

Jonathan Helstrom
General Manager
Sue Sands
Office Manager, Clerk

Fred Page
Water Superintendent
Derek Dufour
Wastewater Superintendent



Caribou Utilities District
Water & Wastewater
176 Limestone St., Caribou, ME 04736
(207) 496-0911

Trustees
Jay Kamm
President
David Martin
Treasurer
David Belyea, P.E.
Matthew Till
Mark Draper

The monthly meeting of the Caribou Utilities District was held Wednesday, July 8, 2026 in the City Council Chambers located at 25 High Street, Caribou, Maine.

Trustees Present

Jay Kamm, President
David Martin, Treasurer
David Belyea, Trustee
Matthew Till, Trustee
Mark Draper, Trustee

Others Present

Jonathan Helstrom, General Manager
Danielle, Brissette, City Clerk
Sue T Sands, Office Manager, City Clerk

President Jay Kamm called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. After reviewing the minutes of the June 10, 2026 meeting, Mark Draper moved and David Martin seconded the motion to approve the minutes as presented. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED. The Financial and Budget reports were reviewed by the Trustees. David Martin moved and David Belyea seconded the motion to accept the reports as presented. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Sue reported that our auditor was pleased to report no disagreements or difficulties dealing with the management arose during the course of the audit, and no significant issues were discussed regarding performance. Therefore, the audit was classified as a clean audit with no findings. David Martin moved and Mark Draper seconded the motion to accept the financial statement for Caribou Utilities District for 12-31-25 as presented. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Manager Helstrom reported that Public bodies are required to designate a Public Access Officer to assist the public in making requests for public records and to help ensure the District complies with the requirement of the law. The Public Access Officer serves as the District's primary point of contact for public record requests. David Martin moved and Mark Draper seconded the motion to appoint General Manager Jonathan Helstrom as the Caribou Utilities District's Freedom of Access Act, FOAA, Public Access Officer, effective immediately. (July 8, 2026.) UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Manager Helstrom discussed the change of location for the monthly board meetings. Mr. Helstrom has not yet fully explored the best video and/or audio options for the meetings which now are recorded on U Tube. Maine law generally requires that public bodies maintain meeting minutes, but does not require meetings to be audio or video recorded. Different options were discussed and Trustee Belyea suggested to Manager Helstrom that he obtain the cost of different equipment before moving forward with a purchase and bring this information to the August 12th meeting.

Manager Helstrom is in the process of updating the personnel policy so it accurately provides consistency in administration, and ensures employees clearly understand employment expectations.

The first item discussed was Overtime;

In the current Personnel policy overtime is not covered unless employee actually works over 40 hours per week. Paid Leave, Holiday and other approved absences do not count toward the forty- hour threshold, therefore employees who work beyond their normal schedule during a week in which they utilize an approved Holiday or Paid Leave may not qualify for overtime compensation. Manager Helstrom recommends revising the policy to provide employees compensation at one and one-half times their regular hourly rate for all hours worked in excess of forty hours in a workweek. Approved leave, including PTO, District Holidays, and other approved paid absences shall be counted toward an employee's normal (40) hour workweek. After much discussion, David Martin moved and Matthew Till Seconded the motion to authorize Manager Helstrom to revise the CUD Personnel Policy to provide employees over-time, (1 ½) times their regular hourly rate for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek, and PTO, District Holidays and other approved paid absences shall be **counted** toward the employee's normal (40) hour week. Trustee Martin, Draper, Belyea and Till voted in favor for the revision of the overtime section with one Trustee, Jay Kamm, opposed.

Second Item discussed; Call Response without reporting to work

In the current Personnel Policy this item is not addressed where an employee is required to respond to a work-related issue outside of normal working hours, but is able to resolve the matter remotely without physically reporting to work. Such examples would include responding to customer emergencies by telephone, communicating with the Caribou Police Department, reviewing and responding to SCADA auto-dialer alarms that require employee's time and attention but do not require travel to a District facility. Manager Helstrom recommended adding a new policy providing that an employee who responds to work-related calls outside their normal work schedule and not required to physically report to work, shall receive a minimum of (1) hour credited time for each qualifying incident at one and one-half their regular hourly rate. Mark Draper moved and David Martin seconded this motion to authorize Manager Helstrom to add the above item to the CUD personnel policy. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Third item, Weekend Duty;

Current practice requires the employee assigned weekend duty to perform scheduled operational checks on Saturday and Sunday. Employees receive a minimum of two (2) hours of credited work time for each weekend visit. Employees currently are expected to reduce their regular work schedule by (4) hours weekly, and currently employees desire to take Friday afternoon off as their (4) hours of credit. Manager Helstrom is recommending if weekend duties require more than (4) hours of work during the assigned weekend, the employee will be compensated at one and one-half the employee's regular hourly rate. David Belyea moved and Mark Draper seconded the motion to allow the employees a minimum of (2) hours of credited work for each weekend visit, (Saturday and Sunday) and currently employees are opting to take four hours of work off on Friday afternoons. If more than four hours is actually worked on weekend duty, the employee will be compensated at one and one-half the employee's regular pay. Trustee Belyea, Draper, Kamm, and Till all voted in favor of this recommendation and Trustee Martin was opposed.

