



**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, December 18, 2017 in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 125 Snowman Lane, North Pole, Alaska.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Ward called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, December 18, 2017 to order at 7:04 p.m.

There were present:

Avery Thompson – *Mayor Pro Tem*
David Skipps – *Deputy Mayor Pro Tem*
Aino Welch – *Alt Dep Mayor Pro Tem*
Santa Claus
Doug Isaacson
Sharon Hedding

Absent/Excused

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Mayor Ward

INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Mayor Ward

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Thompson *moved to approve the agenda of December 18, 2017*

Seconded by Mr. Claus

DISCUSSION

None

Mr. Thompson *moved to consent the following items:*

Old Business:

None

New Business:

- b.** Approval Request to Purchase In-Car Video and Body Cameras.

- d. Resolution 17-23, A Resolution Establishing the 2018 Capital Project Priority for the City of North Pole.

Seconded by Mr. Skipps

Discussion

None

On the amendment

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skipps, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the Agenda as amended

Discussion

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skipps, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Thompson *moved to* approve the Minutes of December 4, 2017

Seconded by Ms. Welch

Discussion

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skipps, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- Reading of the Bill of Rights
- Introduction of the 2018 King & Queen of North Pole – Jeff and Brenda Howe

- Bruce Hanson Day Proclamation

Mr. Thompson *moved to suspend the rules for 15 minutes for a community reception.*

Seconded by Mr. Claus

- The Community Rezone is moving ahead for the Badger Road core commercial area. I am meeting with the Borough next month to address individual property owner concerns. We are anticipating this to go to the Assembly and Planning Commission in early spring. The Santa Claus House was also asked if it wanted to rezone their property as part of the rezone since they are going through a replat of their property.
- Thank you to everyone that participated in the 12 Days of Christmas North Pole. We have had a lot of positive comments and everyone has been happy to see our town and people.
- Explore Fairbanks had their annual board meeting at Hotel North Pole this month and I was honored to give a welcome to our City. Winter tourism continues to see an increase as newer markets gain access to Alaska.
- I am participating with Chief Coon in a multiple day value analysis workshop on the 12 Mile overpass safety project. It is anticipated that after this meeting, there will be a recognized design and direction for this much needed safety improvement.
- FNSB Sustainability Committee is looking for a North Pole liaison so if anyone is interested let me know.
- Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Fire Dept., Chief Coon

- We are working with the contractor for the boiler controls repairs and thanks to the Council for those funds.
- Continuing on our LED change out of our apparatus bay lights. Hopefully will be able to complete this project in 2018 with existing building maintenance monies. We will then start changing out the Fire Department annex lights.
- I will be participating in the meetings with DOT for the overpass near 12 Mile.
- Christmas caroling is underway with the squad. It will run through Christmas evening.
 - **Mr. Isaacson** commented about the Christmas music and how great it is.
- The position closed on the Lt. position and we have made an offer. The new Lt. is awaiting results from the Fire Department physical.
- We will begin testing for an Engineer this week.

- We had 8 applications for each position. We are happy with the number of applicants, especially because neither is an entry level position.
- We would like to make the Council aware of the SCBA grant with a \$30,000 match. I am working with the Mayor and CFO for an end of year budget transfer to pay the match.
- Congratulations to the Howes on King and Queen. This is the first time in almost 27 years that my good friend and retired Fire Chief Lane has not been my supervisor.

Police Dept., Chief Dutra

- I was in Anchorage for training recently and the training topics included QBQ, Personal Accountability, Serial Killer profiles with Phil Chomers who heeded a warning of men vs. women, APSC, AACOP, FBI NAA meetings, and trauma treatment.
- We will be doing an ALICE presentation for Council at our next meeting.
- Regarding the citizen complaint from last meeting, we investigated this and the claims were unfounded. I understand the individual wrote an apology but there is still an enormous amount of time and effort put into investigating complaints (2-40 hours).
- Thank you to Council for passing the budget for the Police Department.
- City Clerk and I are currently working on recruitment for both our vacant positions.
- Statistical data is before you – there are some levels of concern and others are typical anomalies. DUI is an item of concern.
 - **Ms. Welch** asked if the DUIs referred to under the influence of “anything”. Chief Dutra replied that yes, the DUI statistics cover all drugs and alcohol.
- Officer Meyer is closing in on the finish line for FTO.
- APSC funding is going to be reduced so academy costs will increase.
- Memorial Park
 - The cameras are going in slowly and should be finished by the end of January.
 - The flags are coming along slowly.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Last week, the Mayor and I had our initial meeting with KSH in preparation for the annual audit. It was a positive meeting and the audit should go well.
- Last week the Mayor and the department heads viewed a demo for an electronic time-keeping program with Caselle. If we end up using this, I think this will be a time-saver and will work well.
- Summarized financials are on the dais for you and full financials were emailed to you this evening.

Director of City Services, Bill Butler

Building Department

- No new permits issued.

Public Works

- Depending upon snowfall over the next several days, there may be a city-wide plowing.

- Performed a partial plowing over a week ago on NPHS Boulevard, 5th and 8th Avenues to clear accumulated snow.
- Due to heavy traffic, these are often the roads in the worst conditions.

Utility Department

- Sulfolane settlement
 - Review of proposals for the construction contractor for the North Pole Water System Expansion Project was completed last week.
 - Recommendation to the City Council for a preferred contractor will be presented at the January 2, 2018 meeting.
- There is a water main break near the intersection of 5th Avenue and the Old Richardson Highway.
 - Terrible location – gas line, fiber optic, water mains, power poles.
 - Utility staff is planning how to approach this complex repair.
 - Plowing snow to dam water to prevent it from flooding 5th Avenue while we mobilize for the repair.
- Advertisement for the Utility hire will appear in the News Miner beginning December 19th.

Natural Gas Utility Board

- IGU Board agreed to purchase Pentex from AIDEA.
- Final closing is expected to occur in early spring after IGU completes remaining due diligence.

Borough Representative

None

City Clerk's Office, Judy Binkley

- Reminder to sign up for the 2018 Borough Assembly meetings.
- Social Media Policy – Mayor Ward and I have been working on reviewing and updating policies. We recently took a look at the City's existing Social Media Policy, made a minor adjustment, and are working on implementing it.
- 2018 AML Winter Session is February 20-22 in Juneau. Let me know if you are interested in attending and I will make arrangements.
- CONP Website – I'm working on updating some of the content, especially for the Council meetings. I encourage to take a look at the website and look at those changes. You will want to go to the "Inside City Hall" tab and then click on "Agendas and Minutes."
- I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

ONGOING PROJECTS

None

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

- **Thomas McGhee**, 1152 North Star Dr: Mr. McGhee spoke as a resident and wanted Council to understand that during the last meeting when the budget was discussed, the public walked away with the perception that he mill rate was increased to give one department a new employee and another department a “shot in the arm.” He stated the fleet fund problem still isn’t fixed. The Fire Department has the most expensive fleet so how is that need going to be met? Mr. McGhee told Council they need to look forward and figure out how to raise the fleet fund in a sustainable fashion. He added that Public Works needs to be supported as well because their vehicles get the most wear and tear. So instead of looking at a one-time “shot in the arm” there needs to be more long-term planning. He also stated that the Police Department is well with their fleet fund, but their fleet is cheaper than Public Works and the Fire Department. Mr. McGhee thanked Mr. Claus for his festive attire this evening. He congratulated Mayor Ward for filing his letter of intent to run for Borough Mayor. Mr. McGhee stated that he also filed a letter of intent to run for North Pole Mayor. He thanked the Fire Department for continuing with the caroling and acknowledged the City Clerk’s efforts on the website. Mr. McGhee stated that he thinks the dais needs to be centered better as the name tags are difficult to read.

OLD BUSINESS

None

Public Comment

None

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCE 17-28, AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NORTH POLE, ALASKA TO AMEND TITLE 2, ADMINISTRATION AND PERSONNEL CHAPTER 36 PERSONNEL SYSTEM, SECTION 110 AND 190 REGARDING THE CITY HIRING AND PROMOTION PROCESS.

Mayor Ward introduced the ordinance.

Public Comment

- **Steve Dutra**, 125 Snowman Lane: Mr. Dutra stated that this proposed change is so that the City can hire the most qualified individual for any position. He stated that he’s getting ready to start the hiring process for a Lt and that is a position where you really

need a very qualified individual. He stated that this proposed change also sets the bar for current employees.

- **Geoff Coon**, 110 Lewis St: Mr. Coon stated that he came up so that if Council had any questions, he would be available to answer them. He stated that he supports this because he wants a way to streamline the hiring process and make sure that the City is recruiting the best candidate. He stated that this is a clean-up measure in the code. He also stated that if there were candidates that were equally qualified for a position, he would hire the candidate who is a current employee.
 - **Mr. Isaacson** asked how we got to interpreting this section of code where we put the position out to the employees first and then the public. Mr. Coon answered that he thinks every department interpreted it a little differently but this issue would periodically come up but by making this change, it would make the code more clear.
 - **Mr. Isaacson** asked if we made the changes as proposed, would there be words providing hiring preference for current employees all other things being equal or is that something that needs to be added as an amendment. Mr. Coon replied that he would need to see that in writing and maybe discuss it at the next meeting.
 - **Mr. Thompson** asked that by taking away preference to employees, are we taking away an employee's preference to stay with the City? Mr. Coon replied that there is small pool of employees so the code change is to make it so that he is not held hostage and make sure that the best qualified candidate is who is hired.
 - **Ms. Welch** asked how it can be put in the code that preference will be given to employees if everything else merit based is equal. Mr. Coon replied that the department heads would need to sit down and take a look at the ordinance and work together to work on clearer language.
- **Kevin Haywood**, 110 Lewis St: Mr. Haywood stated that he has spoken with Mr. Coon and that he agrees that all things being equal between candidates, preference will be given to employees. He stated that it's a good idea to get this down in writing so that it's clear. This will keep things easier and streamlined during the hiring process.
 - **Mr. Thompson** asked for clarification on if Mr. Haywood supports the change overall but wants to make sure that it's clear preference will be given to an employee, all other things equal. Mr. Haywood replied that is correct.
- **Thomas McGhee**, 1152 North Star Dr: Mr. McGhee stated he supports the Mayor and the department heads. He stated the ordinance is good as it is written and no changes are needed. One of the benefits the City offers is reimbursed education and this is an opportunity for employees to advance. Mr. McGhee stated that they code currently reads if there is no current employee who is qualified for the promotion, it will then be opened to the public. This proposed change allows the City to streamline the hiring process. He encouraged support for the Mayor and department heads.

Mr. Thompson moved to introduce and advance Ordinance 17-28, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska to Amend Title 2, Administration and Personnel Chapter 36

Personnel System, Section 110 and 190 Regarding the City Hiring and Promotion Process.

Seconded by Ms. Welch

Discussion

- **Mr. Isaacson** stated he appreciates that the hiring/promotion process needs to be streamlined. He stated he didn't know when it was construed to mean the City has to have 2 postings for a job opening. However he stated he's not for abandoning the idea that we don't include the terms of employee preference.
- **Mayor Ward** stated that he would work on amendments for the Council meeting that reflects the comments tonight and get the attorney's blessing.

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skippis, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

RESOLUTION 17-22, A RESOLUTION ESTABLISHING CITY OF NORTH POLE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 30TH LEGISLATURE 2018 REGULAR SESSION.

Mayor Ward introduced the resolution.

Public Comment

None

Mr. Thompson *moved to* introduce and adopt Resolution 17-22, A Resolution Establishing City of North Pole Legislative Priorities for the 30th Legislature 2018 Regular Session.

Seconded by Ms. Welch

Discussion

Mr. Isaacson *moved to* amend Resolution 17-22 by adding after "revenue", Line 14, "and the diversification of the non-government induced gross state product in Alaska."

Seconded by Mr. Thompson

- **Mr. Isaacson** explained his amendment because while diversification is discussed, it's not always acted upon.
- **Mr. Claus** stated he likes what Mr. Isaacson has stated. He stated that he would like to encourage the state to look at alternative energy.
- **Mr. Isaacson** replied to Mr. Claus' comment by stating maybe additional language can

be added to Priority 4.

- **Mr. Claus** agreed that may be a good place to insert wording regarding alternative and renewable energy.
- **Mr. Isaacson** suggested the wording “including funding of alternative and renewable grants.”
- **Mayor Ward** questioned whether Priority 2 would be a better place to address the issue.
- **Mr. Claus** asked if this should be postponed to the next meeting or if Council could continue to address it this evening.

Mr. Thompson *moved to suspend the rules for 10 minutes so that another amendment to Resolution 17-22 may be drafted.*

Seconded *by Mr. Claus*

- **Mr. Claus** stated he supported the resolution and amendment as is.
- **Mayor Ward** asked if any Council members would like to co-sponsor the resolution. Mr. Thompson, Mr. Isaacson, and Ms. Welch all indicated they would co-sponsor.

On the amendment

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skipps, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

Discussion on the motion as amended

None

On the motion as amended

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skipps, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a. To discuss personnel issues regarding the Director of City Services.
- b. To discuss personnel issues regarding the Police Department.

Mr. Thompson *moved to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss the personnel issues regarding the Director of City Services and to discuss the personnel issues regarding the Police Department.*

Seconded by Mr. Skipps

Council went into Executive Session at 9:05 p.m.

Mayor Ward brought the meeting back to order at 9:35 p.m.

Mr. Skipps moved to support the Mayor in his decisions regarding the Director of City Services and the Police Department.

Seconded by Mr. Thompson.

PASSED

Yes: 7 – Skipps, Hedding, Thompson, Claus, Isaacson, Welch, Ward

No: 0

Absent: 0

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Ms. Hedding – Merry Christmas and have a safe holiday. We will see you in the New Year.

Mr. Skipps – Merry Christmas and drive safe. And don't call DOT if the roads are too bad!

Ms. Welch – Shared a story about Mr. Hanson on this special "Bruce Hanson Day."

Mr. Isaacson – It's right to recognize Mr. Hanson. Wanted to mention the friends of the North Pole Library and encourage to support them. Don't forget about the North Pole Police Department's "House Check" program. Merry Christmas and Happy New Years.

Mr. Claus – May each of you have a lifetime filled with happiness, peace, good health, prosperity, and most of all love, which is the greatest gift. Merry Christmas.

Mayor Ward – Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. This is a special time for our City. Tonight was a special evening where we got to recognize Mr. Hanson and I hope it's a tradition we can continue with in the future. See you all next year.

Mr. Isaacson moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:42 p.m.

Seconded by Ms. Welch

The regular meeting of Monday, December 18, 2017 adjourned at 9:43 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Tuesday, January 2, 2018.

Bryce J. Ward, Mayor

ATTEST:

Judy Binkley, North Pole City Clerk