

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a regular City Council meeting on Monday, March 16, 2026 at 6:00PM in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Boma, Deputy Mayor Smith, Councilors Bagley, Kelley, Knight Phair, Lovewell and Watson.

Department Managers Lisa Plourde (Housing Director), Brian Lajoie (Fire Chief), Peter Baldwin (Library Director), Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks and Recreation), Corey Saucier (Police Chief), and Eric Sanderson (Economic & Community Development Specialist) were present for the meeting.

Penny Thompson, City Manager was present for the meeting.

The meeting was covered by Cameron Levasseur of The County and broadcast via Spectrum and YouTube.

Council Agenda Item #2: Invocation/Inspirational Thought

Deputy Mayor Smith 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

Bruce Hagelstein, Caribou Resident

Mr. Hagelstein explained came in to speak against the elimination of the spring clean up program with the Public Works Department. He explained that the City should hold off, because there are things that happen like ice storms that cause limbs to break and it is a big benefit to the City to have the pick-up of limbs to keep things tidy.

Council Agenda Item #6: Minutes

- a. Minutes of the February 23, 2026, Regular City Council meeting
- b. Minutes of the March 2, 2026, Special City Council meeting

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to move the slate and approve the minutes from both the February 23rd and March 2nd meetings.

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

Council Agenda Item #7: Bid Openings, Awards, and Appointments

There were no items scheduled for discussion under this topic.

Council Agenda Item #8: Public Hearings and Possible Action Items

a. Public Hearing on the 2026 Municipal Budget

Open Public Hearing: 6:05PM

Bruce Hagelstein, Caribou Resident

Mr. Hagelstein stated that any increases to the budget that are greater than 50% should have justification as to why such increases are necessary. He explained that he believes that employees should be charged to have cell phones because they will most likely use it for personal use. He also expressed concerns regarding the budget for the Caribou Emergency Management.

Deputy Mayor Smith explained that the Capital Budget Committee has met three times and that they are working on some items, but have another meeting scheduled for April 13th.

Councilor Bagley asked if the Council should vote on parts of the budget or wait to do them all together.

Manager Thompson explained that all of the budgets should be finalized and voted on together.

Closed Public Hearing 6:11PM

No action was taken.

Council Agenda Item #9: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. Fire Station Project, Construction Documents approval – Amanda Jandreau of Harriman

The Council was presented with Construction documents for the Fire Station project.

Amanda Jandreau of Harriman was present to answer any questions the Council had regarding the project. She explained that the only change was adding a door to the dormitories as it needed an elevated egress where it is not on the ground level floor.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to approve the Construction Documents as presented by Harriman and put the project out to bid.

Deputy Mayor Smith asked what the timeframe looks like for the bid process.

Ms. Jandreau explained that it will take a bit to put it together then they like to give four weeks or thirty days to receive bids back. There will be a mandatory pre bid meeting and walkthrough of the facilities.

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

b. Caribou Planning Board – Councilor Dan Bagley

Councilor Bagley stated that the Caribou Planning Board met on March 12, 2026 at 6 PM in the council chambers.

A public hearing was held on the “Analysis of Brownfield Cleanup Alternatives (ABCA)” for the abandoned steam plant located on Lower Lyndon Street. Sevee & Maher Engineers, Inc. (SME), our Qualified Environmental Professional (QEP) for the project, and representatives from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) participated in the public hearing.

SME considered three remedial alternatives for the site: 1) No action; 2) No Demolition / Building Repair; and 3) “Demolition and Full Cleanup. After extensive study and analysis, SME recommended the third option “Demolition and Full Cleanup. This is great news for the City, as this will allow us to remove completely all hazards and clear the way for redevelopment of the site. This project is 100% funded by a \$4,000,000 EPA grant.

A public comment period is in effect now and will close out on 3 Apr 26. The next step is that SME will conduct the engineering design and put the project out to bid in the spring/early summer timeframe. They hope to award a contract and begin demolition by late summer/early fall 2026.

c. Caribou Airport Advisory Committee

Councilor Bagley stated that the Airport Advisory Committee met on March 10, 2026 in the Caribou Airport Conference Room.

The Committee is still seeking a certified mechanic to work out of the airport, servicing local aircraft. Committee members have spoken to several candidates and continue to explore different approaches, such as part-time, as-needed, by appointment arrangement. There are virtually no such services north of Bangor, so this could be a real growth area for the airport, and it would likely attract a lot of traffic and use having those services available at KCAR.

From the list of ideas and initiatives discussed during the last meeting, the Committee has selected its Top 4 priorities for future capital investments and development:

Safety, security and furnishings (Extremely dated, worn, falling apart)

Jet A Fuel

Additional Hangar Space

Visual Approach Slope Indicator

The City Manager agreed to begin looking at the potential for obtaining FAA grants for the hangar space and VASI.

The Committee intends to seek approval for these initiatives in an upcoming Council meeting. The new hangar will require voter approval by referendum.

More announcements and events will be posted on the new Airport Facebook page.

Mayor Boma asked about the fuel expenses for Jet A.

Councilor Watson asked about returning expired fuel or the option of swapping it out.

Councilor Bagley stated that they could look into those items.

d. City Council Highway Protection Committee – Councilor Paul Watson

Councilor Watson explained that the curbside pickup will be discontinued and the following information was provided by the public works Director, Chris Perkins.

“For many years, Caribou Public Works has provided a seasonal brush removal service intended to help residents dispose of downed branches or small trees that may have fallen during winter storms or throughout the year. The purpose of this service was specifically for brush and tree debris placed curbside for collection.

Each year, the City has clearly communicated that only brush and tree debris should be placed curbside for pickup. Unfortunately, over time the service has increasingly been misused. Public Works crews have encountered large amounts of materials that were never intended to be part of this program, including lawn clippings, pet waste, potted planting soil, painted wood, lumber containing nails, hypodermic needles, and other debris.

In addition to creating safety concerns for our employees, these materials significantly increase the time required for collection and cleanup. This takes valuable time away from important Public Works responsibilities such as culvert repairs, ditching, and preparing roads for the City's summer paving projects.

The materials left behind also create additional problems during our spring street sweeping operations. Debris that is not picked up by property owners frequently clogs our sweepers, forcing crews to spend additional time returning to manually shovel and remove the mess left behind.

Because of continued misuse of this service, the City of Caribou has decided to discontinue the curbside brush removal program.

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause and appreciate the public's understanding. Our goal is to ensure that the Public Works Department can focus its time and resources on maintaining infrastructure and providing the highest level of service possible for the residents and taxpayers of Caribou.”

Mayor Boma explained that the rules for the program for brush clean up are straight forward, and that it is a service that should continue to offer. This is not something that should be decided in a

committee meeting, it should be brought to the Council for a vote. Councilor Bagley agrees that it should have been a Council decision, and that it should be brought back at the next meeting for more discussion.

Councilor Lovewell suggested writing a memo to the community that the City is working on a solution.

Councilor Bagley asked if there has been a history of injuries with collection.

Councilor Watson stated that the pickup up will need to have strict and clear guidelines for the citizens.

Council gave direction to Manager Thompson to bring this back for more discussion at the next meeting.

e. City Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the City Manager's report dated March 16, 2026.

Council Agenda Item #10: Unfinished Business

a. Caribou Public Library MCA Connectivity Hub Construction Project

Peter Baldwin, Library Director explained that on March 2, 2026, the Caribou City Council accepted a bid from A.M. Construction for a total \$1,446,600 for the Caribou Public Library Connectivity Hub renovation project.

During the contract process, it was noted that an item was left off the original bid accidentally for insurance requirements as detailed in Spec Section 00 73 15 Supplementary Conditions.

The total cost for insurance is \$6,861.28, raising the bid to \$1,453,461.28. As contracts have not yet been signed in their entirety, it is recommended that the City Council amend the accepted bid to correct this.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Knight Phair to to amend the accepted bid on March 2, 2026 from A.M. Construction to include insurance expenses totaling \$6,861.28, for an overall accepted bid of \$1,453,461.28.

Councilor Bagley stated that he believed that the contractor should be covering their own insurance costs and that this is something he does not believe we should consider.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – No, J. Kelley – Yes, L. Knight Phair – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – Yes, P. Watson – Yes, C. Boma– Yes (So voted)

b. 2026 Municipal Budget

Deputy Mayor Smith explained that the Capital Committee is looking at options to potentially lease vehicles.

Discussion on the proposed 2026 Municipal budget has been moved to the next meeting.

c. Update: Ordinance Updating Chapter 7 and Chapter 13

Council had directed City Manager Thompson to send the information to the attorney to review.

d. Tax-Acquired property, 63 Sweden Street

Manager Thompson explained that in November 2025, the property at 63 Sweden Street was acquired by the City of Caribou through the automatic lien foreclosure process.

If the City Council is interested in clearing the title to the property, the former owner could be contacted by the municipal attorney to see if he would issue a deed to the property to the City of Caribou. The municipal attorney, Richard Solman, could do a check for liens. These are the outstanding liens on the property that are known to us:

Taxes currently owed on the property: \$26,659.09

Outstanding water and sewer charges to the Caribou Utilities District: \$7,066.56

These would need to be satisfied before conveying to a potential buyer.

This would allow the City to rehabilitate or sell the property to restore the property to its highest and best use and get it back on the tax rolls.

Councilor Lovewell suggested accepting the offer for deed in lieu of taxes as it was previously offered.

Manager Thompson explained that the funds to abate the taxes and clean up the area would come from money that is set aside each year to help with blight.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Watson to ask the municipal attorney, Richard Solman, to contact the former owner of the property located at 63 Sweden Street and inform him that the City Council would accept a deed to the property, and then abate the property taxes and pay the outstanding water and sewer charges to the CUD.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, L. Knight Phair – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – No, P. Watson – Yes, C. Boma– Yes (So voted)

Council Agenda Item #11: New Business, Ordinances and Resolutions

a. Authorization to apply for a Congressionally Directed Spending Request

Manager Thompson explained that throughout the 2026 Municipal Budget process, the City Council has heard about the need to plan for a new ladder truck for the Caribou Fire and Ambulance Department. The City of Caribou has the opportunity to apply for a Congressionally Directed Spending Request to construct an apparatus bay. This would be constructed on the south side of the existing fire station and would be approximately 30' X 100'.

When Chief Lajoie and I spoke with Trisha House of Senator Collins' office, she said that the application would be looked upon more favorably if the City contributed towards the cost of the project and suggested a 10% match. This amount could come from TIF funds. When the Downtown TIF district was established, it was stated that funds could be used within the district for "Fire station upgrades/reconstruction" (note g from the approval letter from the second amendment dated March 7, 2014). The applications are due March 18, 2026.

The application portal opened on March 2, so this is a quick turnaround, but several members of staff are working to gather the materials needed for the application, if the City Council will authorize the City Manager to apply.

Brian Lapointe, Fire Chief explained that the bays were constructed in 0645 and equipment has been getting bigger over the years.

Councilor Bagley asked for a rough idea of the price comparison between a spec and custom build for the new ladder truck.

Chief Lapointe stated that a spec truck is approximately 1.6 million dollars and a custom truck is closer to 1.8 million dollars.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to apply for a FY 2027 Congressionally Directed Spending Request with a project title of 'Caribou Fire Station Apparatus Bay Expansion Project' and designate a 10% fund match for the project to come from revenue generated within the Downtown Tax Increment Financing District.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, L. Knight Phair – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – No, P. Watson – Yes, C. Boma– Yes (So voted)

b. Authorization to loan \$90,000 in FAA entitlements to Princeton Airport

Manager Thompson explained that the City of Caribou was able to borrow FAA entitlement funds from other Maine airports when working on large projects like the construction of the 6-bay T hangar. The Town of Princeton has asked to borrow \$90,000 in FAA entitlements for the construction of a hangar at their airport, and the City of Caribou can assist by loaning the Town of Princeton \$90,000 in FAA entitlements to be repaid in FY 2027. Here is the information from our airport engineer from Stantec, Seth Lovley:

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Knight Phair to authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to execute the paperwork needed to loan \$90,000 in FAA entitlement funds to the Town of Princeton, to be repaid in FY2027.

Roll Call Vote: D. Bagley – Yes, J. Kelley – Yes, L. Knight Phair – Yes, T. Lovewell – Yes, J. Smith – No, P. Watson – Yes, C. Boma– Yes (So voted)

Council Agenda Item #12: reports and Discussion by Mayor and Council Members

There were no comments made by the Council.

Council Agenda Item #13: Next Meeting: April 13

Council Agenda Item #14: Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under MRSA, Title 1, §405.6.)

a. Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Watson to enter into executive session at 7:10PM to discuss union negotiations pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.D Fire Department Union.

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

Councilors Present: Mayor Boma, Deputy Mayor Smith, Councilors Bagley, Kelley, Lovewell, Watson, and Knight-Phair

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

Legal Counsel: Ann Freeman of Bernstein Shur

Council exited executive session at 7:51PM

No action taken.

Ann Freeman left the meeting.

b. Executive Session for personnel pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.A(1) (Non-Union Retirement)

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Kelley to go into executive session at 7:52PM for personnel matters pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.A.1 for non-union retirement discussions.

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

Fire Chief Brian Lajoie left the meeting

Council exited executive session at 8:04PM

No action taken.

c. Executive Session for economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.C (Development Committee)

Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Councilor Watson at 8:04PM to go into executive session for economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.C for a presentation by the Caribou Development Committee.

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Joining the meeting:

Staff: Eric Sanderson, Community and Economic Development Specialist

Members of the Caribou Development Committee: Troy Haney, Gary Marquis, Matt Bouchard, David Corriveau, and Jacob Beaupre.

Council exited executive session at 8:33PM.

No action taken.

Committee members and Community and Economic Development Specialist Eric Sanderson left the meeting.

d. Executive Session for economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.C (Nylander Museum)

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Knight Phair at 8:37Pm to go into executive session for economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.C for a presentation by the Nylander Museum.

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

Council exited executive session at 9:10PM.

No action taken.

Council Agenda Item #15: Adjournment

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to adjourn the meeting at 9:11PM.

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

Danielle Brissette, Secretary