



**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 15, 2022, via Zoom.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, August 15, 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  
Anton Keller

**Absent/Excused:**

David Skipps

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

Led by Melissa Dionne

**INVOCATION**

Given by Mayor Welch

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Ms. Welch *moved to* approve the agenda of August 15, 2022

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

Ms. Welch *moved to* amend the agenda of August 15, 2022, to consent the following items:

**Old Business**

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

**New Business:**

- b. Ordinance 22-18, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Amend the Police Department 2022 Budget
- d. Approval of Contract with Long Technologies
- e. Request to Write Off Utility Balance

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

## On the amendments

### DISCUSSION

None

### PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: Skippis

## On the agenda as amended

### DISCUSSION

None

### PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: Skippis

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the 8/1/22 meeting

Seconded by Mr. Claus

### DISCUSSION

None

### PASSED

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

No:

Absent: Skippis

## COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor shared that he and Ms. Welch traveled to Anchorage on August 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. While there they saw the Boundary Commission in reference to the Howard Property. Jedidiah Smith helped walk them through the process and clarified some questions they had. They also attended a change of command ceremony for Gen. Krumm at JBER, as well as his retirement party. They also met with reps from Marathon Oil regarding the land in North Pole for the combined heat and power plant site. On August 12<sup>th</sup> they were with the reps from 3 Bears. 3 Bears are working on the land survey now and expect to break ground in the spring. They also said that they would be amenable to having a Welcome Center in coordination with the NPCCC on their lot.
- The Mayor and Ms. Welch also headed to Chena Hot Springs for the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Energy Fair at Chena Hot Springs. The Governor and Senator Murkowski were in attendance.
- Originally the Mayor planned to be in Anchorage for a few days this week, due to health reasons he decided to stay home.

## COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

None

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

### Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Offered job to new hire today. Will start tomorrow. We are excited to have 2 additional “hot prospects” in the mix moving to final stages. Keep your fingers crossed.
- New JAG grant is being worked on seeking \$143,000 for funding.
- A tentative agreement has been reached with TVSA on range expansions. \$5k from NPPD and FPD or AST will be used to offset \$10k from NRA to buildout a 25yd range for use.
- Two applicants for Lt position. Testing and oral boards scheduled appointment hopefully first part of October. 30 days study period for test is required. A lot of work goes into the process, and we are confident the finalist will earn their spot.
- Two applicants for the open Sgt. position due to the sudden departure of Sgt. Rosenbalm.
- Tree lot clearing behind Wendy’s for PD storage has begun. Thank you, Cody and PW, for help.
- Ofc. Tibbetts doing a presentation at NP Senior Center.
- School is starting just a reminder to be aware of the traffic and kids moving around the city.
- Sgt. Wages is stepping down and moving to the FANT/SDEU as our replacement for Det. Werner.

The Mayor asked Chief Dutra to talk about the report from ADOT regarding the speeding along St Nicholas Dr and Santa Claus Lane. With the coming additional traffic with the new construction in that area the Mayor is worried about the traffic situation and is thinking that the speed limit on that road is too high.

- Chief Dutra said that the speed study was not anything outside of what he expected. He has officers keeping an eye on the area. He said while they can run enforcement, they do not have the officers to do a speed study. They are also considering a ‘your speed is’ sign for the area.

### Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- Chief Heineken shared that Michelle Myhill’s last day was August 6<sup>th</sup>. For the last month and a half, she has been training Tammie Chiarell and today was Tammie’s first day in the full time position. The Chief thanked Ms. Myhill for her hard work and dedication in getting Ms. Chiarell trained.
- He shared that the platform truck has been very busy the last few weeks, luckily not fighting fires but making public appearances. Captain McGilvery took it to the First Responders Day at the fair and AC Chambers took it to the Worlds Largest Backpack Event here in North Pole.
- He reminded everyone that school is starting soon and to be extra vigilant in looking for children on the roads.
- He shared that Lt. Beckley’s mother’s house was a total loss due to a fire this last weekend. There was no one injured in the fire. He said that the Red Cross is helping them out and that the insurance company seems to be taking care of things for them.

Ms. Welch asked if Chief had a list of things that the family needs in the coming weeks.

- Chief Heineken thanked the Council and said that he would pass along anything that the family could use help with.

## Finance

- Ms. Fogarty shared financials previous to the meeting tonight. She said the spreadsheet that she sent out is pretty up to date. There are a few things that are not due to the Tyler/Caselle double entry that they are having to do still.
- Ms. Fogarty let everyone know that Sally Terch started with us today. Ms. Terch is a previous City employee and remembers a lot from her time here before.
- Ms. Fogarty is working on contacting the Department of Treasury and getting more info on ARPA funds spending.

The Mayor asked if Ms. Fogarty had spoken to AML regarding the ARPA funds allowable spending. He also asked about the rate of return from the AMLIP. He also asked about the budget workshop dates and getting them narrowed down.

- Ms. Fogarty said that she has just included numbers here and would be sure the rate of return was included on the spreadsheet next time. And yes, she had spoken to AML regarding ARPA, they are the ones that referred her to the Department of Treasury.
- As far as the budget goes she said that she would like to plan it for the 2<sup>nd</sup> week in September and that we should narrow it down during the next staff meeting.

Mr. Jacobson asked about the Council budget work sessions are going to be.

- Ms. Fogarty said that it will be 3 nights in the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> week in October, the Mayor said it will probably be October 24, 25 and 26<sup>th</sup>.

## Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

### Building Department

- They have been working on some internal training and mapping of all the internal processes that they use. He said that he feels it is important to make sure that the processes they use are established and solid for what they are doing.

### Moose Creek

- They continue to meet every week on this project and the final funds disbursement for \$1.8 million was approved. These funds will be used to close of the project between now and December.

### Public Works

- They are heading into the end of summer and are wrapping up the summer projects and starting to think about snow removal.
- PW received a number of complaints about the slough that runs by City Hall, it was blocked up where it runs under the Richardson highway due to a beaver dam. That was taken care of by ADOT and it was taken care of and the water has dropped a few feet.

### Utilities

- He attended the Marathon Oil Wastewater Permit inspection today along with Paul Trissel. The inspection went very well with no issues.

- They continue to focus on the replacement of the city main steel water pipes and the sewage outfall project. They are the focus and will continue to look for available funds for these projects.

The Mayor asked for an update on communications with HC and also about the customer water leak that happened back in February.

- Mr. Wallace said that they have been talking back and forth and included Zane Wilson with CSG in the conversation as well. From the cities perspective we paid for the services that we provided to us and we have not heard back in a about a week.
- Regarding the water leak he shared the details that the City had responded to a customers water leak back in February on 5<sup>th</sup> ave. Because it was not the cities leak the customer was provided with a bill for the monies (\$13,000) that the city put into helping locate the leak. They have not heard back from the customer.

Mr. Jacobson passed along to Mr. Wallace a nuisance complaint from a citizen in the Highway Park area.

There is a property there that had had a fire at some point, there is a 5<sup>th</sup> wheel, a lot of chained up barking dogs and a lot of debris.

- Mr. Wallace said initially he would refer them to the Police dept. and he asked Mr. Jacobson to send him that address so that they could go check it out.

#### **Human Resources, Ellen Glab**

- She has been working with Chief Dutra on the hiring process for the open Lieutenant position and understand that.
- She is having a Safety committee meeting as well as a policy meeting tomorrow.
- The policy manual has been taking a lot of her time, getting those edits done and working on the reviews with the department heads and she is looking forward to finishing that up and getting it out to Council.

The Mayor thanked Ms. Glab for representing the Office of the Mayor in his absence.

#### **Borough Representative**

- There was a meeting August 11, she attended via Zoom from Anchorage.
- The borough assembly did approve the Eagle Estates tax abatement for the 3 new lots.
- They also approved the mailing of the new voter pamphlet that the area clerks have been working on, the borough decided to pick up the tab of this mailing.
- There is a rezoning taking place in the Creamers Field area, the area will only be able to be used for Creamers field access and not for building.
- One of the biggest Ordinances that the borough was considering was 22-46. The ordinance would limit the participation of school boards and the Cities at the borough meetings. It would limit times that school boards and the Cities could spend giving updates to the Borough, it would also limit their participation in debates.

- The School District Rep spoke at the meeting and let everyone know that due to the bus shortages this year, instead of stopping at each address they are going to be condensing stops this year creating ‘mega stops’, putting up to 20 kids per stop.
- Mary Siah Center is still closed, due to a lifeguard shortage.
- The same contractor will be at the Salmon Bake this next year.
- Ms. Welch encouraged the Council to ask to speak during the next Borough meeting on the August 25<sup>th</sup> meeting regarding Ordinance 22-46 limiting the participation of outside reps in the assembly.

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

- Ms. Dionne updated the Council on the website. She has been working on the site map, the due date for turning that in is Friday.
- Elections have taken up a lot of her time as well, working on the pamphlet, plus various trainings.
- The Chambers is all set up for the elections tomorrow and Ms. Dionne encouraged everyone to come out and vote.

The Mayor let everyone know that the Chambers is looking really great and that the Council members are going to be pleasantly surprised tomorrow when they come by to vote and thanked Ms. Dionne and the others who have been helping her make it look so special.

#### ON GOING PROJECTS

- There will a team from the USPS coming soon to unveil the Christmas stamp highlighting North Pole, there will be a special ceremony on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September at 11:00am at the Santa Claus House. Representatives will be in the area for a few days. The Mayor has arranged for them to stay in the Hotel North Pole, to head to the Hot Springs and have a tour of Eielson.

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

- Aaron Lojewski was on the phone with us tonight, although he is on the Borough Assembly he was with us tonight to talk as a citizen about the Borough Ordinance 22-46. He wanted to speak against limiting the outside reps, he feels like the cost of this limitation is more then just time, that it effects the relationship and validity of those outside cities/entities.

#### **New Business**

- a. Ordinance 22-17, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole to Amend the Pay Scale

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve Ordinance 22-17

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

#### **On the Ordinance**

##### **DISCUSSION**

None

##### **PASSED**

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

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skippis

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

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the Mutual Development Agreement  
Seconded *by* Mr. Welch

## On the Ordinance

### DISCUSSION

None

### PASSED

Yes: 4 – Cromer, Jacobson, Keller, Welch

No: 2 – A. Welch, Claus

Absent: 1 - Skippis

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Keller said that he hopes everyone is getting ready for the winter an getting the fuel while it is a little lower cost. He said that he wishes everyone to use their PFD for prepping for winter as well. He said he is thankful for the first responders that we have in the city as well as the support staff that we have at City Hall and everyone pulling together to make this a greater City week by week.
- Ms. Welch reminded everyone that school starts on Wednesday and asked everyone to be on the lookout at those larger bus stops this year.
- Mr. Jacobson thanked everyone for the discussions and thanked the departments heads and staff for all the work that they do. He said that he excited about the continued growth for the city.
- Mr. Claus reminded everyone that voting is tomorrow and that the next regular scheduled meeting is going to be a Tuesday, after the holiday.
- The Mayor shared that while he was talking to 3 Bears last week he also let them know that there was a need for some other businesses in the area, including restaurants and an extended stay hotel. There will also be a power station for electric vehicles, along with RV dumps at the 3 Bears site. He also talked about the NPCCC getting him the info for the Welcome Center that they would like to build, and that 3 Bears said that they would have some space for that as well. He said that this along with the new housing that will be going into the area is a lot of growth for the North Pole area.

## ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Claus *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Mr. Jaconson

The regular meeting of Monday, July 18, 2022 adjourned at 9:09 p.m.

**These minutes passed and approved** by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, August 15, 2022.

**ATTEST:**

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Melissa Dionne, City Clerk