



**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, December 12, 2022, in the North Pole City Hall Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Member Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, December 12, 2022, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

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

Absent/Excused:

Jeffrey Jacobson – Mayor Pro Tem

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Melissa Dionne

INVOCATION

Given by Ms. Welch

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the agenda of December 12, 2022

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

Ms. Welch *moved* to amend the agenda of December 12, 2022, to consent the following items:

Old Business:

- b. Ordinance 22-26, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Fee Schedule

New Business

- b. Ordinance 22-28, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2022 Budget
- e. NPPD Acceptance of Additional JAG Funds
- f. Request for Utility Write Off

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

On the amendments

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Jacobson

On the agenda as amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Jacobson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the 11/21/22 meeting

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Jacobson

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor shared that he was at the community Christmas event on Saturday, December 3rd. There were kids crafts, the tree festival and live music. Volunteers were able to make tie blankets that were given away to the local fire departments, they also gave away domestic violence sacks to local police departments.
- Last week he was in Anchorage at the Alaska Municipal League conference and the Conference of Mayors. He said the weather was crazy driving down and Anchorage had record breaking snowfall last week. The number of mayors that were able to make it to the conference of mayors was very low compared to normal years. AML started on Wednesday, they had over 600 people participating, along with many vendors. He had a private lunch with Meade Treadwell on Thursday, where he was able to get a head start on talking to legislatures on the city's legislative priorities for the upcoming session. He was able to participate in many different education sessions throughout the week. He talked to Rodgers and Altman about possibly consulting with the fiscal staff here at the city.
- Coming up this week he has a few medical appointments this week. He also is trying to fit in a meeting with the auditors.
- Mayor Welch reminded the council that the first meeting in January has been changed from January 3rd to the 4th due to members traveling and not being available.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Chief Dutra just returned from being in Anchorage last week as well. He was attending his annual police conference. He said it was a good week, there were a lot of great trainings that he was able to attend. The annual AACOP meeting and was voted in as the president of the statewide chief's association again. He also attended the Alaska police standards council meeting. There was a lot of talk on regulations and being able to suspend officers and keep them from doing police work while the council is considering taking their certificate away if they have done something bad. Currently the state of Alaska has no authority over to suspend police certificates, whereas most states do. Changing these standards will also let them have authority over officers who are not in compliance with the police regulations (as in they are missing a training or something similar).
- Earlier today he taught ALICE training at the Tanana Middle school, it was a great training.
- Shop with a Cop is coming up this weekend. They have 5 officers participating in that, it is an amazing event and is a great way for the officers to interact with the community.
- They had an officer quit last week for personal reasons. That puts the department down 2 officers and there are 3 more leaving in the next few months.
- Chief Dutra said that he planned to come to the council after the new year with a presentation about the department. He would like to get the council involved a little more in the department and what the future looks like for them. He has some tools in mind that he would like the council to hear that involves ways to add to the longevity of the staff.
- He said they department received about \$18,000 that they believe is from forfeitures. He is going to talk to Ms. Fogarty about that tomorrow.
- He also thanked the LDS church for the gifts from the community Christmas event.

Mayor Welch asked the chief about his outreach at the conference with other chiefs from other communities and if they were all reporting that same types of problems with their departments. He said that there was a lot of talk at his AML events about PERS and what it is lacking. The mayor also thanked him for letting him know about the officer that quit last week because he hadn't been informed yet.

- Chief Dutra said yes that all around the state departments are dealing with the same issues.

Mr. Cromer asked if there was an update to the citizens yard clean up from a few meetings ago, the deadline for him to have the vehicles out of the front yard was the beginning of December

- Chief said that he had no further info except what came from the hearing where he agreed to comply with the deadlines that the Council agreed to.

Ms. Welch offered Chief Dutra a congratulations on being voted in as president again. And she said that she had driven past the house on 5th and that all the vehicles had been removed from the front yard.

Ms. Clack said with Chief Dutra that she has brought back some materials from AML that she wanted to bring back to share.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- The Fire Department has received the Ford Explorer Command vehicle we ordered back in February. The vehicle came from the factory with the lights and siren installed. The remaining radio install and upfit will be completed by Auto Trim Design in Fairbanks.
- The Fire Chief attended a community Christmas event held at the LDS church on 8th avenue. This event brought community members together from all around the interior to North Pole where they hand tied fleece blankets. These blankets were then donated to area fire and police departments to use and distribute during emergency calls.
- Each year North Pole Fire Department partners with North Star Vol. Fire Department and the UAF/CTC emergency services program to provide a Firefighter1 academy. On Saturday December 3rd we hosted the State certification testing for the 22 students of this year's academy. As always, this academy was a big success, and we look forward to having the additional certified firefighters within our community.
- The Fire Departments Squad truck has been fully decorated and is patiently awaiting Thursday night when we continue the long tradition of caroling along each road inside of the City. Each evening between December 15th and 25th the caroling truck will leave the fire station at 6:30pm and will drive the same route each night. We look forward to spreading Christmas cheer throughout the city.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty is also just back from Anchorage; she and Michelle Peede were there for their portion of AML which was the Government Finance Officers Association. She said that she was able to hear a presentation from Rodgers and Altman about preparing for an audit and feels like that accounting firm would be a good fit to be a consultant for us. She was also able to talk to the CFO from Fairbanks, who has the same auditing firm that we do, and they have also reported having issues with them. She said it is always good to be with your peers, who do that same jobs that you do, and to see that they are having the same problems that you do.
- She let the Council know that she is working on a larger fiscal note for the next meeting, moving around year end funds.

The Mayor asked Ms. Fogarty to explain to the Council what having someone at Altman and Rodgers would mean to her.

- Ms. Fogarty said that during the year questions come up, there are new rules that may or may not apply to us. Having someone available to answer those questions as they come up is important. Our auditors are not able to answer those types of questions for us because it could become a conflict.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

- As the Mayor mentioned, I spent last week at the Alaska Mayor's Conference in Anchorage. This was a good introduction to the overarching discussions that go on between Alaskan leaders and I spent most of the time absorbing the information presented. There were professional development sessions, focused on state priorities and characteristics of the new Legislature, Civility in communication and interactions, and grant opportunities. We survived Anchorage's "Snowmagedden" in which they had 24" in one day.

They have challenges with DOT, driver shortages and equipment issues that we have not seen this far this year in NP.

- I'll also provide a brief update for the City Services areas.
Building Dept – Indoor projects only right now; we concluded fee discussions with our contract building inspectors and are working on getting their contract drafts (for the Mayor's signature) ready. We've had success integrating our part time employee (Tresa Parsons) into Building, Utility Billing, and other operations. This has allowed our Utilities Accounting Specialist (Melanie Swanson) to begin focusing on Utilities accounting tasks.
- Public Works – Snowplowing continues to go well and tonight at 2am, Hubbard Construction (our contract snow plow firm) will begin plowing all areas for the City. This will be the fourth plowing for the year. We've also been in discussions with DOT on their operations – they've done well in communicating when they plow in the North Pole area and this has assisted with coordination of efforts. DOT acknowledged that the intersection of St. Nick and 5th Avenue needed attention and that they would do that when time allows. Additionally, we just received a text from them stating that their night shift (starts at 6pm and runs until 6am) would be plowing Badger Rd, Santa Claus Lane and their portion of 5th Ave.
- Utilities – Utilities continue to work behind the scenes to ensure clean water and sewer operations. No significant issues from their perspective. We did have one of our employees (Mr. Skipps) recognized by a customer for excellent service
- Otherwise, things are going well for City Services.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- Ms. Glab said that most of her focus has been on her SHRM training, the test is the 22nd and she has been working through pretests and the couple of things that she didn't do so great on.
- She was recently contacted by NBC about doing a live show here in North Pole for the solstice. She has put them in contact with Mr. Claus and also offered the contact info to the council.

Ms. Clack asked which days the news crew was going to be here.

- Ms. Glab said that they would be here the 20th/21st through the 23rd. They were interested in visiting Fairbanks and the Santa Claus house.

Mayor Welch asked if she had heard from Megan Alexander about the Small-Town Christmas special that was filmed here.

- Ms. Glab said that she would make some calls and see if she could find that to share with everyone.

Borough Representative

- Ms. Welch was unable to attend the meeting, as she was in Anchorage for AML.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne thanked the Council for their support in her attending the AAMC conference in Anchorage last week. She shared that she had a good time and learned a lot. She said that it is always nice to be around other clerks and to hear that they are all dealing with the same types of issues with their cities and to ask advice from them and to offer it to them as well.
- She let the Council know that the audio/visual install is just about wrapped up. Jonathan Huff with Universal Productions was here in working last Thursday and Sunday and again this morning finishing up the project. He will be back after the holiday to finish up a few programming things and cleaning up cords, etc. The public works department will be working on getting permanent power to the cameras to finish that up.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- None

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

- David Brandt was with us tonight. Mr. Brandt shared his thoughts about the city budget. He feels that it is too high and encouraged the Council to rethink taxes and caps due to the overall increases of gas and fuel, etc. Mr. Brandt also spoke again during the Budget talks sharing specifics that he wanted to Council to consider.

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

Ms. Welch *moved* to amend 22-25 to change the sales tax rate to 5.0%, with a \$15.00 cap

Seconded by Mr. Skipps

On the Ordinance as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

FAILED

Yes: 3 – A. Welch, Skipps, Welch

No: 3 – Cromer, Keller,

Absent: 1 - Jacobson

Mr. Keller *moved* to amend 22-25 to keep the sales tax at 5.5% with a \$200.00/\$11.00 cap

Seconded by Ms. Clack

On the Ordinance as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

FAILED

Yes: 3 – Cromer, Clack, Keller
No: 3. A. Welch, Skipps, Welch
Absent: 1 - Jacobson

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller
No: Welch
Absent: 1 - Jacobson

New Business

- Ordinance 22-27, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Pay Scale for City of North Pole Employees

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve 22-27
Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 7 – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller, Welch
No: 0
Absent: 1 - Jacobson

- Resolution 22-16, A Resolution Establishing a Transfer of Funds from Mt. McKinley Bank to the City of North Pole AML Investment Pool Account

Ms. Welch *moved* to amend Resolution 22-16 to change \$2,500,000 to \$3,500,000
Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

On the Resolution as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller, Welch
No: 0
Absent: 1 – Jacobson

- Resolution 22-17, A Resolution Establishing the City of North Legislative Priorities for the 33rd Legislature 2023 Regular Session

On the Resolution

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: – A. Welch, Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 – Jacobson

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Ms. Clack said that she enjoyed her time at AML and the training that she had. She said she feels that what she learned there and see here was an alignment, that it was good perspective.
- Mr. Keller shared some specifics from the community Christmas event that was held at the LDS church. They ended up with 212 blankets that where tied to donate, he said that it was fantastic have the police and fire department there. People from all over the area showed up to help. He asked everyone to be mindful of the road conditions and asked everyone to look out for their neighbors.
- Ms. Welch said that AML was an interesting place to be again. She said talking with people and hearing that they are having similar issues as we are. She said that she heard a lot of stories of communities were stepping up and doing things outside the box for their citizens. When she returned home, she got to enjoy her grandchildren preforming a music recital and a ballet one later that same night. She said that after seeing the snow in Anchorage last week that she really appreciates our snow contractor and Public Works department for keeping our roads clear and clean. She thanked them both for everything they do.
- Mr. Skipps thanked everyone for all that they do.
- Mr. Cromer said that he liked the set up of the chambers and being able to see everyone. He said that it was nice having a citizen come and talk to us tonight and getting back to normal and having in person meetings.
- Mayor Welch said that he is not sure how much Mr. Wallace got from the Conference of Mayors this year, he said that the turn out was very poor and realizes that getting to the conference from some cities is very difficult and expensive. He too said that just about everyone there was reporting the same generic problems, just a different flavor based on size and that we get good value for what we do. He said that he was happy that the gift that the city donated to the auction made some good money for the organization, they use that money for outreach and to support people who cannot afford to come otherwise. He said that the next time they all meet will be at the legislative session. He made some good contacts with a few members of the incoming legislature and has made them aware of the things that the city needs.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

The regular meeting of Monday, December 12, 2022 adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, December 12, 2022.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk