



**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 6, 2021 via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Pro tem Claus called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, December 6, 2021 to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Santa Claus - Mayor Pro Tem
DeJohn Cromer - Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Aino Welch – Alternate Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Thomas McGhee
Anton Keller
David Skippis

Absent/Excused:

Michael Welch – Mayor

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Mr. Skippis

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. McGhee

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. McGhee *moved to* approve the agenda of December 6, 2021

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. McGhee *moved to* amend the agenda of December 6, 2021 to consent the following items:

Old Business:

- b. Ordinance 21-19, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska to Amend the 2021 General Fund Budget
- c. Ordinance 21-20, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska to Amend the Tax Levy & Bed Tax Grant Distribution

New Business:

- a. Ordinance 2-21, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska to Amend the Sales Tax and Uniform Alaska Remote Seller Sales Tax Exemptions
- d. MOU for Stevie’s Place for Participation in the SART Investigations

- e. Approval to Purchase Fire Dept. PPE's from Curtis
- f. MOA for the Maintenance of the FAST Area Surface Upgrades btw. DOT & PF and the City of North Pole
- g. MOA for the Local Match Contribution for the FAST Area Surface Upgrades btw. DOT & PF and the City of North Pole

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

On the amendments

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A.Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skippis

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

On the agenda as amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A.Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skippis

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. McGhee *moved* to approve the minutes from the 11/1/21 meeting

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A.Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skippis

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

- A few clerical corrections were noted

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor was not present at the meeting. Ms. Welch noted that the Mayor was traveling last week and met with the Governor's staff regarding economic development and laying groundwork for new housing in the NP area to accommodate the military changes that would be happening.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- Mr. McGhee asked Ms. Welch to request that the Mayor email everyone regarding an update to the improvements to the Chambers and when we can have in person meetings again.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Dept., Chief Dutra

- Has nothing formal for the meeting tonight.

Fire Dept., Chief Heineken

- The fire department has started decorating the Christmas Caroling truck to continue our long tradition of traveling the streets of North Pole each evening between December 15th and Christmas night. The caroling truck leaves the fire station at 6pm each night and drives along every residential street within the city.
- Was out of State the holiday week of Thanksgiving, Captain McGilvary was in place as the acting fire chief in his absence. The holiday week was very busy for the interior fire service. Our neighboring fire departments had several structure fires, North Pole fire department provided mutual aid support for some of those fire calls.
- The fire department is averaging 3.93 emergency calls per day, this average has slowly increased all year. The month of November the fire department had 13 concurrent calls. Concurrent calls usually take all the on-duty staff, leaving no immediate response for additional emergencies. General recalls for staffing during these events are made to bring volunteer and full-time staff in on overtime to cover any additional calls.
- Mr. Skippy asked for an update regarding the Forestry vehicle that the state might be selling. Chief said that he would follow up on that.
- Ms. Welch said that there was an issue with the sound last year from the caroling fire truck and asked that they watch the volume this year. She said that she really enjoys it and looks forward to it.

Director of City Services, Bill Butler

Building Department

- No new building permits issued since November 15, 2021.

Public Works

- Before Council tonight is a request to approve a Match Agreement and Maintenance Agreement for FAST Planning Driveway Apron Project. Total match cost is \$56,907.
- \$213,000 is available in the Capital Budget to fund the project (remaining balance would be \$143,030).
- Project will install approximately 140 driveway aprons across the City.
- FAST Streetlight Standardization Project

- On Thursday, DOT came in with a new cost match estimate required to fund the entire streetlight project: \$683,969. I cannot recommend Council fund the project at this new cost estimate.
- DOT provided a cost estimate to fund replacement of streetlights in the core of the City at \$175,040.
- Because this scaled down project will consolidate individual unmetered streetlights into a single metered circuit, I recommend that the Council support this project.
- There are sufficient funds in the Capital Budget to fund this project in 2022.
- If Council is supportive of this project, I will ask DOT to generate the Match and Maintenance Agreements which would then come to Council at a later date for formal approval.

Utility Department

Utility

- Budget modification to the 2022 Sewer Budget, Sludge Disposal project is requested.
- Requesting \$150,000 be transfer in from Sewer Reserves to Sludge Disposal.

Moose Creek

- Utility is poised to issue Substantial Completion for the Moose Creek Project with the completion of majority of work at the water treatment plant and commissioning of the two new well pumps and controls.
- Remaining work in 2022
- Spring 2022 a maximum of 18 additional service line installations and 18 wells to be decommissioned.
- Road resurfacing work to be completed in spring 2022.
- Remedial Action Close Out Report: Final report for project addressing project requirements.
- Project termination to occur no later than August 31, 2022.
- Mr. McGhee said that he feels like the street light project should not happen.
- Ms. Welch feels the same. That the price is no longer affordable and doesn't feel like it is a good idea.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Sent out financials last week to everyone. This last week and the next 2 weeks she will be working with Tyler Monday thru Thursday about 6 hours a day on the conversion. Last week the general ledger was loaded, and everything matches through the end of November. Payroll in both systems will be done till the end of the year. Tyler recommends leaving Caselle for payables for now. She will be getting with everyone in the next week or so to talk about signing checks and other things remotely. Everyday they are getting closer to the end goal.

