



**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, April 4, 2022, via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, April 4, 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
Jeffrey Jacobson
David Skippis

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Ellen Glabb

INVOCATION

Given by Jeffrey Jacobson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Claus *moved to* approve the agenda of April 4, 2022

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. Claus *moved to* amend the agenda of April 4, 2022 to consent the following items:

Old Business:

- a. Ordinance 22-08 An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Amend the 2022 General Operating Budget to Expense the Final Encumbered COVID 19 Grant Funds

New Business:

- a. NPDF Request for Approval to Accept a \$5000.00 Grant Award from VFA
- b. Utility Charge Off

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the amendments

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, Jacobson, Skippis, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the agenda as amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, Jacobson, Skippis, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the minutes from the 3/15/22 meeting

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Claus, Keller, Cromer, Jacobson, Skippis, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor talked about us partnering with AIDA on the housing project. A 36-acre parcel on Homestead has been identified that will work for this project. \$5,000 earnest money was put down on the parcel for the \$250,000 asking price.
- April 10-13 Mayor Welch will be traveling to Anchorage to attend meetings regarding general obligation bonds, infrastructure opportunities and for energy and housing. Some of it is being put on by the Alaska Municipal League, some by the Governor's office and some by Senator Murkowski. There is also a possibility that he will be able to talk to the senator from W. Virginia who will be with Murkowski.
- The Mayor asked Santa Claus to cover the staff meeting on Tuesday since he will be gone. Mr. Claus agreed.
- April 13 is the arrival of the last F-35's to EAFB. He said that he would let the Council know if they could attend this arrival.
- He also let everyone know that May 13th at 5:30 there is a celebration for the stand up of the F-35 wing.
- The Mayor was also let everyone know that the Grad Bash on May 10th out at the Ben Eielson High School. On April 30th from 10-4 representatives from the high school will be out in the city to 'pass the boot' around for donations to the high school. They are raising money for the graduation, but also to purchase college supplies for their graduates. Any questions about these events can be directed to Tamara Hall at

907-385-7464.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- IT – List of 20 questions forwarded to IT regarding data breach. Meeting was too be held today but did not receive answers till 1018 so postponed till later this week on the 6th.
- Two new cars have been paid for and are enroute to California.
- Seeking companies to do evaluation of new addition contamination from sewer backup.
- Police Memorial Day will ceremony be at the Memorial Park on the 13th of May at 11:00 am. APOA is sponsoring the event, we will provide food, weather permitting.
- I am scheduled to attend Crime Conference in Anchorage for APOA, APSC and AACOP meetings and training at beginning of May.
- Thank you Councilman Claus and Councilman Skippis for touring the new facility. We would like to invite others to come anytime they can.
- Chief Dutra also gave a thank you to Ms. Fogarty and her team for all the hard work that they are doing with the conversion.

The Mayor ask Chief Dutra to give an update for an events that are happening soon.

- Late July will be the Memorial Ceremony for Fallen Hero's, typically it is the 27th. He will keep us updated.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- The Fire Department has scheduled its open house for May 21st. Due to COVID we have not conducted an open house since May of 2019. We look forward to opening our station and sharing it with the community.
- Engine 25 has been out of service for maintenance over the last week and a half. A water leak was found to be coming from plumbing that had extensive internal wear due to electrolysis and erosion. The repair is being handled in house and should be complete sometime this week.
- Captain Sanders and Chief Heineken were supposed to leave tonight to travel to Appleton, Wisconsin, but Alaska Airlines canceled their flight. This trip was for meetings with factory engineers to go over drawing and specifications they have developed for the new fire truck. The forecasted completion date is in December with delivery to North Pole around February next year. The Chief has had reports from other fire departments that manufactures are now giving a 24 month build time for new orders. He feels North Pole ordered this apparatus just early enough to get ahead of some of the supply issues causing manufacturing delays. They are rescheduling this trip to leave next Monday, April 11.

Mr. Skippis asked the Chief if this delay with him going to Wisconsin is going to delay the manufacturing the truck.

- Chief Heineken said that no, he asked and was told that just 1 week is not going to delay anything.

Ms. Fogarty asked if the company that is manufacturing the truck is paying for the travel arrangements.

- Chief Heineken said that yes, they are handling everything and got them all rescheduled on flights next week.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty said that she sent everyone financials for the months of January and February. The report was done through Tyler and looks a little different than they are used to.
- The utility billing module that they are bringing online is not going so well right now. They need to reevaluate things and make a few changes before they can move completely over to Tyler.
- They spoke to Gary Hutchens at the CPA firm that does the Cities audit last week and they agreed to wait till the 22nd of April to get them things. She will be shifting her focus over to the audit in the coming weeks to get that done.

The Mayor asked how much of the Tyler conversion is left and said that those should be easy conversions.

- Ms. Fogarty said that after the utility there is sales taxes and business licenses and those should be done after June. Moving forward there is a lot less double entry which is going to make things easier and quicker.

The Mayor asked about the financials that she sent to the Council.

- Ms. Fogarty said that the financials she sent do not include that sales tax info, that info has not come from the bank yet nor is that module conversion completed in Tyler yet, so therefore is not included. That is a big portion of our revenue, so we don't have the big picture here.

CITY SERVICES

- Mayor Welch filled in here in the absence of a Director of City Services.
- He has been working with HC on the snow removal project. As of the end of the first week 23,970 cubic yards of snow have been removed from the Patriot, Holiday, and Homestead neighborhoods. They are averaging 4,000 cubic yards of snow a day. HC did note that we overestimated the number of cubic yards that would come out of Stillmeyer Estates. Their snowblower had an equipment malfunction and that shut them down for a few days. HC also had a truck on 3/29 that broke down in the middle of the crazy weather that we were having. The Mayor asked HC to make sure that the oil mess they left there was cleaned up.
- The new front loader that the City ordered is in and the Mayor asked them to expedite the delivery to us so that we have it available for use now.
- He gave everyone an update on the new applicants for the Director of City Services position. He hopes that we will be able to interview again soon. He will update the Council as he can. He did say that we are going to add in relocation monies to help with the cost of a move if the person that we chose is out of state.

- He has been working with the Boundary Commission regarding the new parcel of land that the city is trying to purchase for the project with AIDA. We need to consider how to annex that property into the city. We have 2 options, the first is to take it to the city voters the second is to take it to the legislature when they meet next year. We also need to consider the Borough's recently passed ordinance regarding that waiver of property taxes for new construction. The way that the city is set is that we will go along with what the borough does, unless we change it and that that will be a lot of revenue that we really can't afford to lose.

Mr. Jacobson asked if there were any restrictions on us buying the property now, even though it is not in the city limits and clarified that we could wait on the property annex until a later date.

- The Mayor agreed, we could go ahead and buy the property for AIDA as a goodwill gesture and move forward with the annexing into the city at a later date. The Mayor also said that we would be losing a lot of money in property taxes if we went forward with the property tax forgiveness. He will be meeting with AIDA again this week and will get the Council an update next time we meet.

Mr. Keller asked if the deal with AIDA was contingent on the land being in the city.

- The Mayor responded that no that was not necessary at this step.

Borough Representative

- Ms. Welch attended a meeting on March 24.
- One of the amendments discussed was the voluntary fuel to gas conversion for homeowners. The borough is going to do a similar program as to the one they did years ago for the woodstove swap out program.
- There was a lot of discussion about the Off-road Lions expansion of their lease at Chena Lakes recreation area. The area is set aside for off road vehicles. There has been a lot of problems with people using the area as a dumping ground. The idea is that they would extend the area set aside so then they can set up barriers and be able to control the access into the area to help eliminate the dumping of garbage.
- They also did some smaller changes like reducing the number of people of the Chena Riverfront Commission also there was a resolution supporting the bicycle paths that would go from North Pole to Salcha. The borough urged North Pole to support this as well.
- The borough received a large donation to start a library in Two Rivers. The borough had to turn down the money because the borough could not support the additional money for the project.

Ellen Glab, Human Resources Generalist

- This was Ellen's first meeting since she started. The Mayor introduced her and she gave everyone a brief background to where she is coming from.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne thanked Ms. Fogarty and her team for all their hard work in the Tyler conversion.
- She has been working the last few weeks with Code publishing making sure they have all the ordinances so they can get them published online. What she didn't realize when starting this is that they were missing

ordinances going all the way to 2020. So that has been a challenge, but she thinks she is just about done with that project now.

- Now that the city has a designated HR person, she will be working in the next few weeks to get some ordinances written to split out the City Clerk and Human Resources positions and she told everyone to be on the lookout for those.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- City Clerk Melissa Dionne included with the Council packets this week a few quotes for a new website for the City. She told the Council that she feels the current site is outdated and very simple and could be so much more. She included what she felt like were the top 2 (out of 5) Municode and Revize, both of which specialize in municipality sites. Ms. Dionne asked for the Council 's input, to send her things that they like, that they don't like about the sites from these companies but also from other sites that they may visit. She said that she will be asking the Council to decide on moving forward with choosing a company and starting the project in the next few weeks.

Mayor Welch agreed that this was a good project and something worth investing some time and money in. He said in the next few weeks we would be asking for a decision from the Council He also said that the feedback from the department heads would be sought out, as well as from HR because the website would also be a recruitment tool for us.

Ms. Welch shared that she had met with the company that hosts our current website years ago at AML and told them their site was hard to update and difficult to navigate and she said that it is something that we have struggled with and thanked the Clerk for taking on this project.

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

- None

OLD BUSINESS

- None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Ms. Welch offered a quick thank you to the volunteers that coordinated the science fair this year. She said that she is always in awe for the job that they do and asked parents to support their young scientists.
- Mr. Keller reminded everyone that the roads are still slick out there and offered a word of caution to all the drivers out there. He is excited with all the sunshine and is looking forward to seeing everyone out and about.
- Mr. Jacobson responded to Mr. Keller's comment about the roads. He said that we haven't had this much hard ice on the roads, that storm in December was hard on the roads. He gave another kudos to Ms. Fogarty's team and all their hard work. He also welcomed Ellen Glab to the team and said that he was looking forward to working with her and getting to know her. He said that he was thrilled the Ms. Dione

took on the website design project and thanked her for her for taking on the project.

- Mr. Claus warned everyone who walks on the sidewalks to be extra careful out there.
- Mayor Welch talked about the state of the roads and the HC snow removal project. He said that we are making efforts out there and he did have public works add some gravel to the road with the middle school on it. He asked Mr. Jacobson for some time before he heads down to Anchorage to talk about snow removal and public works. Mr. Jacobson invited the Mayor to come down to the City of Fairbanks public works and that they would give him a your and talk about how Fairbanks does things.

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

The regular meeting of Monday, April 4, 2022 adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, April 4, 2022.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk