

Council Agenda Item #1: Roll Call

The Caribou City Council held a regular City Council Meeting on Monday, July 20, 2026 in the Council Chambers with the following members present: Mayor Boma, Deputy Mayor Smith, Councilors Bagley, Lovewell, Kelley, Knight Phair, and Watson.

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

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

The meeting was broadcast via Spectrum and YouTube.

Council Agenda Item #2: Invocation/Inspirational Thought

Deputy Mayor Smith read an 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

Councilor Watson expressed a conflict with item 10C as the VFW hosts the event.

Council Agenda Item #5: Public Forum

*Felicia Blackstone came in with a North Mall Mural Proposal.

Ms. Blackstone explained that the project will be inspired by the roots of Caribou, Maine. Many things will connect all of the walls to be a continuous story; The sky will be obvious throughout each wall, the ever-changing seasons and the wildlife and nature seen here as the day changes from day to night will also highlight all that Caribou has to offer. The far right last two walls will tell the “end” of the story finishing with the summer season in the evening.

The first part of the project wall will be the last two walls to the right of the North mall. The first section she is proposing to work on is the farthest two walls on the right side.

She explained that some of the items that will be shown in the mural are a farmers’ market in the bed of a truck, the Aroostook River bridge, people floating in kayaks and many other items through the history of Caribou.

*Jeff Bernard, president of Caribou Viking Riders ATV Club

The President of the Caribou Viking Riders ATV Club came to speak about their request for limited ATV access on designated portions of Belanger Road, Albair Road, Brissette Road, and Townline Road.

“I believe you already have our written proposal, so I do not want to spend this time simply reading the letter back to you. Instead, I would like to briefly explain why this request is important, provide an update on our progress, and address some of the potential safety and road-related concerns.

This request became necessary after the Club unexpectedly lost permission to use a previously established off-road trail corridor. The loss of that permission was not caused by misconduct by the Club or its members, but it created a significant break in the local trail system and disconnected riders from a portion of the existing 633F trail network.

The proposed municipal road access would restore that connection while we continue working toward a more permanent off-road solution. We are not asking for unrestricted ATV use on city roads. We are requesting a clearly defined connection, along a specific route, for the specific purpose of restoring continuity within the existing trail system.

Since submitting our proposal, we have confirmed that at least one landowner along the proposed corridor is willing to allow the Club to utilize their property as part of this connection . This is an encouraging step and demonstrates that we are continuing to work directly with landowners rather than relying solely on municipal road access.

We will continue pursuing additional landowner permissions and off-road alternatives, particularly on the eastern side of Van Buren Road. Our long-term preference remains an offroad trail connection whenever one can be secured safely and responsibly. The requested road access is intended to provide a practical temporary solution while those efforts continue.

It is also important to compare this proposal with ATV access that already exists within Caribou.

Riders currently travel along a portion of Van Buren Road north of the North Caribou Park and the Access Highway and Madawaska Rd connecting our trail with the Limestone Trail System. These existing accesses require ATVs to travel alongside regular vehicle traffic for a measurable distance. To our knowledge, that access has operated without significant issues or known damage to the roadway itself. That history demonstrates that designated access can operate responsibly when the route is clearly communicated, and riders understand where they are permitted to travel.

By comparison, the new proposal would primarily require riders to cross Van Buren Road to continue from one portion of the designated route to another. Removing significant travel alongside traffic on Van Buren Road for an extended distance, riders would make a direct and clearly marked crossing.

We understand that the Council must consider public safety, nearby residents, road conditions, and the City's responsibilities. We respect those concerns and are willing to work through any reasonable conditions the City may establish.

The Club is prepared to assist with signage, route markings, rider education, online communication, and safety messaging. We would also work cooperatively with the City and law enforcement to make sure riders understand that this is a designated connection, not general permission to travel freely on surrounding roads.

Maintaining this connection is important beyond the convenience of individual riders. A functioning trail network supports local residents, visiting riders, area businesses, restaurants, fuel stations, lodging establishments, and the tourism-related economic activity associated with ATV recreation.

When a key section of trail becomes disconnected, it affects the usefulness of the entire network. This proposal would restore an important link while allowing the Club time to continue seeking a permanent off-road alternative.

We believe this request is measured, limited, and responsible. It does not create a greater burden than road access that already exists, and in the case of Van Buren Road, the proposed crossing may involve less interaction with vehicle traffic than the extended roadside travel currently permitted.

Tonight, I respectfully ask the Council to support the proposed designated access or move the request forward for any necessary review and reasonable conditions.

We appreciate the City's past cooperation with the ATV community, and we look forward to continuing that partnership in a safe and responsible manner.”

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

a. Bid opening for the purchase of Police Cruisers

Chief Saucier explained that bid packets were sent out to multiple dealerships, and the best offer received back was from Griffeth Ford in Caribou. Chief Saucier is asking that we purchase seven (7) 2027 Ford Police Interceptor Utility AWD vehicles in response to the City of Caribou Police Vehicle Bid that was due on July 9, 2026.

Council had a discussion with Chief Saucier regarding purchasing vehicles to get them by until going to referendum in November for the lease, they also looked at options on where they could get money to cover purchases through the capital funds that the department has available.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Knight Phair to purchase seven (7) vehicles with an additional \$91,000 from the small equipment fund and a total cost not to exceed \$478,000.

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. Bid opening for the purchase of Z mower

Gary Marquis (Superintendent of Parks & Recreation) explained that he is requesting to purchase a new zero turn mower for the department. The request has been part of the Capital Equipment program for this year.

Mr. Marquis explained that he received three bids back from two Caribou dealers.

The staff is recommending that the City Council allow the department purchase the Scag Tiger Cat II from Luke's Small Engine shop.

Motion made by Councilor Bagley, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to purchase the Scag Tiger Cat II with a 61" deck and 32hp Kohler motor in the amount of \$10,479.99 coming from account G 1-365-10.

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)

c. Bid opening for the purchase of Fire Chief vehicle

Chief Brian Lajoie explained that he has recently solicited for bids to purchase a new Fire Chief vehicle. He explained that he received several bids back, with the lowest bid being on a 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe SSV from Colonial Municipal Group in the amount of \$56,341.00.

Chief Lajoie explained that the funding for the purchase will come from the Fire Department Vehicle Reserve account which has a balance of \$80,000.00.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to purchase the 2026 Chevrolet Tahoe SSV from Colonial Municipal Group in the amount of \$56,341.00.

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: Public Hearings and Possible Action Items

a. Public Hearing on Ordinance 5 – Non-Union Retirement

Open Public Hearing: 6:39PM

There were no comments made by the public.

Closed Public Hearing 6:40PM

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Watson to approve Ordinance 5, amending Chapter 2 Retirement.

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. Public Hearing on Dangerous Building at 8 Spring Street

Open Public Hearing: 6:40PM

Tim St. Peter (Code Enforcement Officer) explained that the building is in disrepair and that the owner of the property is deceased.

There were no comments made by the public.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:41PM

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to declare the structure located at 8 Spring Street to be dangerous and a nuisance and order the code officer to have the building removed.

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)

c. Public Hearing on Dangerous building at 96 Main Street

Open Public Hearing: 6:42PM

Danyal Botting explained that her father has had health concerns and that they are trying to take care of the property.

Tim St. Peter (Code Enforcement Officer) explained that the action is looking at the potato house and barn for the dangerous buildings action. He is asking that the council declare the property to be dangerous and have the owners develop a plan to remediate the unstable buildings.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:46PM

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Smith to declare the structures located at 96 Main Street to be dangerous and a nuisance and order the owner to develop a plan to remove the buildings and have it approved by the code officer within 30 days.

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)

d. Public Hearing on Dangerous Building at 374 West Presque Isle Road

Open Public Hearing: 6:47PM

Tim St. Peter (Code Enforcement Officer) explained that the structure located at 374 West Presque Isle Road be deemed a dangerous building. He explained that the owner of the property is deceased, and the property has not gone through probate.

There were no comments made by the public.

Closed Public Hearing: 6:48PM

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Deputy Mayor Smith to declare the structure located at 374 West Presque Isle Road to be a dangerous and order the code officer to have the building removed.

Council Agenda Item #8: Reports by Staff and Committees

a. June 2026 Financial Reports – Finance / HR Director Carl Grant

Carl Grant, HR & Finance Director reviewed the June 2026 Finance reports for the City of Caribou.

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

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. City Manager's Report

Manager Thompson reviewed the City Manager's report dated July 20, 2026.

Council Agenda Item #9: Unfinished business

a. Signing of Quitclaim deed to former owner, approved at the June 15, 2026, meeting

Information was provided to the Council in their packet to release the property via quit claim deed back to the previous owner.

b. Memorandum of Understanding with IAFF 5191

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to authorize City Manager Penny Thompson to sign the Memorandum of Understanding with IAFF 5191, and make all necessary redline changes to the collective bargaining agreement, consistent with the MOU.

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)

Council Agenda Item #10: New Business, Ordinances, and Resolutions

a. Request for a Mobile Veterinarian Clinic on Municipal Property

Eric Sanderson, Economic & Community Development Specialist explained that in June, staff received a request from representatives of the Aroostook Mobile Pet Center, a group that works with the Maine State Animal Welfare Department, to temporarily locate a mobile animal clinic in Caribou. One of the primary volunteers and Caribou resident, Norma Milton, requested use of a municipal facility in town to provide this vital service in Central Aroostook County. The clinic, operated out of a camper-like van, would need access to a small building, water, and power

hookups. Councilor Watson, Parks & Recreation Superintendent, Gary Marquis, and Economic Development staff met with Ms. Milton later in June to discuss some potential City-owned sites. In our communications, the staff made clear that any temporary use of a municipal facility or property will require approval by the City Council.

The van would provide spay and neuter services, vaccines, and insect prevention/remediation for approximately 120 cats across the three days each month. With this in mind, staff believes the Collins Pond Park and building facility would work well for the clinic use. The water and power hookups are on the side of the building, and the van could park at the rear (northeast side) of the building. The request is for use of property in Caribou for approximately three days per month from as early as August this Summer, to October 1st, 2026, to park the mobile clinic van, utilizing a nearby building for a recovery area. Aroostook Mobile Pet Center would also like to plan out clinic locations for 2027, and is similarly requesting to be considered for use of the Collins Pond Park and building from mid-May of 2027 through October 1st, 2027, also for three days per month.

In previous years, the van has been set up at the Parks & Recreation property on Bennett Drive, however that space is very active in the Summer and early Fall months and was discussed to not be a good fit at this time. The previous uses at the Parks & Recreation property involved minimal water and electrical use, not contributing substantially to any costs to the City's monthly utility bills. The group running the mobile veterinarian clinic at that time did provide a donation to the City for its time and facilities, and Ms. Milton has indicated the Aroostook Mobile Pet Center would be amenable to doing something similar this year.

Norma Milton also explained that in the future they would like to expand services for well-being clinics for dogs also, so that they can receive their vaccinations that they need.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to allow use of the Collins Pond Park and building facilities to be used by the Aroostook Mobile Pet Center for approximately three days per month from August to October 1, 2026, and from mid-May to October 1st, 2027.

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. Introduction of Ordinance 6, 2026 Series, to Amend Chapter 3 Article 1, Dog Ordinance

Eric Sanderson, Economic & Community Development Specialist explained that he has made some small adjustments to the proposed ordinance such as the number of dogs that a home can have. He stated that he is bringing the ordinance back tonight to be introduced so that a public hearing can be held at a later date.

Deputy Mayor Smith introduced Ordinance 6, 2026 Series, to Amend Chapter 3 Article 1, Dog Ordinance.

c. Application to License Games of Chance for “Ride For A Cure” at the Caribou VFW

Councilor Watson thanked everyone for their consideration and stated that Ride for A Cure is a huge benefit for Aroostook County.

Motion made by Deputy Mayor Smith, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to approve the games of chance application for Ride For A Cure.

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

d. Ballot for Election to MMA’s Legislative Policy Committee

Manager Thompson explained that she has provided copies a copy of the ballot for Council consideration. Caribou is in the Dist. 1 voting area and needs to vote for two candidates. There are two candidates on the ballot.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Lovewell to vote for Sandra Fournier and Suzie Paradis to Serve as representatives of District 1 on the 2026-2028 MMA Legislative Policy Committee.

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

e. 7 Water Street building discussion

Manager Thompson explained that On January 25, 2023, there was a fatal fire at 7 Water Street. Through their attorney, the owners of the property offered to convey the property to the City of Caribou.

The City of Caribou has been working with the Maine DEP to create a plan to clean up the property. However, the owners are prohibiting the engineers hired by Maine DEP to continue their work which requires entering the property to take samples. Through their attorney, the owners of the property have offered again to convey the property to the City of Caribou.

When speaking with my contacts at Maine DEP, the municipality has access to brownfield funds if they acquire the property involuntary (like through the automatic lien foreclosure process as with the power plants). These funds can also be used if the municipality takes “all appropriate inquiries” before voluntary acquisitions. Since the City (through Maine DEP 128a funding) received an ESA Phase 1 on February 6, 2026, which can be used to satisfy the “all appropriate inquiries” test for six months which would expire on August 6.

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Kelley to accept a deed from Brian and Sharon Bickford for the property at 7 Water Street, and continue the process of clean-up with the DEP, and abate the unpaid taxes from account E 80-01-201-01 Abatements.

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

f. 2026 Tax Commitment motions

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Knight Phair to approve Resolution #7, 2026 Series, A Resolution of the Caribou City Council establishing the 2026 Tax mil rate and collection items.

Councilor Bagley expressed his concern and stated that a 2.5 mil increase is too much and he is not comfortable with it. He stated that he believes that a mil could be cut from Capital Budgets.

Councilor Watson explained that they could go back and look, but to no avail, we have to pay for the services that we need for the community.

Councilor Bagley stated that the biggest adjustments would have been to spend the money that is in the accounts.

Councilor Knight Phair explained that her fear is that the money would no longer be available for the projects that are planned for the future.

Mayor Boma stated that the departments plan for 5-year projections, and that is why they build reserves for future projects.

Councilor Lovewell stated that there is a plan for the money in the accounts, and it has all been set aside for future projects.

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

Motion made by Councilor Knight Phair, seconded by Councilor Watson to close the municipal building to the public at 1:00PM on Thursday, December 31, 2026, so that City staff can complete the year end process.

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

g. Continued discussion regarding Downtown Mall Mural (from Public Input)

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Knight Phair that we accept the proposal from Felica Blackstone to begin the mural at the north mall using account E 11-01-385-01 to fund the project.

Councilor Bagley stated that he is glad to see something like this happen, but he is uncomfortable, he would like to cast a broader net for input from others. He stated that he would like the project to go out to an RFP.

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)

Council Agenda Item #11: Reports and discussion by Mayor and Council Members

Councilor Bagley stated that August 15th will be the Skydiving event at the Municipal Airport and other events are planned for the same date.

Councilor Lovewell stated that she is excited for all the fun things that are coming up and the nice weather.

Deputy Mayor Smith reminded everyone about Thursdays on Sweden Street, and that the lodge would be present selling French fries and dough boys.

Councilor Knight Phair expressed her concern regarding e-bikes and scooters. She stated that many operators do not follow the rules of the road, they may not have much experience and often are moving fast without any helmets and protective gear. She urged everyone to be cautious when traveling.

Councilor Kelley stated that she is excited about the upcoming mural project.

Mayor Boma said she is excited for the projects coming up and to see samples of the artwork for the mural.

Council Agenda Item #12: Next Regular Meeting August 10, 2026

Council Agenda Item #13: Executive Session(s) (May be called to discuss matters identified under MRSA, Title 1, §405.6)

a. Executive Session for economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA §405.6.C (CMAC)

Motion made by Councilor Watson to move into executive session for economic development pursuant to 1 MRSA 405.6.C. CMAC at 7:38PM.

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

Council exited executive session at 8:05PM

Motion made by Councilor Watson, seconded by Councilor Lovewell Councilor Lovewell to provide staff support to the Children's Museum of Aroostook County until 12/31/2026 as outlined in the agreement presented by staff and present statistics on usage on a monthly basis.

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

Council Agenda Item #14: Adjournment

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Motion made by Councilor Lovewell, seconded by Mayor Boma to adjourn the meeting at 8:08PM

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

Danielle Brissette, Secretary