



## Presque Isle City Council Meeting

March 6, 2024

6:00 p.m.

Presque Isle Council Chambers

### Call to Order - Roll Call

Present: Councilors C. Green, G. Nelson, D. Cyr, H. King, J. Carroll, Deputy Chairman J. Willette and Chairman K. Freeman  
City Manager Tyler Brown and City Clerk Kimberly Finnemore were also present.

### Pledge of Allegiance

**BE IT RESOLVED** Councilor J. Carroll, seconded by Councilor G. Nelson to recess for the recess of the City Council meeting to have the PIIC membership meeting.

**Vote: 7-0**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Deputy Chairman J. Willette to suspend the PIIC membership meeting until later in the Council meeting.

**Vote: 7-0**

### Public Hearing

1. Approval for a renewal application for marijuana license for Northern Maine Flower.

Chairman K. Freeman opened the public hearing at 6:23 p.m.

Councilor J. Carroll left the meeting at 6:23 p.m.

City Manager T. Brown said that Northern Maine Flower would like to renew their license and staff approves.

No Citizens comments.

Chairman K. Freeman closed the public hearing at 6:24 p.m.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Deputy Chairman J. Willette, seconded Chairman K. Freeman to approve a renewal Marijuana License for Northern Maine Flower, with a location of 540 Main Street.

**Vote: 6-0**

### **Citizen Comments**

Jeff Fournier from St. Agatha urged the Council to pick any of the airlines other than United because of all the delays at Newark.

Rob Ottaviano from Washburn spoke in favor of United Airlines.

Frank Pytlak of Presque Isle spoke of Angel Flight and Angel Flight would like to see JetBlue.

Ben from United Airlines came in a spoke that they have served Presque Isle since 2018 and the numerous flights they have done since they have started with Presque Isle. They believe they are the best for the growth of Presque Isle with all their flights.

### **Consent Agenda**

2. Approve Minutes from January 24, 2024 and February 7, 2024 Council meeting.
3. Approve 2024 Warrant #3-#7 totaling \$2,564,207.36
4. Approve appointment of Nicholas Violette to the Zoning Board of Appeal
5. Approve construction over limit permit
6. Application for Utility location permit-Ryan Street

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor G. Nelson, seconded by Councilor D. Cyr to approve consent agenda #2-#6 as presented.

**Vote: 6-0**

### **Old Business**

7. Nomination of Councilors to PIIC Board.

Chairman K. Freeman stated there are currently no nomination for the PIIC Board. Chairman K. Freeman asked the Council for some nominations.

Councilor G. Nelson asked the Council to make a brief statement as follow:

Dear Council, Manager Brown, Director Powers and Board Members,

When I expressed my desire to sit on the Presque Isle Industrial council it was for no other reason than to give back to the organization and help others. You may or may not know that my family and I purchased 2 of the large hangers on Missile Street. To grow our business Aroostook Trusses. We have invested a vast amount of money in the community and employ 50/60 people in our operation. This success is largely due to the cooperation of the PIIC and the City that made the building sales happen. We were approached by Bangor to move our operation there and we did not because of this local opportunity. I am sorry the whole situation grew into a distraction of what the intent really was. For this reason, I am removing my name from consideration to be a PIIC

Board Member at this time. I will use my efforts here at the City Council to support the activities of the Industrial Park and other developments in the City.

Chairman K. Freeman asked for nominations for the PIIC Board. Councilor G. Nelson nominated Deputy Chairman J. Willette and Chairman K. Freeman

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Councilor G. Nelson to close the nominations for PIIC Board.

**Vote: 6-0**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Chairman K. Freeman to appoint Chairman K. Freeman and Deputy Chairman J. Willette to the PIIC Board for a 3-year term or unless their Council term ends sooner.

**Vote: 6-0**

#### 8. 2024 Goals review.

City Manager T. Brown spoke on the Goal setting meeting, that they came up with 5 pillars (County, Community, Team, Tourism and Development) that our Department Heads and Team Members that will focus on. Within the pillars there are individual goals that will help us enrich relationships with local, state, and County officials and citizens.

#### 9. 2024 Solar Eclipse update.

Kim Smith gave an overview of the different activities that will take place around the Solar Eclipse.

#### 10. Update on Central Drive Street lights.

Dana Fowler, P.E., City Engineer stated the City Council discussed the possibility of installing street lights on central Drive at the last meeting on February 7, 2024. The Council voted unanimously to update quotes with Versant Power and Lajoie Electric & Control Service for new street Lights.

Versant Power has confirmed that their price would be Not to Exceed \$41,000 and a written quote would require a 10% down payment (\$4,100), but could be as little as \$2,000-\$3,000 if a request was made to upper level management. Versant would provide wood poles with aerial electrical to power LED lights. Versant would own all of the infrastructure and would be responsible for insurance costs, maintenance, repairs, and replacement. The \$41,000 fee would cover engineering and construction costs, but electrical usage costs would be the City's responsibility at approximately \$11 per month per fixture.

City staff along with representatives from the Utilities District (PIUD) and the Industrial council met with Peter LaJoie of LaJoie Electric & Control service. Installing street lights along the north (sidewalk) side of the street will require coordination with the PIUD because they have a water main in the same area as where the poles would be installed. The preliminary submission to the FAA by the Airport Director confirmed that the formal FAA application process will be necessary for approval of the exact pole locations and heights.

After much discussion among the group, the conclusion was that locating light poles on the opposite (south) side of the street would be the better option to avoid the water main. Power could be fed from both direction toward State Street to avoid having to excavate across State Street. Also, because the estimated cost for aluminum poles and underground power is approximately \$1000,000, the consensus was that the project should be formally bid to comply with the Procurement and Disposal Policy.

If the city council desires to pursue aluminum poles and underground power, the plan going forward is for Lajoie to recommend specific products and pole location for the FAA approval process and a bid package. The city will procure FAA approval for the proposed light poles and prepare a bid package, which will require a PE stamp due to the estimated cost of the project. Regardless of whether the wood/aerial or aluminum/underground option is selected, it is estimated that the FAA approval will take 4 weeks.

Chairman K. Freeman made a motion that the City enters into an RFP and publish that for the next 30 days and seek proposals and bring back to the Council for a Consultant Engineer. Council had a discussion to what the motion should say. Councilor C. Green said the recommendation of the committee is to get the bid process started. Dana Fowler had spoken to BRSA and they would find the longitude and latitude and elevation of poles cost would be about \$2,500. Councilor C. Green said we should have two RFP's one for lights and one for engineering costs.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor D. Cyr, seconded by Councilor J. Willette to select Versant Power cost for the project to include BRSA \$2,500 to locate the longitude and latitude of the poles and then provide that to Versant Power (Not to exceed the \$41,000 quote from Versant Power) and to authorize a 10 % down payment to Versant Power.

**Vote: 5-0 -1**

**Councilor H. King abstained**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Councilor G. Nelson to suspended the Council meeting to go back to the PIIC Board meeting.

**Vote 6-0**

**Recess**

Presque Isle Industrial council Membership Meeting (Accept Nominations)

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Chairman K. Freeman, seconded by Councilor C. Green to move to adjourn the PIIC Board meeting.

**Vote: 6-0**

### **New Business**

#### 11. Nomination to Aroostook Waste Solutions.

Chairman K. Freeman asked for any nominations. Councilor G. Nelson said he would like to be on the Aroostook Waste Solution Board. Councilor D. Cyr made a motion to close the nominations.

Chairman K. Freeman asked for vote all in favor of Councilor G. Nelson to be on the Aroostook Waste Solution Board.

**Vote: 6-0**

#### 12. Star City ATV Grant Support Request.

Dick Howlett president of the Star City ATV Club for 21 years, asked the Council to give them support in applying for a Municipal Grant for \$70, 000. It's a 90% -10% grant State does 90% and 10% from the club. Dick talked about the numerous projects they have to do this year.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Chairman K. Freeman, seconded by Councilor D. Cyr to approve support for the Star City ATV Club in applying for a municipal grant.

**Vote: 6-0**

#### 13. Airport Budget Revisions.

City Manager T. Brown discussed with the Council of the Conversion of 7 seasonal positions to 2 full time maintenance positions. The budgeted surplus for the 2024 is \$56,612. If we adopt this recommendation that surplus would be reduced to \$44,814. The second memorandum is for the assessment of the building 401 (IP Building). We would like to utilize our portion of Covid Relief funding to do two studies to evaluate the feasibility of returning this building to a hangar use or a production facility use in the future. Also, the purchase of a plow \$100,000 was set aside for local match for the purchase of two electric towbarless tugs.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Councilor J. Willette to authorize the City Manager to approve the conversion of 7 seasonal position to 2 full time positions.

