



**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, January 18, 2022, via Zoom.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, January 18, 2022, to order at 7:00 p.m.

**Present:**

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

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG**

Led by Melissa Dionne

**INVOCATION**

Given by Mr. Keller

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mr. Claus *moved to* approve the agenda of January 18, 2022

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. Claus *moved to* amend the agenda of January 18, 2022 to consent the following items:

Old Business:

New Business:

- b. Resolution 22-06 A Resolution of the City of North Pole, Alaska, To Approve the Developer Agreement Between the City and Stepping Stones Builders for the Construction of Water, Sewer, and Road Facilities in Lot B-2 Eagle as a Site for Muti-Family Housing

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

**On the amendments  
DISCUSSION**

None

**PASSED**

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

No: 0

**On the agenda as amended**

**DISCUSSION**

None

**PASSED**

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

No: 0

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Mr. Claus *moved* to approve the minutes from the 1/3/22 meeting

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

**DISCUSSION**

None

**PASSED**

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

No: 0

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR**

- Dr. Dominique Pride with the Alaska Center for Energy and Power, UAF, was with us to talk about the electric thermal storage heater project that she is working on in the North Pole City area.

The Council asked a few questions of Dr Pride and gave her some advice on outreach in the area.

- The Mayor said that he had some good news tonight from Senator Murkowski to pass along, but that he couldn't until the morning and told the Council to look forward to that.
- The City is challenged right now due to the amount of snow we have gotten so far this year, the Mayor said that he has never seen this in his 22 years. The governor declared an emergency and FEMA is going to be here in February and he has tasked him with trying to figure out how much money the OT and equipment breakdowns has cost the city. As well as the money needed for removing the snow that is building up in the Stillmeyer, Northstar, and Eagle Estates, Ford and Highway Parks subdivisions along with another large area are going to cost over \$1.5 million just for the removal.

Mr. Skipps asked where the removed snow would be going. The Mayor responded that we have a quote from Hubbard on the snow removal and they will be taking to snow to a property that they own, which is here in the city, so that will help keep the cost of this project down.

- The Mayor shared that since the last NPCC meeting he has been out to EAFB to talk to General Willsbach and the advisory board to talk about the military and the housing needs for the area. There will be a resolution to the Council soon allowing AIDEA to do the infrastructure in Brookside Park.
- 3 Bears is moving forward with their plan to buy land in Brookside Park, the store will be a larger store

then what it is Healy.

- The Legislative Session is starting soon, the Mayor plans on going in February, but AK Airlines is canceling flights into Juneau due to COVID, so his plans might change.

## COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- Mr. Skippy asked about the Utility Manager position that the city is hiring for and asked about the changes with Mr. Butler leaving and if the code is going to be changed to accommodate the change in management.

The Mayor responded with some background on the management change with Mr. Butlers job and the future changes the city has in the works.

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

### Police Dept., Chief Dutra

- Chief Dutra did not have anything formal for the meeting but did thank the Fire Department for having COVID tests for the City employees. They have had quiet a few police officers test positive.

### Fire Dept., Chief Heineken

- Chief Heineken talked about the 2 positions that they have posted right now, they hope to start the process for those positions next month.
- COVID is on an upswing in the community. In the last few weeks, they had one person that just came back from being sick and a new one that is out now. They have been trying to keep tests on hand for everyone, but not have too many because they expire quickly. Any city employee can contact the fire dept and get tested and results are available within 30 minutes or so.
- FMH has been unable to offer ambulance services back to the patients houses for patients who are bedridden and have no way of getting back home and they have asked for help from the local fire departments. Chief Heineken said that unfortunately they just do not have the staff availability to help with this. It would take 2 staff away for approximately 2 hours and for a non-emergency call, that is just too much for them.
- Chief Heineken said that he is working on the specs for a new ambulance so that they can order it and hopefully get it by Spring 2023. He will have it together for the Council soon.

The Mayor asked when we were going to hear about the contract that we have with the borough.

- Chief Heineken said that he would check into that because it should be coming up soon, as the borough is on the July FY schedule, and this contract should be in place by May.

### Director of City Services, Bill Butler

#### Building Dept

- No new building permits issued since November 15, 2021.
- Will be proposing updating the Building Department's building codes, possibly as early as the February 7 Council meeting, to parallel the building codes in Fairbanks.

### Public Works

- Public Works has been preoccupied with snow removal since the late December 2021 storms.
- Exploring the costs to remove snow from most heavily impacted subdivisions.
- Public works snow removal equipment was overwhelmed by the snow event.
  - Skid steer loader that is over 10 years old has significant hydraulic leaks.
  - Mini loader is undersized to deal with the work we tried to do the keep ahead of the snow and it experienced some damage.
  - Pricing a larger loader in anticipation of future large snowfall events.

### Utility Dept

#### Utility

- The Utility was challenged by the power outages during the later December snow event, but they were able to cope, especially with snow removal help from Public Works.
- The December snow even has resulted in the Utility seeing the need for more robust snow removal equipment. Public Works has its own priorities and will not always be able to assist the Utility, especially over the Utility's wide-spread service area.
  - The Utility is pricing a loader and trailer in anticipation of future large snowfall event.
- Industrial Pretreatment Permits for the three North Pole industries expire on July 31, 2022 and work has begun to re-issue these permit.
  - A professional services agreement has been provided by NTL Alaska to assist the City with this effort. The agreement was submitted too late to be include on this agenda.
- Begun discussions with NTL Alaska and Stantec to develop a plan to make the case to ADEC to reconsider when there is loss of surface flow in the discharge channel to authorize the channel as an intermittent stream that functions as a conveyance channel.
  - The Clean Water Act allows discharge to intermittent stream similar to what the City experiences, but the ADEC previously denied this concept. This time the idea is to make a "full-court press" for this approach. With the possibility of even going as far as a legal challenge to ADEC.

#### Moose Creek

- 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. Skippo asked about the city generators and how the city was able to use them and if they were enough that were needed.

- Mr. Butler responded that they were lucky enough that they did not have to do much moving around of the generators and that they worked out okay. He did say that space was limited on having the vehicles and generators being inside the garage.

Ms. Welch asked about the generator storage situation and where the generators are located when they are

being used.

- Mr. Butler said that the generators being outside while being used is not an issue.

#### Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty left the meeting early because she was not feeling well. She encouraged the Council to email her should they have any questions.

#### Borough Representative

- Ms. Welch said that the borough meeting was held last Thursday, January 14<sup>th</sup>.
- The main topic was the winter storms that hit the Interior.
- The borough is working on their annual budget.
- The school board will be meeting in a few days to talk about moving 6<sup>th</sup> graders into middle schools and closing a few of the elementary schools. Voting will take place at the first meeting in February.
- Ord 21-40 was of interest to the City of North Pole, to rezone Lot 1A, block 2, of the City of North Pole subdivision Phase 2, from 2 family residential to general commercial. It is the property that City Hall is located. The vote was quick and the ordinance was passed.
- The borough also changed their Ethics code regarding assembly members taking borough positions. Previously they were discluded from employment because of their assembly positions. The code was reworded to allow them access to non-permanent positions with limited hours.

#### City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne told the Council members that she had sent them an invite for a work session that the borough is hosting regarding light pollution. It will be held in person and via Zoom on January 25<sup>th</sup> at 5:30.
- Ms. Dionne gave an update about the HR and Utility Manager positions and the closing dates. As well as the Council position that is currently open to replace Mr. McGhee.
- She also spoke about some potential trainings the in the works and a few conferences that she is looking into.

#### ON GOING PROJECTS

- None

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

- None

#### NEW BUSINESS

- a. Resolution 22-05 A Resolution Establishing the City of North Pole's Legislative Priorities for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Legislature 2022 Regular Session
- Chief Dutra said that he does not have a formal presentation for this. It is a priority for the city since 2018 and was identified in 2010 as a necessity. The Legislature gave us \$250,000 in 2019. A property has been identified, the piece of land has been presented to the Borough Mayor for his support and they are hoping that it moves through the Borough assembly quickly. They do have a few other alternative

lots identified as well. Chief Dutra said that it took APD 3 separate funding cycles to fully fund their range, so he knows that this is a long-term process, and we need to start collecting money now so that we are ready when the okay for the land happens. There is a business plan in place outlining the \$6 million project. Chief Dutra said that he would get the business plan to the Council.

- The Mayor spoke a little about the combined heat and power plant and the sewer extension project that are also on the priorities resolution. Along with the PERS request.

c. **MOU - DOL and NPPD Regarding Exculpatory Information in Personnel Files**

- Chief Dutra spoke about this MOU and what it covered. It authorizes the Attorney General to provide the background info (personnel file) of police officers to the defense attorney in criminal cases that are prosecuted. It would allow defense attorneys to use negative information in the police officers background to discredit them in trial. The agreement, Chief Dutra said, is really being forced upon all police departments because if they refuse to sign it the Attorney General could refuse to prosecute their cases in a court of law. He did say that none of our police officers have any risks in releasing their files, so there won't be any issue.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- Mr. Skipps reminded everyone that the annual APOC paperwork for council members is due at the beginning of March
- Ms. Welch spoke of the roads to and from North Pole and thanked them for all their hard work.
- Mr. Claus thanked the healthcare providers and first responders and asked everyone to be careful driving and walking out there.
- The Mayor told everyone that he will be out at EAFB on the 25<sup>th</sup> to go see the arrival of the 49<sup>th</sup> F35.

Mr. Keller *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Ms Welch

The regular meeting of Monday, January 18, 2022 adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

**These minutes passed and approved** by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, January 18, 2022.

**ATTEST:**

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Melissa Dionne, City Clerk