

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call/Determine Quorum

The Caribou City Council held a Regular City Council Meeting on Monday, December 15, 2025, in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Boma, Councilors Bagley, Lovewell, Theriault and Watson. Councilor Kelley was present via Zoom. Deputy Mayor Smith was absent from the meeting.

City Manager Penny Thompson was present at the meeting.

Department Managers Carl Grant (Finance Director), Brian Lajoie (Fire Chief), and Eric Sanderson (Economic & Community Development Specialist) Corey Saucier (Police Chief) and Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks and Recreation) were present at the meeting.

The meeting was broadcast via Spectrum and YouTube.

Council Agenda Item #2: Call the Meeting to Order

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

Council Agenda Item #3: Invocation / Inspirational Thought

Councilor Lovewell 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

Councilor Bagley stated that he would need to reclude himself from agenda item 15 A in executive session.

Council Agenda Item #6: Public Forum

There were no comments made by the public.

Council Agenda Item #7: Acceptance of Minutes

a. Minutes of August 25, September 15, October 20, and November 17, Regular City Council meetings.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to accept the minutes of August 25, 2025, Regular City Council meeting, September 15, 2025, Regular City Council meeting, October 20, 2025, Regular City Council meeting, and November 17, 2025, Regular City Council meeting.

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

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

a. Appreciation to City Council member Joan Theriault for her years of service.

Mayor Boma stated that tonight is the final City Council meeting for 2025, and the end of 13 years of service to the citizens of Caribou for City Councilor Joan Theriault.

Councilor Theriault has just completed her 4th full term on the Caribou City Council, after being appointed to serve in 2013. She was born and brought up in Caribou and has never lived anywhere else. She has been married to her husband, Paul, for 59 years and they have 1 daughter, Denise. In 1987, together they built, owned, and operated Rivers Bend Mobile Home Park, an adults-only community on the River Road. They sold Rivers Bend in 2023 but still reside there. Before her retirement, Councilor Joan Theriault worked as a property and casualty insurance agent for 50 years.

Councilor Theriault did not seek re-election for another term on the Caribou City Council so tonight, we express our appreciation for the projects and decisions she championed while on the City Council.

Mayor Boma presented Councilor Theriault with a desktop clock thanking her for her years of service and dedication to the City of Caribou.

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

There were no public hearings scheduled for the meeting.

Council Agenda Item #10: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. Financial Reports for November 2025 – Finance Director Carl Grant

Carl Grant reviewed the November Financial report for the City of Caribou.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to accept the November financial report as presented.

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

b. City Manager's Report

City Manager, Penny Thompson reviewed City Manager's Report and Hot topics in the community such as the Fort Street Bridge Project.

Council Agenda Item #11: Unfinished Business

a. Library Connectivity Hub, Design Development approval – Matthew Carter, Haley-Ward

Matthew Carter of Haley-Ward joined the meeting via Zoom and reviewed the highlights of the design and renovations to the Library.

Councilor Bagley asked if the telehealth cubicles would have sound isolation.

Mr. Carter explained that the walls will be insulated and there is a special clip that is used to slow the vibration allowing for less sound to travel.

Councilor Bagley asked about the updated cost estimate because the one provided with the design documents was outdated.

Mr. Carter assured him that they are working on it now and they plan to have it completed by the 19th.

Councilor Bagley asked about the schedule and deadlines.

Mr. Carter explained that the plan is to go out to bid in January, and that they cannot control the construction timelines. That information would have to be gathered from the contractor.

Peter Baldwin (Library Director) explained that the deadline for the grant is October 31st and that the initial grant had a 10% contingency built in.

Council had a brief discussion with Mr. Carter and Mr. Baldwin regarding timeframes in what goes out to bid, possibly charging contractors for liquidated damages and the possible risk. Mr. Baldwin also explained that he is applying for other funds to help with accessibility to the building.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve the design development drawings as presented by Haley-Ward.

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

b. Memorandums of understanding (MOU) with IAFF 5191 (Fire Department Union)

Manager Thompson explained that at most recent Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) with IAFF 5191, the union for the Caribou Fire and Ambulance department employees, expired on 12/31/2024. With no contract settled for 1/1/2025, the City Council budgeted for a 4% wage increase for the department in 2025. Currently, negotiations are still ongoing until a contract can be ratified.

Coming up at the end of the year, the proper resolution would be to pay out the funds that were appropriated for this purpose in the 2025 municipal budget. Due to their challenges in filling full-time positions, there are adequate funds to increase this amount from 4% to 4.25%.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve the Memorandums of Understanding with IAFF 5191, and authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to sign on behalf of the City of Caribou.

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

c. Proposed increase in Interlocal coverage Agreements – Fire Chief Brian Lajoie

Brian Lajoie (Fire Chief) outlined the increase to the interlocal agreements for local communities and proposed a 5% increase.

Councilor Bagley asked about the peridium communities, and Chief Lajoie explained that they are managed separately in different lines.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to implement a 5% increase in the per capita rates for Fire and Ambulance coverage in 2026.

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

a. Request regarding 2026 SnowBowl – E &C D Specialist Eric Sanderson

Eric Sanderson (Economic & Community Development Specialist) explained that Spud Speedway is looking to host the SnowBowl back in Caribou this year.

Mr. Sanderson explained that he has had discussions with the Public Works Department for snow hauling, Wellness center staff for use of the facilities for an event in front of the tennis court, and with the Fire and Ambulance department for coverage during the show, which would be approximately 45 minutes.

Troy Haney explained that they are going to try to host all of the events at the speedway but are setting up contingency plans incase of a change with the weather. The event will have snow drags, snow cross and much more.

Mr. Haney stated that if they hold the event on city property, they are going to try to do it with very little municipal impact, other then using the facilities and closing a portion of Bennett drive if the show takes place at the Wellness Center. They are looking to have a good idea by mid-January on where the event will be held because it all depends on mother nature and the snow conditions. He explained that they will still need the ambulance coverage with either location for the events.

Gary Marquis explained that they can leave the parking lot unplowed where the show would take place and that it adds no extra on the rec for the event to be there.

Chief Corey Saucier (Police) stated that there should not be any issues for them, he has reserve officers that he will have on for traffic control.

Chief Brian Lajoie (Fire & Ambulance) stated that they are short another person right now, but that they will do the best that they can to make sure that the event has coverage.

Mr. Haney explained that some of the local earthworks' companies volunteer to help move snow for the event to be able to take place.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve the use of the Recreation & Wellness Center for the 2026 Snow Bowl as presented, allowing use of resources and staff from Parks & Recreation, Public Works, Police, and Economic Development Departments, and the Fire Department resources allocated as available at the discretion of the Fire Chief.

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

b. Abatement Request for uncollectable accounts – Finance Director Carl Grant

Carl Grant (Finance Director) explained that he is asking for an abatement for two trailers that are in a trailer park and are in bad shape. He explained that the accounts have been worked, and now he would like to clean up the books.

Manager Thompson explained that this is something that the City budgets for abatements.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Lowell to abate the taxes for account 5045 in the amount of \$146.01 and account 5121 in the amount of \$58.88.

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

c. MainePERS request to add Dispatchers – Finance & HR Director Carl Grant

Carl Grant (Finance & HR Director) explained that currently the City is working on negotiations with police, patrolman and dispatchers have been added. Currently dispatchers are not in the plan for dispatchers to be able to take deductions or be in the Maine State Retirement Program. Mr. Grant explained that tonight he is here to ask the Council to sign the contract to allow dispatchers to be in the program, the change would need to be in effect to allow them to take place in the Maine State Retirement plan.

Chief Soucier (Police Chief) explained that there was an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) signed previously that allowed dispatchers to have union protection that adds them to the union contract. When this took place, it did not give them the opportunity to get the Maine State Retirement.

Information provided to the Council from packet:

**City of Caribou, Caribou Fire & Police's
legislative body to add coverage for Dispatchers under their
MainePERS Consolidated Participating Local District Plan (The Plan)**

To see if the City of Caribou, Caribou Fire & Police will vote to add coverage for its full-time dispatchers effective January 1, 2026.

The City agrees to:

- A) Add coverage under Special Plan 3C for its full-time dispatchers who regularly work at least 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year effective January 1, 2026.
- B) Continue to provide Special Plan 3C to its full-time firefighters and police officers who regularly work at least 40 hours per week, 52 weeks per year.
- C) Continue to exclude all other employees, including city council members, from participating in The Plan.
- D) Authorize Penny Thompson, City Manager or Courtney Boma, City Council Chair to sign the amended agreement between the City and Maine Public Employees Retirement System.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve as written

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

d. Approval of Maine Paid Family & Medical Leave program participation for 2026

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 2026.

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 2026 payroll is \$5 million, so a 1% premium would be equal to \$50,000.

Ms. Thompson stated that her recommendation is for the City to pay the full 1% premium in 2026. The City paid the 1% premium in 2025 because there are collective bargaining agreements that are not settled to reflect this new language. This is still true as the City moves into 2026.

The City Council and Manager Thompson had a brief discussion regarding union negotiations not being ratified yet, union contracts being 3 years, and taking care of the people that slip through the cracks.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to pay the full 1% MFML premium for the 2026 budget year.

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

e. Approval of 2026 COLA for employees not covered under collective bargaining agreements

Manager Thompson explained that on January 1, 2026, employees covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement will receive a Cost of Living and/or other adjustment to their hourly rate of pay. The amount of the adjustment is tied to their Collective Bargaining Agreement. Those part-time employees who are paid the Maine state minimum wage will receive a 3.08% increase from \$14.65 to \$15.10 per hour. There is no such automatic COLA for the non-union employees.

Three of the four unions are still under negotiation currently. The Public Works Union will be in year three of a three-year contract in 2026 and will receive a 3% increase.

In June 2025, the Caribou City Council adopted a new wage scale for non-union employees.

As a reflection of their ongoing dedication in serving the citizens of Caribou, I am asking for a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment to be approved for all regular non-union non-contract employees, both full-time and part-time, effective January 1, 2026.

Councilor Bagley thanked Manager Thompson for advocating for the staff.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to approve a 3% Cost of Living Adjustment for all regular non-union non-contract employees, both full-time and part-time, effective January 1, 2026.

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

f. Approval to close municipal offices at 12:00pm on Wednesday, December 24, 2025

Manager Thompson explained that the City personnel manual provides those employees not covered under a Collective Bargaining Agreement, Christmas Day as a holiday. This year, Christmas Eve falls on a workday.

She explained that she is asking that those employees not covered under a CBA be allowed to start their Christmas holiday at 12 noon on Wednesday December 24, 2025. Any scheduled work hours not worked after 12 noon on Wednesday December 24, 2025 due to the closure will be paid as regular time.

Employees not covered under a collective bargaining agreement include: all department managers, any non-union personnel in union departments, Caribou Public Library, Nylander Museum, Parks and Recreation, Caribou Housing Authority, Tax Assessment / Code Enforcement, and all General Government departments.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault that the employees who are not covered under a collective bargaining agreement end their regular workday at 12 noon on Wednesday December 24, 2025, and any scheduled work hours not worked after 12 noon on Wednesday December 24, 2025 due to the closure be paid as regular time.

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

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

Councilor Kely wished everyone a Merry Christmas and stated that she would miss Councilor Theriault.

Councilor Bagley wished everyone happy holidays.

Councilor Lovewell wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays and stated that she will miss Councilor Theriault.

Councilor Watson extended his well wishes to Councilor Theriault.

Mayor Boma stated Happy Holidays and that they are going to miss Councilor Theriault.

Councilor Theriault stated that she is going to miss being on the Council, she stated that she loved serving on the council and the excitement of new things. She explained that she has received so much encouragement over the years.

Council Agenda Item #14: Next Meeting: January 2, 2026

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

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

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Watson to enter executive session at 7:37 PM to discuss Labor Negotiations pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.D Fire Department Union.

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

Council entered executive session at 7:46PM.

Staff Present: Finance Director Carl Grant, City Manager Penny Thompson, and Fire Chief Brian Lajoie.

Council exited executive session at 8:31 PM

Action taken: Members of the staff were given guidance on further negotiations.

c. Executive Session for Labor Negotiations pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.D (Police Department Union)

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to enter executive session at 8:33PM to for labor Negotiations pursuant to 1 MESA §405.6.D Police Department Union.

Councilor Kelley excused herself from the executive session.

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

Staff Present: Finance Director Carl Grant and City Manager Penny Thompson.

Council exited executive session at 8:40PM.

Action taken: Members of the staff were given guidance on further negotiations

a. Executive Session for Labor Negotiations pursuant to 1 MESA §405.6.E (80-B Complaint)

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to enter into executive session at 8:45 PM for legal consultation regarding 80-B pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.E.

Councilor Bagley excused himself from executive session.

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

Staff present: City Manager Penny Thompson.

Council exited executive session at 9:36PM.

No action taken.

Council Agenda Item #16: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Theriault to adjourn the meeting at 9:36 PM.

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

Danielle Brissette, Secretary