



**Committee of the Whole – 6:30 P.M.
Regular City Council Meeting – 7:00 P.M.**

A regular meeting of the North Pole City Council was held on Monday, November 20th, 2023, in the North Pole City Hall Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Pro Tem Clack called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, November 20th, 2023, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Chandra Clack – Mayor Pro Tem
Anton Keller – Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Larry Terch – Alt. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Jeffrey Jacobson
Benny Williams
David Skippis

Absent:

Mayor Welch

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Mr. Terch

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. Williams

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Keller *moved* to approve the agenda of November 20th, 2023

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

Mr. Keller *moved* to amend the agenda of November 20th, 2023, to bring Ordinance 2023-17 up to first order of unfinished business

Unfinished Business

- a. Ordinance 2023-17, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, to Amend Title 10, Unsafe and Hazardous Vehicles and Title 1, Minor Offense Fee Schedule
- b. Ordinance 2023-15, An Ordinance of the North Pole City Council Establishing the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and Levying the Mill Rate
- c. Ordinance 2023-16, An Ordinance of The City of North Pole Amending the Pay Policy for City of North Pole Employees.

New Business

- a. Memo – Response to Request for Proposal- Approval of Auditor
- b. Memo – Request to Accept Grant Funds – Homeland Security

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

On the Agenda, as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Skippis, Clack, Terch, Jacobson, Williams, Keller

No: 0

Absent: 1 – Welch

On the Agenda

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Jacobson, Williams, Keller, Skippis, Terch, Clack

No: 0

Absent: 1 – Welch

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the minutes from the November 16th, 2023, meeting.

Seconded *by* Mr. Skippis

On the Minutes

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Keller, Skippis, Terch, Jacobson, Clack, Williams

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Welch

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- Mayor Pro Tem Clack asked Mr. Jacobson to come forward and present Tricia Fogarty with her 20-year pin, he thanked her for her years of dedicated service. Mr. Jacobson shared that he hired Ms. Fogarty 20 years earlier and that he is so proud to present her with her 20-year pin.
- Mayor Pro Tem Clack reminded everyone that there is an opening on the Planning Commission and that if someone is interested, they should call the Clerk's Office.
- Mayor Pro Tem Clack reminded everyone that the Regular Council Meeting of December 4th has been postponed to December 11th.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

CITIZENS COMMENTS – (Limited to Five (5) minutes per Citizen)

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty shared that she had Ms. Braniff sent out the financials relating to the prior month's income. She reported the budget is still out of balance due to the changes that were made at the last minute and that she needs direction as to how to bring it into balance. Ms. Fogarty stated she is happy to answer any questions. Mr. Jacobson shared the returns on investments have gone up quite a bit since investing with AML and not a small local bank and thanked Ms. Fogarty for her work.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- Chief Heineken stated he did not have a formal report but that he is available for questions if any Council member had them.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

Special Topics

- Moose Creek Closeout for Engineering and Design - Our Water Utilities project with Moose Creek hit a milestone this summer – we closed out the first portion of the project, the Engineering and Design phase. Right now, we're working with the US Army Corps of Engineers on closeout actions (ensuring the accounting is correct on disbursements and expenses). The Construction portion of the project will continue until at least March 2024, as we are doing final checks on system performance.
- North Pole Contamination Meetings - On November 8th, the Mayor and I hosted (via MS Teams) a multi-level government meeting focused on groundwater contamination in the North Pole area. As most of you know, PFAS continues to be an issue in the area as the plume continues to move to the northeast from Eielson AFB. Attendees included military representatives from Air Force Environmental, Alaska Dept of Environmental Conservation, Fairbanks North Star Borough. Each organization presented their overall roles and responsibilities in PFAS and other contaminate mitigation. There is a significant monitoring and testing effort that includes over 80 wells and continues. We are awaiting the most recent round of test results from the Air Force due out next month. We have some information posted on the City's Website about PFAS/PFOA issues and we are scheduled to meet again in January to review the upcoming test results. This collaboration is important as we prepare to mitigate this ongoing issue.
- Presentation to the AK Interior Delegation on City Priorities – The Mayor asked me to mention that the city visited the AK Interior Delegation and conducted a presentation and discussion on City Priorities. Mayor Welch discussed issues with PERS, while Chief Dutra and Chief Heineken discussed the firing range and fire department. For City Services, I discussed the need for design funds for our city water main replacement and PFAS contamination preparation. This began the discussion with the Interior Delegation on our legislative priorities and Mayor Welch intends to present a finalized list in December for Council approval.

- Winter Maintenance Forum - On November 14th, Mr. Cody Lougee and I participated in the annual Winter Maintenance Forum, hosted by FAST, at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center. This annual event provides information to the public on local winter operations, and we presented an overview of North Pole winter operations. Other departments emphasized difficulty with personnel vacancies and, at least for now, we are fortunate not to be in that position (as we have a full crew at this time). This was also an excellent opportunity to hear about other winter operations in the Interior. Of note, we continue to have positive working relationships with both the State DOT and FNSB regarding winter weather operations.
- The only other update that I have is that our Public Works folks are working on the Christmas decorations for the roundabouts – you should see those in the next couple of weeks (or sooner).

Police Department, Jed Smith

- Mr. Smith shared the North Pole Police Department brought in almost their goal for the local food drive. Mr. Keller asked when their new Executive Assistant will start, Mr. Smith reported they have someone in mind for the position and the Council should hear more about her soon.

City Clerk, Emily Braniff

- Ms. Braniff reported that there is a new Deputy Clerk/HR Admin who will be starting the first week of December, Ms. Dionne will be here training her while staff is at AML. Ms. Braniff reported the Bed Tax Committee meeting will be held November 29th at 6:00 p.m. and there is \$177,000 in 2023 audited funds to divide amongst the eight applicants.

Borough Representative, Ms. Clack

- Ms. Clack reported on the issues that were discussed at the Borough Assembly meeting relating to teachers who are dealing with hard issues students are living with. Ms. Clack stated she would have a more thorough update after the next assembly meeting.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- Howard Rixie of the North Pole Chamber of Commerce updated the Council on the things that have been happening at the Chamber since his last update. Mr. Rixie spoke about the costs of operating the events that have been put on and how they are trying to raise funds for the new welcome center.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Ordinance 23-17, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, to Amend Title 10, Unsafe and Hazardous Vehicles and Title 1, Minor Offense Fee Schedule

On the Ordinance

Discussion

Lieutenant Jed Smith provided a staff report suggesting changes to the ordinance moving forward regarding fees and compliance requirements.

Barbara Haney spoke in opposition to ordinance 2023-17.

Don Thompson spoke in opposition to ordinance 2023-17.

Rita Trometter read a letter in opposition to ordinance 2023-17.

Gerald Million spoke in opposition to ordinance 2023-17.

Mike Prax echoed the comments of previous speakers and shared that the city should scrap the ordinance.

Tammie Wilson spoke in opposition to ordinance 2023-17.

Hank Bartos shared that he does not support ordinance 2023-17.

Alex Smith shared that he is in support of ordinance 2023-17.

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to postpone Ordinance 2023-17 to the Regular Council meeting of February 5, 2024

Seconded *by* Mayor Pro Tem Clack

On the Ordinance

Postponed

Yes: 6 – Clack, Terch, Skipps, Jacobson, Williams, Keller

No: 0

Absent: Welch

- Ordinance 2023-15, An Ordinance of the North Pole City Council Establishing the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and Levying the Mill Rate

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to advance Ordinance 2023-15 to the Regular Council Meeting of December 18th, 2023

Mr. Jacobson *withdrew* his motion to advance Ordinance 2023-15 to the City Council meeting of December 18th

Council members discussed December schedules and the Alaska Municipal League (AML) conference; department heads weighed in on their schedules. Mayor Pro Tem Clack called for a Work Session at 6:00 p.m. prior to the City Council meeting of December 11th, to discuss proposed budget changes prior to the final reading at the December 18th, City Council meeting.

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to advance Ordinance 2023-15 to the City Council meeting of December 18th for third reading

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

ADVANCED

Yes: Skipps, Williams, Clack, Jacobson

No: Terch, Keller

Absent: Welch

- Ordinance 2023-16, An Ordinance of The City of North Pole Amending the Pay Policy for City of North Pole Employees

Mr. Keller *moved* to approved Ordinance 2023-16

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Yes: Keller, Clack, Terch, Skipps, Williams, Jacobson

No: 0

Absent: Welch

NEW BUSINESS

- Memo – Response to Request for Proposal- Approval of Auditor

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the Response to Request for Proposal from Elgee Rehfeld

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

On the Memo

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Yes: Skipps, Clack, Terch, Keller, Williams, Jacobson

No: 0

Absent: Welch

- Memo – Request to Accept Grant Funds – Homeland Security

Lieutenant Smith gave a staff report on the request to accept grant funds.

Mr. Terch *moved* to approve the Request to Accept Grant Funds from Homeland Security

Seconded *by* Mr. Williams

On the Memo

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Yes: Keller, Williams, Terch, Skipps, Clack, Jacobson

No: 0

Absent: Welch

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Keller wished everyone a merry Christmas and asked that everyone understand that the ordinance about traffic safety is not about gaining revenue, it is about safety. Mr. Keller shared that he understands the maximum and minimum of safety and that he looks forward to continuing the conversation in the future. Mr. Keller shared that being an owner of a vehicle is not a right, it is a privilege and with ownership comes responsibility. Mr. Keller thanked the police department for the work that they do in keeping the community safe. Mr. Keller shared that at Thanksgiving time he is happy to be a member of the North Pole community.

Mr. Terch thanked the citizens that came out for public comment and shared that public safety is his number one goal. Mr. Terch thanked everyone for their time and for the opportunity to serve.

Mr. Williams thanked everyone for allowing him to serve and shared that he appreciated everyone that came out to testify to the traffic ordinance. Mr. Williams reminded everyone of the quote ask not what your country can do for you it is what you can do for your country.

Mr. Jacobson thanked everyone for their service and support during the meeting and reminded the Council that the Open Meetings Act is there to help everyone have access to public content. Mr. Jacobson spoke to the amount of snow that has fallen in 2023 compared to the past few years. Mr. Jacobson shared his concern for the trucks that will be driving from the Manh Choh mine. Mr. Jacobson applauded Mayor Welch for attending the Department of Transportation policy committee meeting and requesting they not rush the plan for trucking because it will not affect the next five years, it will affect the next 30 years. Mr. Jacobson shared his fears for the heavy ore trucks transporting ore through North Pole. Mr. Jacobson suggested the State of Alaska build a railroad between mines rather than tucking on the highway. Mr. Jacobson complimented the North Pole Police Department for being community minded police and shared that the proposed ordinance is only to increase public safety and not to increase revenue.

Mr. Skipps thanked everyone for coming out to give public testimony and thanked the Council for postponing the ordinance for future discussion.

Mayor Pro Tem Clack wished everyone a wonderful Thanksgiving and thanked the Council for postponing the traffic safety ordinance for future consideration.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Skipps *moved* to adjourn.

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

The regular meeting of Monday, November 20, 2023, adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, November 20, 2023.



Mayor, City of North Pole, Alaska

ATTEST:



Emily Braniff, CMC
City Clerk