Borough Representative

- None. There has not been a borough meeting since the last NPC Council meeting.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Nothing formal for the meeting tonight.

ON GOING PROJECTS

Committee Sign Ups

- Mr. McGhee said that the approval of committee's should be presented to the Council as a resolution, not as an ongoing project and asked that it be resubmitted appropriately.

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

- None

OLD BUSINESS

- Ordinance 21-17, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska, Establishing the 2022 Operating and Capital Budget and Levying the Mill Rate

Mr. Skipp *moved* to approve and adopt 21-17

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. McGhee *moved* to amend 21-17 to move \$150,000 from fund 52 to fund 42 for the sludge removal project

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the amendment to the amendment

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A. Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skipp

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

On the amendment

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A. Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skipp

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

NEW BUSINESS

- Ordinance 21-22, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Amend Title 10 Vehicles and Traffic

Mr. McGhee *moved* to Introduce Ordinance 21-22

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

DISCUSSION

Mr. McGhee is against this ordinance being approved tonight. He does not feel like everyone has properly researched this ordinance and the definition of all-purpose vehicles properly. He feels like we should allow 4 wheelers on the streets allowing them access to the trails and businesses in the area, but that we should NOT allow snow machines. Chief Dutra does not think that snow machines are included in the state statute and agrees with his officers that if we did allow the ATV's on the roads they would be better regulated and be required to be street legal and that only licensed drivers should be driving, giving police reasons to give tickets and enforce this law. He said that he feels that the Council should change this law around however they feel it to make it a good fit for our city. Ms. Welch feels like amount of ATV on the road that this law is going to allow is going to be too much for our officers to handle and that it is going to cause problems and fatalities. Officer Lindhag says that he can see both sides of this discussion and feels like it would be helpful from some of the local ATV groups to have a little input into the discussion on this ordinance.

On the amendment

Mr. McGhee *moved* to suspend Ordinance 21-22 until the next Council meeting on December 13, 2021

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

Council took a 3-minute break and came back into session at 7:48pm

- c. Ordinance 21-23, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska to Amend the Leave Policy and Pay Scale for the City of North Pole Employees

Citizens Comments

Mr. Butler agreed that the pay scale was on track for where it needed to be, but that he did notice a discrepancy in the Utility Operator pay and that it needed to go up. The Utility Operator can be a stand in for the Utility Supervisor so he feels like that pay scale should be higher based on the training and skill set required for that position. Paul Trissel also spoke about the Utility Operator pay scale and feels like it should start at \$31.00 dollars an hour instead of \$28.00. He was also concerned with the new pay scales and where that puts the current employees and what the incentive is for people to continue to work for the City if they have been here long enough that they are no longer on the pay scale due to their step increases. Mr. McGhee asked if this correction is an easy one and Chief Dutra responded that it was and that it would be corrected. He also addressed a few of Mr. Trissel's concerns regarding current employees.

Mr. McGhee *moved* to Introduce Ordinance 21-23

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

DISCUSSION

Mr. McGhee wanted to say that we had finally resolved some serious issues with the overall pay scale and feels

like separating out the individual departments on the pay scale will make making changes to pay scales in the future easier and will not have to involve all the departments. He feels that it addresses longevity in employees as well. He did ask why the leave hours earned was changed on the new scale. Chief Dutra responded that the leave hours earned was very behind the current average and felt that taking away the 4.96 hours per 2 weeks for employees in their first two (2) years of employment was a great change. The new scale gives employees in their first 4 years 7.98 hours per two (2) weeks and makes the city a more competitive employer. Mr. McGhee went on to add that he was pleased with the change of taking out the Council from having to decide if a department can start a new hire further into the pay scale based on their employment history and that it now goes to the Mayor and department head instead. He also said that instead of this pay sale being reviewed periodically, it will now be reviewed every 3 years.

Mr. McGhee *moved* to Amend 21-23 to change the Utility Operator pay starting Step 1 from \$28.00 to \$31.00 an hour and changing that line all the way across the scale

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

On the amendment to the amendment

DISCUSSION

Ms. Welch asked if this would affect the new budget at all. Mr. McGhee responded that the current pay for the Utility Supervisor will not be affected by this new pay scale. Mr. Butler said that he based his budget on the previous pay scale and Ms. Fogarty responded that they could do a fiscal note and move money around should it be necessary later, since the 2022 budget is already approved.

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A.Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skipps

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

On the amendment

DISCUSSION

Mr. McGhee reminded everyone that even though this change would not effect anyone right now, it would give the city more hiring power if they were going to ever need to rehire for this position.

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A.Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, McGhee, Skipps

No: 0

Absent: Mayor Welch

21-23 will advance to the 12/13/21 meeting

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Claus passed along best wishes to Ms. Welch for the Mayor, who is out sick tonight.

Mr. McGhee *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

The regular meeting of Monday, December 6, 2021 adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, December 6, 2021.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk