



**Work Session – Meritain Annual Health Care – 6:00 P.M.
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, May 6th, 2024, in the North Pole City Hall Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Michael Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, May 6th, 2024, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by City Clerk Emily Braniff

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. Williams

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the agenda of May 6th, 2024

Seconded by Mr. Keller

Mr. Jacobson *moved to amend* the agenda to move item a. Ordinance 2024-04 An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2024 Budget to Accept Grant Funds (Fire & Utilities) from Unfinished Business and items a. Ordinance 2024-05 An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2024 Budget to Accept Grant Funds (Police) b. Request to Council – Pay for Backup Generator at Public Works – State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) Grant and c. Request to Council – TBEC Fire Station Grant Application \$12,820 from New Business to the Consent Agenda.

Seconded by Ms. Clack

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a. Ordinance 2024-04 An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2024 Budget to Accept Grant Funds (Fire & Utilities)

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Ordinance 2024-05 An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2024 Budget to Accept Grant Funds (Police)
- b. Request to Council – Pay for Backup Generator at Public Works – State Homeland Security Program (SHSP) Grant
- c. Request to Council – TBEC Fire Station Grant Application \$12,820

On the Agenda, as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the Agenda

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent:

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Clack *moved to approve* the minutes for the May 6th, 2024, meeting.

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

On the Minutes

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

Mayor Welch passed around to Council the book that he was given by the Italian Battalion that was in town for

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May 6, 2024

NOT A VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT

Red Flag Alaska. Mayor Welch spoke of events he had attended since the last Regular Council meeting including Tiger Team and the North Pole Economic Development Committee meeting. Mayor Welch stated he would be attending the Governor's Task Force in Anchorage the week of May 20, 2024. Mayor Welch stated there is a problem that is happening with rumors and gossip but that when the city puts in for a grant, it cannot be applied to anything else. Mayor Welch stated every time he turns around, he hears from a builder that they do not think the grant funds would be going to Brookside Park, he stated they can only go to Brookside Park. Mayor Welch and Council members discussed changing the date of the next meeting, but no definitive change was made.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

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

Howard Rixie spoke to the North Pole Chamber of Commerce Make it Shine campaign to help Clean Up Alaska. Mr. Rixie spoke to the entities he has put together for recycled items located where the Chamber is proposed to be built. Mr. Rixie encouraged residents to investigate the Junk Car program that he has worked on with towing companies to dispose of cars that have become dilapidated. Mr. Jacobson asked if Mr. Rixie would share the contact for the towing companies, Mr. Rixie stated he would bring flyers to share that kind of content. Mayor Welch stated he would donate \$50 gift certificates to the Pagoda and Lanyards to the Firecracker Run on June 29, 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE

Finance Department, Tricia Fogarty

Trisha Fogarty reported Finance has been having a lot of meetings with the Auditors and they have a lot of questions about the Moose Creek Project, but it is a new project, so it is understandable. Ms. Fogarty reported Ms. Braniff and Human Resources Administrator/Deputy City Clerk Maggie Kimmel had been working with the health care company and that none of the numbers reported at the Work Session are set in stone because the City of North Pole is self-funded. Ms. Fogarty reported the fund that was started under Mayor Bryce Ward is at a nice balance and if the city needs to tap into those funds they are there.

Police Department, Chief Steve Dutra

Chief Dutra reported body cameras, server and car cameras are all ordered and, on their way, and thanked Council for their approval for the ordering. Chief Dutra reported the Alaska Police Officers Association was held in the Interior and PSA Chris Illingsworth was awarded support person of the year. He spoke to the Police Memorial ceremony that will be held May 17th at 11:00 a.m. at the Trooper Gabe Rich and Trooper Scott Johnson Memorial Park event that is coming up. He reminded everyone that the Torch Run in support of the Special Olympics which will start at 10:00 a.m. at Chena Lakes on May 18th.

City Services, Danny Wallace

Mr. Wallace echoed Chief Dutra's kind statement about PSA Illingsworth who has been a wonderful resource for the community. Mr. Wallace spoke to grants that he has been notified of award for drainage in the city. Mr. Wallace reported summer hires have started onboarding and they have a lot of work to get done over the short season and of the CDL program that will assist his department. Mr. Wallace reported there has been an increase

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in building permits including Three Bears and that Melanie Swanson, Account Specialist has earned credits to move to an Account Specialist II. Mr. Wallace shared the Middle School students have begun work on the Water Treatment Plant mural and reported it is a great project for the students and the community.

Mayor Welch asked when the mural would be finished and if he planned to advertise it, Mr. Wallace stated he has been taking pictures of the progress during the project.

Mr. Keller asked if the CDL Program was for CDL Class A, Mr. Wallace confirmed that to be correct. Mr. Keller asked if Ms. Swanson is up for promotion or completed the qualifications for her current position, Mr. Wallace stated it is for promotion. Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Wallace discussed the position, Mayor Welch referred the issue to Ms. Kimmel offline.

