



**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, August 16, 2021 in the Council Chambers of City Hall, 125 Snowman Lane, North Pole, Alaska.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, August 16, 2021 to order at 7:00 p.m.

There were present:

**Michael Welch – Mayor
Thomas McGhee – Mayor Pro Tem
Aino Welch – Dep. Mayor Pro Tem
Perry Walley – Alt. Dep. Mayor Pro Tem
DeJohn Cromer
David Skipps
Santa Claus**

Absent/Excused

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Mayor Welch

INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Councilwoman Welch

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. McGhee *moved to* approve the agenda of August 16, 2021

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

DISCUSSION

None

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

Old Business:

Ordinance 21-15, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska to approve up to \$150,000 for the removal and treatment of stockpiled sewer sludge at the Wastewater Treatment Plant by US Ecology

Seconded by Ms. Welch

Discussion

None

On the amendment

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the Agenda as amended

Discussion

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes for August 2, 2021 will be available on the September 7, 2021 meeting

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- Visited with Marathon Oil and the project team. Attached is the City of North Pole Combined Heat and Power Plant project. This project could be shovel ready by May 2022.
- Attended the 15th Annual Renewable Energy Fair at Chena Hot Springs. Pamphlet is attached.
- Amy Geiger from **Explore Fairbanks** informed council on things going on with the tourism industry. She handed out pamphlets to the council and stated that they usually hand out over 40,000 a year. The North Pole Festival is included in the pamphlet along with other businesses and pictures.
- Mayor Welch stated that Safeway wanted to know if they could use our City logo. CS&G said that the City Council needed to approve the use of it. They also said that it could look like we are endorsing the business and

- Major General Wilcox will be at City Hall on Tuesday, August 24, 2021 at 11:00 a.m. to thank the City for the water system at Moose Creek.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

Ms. Welch stated that she would like to see the report that Ms. Greiger had that was in a different language.

Mr. McGhee asked the Chief of Police about the pay scale adjustments. Chief Dutra stated that there were people in his department that were not in the right pay range. He said those corrections were in the budget. Mr. McGhee asked the Mayor why those changes weren't allowed.

The Mayor said there was updated the council on what took place on that subject. He stated that the employees did get there 3% in the new year.

Mr. McGhee asked were the city stood on Municipal Solutions and where the City was at that time.

Mayor Welch said he has dealt with all departments. He will email this to Councilmen Perry and McGhee to take the data and decide what needs to be done. The Policy Manual is 97% complete. Mayor Welch stated that the city is not doing Phase 3.

August 23, 2021 – City Clerk interview starting at 5:30 p.m.

August 24, 2021- Committee 4:00 p.m. - Total Compensation Committee

Mr. McGhee *moved to* appoint Kathryn Weber as the part time City Clerk

Seconded by Mr. Claus

Discussion

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Fire Dept., Chief Heineken

- The new fence along the North side of the fire station has been completed. Last Frontier Fence Company did a great job, the fence looks great and provides a safe environment for

the fire department by eliminating the pedestrian walk throughs that have been occurring this summer.

- Hydrant testing will begin Monday Aug 23rd. Citizens on the city water system could see some color changes in the water due to the high volume flows in the system. All testing will be concluded by September 3rd.
- Planning for the State Firefighters Conference is underway, the conference is being held in Fairbanks this year. Captain Sam Sanders is part of the Conference Command staff as the logistics officer. Firefighters from all over the state will be in the Fairbanks area training during the conference. The conference planners have been working hard and have a live fire training planned using an acquired structure on Peger road in Fairbanks. We are very proud of the Captain Sanders stepping up and taking on a large role in the conference command staff.
- The fire department was very busy in July with the largest number of calls within a month we have seen. Our staff provided service for 149 calls in the month of July. August numbers have normalized some, we predict with population increases the fire department will continue to see a steady rise in emergency responses.
- The council asked Police Chief Dutra about his thoughts on the PERS retirement system and the effort to return public safety employees to a defined benefit plan. As the Fire Chief I would like to add to the conversation, HB55 has passed the House and is now waiting for the Senate. The Fire Department is a strong supporter of HB55, currently Captain Hamlin and I are the only fire department employees left on the PERS Tier3 retirement plan that provides retirement eligibility after 20-25 years of service. All other fire department staff are Tier4, under this plan they would need to work into their 60's before having adequate funds available to retire. Public Safety jobs such as police and fire are tremendously hard on the individual physically and mentally. HB55 would bring these employees into a new PERS defined benefit retirement allowing them to retire at an appropriate age.
- The Mayor asked that I report on the AML Defense Forum, I had the privilege to attend the Forum. The company, food and speakers were all great. The forum provided very high level national experts via zoom to talk with everyone in attendance about the importance of the arctic concerning national security. Alaska is the United States only Arctic region and therefore is a vital region of importance to the nation. The conference had a very tight schedule with many speakers covering a wide range of topics. Alaska communities and the Department of Defense obviously have common goals for working together here in Alaska.

Mr. McGhee asked about fire hydrants that do not have city water and sewer.

Chief Heineken stated that he needed to get together with Bill Butler when he returns.

Ms. Welch stated that she lives in a part of the City that does not have hydrants and asked how far the NPPD can reach from a hydrant.

Chief Heineken explained how their fire trucks and tankers can fill and can ask for help from other departments.

Police Dept., Chief Dutra

- Lt. Lindhag has decided to withdraw his retirement and stay on at NPPD. We could not be happier to have him back in the saddle. He will be out of office until October 1 when he will return to full duty.
- Our new Motorola portable radios have arrived. All officers have now been issued new radios from the old radios from 2006.
- We have two officers enrolled in EVOG Instructor course. Much needed really large shortage throughout the area. Lt. Lindhag and I are the only two.
- Memorial Park event went well. Thank you for all those who attended. Black Hawk Works and Down to Earth Landscaping deserve a big thanks for grass seeding and stump grinding.
- Vehicle involved in MVA is being repaired. There is a \$500 deductible.
- While I was on vacation, we had a quiet couple of weeks. Still a lot of officers on and off vacation during the summer, causing more than normal 12-hour shifts. I want to publicly thank all those officers and their families for the added burden they take on when these things happen.
- We are moving forward with our Recruitment video production. Contract will come to council at next meeting and funds are being moved from training/travel.
- Just a reminder recently released data shows more officers killed to date by felonious assault in 2021 than in all last year. Stunning and concerning.
- Hiring. We have one person with experience who has expressed interest all others still have not completed proper paperwork. We need to find a solution to the pay scale soon. We have more outreach than we have had ever before and recruits are harder to find. This is our second year without an academy recruit new hire. ZipRecruiter job listings up.
- Stats – no major issues again relatively normal.
- Ofc. Tibbetts attending child abduction seminar we will be working to update response to these events.

See attached statistics

Mr. McGhee stated that vandals had put graffiti on dumpsters in North Pole. He contacted the police dept. and proceeded to spray paint the dumpster to delete the graffiti.

Mayor Welch asked Chief Dutra if they could put speed signs on St. Nicholas Dr and make 30 mph throughout that street.

Mayor Welch asked Chief Dutra about a complaint within the City concerning Meth.

Mayor Welch stated that Mr. Satterberg stated that one of our police officers/detectives did a great job testifying.

Ms. Welch commented on the PERS tier 4 & 5.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

None

Director of City Services, Bill Butler

None

Borough Representative

Citizen's Comments... Most about the mask mandate for the borough Assy Chamber only... All asked for assembly to NOT pass the resolution.

Report from the School Board Representative.: School starts 18, normal operation, no masks required. Please check with your school for start times as they have changed.

Mayor Ward: Covid update: The incidence command is still at a stand-down.

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-05, Rezone off Gilmore. The consensus was that rezone would bring into compliance of some properties but then put others out of didn't pass

ORDINANCE NO. 2021-15, Pertaining to Animal Control

The most important part of this was to enforce rescue organizations (RO) to report the intake of any animals within 2 days, as to ensure owners with lost pets only have one place to check. One amendment removed the requirement of RO's

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-30, A Resolution Requiring The Wearing Of Masks In The Mona Lisa Drexler Assembly Chambers When The State Of Alaska COVID-19 Resident Cases Alert Level Is High. (Sponsor: Assembly member O'Neill).

The comments were all for voting down, however the assembly voted 5-4 passing it. Mayor Ward reminded the assembly that the borough does not have health related powers, and that he does have Veto powers. He vetoed the resolution Friday morning.

City Clerk's Office, Kathryn Weber

- Thank you for appointing me as your part-time City Clerk. It is an honor to be back here serving the public again and the council.
- Working on updating the City Code book as it has not been updated since March 2021.
- Organizing Minutes, Ordinances, Resolutions and making sure that everything is signed and has the city seal. Also organizing the computer files for the City Clerk.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Total Compensation Committee – Mayor Welch updated council on the status of the report from Government Solutions.

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

None

OLD BUSINESS

Consented Agenda
Comments - None

NEW BUSINESS

None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Skipps – no comment

Mr. Cromer- no comment

Mr. Claus – stay safe and thank you

Ms. Welch – no comment

Mr. McGhee –thanked Councilman Cromer and Councilman Claus for coming to the meeting tonight and wearing their masks. Appreciates seeing people in person for debate and the ability to have conversations. Encouraged council to read the code of ordinances and stated that it is a living document and that the council can change it at any time to adjust with the changing times. He has been a stickler with the code. We have made a number of mistakes and making any kind of comment or on whether we can or cannot do without backing it with code. The pay scale is a big part of the code and it's councils responsibility to review code. He appreciates the fire and police departments for everything they do. He doesn't think he could get up every morning and put on a

vest or fire equipment to save people's lives every day.

Mr. Walley – no comment

Mayor Welch – on the dumpster graffiti , there are also people who have inappropriate things on their property like those on Badger Rd on the president and vice-president. If someone wants to put it in the front yard he hopes they know what kind of a message they are sending the younger generation. He did pass that particular inappropriate message on to the borough. Mr. Welch stated that he is serving to the best of his ability and knowledge.

Mr. McGhee *moved to adjourn the meeting at 9:23 p.m.*

Seconded by Ms. Welch

The regular meeting of Monday, August 16, 2021 adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, September 7, 2021.

Michael Welch, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kathryn Weber, MMC
North Pole City Clerk