 years
Adam Chartier	Caribou Fire & Ambulance Department	10 years
Chad Cochran	Caribou Police Department	15 years
Scott Dow	Caribou Fire & Ambulance Department	15 years
John Thornton	Caribou Fire & Ambulance Department	15 years
Penny Thompson	Caribou General Government Department	15 years
Matt Bouchard	Caribou Parks & Recreation Department	20 years
Brian Lajoie	Caribou Fire & Ambulance Department	30 years
Gary Marquis	Caribou Parks & Recreation Department	30 years

Mayor Boma presented certificates to those who were able to attend and certificates will also be given to employees who were unable to attend the meeting.

b. Fire Station Engineering Firm bids

Mayor Boma explained that the City of Caribou has received funding through the Aroostook County ARPA grant funding, through a Congressionally – Directed Spending request from Senator Collins’ office and from funding that was set aside by designating capital funds for a project to make needed renovations and upgrades to the Caribou Fire and Ambulance department building. The City Council Municipal Buildings Committee advertised through an RFQ process to obtain qualifications from firms interested in engineering the project.

The Municipal Buildings Committee then selected two highly qualified firms to meet with to discuss the project in-depth. The City Council Municipal Buildings Committee is recommending that the Caribou City Council award the project to: Harriman at a cost of \$150,000 for phases to from investigations and design to construction administration.

Motion made by Councilor Theriault, seconded by Councilor Watson to award the Caribou Fire Department Renovation and Upgrades project to Harriman at a cost of \$150,000.

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

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

There were no public hearing scheduled for the meeting.

Council Agenda Item #10: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. May Financial Reports = Finance Director

Carl Grant (Finance Director) reviewed the May Financial report for the City of Caribou.

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

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

b. Update on visit to Cary Medical Center OB Unit – Mayor Boma

Mayor Boma explained that the Caribou City Council and City Manager were invited by Cary Medical Center CEO Kris Doody, staff and the Cary Board of Directors to tour the newly remodeled OB unit at Cary Medical Center. Many hospitals across the state have closed their Labor and Delivery units, however, the Cary obstetrics unit continues to provide area parents with labor, delivery, and post-partum services to expectant moms and dads in a soothing, professional environment.

Mayor Boma explained that the new unit is beautiful and will be well utilized because of the increase in number of births here in Caribou due to other facilities closing their obstetrics units in the area.

c. City Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the City Manager's Report dated June 16, 2025.

Council Agenda Item #11: Unfinished Business

a. Cannabis medical caregiver discussion

Mayor Boma explained that at last two 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.

There would be a lot that would need to be done to allow a caregiver retail store or registered dispensary to legally operate in Caribou and Councilor Kelley has prepared an ordinance to be introduced.

This would be Ordinance 3, 2025 Series, Medical Cannabis Dispensary Ordinance. This has not been reviewed by municipal attorney Rick Solman. If the members of the Caribou City Council would like an opinion from MMA Legal Services, I would need an approved motion.

Councilor Bagley explained that in the Charter that the Planning Board would be the first to work on the ordinance then it would go to the Council.

Councilor Kelley stated that in section 212 it states that a Councilor can bring forth an ordinance.

Deputy Mayor Smith stated that for the zoning it can still be looked at by the planning board and legal in the meantime.

Councilor Bagley suggested that the next step would be to send the ordinance to the Planning Board.

Deputy Mayor Smith introduced Ordinance No. 3, 2025 Series, Medical Cannabis Dispensary.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to direct City Manager Penny Thompson to seek the opinion of Maine Municipal Association Legal Services regarding the proposed Medical Cannabis Dispensary Ordinance.

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

b. 2025 Municipal Budget

Mayor Boma explained that at the March 10, 2025, meeting, the public hearing on the 2025 Municipal Budget was held. There was a projected \$1.2 million dollar shortfall between expenses and revenues. The City Council has directed staff to present a 10% savings (approx. \$1,000,000) in savings to lessen the impact on taxpayers. At the March 17, 2025, City Council meeting, cuts to the budget were brought forward. These potential savings were less than \$1,000,000 and were not accepted.

At the May 27, 2025, City Council meeting, the subject of cuts was brought up again and several approaches were discussed, including looking at additional cuts or funding the unionized departments at 2024 levels and cutting other departments by 10%.

Much of the savings presented come from open positions and deferring capital projects.

It is the City Council who sets policy. Is the City Council looking to cut programs, services, and staff? If so, please provide that direction.

Motion made by deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to reduce the expense budget by \$723,697 by recommendations provided by the City Manager.

\$194,790.77 is from a reserve account G 1-456-00 “Tax Relief Funds 2021”

The \$46,039.20 was from various accounts including:

\$12,039.20 I think from Tax Acquired Property Remediation Reserve G 1-373-07

\$14,000 I think from Tax Acquired Property Remediation Reserve G 1-490-00

\$20,000 I think from Caribou Trailer Park Reserve G 1-406-00

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

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to move the ARPA NEU funds to offset the increase in police wages of, \$67,488.64

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

a. RSU #39 Budget Validation election results

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to set the start time as 8:00 AM, to appoint Danielle Brissette as Election Warden, Kristina Drinkall and Amber Madore as Deputy Wardens for the July 8, 2025 RSU #39 Budget Validation Referendum Election.

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

b. Request to sign a Corrective Deed

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to sign the provided corrective deed for the property located on Map 16 Lot 51.

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

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

Mayor Boma stated that Thursdays on Sween Street was fabulous, and she commended Gary and the City Staff for all of the work they put into the events.

Deputy Mayor Smith stated that at Thursdays on Sweeden Street it was very well attended and many of the vendors were able to sell out of food items.

Councilor Kelley thanked everyone for their support.

Councilor Watson stated that he was able to attend a Library meeting and that they are an incredible group.

Council Agenda Item #14: Next Regular Meeting

June 30, 2025

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

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to enter into executive session at 7:09PM for personnel matters pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.A(1) Non-Union Employee survey results.

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

Council exited executive session at 8:03PM

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to accept the wage scale proposed to be put in place for non-union employees.

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

Council Agenda Item #16: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to adjourn the meeting at 8:06PM.

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

Danielle Brissette, Secretary