Mr. Terch asked if the city still had to pay for four slots of CDL training if they are only using three, Mr. Wallace assured him the city would not have to pay for the fourth unused spot.

Fire Department, Chief Chad Heineken

Chief Heineken was excused from the meeting, Mayor Welch read aloud his report. His department is busy preparing for the apprenticeship program, reminded everyone to come out for Clean Up Day on May 11th and to save the date for the Fire Department Open House scheduled for June 29th.

City Clerk, Emily Braniff

Ms. Braniff shared an article written by the Fairbanks Daily News Miner that was published in May about the North Pole Fire Department Apprenticeship Program. Ms. Braniff stated if anyone would like to read an uplifting story about the city that it would remain in Chambers to look at.

ON GOING PROJECTS

Mr. Jacobson stated the North Pole Economic Development Committee met and created a brainstormed list of ideas that would help better and/beautify the city. Mr. Jacobson stated the list has long-term and short-term goals and they would eventually like to develop a theme city concept but that it will take multiple years to make it happen.

Mayor Welch asked Mr. Wallace to come forward to speak on the Combined Heat and Power Project. Mayor Welch reported that he is going to host a Work Session on June 6th at 6:00 p.m. where stakeholders, builders, Legislator and the Army and Air Force will be attending. Mayor Welch stated the city needs to look long and hard at whether they should become invested in the project or not. Mayor Welch stated there are a lot of players at stake that will be attending and so there will need to be a meal provided. Mayor Welch state the Governors Office and possibly AIEDA will be attending, he reported Marathon Gas has donated 20 acres to the city to use for the project. Ms. Clack shared that it was her understanding that the project was not going to go forward, Mayor Welch stated here at Latitude 65 is the best place for this kind of power project to take place. Mayor Welch started the City Attorney works for Interior Gas Utility and would be unable to advise the city on the issue, but he wanted to have a meeting to discuss if it was feasible moving forward.

Mr. Williams asked how long the meeting would last, Mayor Welch stated it should not last more than two hours and that is why food will be provided. Mayor Welch stated if anyone else has any other questions about the topic they can let himself or Mr. Wallace know.

Mr. Jacobson stated the Council does not have any information about the project, Mr. Wallace reported that nothing has changed and that the information sheet that was held last year is the most current information. Mr. Wallace asked Mayor Welch if it was only an information session only, Mayor Welch confirmed that was the case. Mayor Welch spoke to how cheap power can be purchased and sold to GVEA which will provide for North Pole and save the city a lot of money.

Mr. Williams asked if the city does not show interest, if that means the project goes away. Mayor Welch stated none of the Council has seen the presentation other than Ms. Clack and Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Keller stated he was present at the first meeting.

A member of the audience called out a question, Ms. Braniff called a point of order and asked if they were still on Ongoing Projects on the agenda. Mayor Welch stated they are speaking under Ongoing Projects and that he is trying to present to his Council some information.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Mr. Williams stated he attended the Red Cross Sound the Alarm event and that he was impressed with the project. Mr. Williams read some inspirational quotes to help people better reflect on things going on in their lives.

Mr. Terch asked everyone to remember to get out and vote one way or another in the Special Election the following morning. Mr. Terch asked everyone that will be out for Clean Up Day to wear the proper Personal Protective Equipment, rubber boots and high visibility vests. He also reminded everyone that motorcycles are out and to keep an eye out for them.

Mr. Jacobson spoke to the Sound the Alarm event and the importance of utilizing the program for safety of residents' homes. Mr. Jacobson shared his concern for the cost of weight loss drugs if the city should opt in for that kind of coverage, reiterating that it is extremely costly. Mr. Jacobson spoke to the ore hauling trucks and road conditions and shared he continues to have concern with the degrading surface of the road.

Mr. Keller echoed Mr. Jacobson's concern for the degradation of the roadway and spoke to hearing of the damage that is occurring on the haul path. Mr. Keller shared motorized vehicle traffic has increased and reminded everyone that all-terrain vehicles have to be registered vehicles if they are going to be on a roadway. Mr. Keller shared he chuckled a little in the morning when it snowed earlier in the day.

Mr. Skippis reminded everyone that North Pole High School Graduation is the following week and encouraged everyone to drive safely.

Ms. Clack thanked staff and Mr. Rixie for the good work they are doing for the City of North Pole. Ms. Clack spoke about the events that would take place before the next City Council meeting.

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Mayor Welch spoke to events that he would like to see Council members attend to include Military, Civilian and Senior that will be happening before the next meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Welch *moved* to adjourn.

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

The regular meeting of Monday, May 6th, adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, May 20th, 2024.

ATTEST:



Emily Braniff, CMC
City Clerk





Mayor, City of North Pole, Alaska