Fourth item, Holiday Duty

Current practice differs from the written policy regarding holiday coverage. Employees assigned to holiday duty typically report to complete required operational checks and other assigned duties. The

employees currently receive holiday pay and are provided eight (8) hours of compensatory time to use at a later date. Mark Draper moved and David Martin seconded the motion authorizing Manager Helstrom to revise the current personnel policy as follows; employees assigned holiday duty shall perform the required operational checks and other assigned duties on District-recognized holidays, and shall reduce their regular work schedule by four (4) hours of credited work time, in the same week, for each required holiday assignment, subject to supervisory approval to maintain a standard forty (40) hour workweek regardless of the actual time worked. If Holiday duties require more than four (4) hours of work, all additional hours shall be compensated at one and one-half their regular hourly rate. Employees shall no longer receive eight (8) hours of compensatory time for performing holiday duty. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

Fifth item, On-Call Duty;

Currently each week one employee is assigned as the District's primary on-call operator. This employee is responsible for performing any required weekend and District recognized holiday operational checks that occur during this assigned week. In addition, this employee serves as the first point of contact for all after-hours operational issues Including; auto-dialer alarms, water and wastewater emergencies, customer service emergencies, equipment failures, and other operational incidents requiring an after-hour response.

Unlike scheduled weekend and holiday assignments, on-call duty requires the employee to remain continuously available throughout the entire assignment period. The on-call employee shall be expected to answer all work-related telephone calls at any time, day or night, respond to emergencies as required, remain fit for duty, and remain within approximately thirty (30) minutes of the City of Caribou to ensure a timely response to emergency situations. Currently, these employees receive compensation only when they are actually called to respond to an emergency. There is no compensation simply for accepting the responsibility of being on call, despite the significant restrictions placed on the employee's personal time and activities throughout the assigned week.

Manager Helstrom is recommending establishing a formal on-call compensation program providing a weekly on-call stipend of \$130.00 for the employees assigned primary on-call duty. This stipend would compensate employees for accepting the responsibility of remaining continuously available to respond to the District's after-hours operational needs and would be separate from any compensation received for weekend duty, holiday duty, call-ins, or overtime. David Martin moved and Mark Draper seconded the motion to provide an on-call stipend to selected employees for accepting the responsibility of remaining continuously available to respond to the District's after-hours operational needs during their seven (7) day on-call duty in the amount of \$140.00 rather than \$130.00 which would represent \$20.00 per day for on-call duty, subject to annual adjustments which would correspond with an end of the year approved COLA. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

The River Road Crossing project continues to progress well, and is anticipated for a final pay requisition and project close-out activities scheduled by December 28,2026.

To comply with all SRF procurement requirements, the District issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) for hydrant-mounted leak detection devices which closed on June 26, 2026. The single proposal received was submitted by Ti-Sales for the leak detection system. Dirigo

Engineering is reviewing the proposal to confirm that it complies with all applicable SRF procurement requirements. The Drinking Water Program has determined that these leak detection improvements are eligible expenses under the SRF program and may be included within the available “stretch” funding associated with the River Crossing Project. As a result, approximately 35% of the project cost would be covered through SRF principal forgiveness, allowing the District to maximize the value of the funding currently available while improving its ability to proactively identify and reduce water loss throughout the distribution system.

Dirigo Engineering has been on site finalizing the project design for the Grimes Generator Replacement Project. Only a few remaining field details need to be completed, then the project will be ready to advertise for bids.

A loan application was submitted 06/24/2026 for FFY2025 Maine Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan (CWSRF) for \$1,700,000.00 for Upgrades for the Wastewater Headworks, Pump Station #1, Pump Station #2, Treatment Plant and Scada, Remote PSs and second force main River Crossing. MMBB staff will evaluate the District’s financial condition, creditworthiness, and repayment capacity before making a recommendation to the MMBB Board on whether to approve the loan. This review could take several months. The \$1,700,000 loan application would be eligible to fund engineering services, however, after further discussion with the Maine Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Program, EPA Region 1, and Dirigo Engineering, it became very clear that relying solely on CWSRF funding for engineering could make it difficult to demonstrate sufficient eligible matching funds outside of qualifications-based engineering services to satisfy the federal cost-share requirements. Under the current funding strategy, the available match would be very close to the minimum required. After careful consideration, Manager Helstrom has determined that the most prudent long-term approach to procure engineering services for the entire project would be through a qualification-based request for Qualifications, (RFQ). This request was advertised June 30, 2026 with a reply due by July 30, 2026.

There have been no new developments regarding the FY 2027, Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) request. It appears that possibly the FY2026 and FY2027 could be combined at the proper time.

Jay Kamm moved and David Martin seconded the motion to go into Executive Session , Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405, 6A, Personnel Issues at 6:30 P.M. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED. David Belyea moved and Mark Draper seconded the motion to move out of Executive Session, Title 1, Chapter 13, Section 405, 6A, Personnel Issues at 6:45 P.M. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED.

David Martin moved and Matthew Till seconded the motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 P.M. UNANIMOUSLY VOTED. The next scheduled meeting will be Wednesday, August 12, 2026 at 25 High Street, Caribou Maine beginning at 5:30 P.M.

Sue T. Sands, Office Manager, District Clerk