**Vote: 6-0**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor J. Willette, seconded by Chairman K. Freeman to authorize the City Manager and the Finance Director to transfer \$100,00 from the Covid Relief funding to a reserve account for the completion of two studies to evaluate the feasibility of returning Building 401 to hangar use or a production facility use.

**Vote: 6-0**

Scott Wardwell Airport Director gave an overview, building 401 was originally constructed as an aircraft hangar by the US Military. After the closure of the Presque Isle Air Force Base, the hangar and the land surrounding it were part of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Airport Deed. Because a tenant for it as an aircraft hangar could not be identified, it was converted to a cardboard box manufacturing facility. That facility was operated by International Paper (IP). Several modifications to the building were made during IP's operation of the facility including additions on the north and south ends of the original hangar. Since the facility was vacated by IP, it has been used for storage of farm equipment, automobiles, recreational vehicles, etc. A number of years ago, the Executive Director of the Presque Isle Industrial Council and the Airport Director met with the FAA to discuss the status of the building and the land that surrounds it. After much discussion, the FAA agreed to release the building as an airport asset. However, the surrounding land was retained as an airport asset. The FAA indicated that revenue from the land had to go to the airport. During the Master Planning process just completed a couple of years ago this area of the airport was designated for the development of an aerospace park. The Presque Isle Industrial Council commissioned an appraisal of the building for the purpose of transferring this asset back to the airport in exchange for the release of the land now occupied by Falcon transport and the Intermodal yard. As a former hangar and then production facility of renovating the building for either the use as a research hangar, maintenance refit and overhaul of large aircraft hangar or an aerospace manufacturing facility. FAA has informed the airport that they will only consider the trade once the true value of the airport of the building including renovations is known.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Deputy Chairman J. Willette, seconded by Councilor G. Nelson to authorize the City Manager and the Finance Director to transfer \$55,000 from the electric towbarless tug account to an airport snowplow account.

**Vote: 6-0**

#### 14. EAS Recommendation

City Manager T. Brown did a brief overview of the Essential Air Service Bids. Received ones from American Airlines, Boutique Air, JetBlue Airways and United Airlines. The Airport Advisory Committee they met in February they were able to view presentations from JetBlue and United Airways. Also taken in consideration the proposals from

Boutique and American Airlines. The Advisory Committee voted 7-1 for United Airlines as the Essential Air provider.

Chairman K. Freeman read an excerpt from the Angel Flight president and founder Larry Camerlin's letter.

Since our founding in 1996, Angel Flight NE has played a pivotal role in ensuring patient access to life saving, specialized medical care by providing free air transportation to individuals and families in need. The availability of air transportation services from Presque Isle to Boston and its connecting cities is and critically important to not only the community of Presque Isle but for all residents of Aroostook County and beyond. For many patients, the journey to care poses significant logistical and financial challenges as the long driving distances and cost associated with frequent travel often creates barriers to accessing the lifesaving medical care they urgently need. We whole heartedly endorse JetBlue's proposal and believe it will significantly enhance medical access for all residents of Presque Isle and Aroostook County.

Councilor C. Green did a presentation on the PQI Air Travelers Facebook Poll of public results along with supporting data from Jack Penning at Volaire.

Councilor C. Green read letter in support from Northern Lights supports JetBlue, Jennifer Daigle President/ Owner=Operator, Lakeview Restaurant and Camping Resort supports JetBlue

Chairman K. Freeman read his letter:

When we were with Penn Air to Boston in 2016 we boarded 14,260 passengers at PI. In 2017 Penn Air to Boston was down to 12,780. Mid-year 2018 United took over with service to Newark and the first year (including no service the month of June) boarding's were 10,910. Next full calendar year United boarded 13,149 an increase of 21%.

After COVID in 2021 United boarded 11,121 and by 2022 boarded 15,409 establishing an upward trend in boarding that continued in 2023 topping out at 19,254, the highest number of passengers using our airport since 2000. This is likely the determining factor in having the PI Airport Advisory committee vote to choose United to Newark again for the next 2-year period.

Presque Isle is the airport for not only our community but the County and surrounding area. More and more people are choosing to fly to and from here each year POST-COVID.

After hearing the United presentation, it is clear that if they are selected to continue service to Presque Isle our Airport's growth in passenger volume will be limited by the size of the aircraft and the number of flights per week. For the next two years United has chosen to keep the same number of flights and the same aircraft, also incidentally going to the same Hub city in this case which is Newark Liberty International Airport. While PI may experience some additional growth on the later flights each day, the primary focus is the connecting early morning flight which appears to be nearly sold out for many months now. I asked if United would consider any changes to either a larger aircraft or more morning flights and that is not part of this proposal. Neither is moving the Hub airport to Dulles International at this point in time.

The JetBlue Boston Logan proposal is a different approach that our market has not been offered previously. The single flight per day initially is 100 seats, then moving to 140 seats in the second year. This gives our market an opportunity to board many more people in the morning than what United offers now. It would be easy to assume that the impact of a 'low-cost' carrier would additionally attract more boarding's through our airport than currently due to the savings per ticket as well. This should in theory give our airport the best opportunity for continued growth in passenger volume.

The proposal to Boston is departing PQI at 6 a.m. arrive Logan Boston at 7:40 a.m.

The return flight from Boston is scheduled for 8 p.m. and arrives in Presque Isle at 9:30 p.m. If you have medical visits in Boston, it is possible to be down and back in the same day without an overnight. I have received and read the support by Angel Flight New England and the JetBlue Boston proposal.

I'm aware that this is the first time that our airport has been submitted 4 bids for EAS service for the next 2 years, and we may never get this opportunity to consider again. I am encouraged by the growth and interest in our airport and feel that the best way to move that needle upward and outward is by going with the proposal submitted by JetBlue to Boston.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Councilor D. Cyr to recommend JetBlue as Presque Isle's Essential Air Service Provider.

**Vote: 5-1**

15. Egypt Road Culvert Project.

Kim Smith stated they are in the middle of writing a grant for the Egypt Road project.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor J. Willette, seconded by Councilor G. Nelson that the City approve expenditures up to \$270, 000 towards the Egypt Road project to be funded from Fund Balance.

**Vote: 6-0**

### **City Manager's Report**

Community Clean up is April 20<sup>th</sup> there will be more information coming.

### **Announcements**

Wonderland on Ice at the Forum on Saturday, March 9. Two shows at 12:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

McCluskey's RV Show will be the weekend of March 16-17<sup>th</sup>.

Aroostook Spring Sportsman's Show will be the weekend of March 23-24<sup>th</sup>.

The City has the following employment vacancies:

Police Officer



Economic and Community Development Director

We have the following vacancies for Boards/Committees:

Assessment Review, 2-one-year alternates

Audit Committee, 1-four-year member

Downtown Revitalization, 1-four-year member

Library Board of Trustees, 1-one-year alternate

Rec & Parks, 3-one-year alternates

Zoning Board, 1-one-year alternate

Please see the City Clerk for an application or apply online

The next scheduled meeting of the Presque Isle City Council will be on Wednesday, April 3, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

### **Adjournment**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Councilor J. Willette enter into executive session pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(D) to discuss Negotiations at 8:40 p.m.

**Vote: 6-0**

### **Executive Session**

Out of executive session at 8:42 p.m.

No Action Taken

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Chairman J. Willette seconded by Councilor C. Green to enter into executive session at 8:43 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(A) to discuss Personnel matters.

**Vote: 6-0**

Out of executive session at 8:45 p.m.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor G. Nelson seconded by Councilor C. Green to accept a proposal from the contractor for the demolition of 38 Elizabeth St.

**Vote: 6-0**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Chairman K. Freeman seconded by Deputy Chairman J. Willette to enter into executive session at 8:46 p.m. pursuant to 1 M.R.S.A. § 405(6)(C) to discuss real estate matter.

**Vote: 6-0**

Out of executive session at 8:54 p.m.

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Chairman K. Freeman seconded by Councilor G. Nelson to resolve a dispute on wages from 2023 with a city employee.

**Vote: 6-0**

**BE IT RESOLVED** by Councilor C. Green, seconded by Councilor G. Nelson to adjourn at 8:55 p.m.

Attested by: Kimberly A Finnemore  
Kimberly A Finnemore, City Clerk