



**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, July 18, 2022, via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, July 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
Jeffrey Jacobson
David Skipps

Absent/Excused:

Anton Keller

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Melissa Dionne

INVOCATION

Given by Aino Welch

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

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

Old Business:

- a. Ordinance 22-14, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Adjust the Budget to Purchase Essential Police Equipment

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

On the amendments

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A. Welch, Claus, Cromer, Jacobson, Skipps, Keller, Welch
No: 0
Absent: 0

On the agenda as amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A. Welch, Claus, Cromer, Jacobson, Keller, Skipps, Welch
No: 0
Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the 7/5/22 meeting
Seconded by Mr. Skipps

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A. Welch, Claus, Keller, Jacobson, Skipps, Keller, Welch
No:
Absent:

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- Alliance CPA's, Gary Hutchinson, gave the annual presentation of the audit.
- * Mayor Welch excused himself and asked Mayor Pro Tem Claus to continue the meeting
 - Mayor Pro Tem Santa Claus read the Proclamation for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month and the Proclamation Supporting Fire on the Ice.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- July 27th Fallen Heroes ceremony. We will move it to 4:00 pm so employees have time to clean up and close out for the day. I believe Mayor Welch will be our guest speaker.
- On July 12th we hosted Coffee with a Cop – at the Santa Claus House at 0900 – 1100 hours was a complete success. Thank you to everyone who attended and thank you to Santa Claus House for hosting. My staff did a great job setting up and speaking to public.
- Lieutenant Lindhag is due to retire September 18th and we have already started the search for a new Lieutenant.
- SDEU/HIDTA Detective has also been advertised.

- Completed a new policy update for CJIS very long process. Thank you, Rachel Wing, for all her efforts in pulling that project together.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- Wildland fire weather update
 - As reported last council meeting fireworks sales were closed during the Independence Day holiday due to the potential of wildfire. Per city code fireworks vendors can and have ask to open during Labor Day if sales are closed over the 4th of July. We have approved fireworks sales from August 22nd thru September 9th this year.
- Annual hydrant testing began Monday and will continue over the next two weeks. Each year the fire department test all hydrants within the City. Ensuring hydrants are operational and flow adequate water is essential for the fire department to prepare for potential fire operations within any given area of the city.
- The fire station bay doors have now all been replaced. New doors where ordered last November with the knowledge that it would take significant delivery time. The first 4 doors were installed in May with the remaining 3 doors being installed this last week. The supply chain delays seem to have no boundaries. We are also waiting to receive the firefighting turnout gear we ordered late in 2021.

Ms. Welch asked how Assist Chief Chambers is working out for the department.

- Chief Heineken said that Assist Chief Chambers is working out great, he is helping them catch up on projects and updates and is very grateful to have him. Chief Heineken also said that he plans on introducing most of the fire staff to the Council when we go back to in person meetings.

Finance

- Ms. Fogarty gave the Council financials prior to the meeting.
- She shared on screen a spreadsheet she created to show Sales Tax totals and said that she would keep this spreadsheet up to date to share at the second Council meeting on the month.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

Building Department

- During June and July 2022, we have issued 8 permits. These have included the following:
 - IGU – Commercial
 - Jenny’s Noodle Shop in the NP Plaza mall - Commercial
 - 2801 W 3rd Ave – Residential
 - 2942 Hurst Rd – North Pole Vet – Commercial
 - North Pole Eye Care – Commercial
 - ACS Fiber & phone line installs – Commercial
 - 2410 San Augustin – Residential
 - 708 Blanket – Gas install – Residential

Public Works Department

- PW remains busy with mowing, beautification, work on the Council Chambers and several other tasks. We've adjusted some work based on the air quality although right now, there is limited impact on work (due to the smoke).
- PW and Water Utilities are exploring options for conversions of our oil boilers to natural gas (more to follow over the next couple of months on that effort).
- The North Pole Street Lighting Project (sponsored by DOT) for the City Core area received bids last week and will move forward. They will start planning efforts later this summer and we anticipate the City Core being completed in late 2023. City funding was submitted to DOT last year, although there might be additional funding needed (estimated at less than \$20,000) due to price increases. More details on the project are available at <https://dot.alaska.gov/nreg/northpolelights/>

Utility Department

Utility

- Industrial Pretreatment Permits for the three North Pole industries have been completed and re-issued. NTL Alaska assisted with review of the applications.
- Met with DEC (Marie Klingman) on July 13 to the case to ADEC on our sewage outflow project (effluent outflow). We asked them 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.

Utility Billing

- June billing was just completed with 1,576 customers billed for water service and ____ for sewer.
- Billing included 48 delinquent customers and 19 serious delinquent ones. Our delinquent and seriously delinquent customer numbers are high due to our billing system and online payment conversions. Those on Autopay do not look at their bills as they assume they are still on Autopay. Those same customers often do not look at written City notifications.

Moose Creek

- Remaining work in 2022 includes the following:
 - HC is working on 3 remaining water service installations and decommissioning 9 wells. They anticipate this will be finished by the end of the summer.
 - Road work will continue throughout the summer.
 - Monthly reports and other administrative requirements are on track.
 - Project termination has been extended to December 31st (from August 31) 2022 to allow for all requirements to be completed. This includes water meter equipment (slated to arrive this fall) and ongoing installations and decommissioning.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

HR Update:

- Of the City's 65 employees 46 are eligible for health insurance, currently we have 41 currently enrolled in the city's health care program. We are aware of 1 who had previously had health care and who declined this year. There are 3 that didn't have the health care that enrolled in it after the changes were made.

Current staffing is:

City Hall Admin

- 7 Full time
- 1 Part-time
- 1 Open position (AP Clerk)

Public works

- 3 Full
- 3 summer hires (Ends August)

Utilities

- 5 Full Time

Fire

- 16 Full Time
- 1 Part Time
- 15 Volunteer

Police

- 15 Full Time
- 2 open positions (Lieutenant, Drug Unit Detective)

- The make up safety meeting from the missed meeting in June took place on July 7. We discussed fire safety and each department rep was asked to provide an evacuation plan for the next meeting at the end of July. They were also asked to check on the SDS (safety data sheets) and locate their copies for their departments.
- Ms. Glab also noted that progress is being made on the Employee Policy Manual. She is finishing up some documents and edits after the last meeting and is hoping to have it ready for full review soon.

Mr. Jacobson shared that he was very glad that the City employees have Ms. Glab helping them take advantage of the benefits.

Borough Representative

- Ms. Welch said that she did not attend a meeting since the last NPCC meeting.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne updated the Council on a PIO training that she recently attended. She said that she has been looking around for some certifications for the PIO part of her job.
- Elections have been taking up a little bit of tie. She will be walking in the Golden Days parade with the City of Fairbanks and FNSB clerks this coming weekend getting out information on pen seats and dates to file

by. They are also working on the pamphlet to get information on those running to the voters and thanked the Council for their support on that ordinance.

- She also reminded the Council that City Hall will be closed starting Friday at 1:00pm and will reopen Monday at 1:00pm.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- Explore Fairbanks wanted to be with us tonight to introduce their new “Aurora Viewing Map & Guide”, it highlights the best spots to view the aurora in the winter months in the area and in North Pole. The Clerk shared it on screen in their absence. Copies are available at City Hall.

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

- None

New Business

- a. Ordinance 22-15, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Amend Title 3.16, Qualifications for Elective Office

Ms. Welch *moved* to introduce Ordinance 22-15
Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

Ms. Welch *moved* to Amend the wording in Section C to say ‘The biographical information and the non-partisan position statement combined may not be more than 400 words’.
Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

On the Ordinance as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No:

Absent: 1 – Mayor Welch

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No:

Absent: 1 – Mayor Welch

New Business

- b. Dispute of Customer Utility Bill

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to postpone the question until 8/1/22

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No:

Absent: 1 – Mayor Welch

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Jacobson said that he was uncomfortable making the decision on the customer dispute tonight and glad that we postponed it, to be able to consider it further. He feels with the number of new customers that we are going to have soon and maybe we should think about putting some things in place now to help them out. He asked that Ms. Welch please keep us updated on the mayor's health when she has some more information.
- Mr. Keller agreed with Mr. Jacobson saying that this is a good opportunity for us to set a standard for these issues moving forward. He said that he has had one of his children leave a faucet on overnight before, so he understands that, but he said that we also have to consider the wellbeing of the utility. He has been traveling the last few weeks and said he is very happy to live in Alaska and in North Pole.
- Ms. Welch said that she is happy to have the mayor back with us tonight and thanked everyone for their concern. She said that she is looking forward to spending some time with the Fire on the Ice people the next few days. She asked everyone to enjoy the rain and be safe.
- Mr. Skipps also agreed with the postponement of the dispute of the utility customer, he would like a little more info before deciding. He reminded everyone to stay safe.
- Mr. Cromer welcomed the mayor back to the meeting and shared that it was his birthday this last weekend and said that he was looking forward to the fair next week.
- Mr. Claus also welcomed the mayor back and thanked everyone for bearing with him as he took over the meeting tonight.
- The Mayor thanked the firefighters and their captain for taking care of him tonight. He also thanked Chief Heineken for sending them over to help him. He reminded everyone that the Fire on The Ice festival is this week, and that the AML summer session is coming up and if anyone on the Council would like to attend to please let the City Clerk know.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

The regular meeting of Monday, July 18, 2022 adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

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

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk