



**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, November 21, 2022, in the North Pole City Hall Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Member Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, November 21, 2022, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Jeffrey Jacobson – Mayor Pro Tem
DeJohn Cromer – Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Anton Keller -Alt. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Chandra Clack
Aino Welch
David Skippis

Absent/Excused:

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Melissa Dionne

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. Keller

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Keller *moved to* approve the agenda of November 21, 2022

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

Mr. Jacobson *moved to* amend the agenda of November 21, 2022, to consent the following items:

New Business:

- a. Ordinance 22-20, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Leave Policy for the City of North Pole Employees
- b. Ordinance 22-23, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska, to Amend Title 4, Revenue and Finance, to Require City Approval of Property Tax Exemptions and to Approve Certain Exemptions

New Business

- b. Resolution 22-15, A Resolution of the City of North Pole City Council Designating City Officials' Authorization to Sign on City of North Pole Accounts – To postpone until January 2023

Seconded by Mr. Cromer

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

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the minutes from the 11/7/22 meeting

Seconded by Ms. Clack

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor read the proclamation of the Student of the Month, Olivia Smith, who was in attendance along with her family.
- Mayor Welch shared that he was the host to the Interior Mayors delegation this last week. Mayors Walker and Verhagen, David VanHolde with the Department of Energy and Brent Sheets with UAF were also in attendance to talk about combined heat and power. They presented at FedCo during the day and then later the group also heard a presentation from Glen Brady and Mark Sherman about their new building structural modular building system, a cheaper building system that also extends the building season for Alaska. Dr. VanHolde also hosted a talk at City Hall that evening for citizens, it was in person and also via Zoom.
- UpTv was also here last week filming 'A Small Town Christmas,' they filmed around the city and at Santa Claus House Saturday. The Mayor hosted them out at Chena Hot Springs and had a good visit. The show airs on December 11th and will be available online as well.

- Mayor Welch is also working with the city attorney, Zane Wilson, and Marathon Oil on an MOU for the combined heat and power plant.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Chief Dutra let the Council know that the new police car is completed and in California and should be shipped soon.
- The Food Drive ended today; it was an amazing success. They brought in over 96,000 pounds of money and food to be donated to the Food Bank. It was the largest food drive in the Food Bank history. He thanked everyone for donating.
- He has been in meeting the last week with a new RMSCATS system. The system does reports and tracks calls, send officers on calls, evidence, etc. It is a big undertaking.
- Chief Dutra reported that he has spoken to the city attorney, Zane Wilson, and relayed the Council decision from the last meeting regarding the citizen property clean up. Mr. Wilson will be working on that.
- He is off to Anchorage on the 4th of December and will be gone the week for annual meetings and training.
- He and Lt. Smith conducted ALICE training last week at Lathrop high school and Denali elementary, he said that it was the most engaged trainings that he had ever conducted. The week before there had been an active shooter scare at the high schools in the area and that prompted many great questions from the teachers.

Mayor Welch asked Chief Dutra about his legislative priorities list.

- Chief Dutra said that he has the indoor shooting range on his list and will get the Mayor the wording for the Resolution.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- We have concluded the Lieutenant testing and a conditional job offer has been given to Robert Dobson. He will be completing a fit for duty physical and completing the departments physical agility test this week. Upon successfully completing all conditions we will then be able to set a starting date.
- On Tuesday November 8th at approximately North Pole Fire Departments engine and ambulance responded to a mutual aid fire off Freeman Road. A 19-year-old female was found inside of the building during fire attack. Our ambulance crew was on scene and able to start treating the victim once she was removed from the building and transported her to FMH. Unfortunately, the victim was not able to be revived and was pronounced deceased at FMH.
- Our new fire engine being built at the Pierce factory in Wisconsin has entered the production phase. I received the first photo update over the weekend showing the cab has been fully welded and moved from the fabrication facility to the main build facility. The apparatus is on schedule to see a springtime arrival here in North Pole.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty gave an update on the Tyler/Caselle conversion.
- Financials were provided to the Council Friday, with an updated version sent Sunday adding a few things. The Mayor asked about the idea of moving money out of Mt. McKinley bank into the AMLIP acct due to the interest rates, moving the money into the AMLIP will make us much more money in interest.
- Ms. Fogarty said that she would put together a Resolution to move money for the next meeting.
- She also let the council know that she will be putting together an Ordinance to move some money around in accounts that we are over and also to add to the budget a few unexpected amounts of money that we have received.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

- Similar to my peers, my focus over the past couple of weeks has included a significant amount of work on the budget. I'll provide a brief update for the City Services areas.
- Building Dept – Indoor projects only right now; we'll discuss fees for next year in the next few weeks with our contract building inspectors.
- Public Works – Our summer hires have been released, they stayed long enough to help with the City's holiday decorations and lights. We have a meeting with DOT on Wednesday on the Doughchee Avenue project. This is on the recommended list for Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, although final approval is still not completed. We also applied for a grant from the State of Alaska for a drainage survey to address issues with yearly flooding. Finally, we're slated to participate in the FAST Winter Maintenance Forum next week. We'll provide a short public presentation on North Pole snow removal operations.
- Utilities – We received the new Ford F250 truck approved by the Council in October. We're still waiting for the title prior to putting it into service. We've shifted out of the season for utilities hookups.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- She thanked the Public Works department for getting her new office ready for her, she said that it was nice to have a space of her own instead of floating around.
- She has been working on fin tuning some working on different things and helping out other departments with their projects.
- She will be attending the Newly Elected Officials Training later this week via Zoom.

The Mayor asked if the research into the idea of adding an additional holiday to the City calendar has been completed and how much that holiday equaled cost wise for the city.

- Ms. Glab said that the amount of would be \$6600.

Mr. Keller asked if that number was based on current employees and not the fact that we are not fully staffed at the police and fire department.

- Ms. Glab responded that that is based on current employees, that there would be a little wiggle in the number depending on where we were at with hiring.

Borough Representative

Ms. Welch will be attending the borough meeting on Thursday, November 24th.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne shared that she has been working on the website and moving into the next steps.
- The Bed Tax Committee is meeting Tuesday, November 29th, she has been working on the packets and prepping for that.

The Mayor asked about the audio/visual system and where we were at with that.

- Ms. Dionne said that she hasn't seen or heard from Universal productions in weeks. Jonathan Huff with Universal Productions is supposed to be meeting with us tomorrow at noon to talk about the rest of the install.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- City Clerk, Ms. Dionne let the Council know that the committee will be meeting the 29th of November, the members will be the Mayor, Council members Welch, Skipps and Clack, along with Wanda Aldesperger, Benny Williams and Larnitia Skipps. The committee will hear presentations from the Worlds Biggest Backpack, Explore Fairbanks, NPCCC, the Grange and Grange Gallery, the Literacy Council and Santa's Letters. The committee will be awarding approximately \$133,000. The Resolution will be presented to the Council with recommendations from the committee at the second meeting in December.

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

- None

Old Business

- Ordinance 22-24, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, Alaska, Establishing the 2023 Operating and Capital Budget and Levying the Mill Rate

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to amend 22-20, to keep the current tax rate at 5.5% and to raise the sales tax cap to \$300.00 or \$16.50 and that the additional money from that sales cap increase be placed in the cities Capital Reserves
Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

On the Ordinance as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to advance Ordinance 22-24 to the 3rd and final reading
Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

On the Ordinance to advance to the 3rd Reading

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

- Consideration of Citizens' Extension of Time for Property Clean Up

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to allow the

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

New Business

- Ordinance 22-25, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Fee Schedule

Ms. Welch *moved* to amend 22-25, to remove 'the audio recording of public meetings' from the fee schedule

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Cromer wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving and asked everyone to enjoy their family.
- Mr. Keller invited everyone to join him for the Christmas community event hosted by his church here in North Pole from 10am to 4pm. There will be tying blankets that will be donated to people in need, there will be a hall of trees along with refreshments and live music. There will comfort kits available for kids as well. The church is across the street from the NP Middle School. Mr. Keller went on to say that in the spirit of Thanksgiving he is grateful for the opportunity to serve on the Council and to live in the City of North Pole and to have Santa Claus as a next-door neighbor. He has a lot of blessings that he is grateful for, he loves the state of Alaska, he has only been here for about 4 years, but he feels like it is right where he

needs to be. He shared that he is grateful for the community, for the friends and adopted family that he has here.

- Ms. Welch wished everyone a happy thanksgiving and asked everyone to enjoy their families and reminded everyone to be careful on the roads. She said that she has seen a lot of vehicles in ditches and has seen many people who think because they have a 4-wheel drive that they can go any speed they want to and that we don't want to rush our fire and police departments too much over the holidays and wishes the fire and police department employees a good holiday with their friends and families.
- Mr. Jacobson took a moment to recognize Ms. Clack, who was featured on the front of the GVEA magazine for the month of December. And thanked her for being recognition to our community. He shared that he was grateful for the work the Council puts together and for the city staff. He said that even though we might always agree that he thinks that everyone has the best interests of the city. He let Mayor and Council woman Welch that he has known them for decades and has the deepest respect for both and considers them friends, but he let them know that he is very passionate about the check signing issue. He said that he has been on the city council or as the mayor for nearly 20 years. During that 20-year time he has experienced ethics violations against every sitting city council member, against Mayor Isaacson, against himself, against Mayor Peters who was recalled and lost his seat as mayor, against Carlita Lewis was also recalled but the vote against her failed and that is why is very concerned about anything that could go down this pathway where people could make accusations, whether they are true or not. The experience of having an ethics violation and having a hearing is just not worth it. It was a very tumultuous time during those years, and it did a lot of damage, and he doesn't want to see that happen to either one of them. Any member of the public can make an accusation and we have to follow through with it even though it may not be true, we have to go through it and it becomes very public and very nasty and now with social media the way that it is, it is just not something he wants them to go through, or anyone go through, s that's where he is coming from on that whole position. He appreciates the Council's support on maintaining the sales tax and ensuring that we have the finances that we need for the things that we are trying to achieve here in our community.
- Ms. Clack said ditto to everything that Mr. Jacobson just said and asked that everyone have a good Thanksgiving and to enjoy their family.
- Mr. Skipps asked that everyone be safe and drive safe.
- Mayor Welch shared that this has been a crazy period, he had tried to listen into the last meeting, but the audio was not working so he could not hear what was being said. He said that tonight there were some questions about how the vote went during the last meeting, but that for a very selfish reason that he was glad that it came out how it did. He said that we can consider asking our city attorney to come to the meeting when we consider the signing resolution again in January and asked the council to consider if that is necessary. He did share that he has previously been brought up on ethics charges in 2020 along with Chief Dutra. He said that it was very uncomfortable, and the end outcome was in his favor that no ethics violations were made, so he is very aware of accusations and how they could affect him. He asked the Mr. Jacobson, Cromer, or Keller to please represent him on December 3rd at the Christmas Community event. He really enjoys going to the Christ gallery and said that it is very beautiful and awe inspiring. Unfortunately, he has prior engagements that day. Mr. Jacobson said that he would be happy to represent the city at the event. The Mayor shared that he and his wife were considering going to the Hot Springs for

the day and that relaxing there would be a great way to spend the day. He also let everyone know that he plans on taking the day after off. He let everyone know that before the year is over we also need to figure out a way to split up the borough representative duties so that they do not end up on the shoulders of one council member, he feels like it should be a few members sharing the load. He reminded everyone that there was an ordinance brought up a few months ago that would put a time limit on reports from the city and school representatives to the borough and that it would be coming back up to vote after the new year.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn
Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

The regular meeting of Monday, November 21, 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, November 21, 2022.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk