



**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, September 19, 2022, via Zoom.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, September 19, 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
David Skipps
Jeffrey Jacobson
Anton Keller

Absent/Excused:

None

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 September 19, 2022

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

Mr. Jacobson *moved to* amend the agenda of September 19, 2022, to consent the following items:

New Business:

- b. Ordinance 22-21, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2022 Budget
- c. NPPD Acceptance of NRA Grant Funds of \$10,000
- d. Acceptance of FNSB Beautification Grant of \$19,000
- e. Acceptance of 2022 Emergency Management Performance Grant of \$18,750

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

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, Skipps, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the 9/6 and 9/12/22 meetings

Seconded by Mr. Claus

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor shared the details of his travel the last week. He spent time with Nenana Mayor Verhagen before heading to Wasilla to talk to the Syngas team about the combined heat and power plant. After picking up Mr. Wallace from the airport they attended a grant writing workshop hosted by AML on the afternoon of September 6. The rest of the week was spent at energy, infrastructure and transportation conferences, the week ended with a meeting with Latitude 63 touching base about Brookside Park. This last weekend, he and his wife attended the Air Force Ball, celebrating the Air Force's anniversary. Also this last weekend he was in Fox with the engineers from Arctic Light talking about building and military needs in the area.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Today was Lt. Lindhag's last day. They had a little party for him with cake, his retirement badges and gave him his service weapon as a thank you. Chief Dutra thanked the Mayor for allowing them to give Lt. Lindhag the weapon.
- The scores for the Lt. boards should be available any day now and hopefully they will be able to announce the new Lieutenant soon.
- Along with Sgt. Smith, Chief Dutra, gave an Alice training to the school district last week. He felt that it was a good training and they had requests from individual schools to come on site and give the training to additional staff as well.
- Starting tomorrow he will be training through Thursday on doing security assessments on businesses and schools and building around the area, he is looking forward to that.
- He sent a notice for a \$110, 000 grant that the department just received. They will use it for security cameras and door lock systems in the new wing.

Mayor Welch thanked the Chief for his budget inputs during their meeting earlier today and apologized for being late. He said he feels like it was a good start. He also asked Chief about being short staffed and asked where we are at with new recruits. He also asked how Chief how he thinks that our recruitment process is based on other cities and what they are offering.

- Chief Dutra said that they have 2 new recruits moving up and they are working through the psychological testing now. This is the 2nd to last step in the process. Chief said that he would love to have a conversation with the Mayor to talk about recruitment and ideas that he has for hiring bonuses and progressive bonuses for length of employment.

Ms. Welch asked about the Alice training and some of the details of what is taught.

- Chief Dutra replied that the Alice training is a little different in elementary schools.

Fire Department, AC Chambers

- Chief Heineken is just back from being gone the last 2 weeks. He thanked AC Chambers and the staff at the Fire Department for taking care of everything in his absence. He said it is a good feeling walking back in knowing everything is just as it should be.
- Long Technologies is the contractor that is installing the locks on the doors at the Fire Station. He thanked Chief Dutra for his hard work in helping them get the grant that is paying for this upgrade for the station.
- The statewide fire conference is taking place next week in Fairbanks. They have fire departments from all over the state that will be taking part in the training that is being offered. AC Chambers is the incident commander for the event, as well as Captain Sanders who is the logistics officer position. They have been instrumental in getting this conference to be what it is and Chief Heineken thanked them for their hard work.
- The Fire department is also working on their winter prep, along with the PW department today they removed one of the wildland firefighting units out of squad 24 in preparation to install the heat unit so that they can respond to emergencies this winter.

The Mayor asked Chief for some more details on the Fire Conference next week. He also commented that he is seeing a lot more collaboration between departments in the city and that he appreciates that.

- Chief Heineken said that it is all week, and that he will have AC Chambers email the Council a schedule tomorrow so that they can see the events and hopefully plan to attend a few.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty said that she had noticed some issues with the financials before the last meeting, they identified the issue, and she will have financials to send to the Council tomorrow along with the AMLIP interest numbers.
- Preliminary budget workshops are happening this week in preparation for the 2023 budget. She feels like we have a good process in place for this.
- She wished Lt. Lindhag the best in his retirement and said that he will be missed.

The Mayor reminded the Council that the budget workshops for the Council will be October 24-26.

- Ms. Fogarty confirmed those dates. The first night will be the revenues, admin, and clerk/HR budgets, the second night will be Fire and Police and the third night will be City Services.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

- Mr. Wallace echoed what the Mayor said about their week in Anchorage, it was very productive. The week was all about how cities can address problems through funding. The number one priority is the steel pipe water mains and finding money to pay for this. They contacted a few grant writers as well.
- The public works department is cleaning up the roundabouts and removing the flowers from around the city, prepping things for the upcoming cold weather.
- They are still working on some of the details, but they are working on the idea that our snow plowing contractor would take over some of the DOT areas in the city, with DOT paying for that cost increase. There have been issues in the past with DOT being able and timely with some of the NP roads while Hubbard is familiar with the area and has a good system in place for keeping the roads cleaned up.
- Water and sewer are also looking towards the colder weather and getting prepared for that and maintaining the treatment of the water and keeping it up to standards.
- Budget workshops are in progress, this is first time working on the budget for his departments and is working hard with his supervisors to make sure they are ready when it goes to the Mayor and Council.

Mr. Cromer asked about the blinking light at the corner of 5th and Santa Claus Lane and why it was blinking.

- Mr. Wallace replied that he did not have any information on this light and would investigate it.

Mr. Jacobson asked about the grants the city was looking into and if there were any matching ones available. He asked the question since the budget talks are happening now. Advising that we start planning for a match now so that we are not scrambling to find money when the time comes.

- Mr. Wallace said that there are some matching ones and would depend on the grant.

Mr. Keller thanked Mr. Wallace for stepping up to the plate with everything that he has lately. He asked about the infrastructure bill that was passed and asked if some of the grants that we are looking into are to address this.

- Mr. Wallace shared that he will be meeting with a grant writer tomorrow to start talking about which grants and loans that are out there will be best suited to the city's needs.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- She has been working with the PW and Police department on some new hires and new positions. When those positions are filled, she will report back to the Council.

Borough Representative

- There was a meeting September 15, via Zoom.
- The Borough Mayor addressed the tipping fee that normally would be paid when you get rid of junk or old cars on a piece of property, the borough will waive the fees of taking these things to the landfill.
- Some of the commissions in the borough have open spots, anyone interested can contact the borough to get more information.
- The ribbon cutting ceremony for Bluebell Park took place last week.
- It is library sign up month.
- The skate park will be reopening soon.
- They considered an ordinance regarding dangerous animals. When an animal control officer is called to an animal issue, the decision of what happens to the animal is now up to the animal control officer, previously they were not allowed to act unless the animal bit someone.

City Attorney, Zane Wilson

- Joined us tonight to talk about the AIDEA land deal and to offer some advice to the Council.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne let the Council know that we are all set up for absentee voting at City Hall.
- She has been working on edits to the new website.
- Ms. Dionne and Ms. Glab are sharing a budget this year, they met already to go over the numbers and will be meeting with Ms. Fogarty and the Mayor on Wednesday to talk about the numbers.
- She said that she had talked to Jonathan Huff with Universal productions about the Chambers project. He said that they will be ready to install the week of October 17th. The new 'brain' of the system will not be here in time, but he has figured out a work around for us.

The Mayor shared that while he was with the US postal service people last week for the new Christmas stamp unveiling that they had a chance to stop by City Hall and the Chambers and they all agreed that the Chambers was very inviting and beautiful. He asked Ms. Dionne to share with the Council who helped her with the project.

- Ms. Dionne said that the project was really a collaborative effort and that through the process she enlisted just about everyone's help. She did say that Tresa Parsons was very helpful with the design and Ms. Welch and Public Works all helped a lot as well.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- The Mayor shared that he submitted the final paperwork to the department of energy for the combined heat and power plant. He will share more info when he hears back.

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

None

Old Business

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

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the Mutual Development Agreement with AIDEA

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to Amend Ordinance 22-17 to add 'Accounts Specialist/Utility Accountant'

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 0

No: 7 - A. Welch, Claus, Cromer, Jacobson, Skippis, Keller, Mayor Welch

Absent: 0

- Ordinance 22-19, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, to Amend the 2022 General Fund Budget to Purchase Parcel Number Three Howard Property

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve Ordinance 22-19

This amendment failed to get a second

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to take a 5-minute break at 8:30

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

New Business:

- Ordinance 22-20, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Leave Policy for the City of North Pole Employees

Ms. Welch *moved* to postpone the Ordinance 22-20 until the October 3, 2022 meeting

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

On the Postponement

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

- Reallocation Proposal NPCCC

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the Reallocation Request from NPCCC
Seconded *by* Mr. Claus

On the Request

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 4 - Skipps, Jacobson, Cromer, Keller

No: 3 - A. Welch, Claus, Welch

Absent: 0

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Cromer said that he wished AIDEA could have been here tonight to talk about the mutual development agreement. He said that he likes to see the direction that the City and Council is heading.
- Mr. Keller gave a congratulations to NPCCC for the vote tonight and gave a shout out to Chief Dutra, Chief Heineken, and Mr. Wallace for the grants they worked hard to for. Receiving the NRA grant, the Beautification grant and the Emergency Management Performance grant were all big wins for the city. He said that he is keeping those effected by the storms in western Alaska in his thoughts and prayers and asked everyone to be sure to enjoy the nice weather and beautiful fall colors.
- Mr. Jacobson thanked everyone for the discussions tonight, it was a challenging night with the topics and votes that we took tonight. He also thanked the NPCCC for the hard work that they do for the community. He said moving forward that we need to clean up our code and make it a little cleaner and that there needs to be more dialogue as far as using city resources happening. He said that is was too bad that the agreement with AIDEA didn't work out and hopes that we can do something in the future. But he felt that the plan that AIDEA had just wasn't going to fit with our needs. He said that he is concerned about the water main replacement project and said that he is glad that Mr. Wallace is on top of the project. He encouraged the Council to look at the pipe piece that is in Mr. Wallace's office.
- Mr. Skipps reminded the Mayor that the mayor's bowl for the NP and Lathrop football teams is this weekend, the 24th at 5:00pm. He also told the NPCCC to keep fighting the good fight.
- Mr. Claus also wished the NP Chamber well and reminded them that if they would like to revisit the idea of using the cabin here at City Hall for the summer to let us know. He also wished Lt. Lindhag the best in his retirement and said that his thoughts are with the people effected by the storms in western Alaska.
- He said that he has had a whirlwind 2-3 weeks. He is very satisfied that the Air Force made it to its' 75th year and was thankful for the time he spent with General Krum the last few weeks. He told the Council that he will be talking to the Clerk about forwarding invites and details of events to them so that hopefully some of the Council can start attending them, as he cannot be at everything. He thanked the Council for thinking things through tonight with the votes and Zane for being with us to offer advice tonight.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to adjourn

The regular meeting of Monday, September 19, 2022 adjourned at 9:57 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, September 19, 2022.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk