



**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, February 6, 2023, in the North Pole City Hall Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, February 6, 2023, 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 Skipps

Absent/Excused:

None

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Melissa Dionne

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. Jacobson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jacobson *moved to* approve the agenda of February 6, 2023

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

Mr. Jacobson *moved to* amend the agenda of February 6, 2023, to consent the following items:

New Business:

- a. Ordinance 23-04, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Harassment Policy for City Employees – To postpone until March 6, 2023
- d. Request to purchase Public Works vehicle

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the amendments

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

On the agenda as amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the minutes from the 1/17/2023 meeting

Seconded *by* Mr. Skipps

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor congratulated Melanie Swanson and Allison Schack on their 5th year anniversary with the City of North Pole.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- None

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

- None

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Chief Dutra was not in attendance tonight.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- Chief Heineken was not in attendance tonight.

Finance, Michelle Peede

- Ms. Fogarty was not in attendance tonight, instead Michelle Peede gave the finance report.

- She emailed the financial statements, and the sales tax and interest spreadsheet to everyone last week.
- The audit will become the focus in the next few weeks. She has started working with the new Tyler system and prepping that.

The Mayor asked when the audit information was going to be due to the accounting firm.

- Ms. Peede said that Gary Hutchinson is out of the office and will be back next week to answer that question officially. But it should be around mid-April.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

Building Department

- We held a meeting on Process Flow for the Building Department Processes. We're working on ensure that the same process is followed each time for building permits (we had a working process from Bill, but needed to document/validate it).

Public Works Department

- Snowplowing occurred over the weekend and we alerted the community via social media of both DOT and City activities. The PW folks are still pushing snow today (sidewalks, etc). No complaints that I'm aware of (yet).
- We're working on an invitation to bid for street sweeping for the spring and potentially in the fall for the city. Each year, we scramble to get these services and putting this out to bid will be more timely and cost effective. Last spring, we spent \$18,400 with Groundhogs LLC to sweep the streets of sand/gravel debris. We're hoping that using the bid process, we'll be able to keep costs at that level (or lower)
- Cody Lougee, our PW supervisor will take some well-deserved time off beginning in mid-February. We've got a coverage plan and the City should not see a reduction in services.

Utility Department

- No significant utilities issues over the holiday weekend
- We're finalizing a contract with Respec (an engineering firm we routinely work with for City projects) on overall support to the City for engineering work. This is a requirement for our Stormwater Grant (being finalized) and will provide advantages when we need to reach out for engineering support for other projects. This is non-binding (we are not bound to use them for projects), but saves money and time if Respec is the best option for City work.
- Last week, we had our second working group discussion on ways to mitigate the chronic funding for sewer utilities. The group included the Mayor, Paul Trissel, Melanie Swanson, Tricia Fogarty, and me. We reviewed the six potential options for the City and discussed/validated. During the next meeting (later this week), we'll rank those options.

Moose Creek

- No significant change to this project

Other items

- Streetlight project (Summer 2023)

Ms. Welch asked about the types of streetlights that are going to be installed in this summer in the city. She is concerned about light pollution.

Mr. Keller asked if the Ford subdivision would be included eventually in the streetlight project.

- Mr. Wallace said that he would get that information and pass it along. The Ford subdivision is not included at the moment, but it might be an option for later.

Mr. Jacobson asked for additional details on the street sweeping project that we are going to be putting out for bid.

- Mr. Wallace said that the details of the project will be the same as what was done last year.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- Ms. Glab has been working on making ID badges for the staff. This is a new thing that we are doing to help identify our city works to businesses and the public. She will start with the Public Works and Utility departments then move onto the rest of the staff.
- She has been working on a schedule for staff anniversaries so that we can continue to recognize these important dates.

Borough Representative

Borough meeting 1/26/2023

- Ms. Welch let the FNSB assembly that we will have a rotating schedule of the NP representative at the meetings for the rest of the year.
- The ordinance limiting the representatives' giving reports to the assembly did pass. The time will now be limited to 5 minutes for the reports from the city and school district reps.
- The borough agreed to purchase land and passed the ordinance to build a new animal shelter. It will be located off of Braddock Street.
- The borough was trying to put money into the recycling program, but until the process is streamlined and more efficient it is too costly to have the program.
- Also the Ester community park will now be tax exempt.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne gave an update on the new city website; it is in the final stages. Training should be able to be scheduled for the end of February/beginning of March.
- She reminded the Council that the next Council meeting will be on February 27th and not the 21st as previous planned.
- Ms. Dionne asked the Council, City employees and general public to please send her any photos of the city that they would like to share, the new website is severely lacking in photos and she would like as many more as she can get.
- She also reminded the council that she is out of the office starting Thursday this week and will be returning the 21st.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- Gary Wilken was with us tonight to talk about opposition to the Manh Cho mine project.
- 2023 Committee sign ups.

New Business

- Resolution 23-02, A Resolution of the City Council of North Pole, Alaska in Support of Grant Applications

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the request.

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the Resolution

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

- Resolution 23-03, A Resolution from the North Pole City Council Expressing Opposition to the Sole Ore Trucking Proposal for the Manh Cho Mine Project

Giving public testimony supporting the resolution was:

Mary Farrell

Steven Hovenden (via written testimony)

Patrice Lee

Mike Miller

Gary Wilken

Lynn Cornberg

David Cornberg

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the resolution

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to amend the Resolution to change the wording in paragraph 1 and in the last paragraph of the resolution (changes were made during the meeting)

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the Resolution as amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the Resolution

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Ms. Clack thanked everyone for the work on the Man Cho mine resolution tonight. And wished everyone a safe trip home tonight.
- Mr. Keller shared that he has had many conversations with members of the public on both sides of the Manh Cho mine project, he said that he loves to see the passion that is coming from both sides on this subject. As Alaskans we like to see our resources developed, he watched it growing up in Idaho. But we need to do it efficiently and effectively. Watching this resolution come to pass has been really interesting and inspiring of how we need to come together as public and elected officials to really see change. He said it is sad that it has taken almost 2 years to get to this point where we can say enough is enough we need to see change. Imagine if the company at hand had gone to the state with their plan for expansion and the idea of the railroad expansion then how much closer we would be to that project to being completed. He hopes that this is an awakening for Alaska that we need to do things better and that we need to look at the public health of our citizens. He thanked everyone for the public testimony tonight, he said it has been better that it was a little unorthodox for parliamentary procedures. But who cares, we got things done, got it accomplished and he looks forward to seeing how this effects our community.
- Ms. Welch said that we all of the safety and information that we have been given tonight I will also take it back to the local people. I do duty everyday in front of Hunter elementary school , I see bus drivers that have absolutely no idea about what 25 miles er hour means much less a blinking 20 mile per hour sign means. She has talked to the dispatcher to ask their drivers to slow down, she has talked to monitors even and hopes that they have learned a lesson to slow down. She said that that goes for parents too, you are going to kill a kid if you do not slow down. She said that going that extra 10 miles an hour over for 100 yards is just not going to save you that much time to make it worth it. She asked that everyone listening please look out, look out for our students, look out for our students, look out for each other. That comes from someone who has been out there for the last 21 years in front of Hunter elementary.
- Mr. Skippis thanked everyone for their public testimony tonight. He also thanked Mr. Wilken for the presentation. He said that it was very eye opening.
- Mr. Cromer said the same thing. He thanked everyone for the testimony it was eye opening for him. He is thinking about driving to work everyday in Fairbanks with all of those big trucks on the road and them stopping at railroad crossings and how congested it gets and how that will effect that commute.
- Mr. Jacobson thanked everyone for the collaborative effort, he said that he is sure the maker of ‘Robert’s Rules of Order’ is rolling over in his grave tonight. He said that we certainly stretched those rules throughout the evening. But he thinks that the end result is a document that he thinks is going to be a wake up call to our neighbors and our friends in Juneau that we need to stop and think carefully about

what we are doing. He said he is always concerned about a business plan that operates on so many assumptions of everything working perfectly on the highways when the driving public is so unpredictable in their behaviors while driving, not saying that they are irresponsible, but there are so many things that can go wrong in our environment, in our weather conditions and our roads. Adding these trucks to the mix and the amount of delays and accidents that would occur and then when the human cost becomes too great and we go to Kinross and say you need to shut it down they are going to argue that they have spent too many dollars on the project and aren't going to stop now and we are going to sue you for damages. So I think that this is our way of saying before we get too far down the road and they have invested so much and are going to hold the state responsible or the contractors responsible for the accidents on the road. The piece of knowledge tonight about them shirking responsibilities for endangering the public onto their contract drivers is very concerning to him. He thanked everyone and asked everyone to be safe tonight and every night.

- Mr. Mayor shared that he received an email from a constituent who was recently notified about her additional taxes for road maintenance that she just received. The Mayor gave her details on who with the borough that she could contact. Inflation has effected many things and the constituent said that the prices are just getting out of hand. He said he feels that he did his due diligence in listening to her and giving her the contact info to forward her grievance.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn

The regular meeting of Monday, February 6, 2023, adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, February 6, 2023.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk