



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 1, 2022, via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, August 1, 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 Mayor Welch

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the agenda of August 1, 2022

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to amend the agenda of August 1, 2022, to consent the following items:

Old Business

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

And to remove the following items:

- b. Dispute of Customer Utility Bill

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

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 7/18/22 meeting

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No:

Absent:

Abstained: Welch

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor shared that he did spend some time at KJNP for the Fire on the Ice during the festival that they had. There were around 300 people that came out for the 6 nights.
- Coming up this week he is working on the environmental and legal issues that the city is facing currently. He will be meeting with our lawyers at CSG and he invited the Council to attend with him should they desire.
- He shared that he will be traveling to Anchorage and Wasilla to meet with Latitude 63 and 3 Bears Corp., as well the Mayor of Nenena on August 9/10.
- He also let the Council know that the staff meetings have changed from Tuesday at 11 to Mondays at 3:00pm to accommodate timelines with the newspaper.
- Mayor Welch also let everyone know that he will be traveling August 16 and 17th to be on a panel for a UAF project relating to drones and airspace.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Chief Dutra gave a brief update on the Fallen Heroes Memorial Service that the NPPD hosted recently. He said that although it was attended by as many people as he would have liked that it went well. He thanked his staff as well as the Fire Department and Public Works for their hard work in set up and making it happen.
- Chief reported that TVSA was looking for some help writing a grant to the NRA and he volunteered to help. The grant is a match grant, so the FPD and NPPD will be giving \$5,000 each to help convert the TVSA range to a 25 yard range. They will be working with TVSA to coordinate if it acceptable to them. Although this is not a long term fix for their shooting needs it does help.

The Mayor asked how recruitment for the open positions is going.

- Chief said that there were a few promising officers moving up in the process. There were 2 that made it through for the Lieutenant position and that process has been started.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- New fire engine update: We have received notification from Hughes Fire and Equipment that the new fire engine on orders completion date has been moved from December to early March 2023. We have been in regular communications with the manufacture, and this is not an unexpected delay, and is due to the supply chain inconsistencies. This delay is of a small benefit as we prefer not to ship and in service a new pumping apparatus in below freezing temperatures due to the possibility of freeze up damages.
- The fire department would like to thank the police department for organizing and conducting last week's ceremonies at the memorial park. As always, their staff went above and beyond and should be recognized for their efforts.
- Last but not least I would like to share with the City Council and the citizens of North Pole a little bit of information about the greater Fairbanks/North Pole area emergency service. The North Pole Fire Department through mutual aid agreements and our EMS contract are part of something much larger than our individual fire department. All of the area fire departments work together to support each other, we plan together, we train together, we socialize together and most importantly we work together during large scale emergencies.

The value and the strength gained from these partnerships were highlighted on the other side of Fairbanks recently when the Ester Vol. Fire Department had an interruption in their insurance policy that was required by contract with the Borough. You may have heard about this situation or read about it in the newspaper. The surrounding fire service literally overnight developed a plan to ensure the citizens of Ester were not without emergency response. The closest neighboring fire department, Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue stepped up for two weeks under a temporary contract and provided emergency services allowing the Ester VFD time to gain the necessary insurance policy and step back into the role of serving their community.

I bring this to your attention today to reinforce the confidence you have in your fire department. Unexpected circumstances or large emergencies can quickly overwhelm local resources. Your fire

Minutes

department is part of an outstanding group of emergency service personnel throughout the interior that partner together to provide for the greater good of the whole community. During the onset of COVID the interior fire service developed plans to cover emergency responses in the event staffing at a single station all contracted COVID at the same time. The first two weeks of January 2021 over half of our fire department staff contracted COVID, the remaining healthy staff at North Pole worked diligently but could only maintain a single unit response during this time. Through the predeveloped plan with our partnering agencies our City never went without emergency services during this time.

The citizens of North Pole can rest easy with the knowledge that they have a great fire department, outstanding emergency responders, and in the event that our fire department or personnel are overwhelmed we have partnerships established that will ensure that emergency services remain adequate and in place.

I would like to publicly thank our partner organizations,

North Star Vol. Fire Department

Salcha Fire & Rescue

Eielson Fire Department

Ft. Wainwright Fire Department

Fairbanks Fire Department

Steese Vol. Fire Department

University Fire Department

Ester Vol. Fire Department

Chena Goldstream Fire & Rescue

Fairbanks Emergency Communication Center

Your fire department and are partner organizations are dedicated to making sure someone is coming to your families aid if and whenever needed.

The Mayor thanked the Chief for being present at the Fallen Heroes Memorial Ceremony and for representing the NFPD. He asked Chief Heineken asked about the 911 emergency system going down recently.

- Chief Heineken briefed the Council that the Mayor was talking about the Emergency 911 system was down for 2 hours last week due to the backup generator failing. He said that the borough briefed everyone just today, they are looking into a backup for the backup generator currently. He said that all the Chief officers were busy that night and receiving emergency calls to landlines and from walk ins. He said that they also reverted to the old radio system. He said that they learned a lot about the system and will take those lessons moving forward.

Finance

- Ms. Fogarty gave the Council an update on the audit, the Mayor gave his response last week and the audit should be bound soon and copies will be available at the next meeting.

The Mayor asked about the financial statements.

- Ms. Fogarty said that she will be giving them to the Council the second meeting of the month. She said that they are almost caught up and the financials that she will have next meeting should be up to date.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

- Mr. Wallace has been out for the last 2 weeks. He was at the Army War College doing leadership training, he said that it was a good experience and that he will be back in the office tomorrow morning.
- He shared that he stayed in constant contact with the Public Works and Utility Supervisor while he was out. They continue to focus on key areas of outfall, infrastructure, and continuing summer operations. The summer hires are still working and will be with us until mid-August.

The Mayor welcomed back Mr. Wallace and gave him an update that his staff did a great job while he was out and that the carpet installation was completed. He said that there was an issue with the trim that was installed, but that they are coming by tomorrow to fix it. He said that we need to buckle down and get the chambers cleaned up because the special election is coming up and we will be using the Chambers to set up for voting.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- I have spent a good part of the last 2 weeks working with the police department on preparation for hiring and other items. This has taken a substantial amount of time.
- I have worked with Tricia, we have hired a new AP Clerk to start Aug 15th, her name is Sally Terch.
- I will be scheduling the next Policy review shortly along with the next safety meeting.

Borough Representative

- There was a meeting July 28th.
- One of the things that took a lot of time was a property that asked for the property tax exemption. They realized that there was a wording discrepancy about when the building can start if they need to wait till the waiver is granted or not. The Assembly postponed the vote.
- The voter information pamphlet was passed.
- There was a lot of discussion about some extra money in the budget. Some will be going to Pioneer Park and updating the sewer and electric there.
- The borough is finishing up construction on Hunter elementary school as well as getting the plans for the Noel Wein library. The rifle range is running a little behind with those renovations, it should be done at the end of August. The new Southside dog park is open.
- There was a lot of vandalism at Griffin Park recently and it will be closed for the rest of the year.
- The 9-8-8 suicide prevention emergency system is now up and running.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne updated the Council on the website. The kickoff meeting took place last week. Ellen Glab, Tammy and Michelle with the Fire Department and Melanie with PW/Utilities were all in attendance. She gave a shout out to Michelle and Tammy for the pictures that they sent. They will be used in the development of the site and a few were printed to hang in the chambers as well.

- Ms. Dionne said that she will be attending a PIO training in October that is being held by the Dept. of Homeland Security.
- She also gave an update on the 2 candidates the turned in applications for the 2 open seats, Jeffrey Jacobson and Chandra Clack.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- Ms. Dionne gave an update on the Chambers. Alaska Universal productions is still waiting on some of the products to arrive. She reported that we are also setting up an office in the Chambers. It is being designed by the Glass Doctor and should be installed in September.

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

- None

Ms. Welch *moved* to suspend the rules for 5 minutes.

Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

New Business

- a. Ordinance 22-16, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Amend the 2022 Operating Budget

Mr. Claus *moved* to approve Ordinance 22-16

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

- b. Approval of Mutual Development Agreement Between the City of North Pole and AIDEA for the Howard Property

* Renee Broker, with CSG, was with us tonight to advise on this issue.

Mayor Welch *moved* to go into an executive session to have a candid discussion with our City Attorney regarding matters that may immediately and significantly impact our city's finances specifically to a propose mutual development agreement for the Howard property to include negotiations strategies and advice regarding the risk and benefits of proposed language.

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch/Mr. Claus

The Council *moved* into executive session at 8:36 p.m.

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to end the Executive Session

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

The Council returned from Executive Session at 9:48 p.m.

Ms. Welch *moved* to extend the time of the meeting out until 10:20 p.m.

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to Amend the Mutual Development Agreement between the City of North Pole and AIDEA for the Howard Property to add to section 4C 'Initial infrastructure will include city water and sewer, paved roads and streetlights.'

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

On the Ordinance as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 1 – A. Welch

Absent: 0

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Jacobson thanked everyone for staying up late and feels like we hashed out some concerns.
- Mr. Keller said that he hopes that the citizens realize how much effort the Council is putting into the decisions that they make for the city and wishes more citizens would participate and come to the meetings to comment on the decisions.
- Ms. Welch talked a bit about the fair and reminded everyone that they should get out and participate in it and gave a shout out to the Lane Family and all the effort they put into it.
- Mr. Claus reminded everyone that voting takes place on the 16th of August.
- Mr. Mayor appreciated the reminder and will be taking advantage of the early voting since he will be traveling.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

The regular meeting of Monday, August 1, 2022 adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, August 1, 2022.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk