



NORTH POLE CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 2, 2020  
NORTH POLE CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
125 SNOWMAN LANE, NORTH POLE, ALASKA

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Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Tuesday, March 2, 2020 to order at 7:00 p.m. with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present: Santa Claus  
Thomas McGhee  
David Skippis  
Aino Welch  
Perry Walley  
DeJohn Cromer  
Mayor Welch

Excused:

Also Present: William Butler, Director of City Services  
Tricia Fogarty, Chief Financial Officer  
Steve Dutra, Police Chief  
Kim Kiehl, City Clerk/HR Manager  
Geoff Coon, Fire Chief

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG**

Mayor Welch asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**INVOCATION**

The Invocation was given by City Council Member Mr. Walley.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Mr. McGhee moved to approve the agenda of March 2, 2020.**

**Seconded by Mr. Walley.**

**Discussion**

**None**

**MOTION TO AMEND AGENDA**

**Mr. McGhee moved to amend the agenda with the following changes**

**Seconded by Mr. Perry**

**Old Business:**

None

**New Business:**

- a. Request to approve a contract with Long Building Technologies for video camera system
- b. Request to approve creation of temporary position in the Utility Department to conduct field inspections of service line installations for the North Pole Expansion
- c. Request to approve a 5-year extension of the Use Agreement between the Santa Claus House and the City of North Pole for the Beaver Springs Nature Trail
- d. Request for Tuition Reimbursement for Chad Heineken in the amount of \$690.00
- e. Request to approve a Mutual Aid Agreement with the United State Army and the surrounding Fire Departments Emergency Services

**Consented**

**Discussion**

None

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE AGENDA OF MARCH 2, 2020 AS FOLLOWS:

YES: 7 – Mr. McGhee, Mr. Skipps, Mr. Claus, Mrs. Welch, Mr. Cromer, Mr. Walley, Mayor Welch

NO: 0

ABSTAIN:

**Mayor Welch** declared the MOTION CARRIED

**Discussion on the agenda as amended**

None

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AS AMENDED**

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AMENDED AGENDA MARCH 2, 2020 AS FOLLOWS:

YES: 7 – Mr. McGhee, Mr. Skipps, Mr. Claus, Mrs. Welch, Mr. Walley, Mr. Cromer, Mayor Welch

NO: 0

ABSTAIN:

**Mayor Welch** declared the MOTION CARRIED

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES AS AMENDED**

**Mr. McGhee** moved to approve the Minutes of February 18, 2020.

**Seconded by Mrs. Welch.**

## Discussion

- CFO Tricia Fogarty clarified the total interest earned on our AML Pool funds invested was \$7,644.00.
- The time of the Motion to Adjourn moved by Mr. McGhee was corrected to 8:07 p.m.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 18, 2020 AS FOLLOWS:

YES: 7 – Mr. McGhee, Mr. Skippis, Mr. Claus, Mrs. Welch, Mr. Cromer, Mr. Perry, Mayor Welch

NO: 0

ABSTAIN:

**Mayor Welch** declared the MOTION CARRIED

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- a. February 16 – 20, 2020 Alaska Conference of Mayors under the Alaska Municipal League, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature
  - a. Met with Senator Coghill, no Representative in place at the time
  - b. Met with Representative Talerico and Senator Bishop
  - c. Met with Lt. Governor
  - d. Attended breakfast meeting with the Governor on the last day of the AML
- b. February 21, 2020 meeting with Governor Dunleavy in Fairbanks State Office of Alaska's building
  - a. Discussing what was near and dear to our local constituents
  - b. Accompanied by Councilman Mr. Claus, Councilman Mr. McGhee, and Councilwoman Mrs. Welch
    - i. Mayor Welch discussed economic development
      1. Ensuring we have vibrant businesses, good education, and good jobs/income
    - ii. Councilman Mr. McGhee discussed the following three points
      1. DMV requirement of 40 hours of driving experience to transition from driving permit to driving license not being enforced, on good faith.
      2. Lottery for the State to raise money for the education system, University, and a number of projects.
      3. Inquired as to why the Governor backed off on the reorganization of the University and the internal investigation of the waste of funds.
    - iii. Councilman Mr. Claus discussed the following three points
      1. The Cold Climate Research Center
      2. Funding the University
      3. How some communities invite business, and some do not
    - iv. Councilwoman Mrs. Welch discussed the following topic
      1. The lack of accountability for children in our schools.
        - a. Single child can disrupt and ruin the learning experience for other children.
        - b. What can we do to make kids more responsible and for the school to take action quicker.
- c. Round table regarding taxes, we were the only entity that had a sales tax

- i. Shared the City of North Pole's tax is 5.5% with a per transaction cap of \$11.00.
  - ii. Discussion in the AML and Conference of Mayor's the possibility of a sales tax. Will not go in a bill this year. If we do nothing about on-line sales tax, the State could grab it.
  - iii. More transactions are not happening out-of-state, they are happening in-state.
  - iv. Revenue Department stated they would be willing to turn the tax collection over to the AML. The AML could be contracted on behalf of the State and would make money for the service.
- d. Answered an invitation at Tanana Valley Fairgrounds for the Alaska Ice tribute to Connie Parks-Karl who passed February 4, 2020.
- e. Attended the F-35 Celebration Planning Meeting on February 26, 2020
  - i. Military Appreciation Day to be held June 13, 2020 at Pioneer Park
    - 1. Stomp Parade to start at 11:00 a.m.
    - 2. F-35 fly over
    - 3. Parks open to all Military Vets and their families at noon
      - a. Free lunches to all, approximately 6000 people to be served
        - i. Noon until 2:00 p.m. or until they run out of food
      - b. Rides, museums, and everything else will remain open until 8:00 p.m.
    - 4. Planning meeting scheduled March 25, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. at the Salsa Room if you would like to attend
- f. Met with Jim Dotson at Fedco on February 26, 2020
  - i. Discussed idea of North Pole starting and economic development authority
- g. Met with Mrs. Sheridan Heinrich of the Latter Day Saints Church on February 28, 2020 regarding community initiatives starting Mother's Day through October
  - i. Fill the Purse on May 2<sup>nd</sup>
- h. Shared the radio with our new Representative Prax who was in Juneau on KJNP's Over the Coffee Cup
  - i. House Bill 79
- i. Met with Alaska Senator Sullivan on February 29, 2020 at Friends Journey Church
  - i. Brief on Alaska's posture
  - ii. Future basing decision for Eielson AFB to get the new KC-46 Super Tanker
- j. Upcoming events
  - i. March 3, 2020 at 6:00 p.m., meeting with the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Chena Pump House
  - ii. April 8, 2020 tour of the LIDAR facility at Clear Air Force Base, along with a coalition of Interior elected officials. The host is Denali Borough Mayor Walker.
  - iii. May 8, 2020 will be the Military Appreciation banquet at the Carlson Center
  - iv. An unknown date, after May 8<sup>th</sup>, Wing Commander Colonel Bishop will be departing to the Pentagon J-5 as a policymaker for the Joint Chiefs of Staff.
  - v. June 13, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. is the Pioneer Park Military Appreciation Day.
  - vi. August 11 – 13, 2020 is the Alaska Municipal League Alaska Conference in Fairbanks. Council members are urged to attend.

**COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR**

None

## **COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK**

### **Building Department, Bill Butler**

- No permits issued since the last council meeting.
- Serious inquiries about expansions at Petro Star, a medical practice, and remodel of Wendy's.

### **Public Works**

- Snow plowing began at 9:00 a.m. this morning, about 5" of snow
- Cody is on leave for another 2-1/2 weeks, Public Works staffed by Tom Blair
  - Major task is keeping sidewalks clear and graveling roads

### **Utility Department**

- Appreciate the Council of the Whole approving the utility moving ahead with hiring a field inspector for the summer to inspect customer service lines
  - Paid for with funding from the legal settlement

### **North Pole Expansion Project**

Exclusive Paving is still waiting on two sub-contractors to notify the Department of Labor that they have no liens against the project

### **Moose Creek Water System Expansion Project**

First delivery of City purchased pipe came in last Friday. Another shipment will arrive early March. Pipe is located at the Vertex site in Fairbanks.

- PDC will inspect them, then it will be turned over to HC Contractors to manage.
- Vertex will insulate the pipe prior to it being delivered to the Moose Creek storage site.
- Waiting on paperwork for final approval of the Environmental Covenant project and the Combined Phase 1 and Phase 2 project.

### **Council Member Questions**

- Mayor Welch – Have you heard anything from ADEC Commissioner Brune's office?
  - Mr. Butler – No.
    - Mayor Welch – Provided a copy of the legal letter we received from Jerry Koerner that referenced the Ainley International Money Fund, therefore the Brookside Park, to the Commissioner to see if he could find anything dating back to when the interceptor lines were closed off.

### **Fire Department, Chief Coon**

- Responded to an automatic aide to NSVFD for a residential structure fire outside the city limits on Roseanne Court last Saturday
  - Run the numbers annually to ensure the automatic aid agreement is fair, that we are giving aid as much as we are receiving it back.
- Have not heard back from the Borough regarding our EMS contract with them.
  - Contract runs out in the middle of summer

- Gone out on 246 emergency calls this year, averaging 4 calls per day.
- Paramedics in training all week for semi-annual Paramedic refresher training
  - Of the 12 members on shift, 7 are paramedics and 5 are EMT 3 advanced
- Lieutenants are attending a National Fire Academy class in Fairbanks
  - Command and control incident operation class
- Chief Coon attended a Leadership Strategies of Community Risk Reduction class at the National Fire Academy
  - Class focus was reducing risk through training, code enforcement, and education
  - NPFDP will be focusing a Community Risk Reduction effort by working to educate approximately 570 elementary school aged children
- Chief Coon attended a Foundations of Emergency Management class at the Emergency Management Institute last month.
  - Class 1 of 5 to obtaining an Emergency Manager Certificate
- Still have several volunteers enrolled in the EMT1 class
- Maintenance:
  - Getting ready to make a major purchase on tires
  - Still chasing down air leaks. The cold weather has sparked a bunch of tiny little air leaks everywhere. Air operates the pump transmissions, air horn, and thinks like that.
- House Bill 79
  - Purpose of Bill is to remove peace officers and firefighters off a defined contribution system and move them back to a traditional defined benefit system, new Tier V
  - Tier IV have created difficulties in employee retention
  - 5-year mark is when employees are fully vested in Tier IV
    - Mayor Welch – To see HB 79 go to the State of Alaska web site

### **Police Department, Chief Dutra**

Nothing to Report

- House Bill 79
  - Sit on ACOP, Alaska Association Chiefs of Police, president of the organization
  - This would be a substantial step toward fixing some of the problems created by Tier IV
  - Improve retention
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> letter sent to the Governor December 17, 2019 by ACOP
    - Councilman Mr. McGhee – House Bill 62, sent to the judiciary on February 20<sup>th</sup>
    - A claim made regarding someone's mental health/welfare can lead to the removal of a firearm
    - Encroaching into individual rights without jurisdiction
    - Please review and share your concerns with the council

### **Borough Representative**

- Mrs. Welch – No meeting since our last meeting. Councilman Mr. Walley will be covering the next meeting on Thursday, March 5, 2020.

**Finance, Tricia Fogarty**

- Difficult to work on the audit while covering the City Clerk vacancy. We are further ahead at this time than we were at this last year. Should be able to meet the mid-March deadline.
- Earned \$7,644.00 interest the month of January on our AML investments.
- Invested 3.3 million in one account in August
  - Earned \$19,606.00 in interest in that one account
- Two accounts from the attorney's office that are associated with the settlement funds
  - Funds are not our monies
  - We are able to keep the interest earned from those monies
- Reminder the APOC filing deadline is March 15<sup>th</sup>
  - Please provide a copy of your filing
    - Councilman Mr. McGhee – If you don't file you will be fined and the City will not pay for it

**City Clerk**

- Kim Kiehl – Happy to be the new City Clerk and look forward to working with everyone.

**ONGOING PROJECTS**

None

**CITIZEN'S COMMENTS – (Limited to Five (5) minutes per Citizen)**

None

**OLD BUSINESS**

None

**Mr. McGhee *moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:49p.m.***

**Seconded *by Mrs. Welch.***

The regular meeting of Tuesday, March 2, 2020 adjourned at 7:49 p.m.



Michael W. Welch, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

Kim Kiehl, City Clerk