



**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, May 1, 2023, in the North Pole City Hall Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, May 1, 2023, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

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

Absent/Excused:

David Skipps

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Melissa Dionne

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. Keller

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the agenda of May 1, 2023

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to amend the agenda of May 1, 2023, to consent the following items:

Unfinished Business

- a. Ordinance 23-07, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the User Fee Schedule and Title 15

New Business

- b. NPDFD Request to Purchase Command Vehicle
- c. NPPD Approval of Contract for Accreditation
- d. Saigon Garden Restaurant Request to Approve Liquor License

Seconded *by* Ms. Welch

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Jacobson, Cromer, Keller, Mayor Welch

No: 0

Absent: Skippis

On the Agenda as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Jacobson, Cromer, Keller, Mayor Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skippis

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the 4/17/2023 meeting

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

On the Minutes

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Jacobson, Cromer, Keller, Mayor Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skippis

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Mayor shared that since we met last he has been very busy, along with Mr. Wallace working on the combined heat and power project. The next meeting with the combined heat and power group will be May 9. They are meeting on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month. They met with our attorney today to talk about a power purchase agreement with GVEA. That is the next cog in the wheel.
- He said that the Mayor's Giving Gala that was held this last Saturday night at the Carlson Center was very good. He was joined at his table by his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Rixie, and Mr. Keller and his wife. He said that he does not know how much the United Way made that night but he feels like they did very well.
- On May 11 he will be attending the Senior Games award ceremony and luncheon at the Carlson Center.
- He reminded everyone that May 20th is the Cruisin with Santa event at the NP mall as well as the Torch Run at Chena Lakes.
- Later that same weekend he will be heading to the governor's sustainability conference and will be in Anchorage that entire week.

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

- Hiring applicants have exploded and prospects look good.
- I have placed a request to present the idea of a public safety specialist on a trial basis.
- We have started our Chena Lakes coverage effective today.
- North Pole VFW has started a raffle to raise funds for Operation Glow. Tickets for chainsaw and weed whacker/blower are on sale at NPPD for \$10 a piece. Check out our Facebook.
- Reminder to attend the Torch Run on the 20th at Chena Lakes (donate to me see Facebook), starting at 1000. Also, Police Memorial Day is on the 19th at 11:00 at Memorial Park.
- Reminder I am heading to Anchorage tomorrow to present ITF range/evoc facility to state APOA Annual meeting.
- Stats – were given out to everyone prior to the meeting.

The Mayor asked why there was a sudden large interest in applicants for the department.

- Chief Dutra said for sure 2 of the new applicants became more interested after the pay scale increase. They have been doing a lot of outreach at the Army base too. He said they have been having a lot of good response to the recruiting app that they are now using.

The Mayor asked if there had been any luck finding someone to work the Chena Lakes contract and he also asked about Officer McBroom's retirement party.

- Chief Dutra said no that Officer Knutson is working that contract and that Officer McBroom did not want a retirement party so they just did something little for him at the office.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken – AC Tod Chambers was with us tonight

- Chief Heineken is out of town on the final inspection of the new department truck.
- They recently wrapped up firefighter 1 testing, they had 2 of their volunteer members in that group, they all passed.
- Immediately following they held a fire service instructor certification and had 3 of their staff attend and successfully complete.
- Rescue 21 continues to have an air system problem; it came back from the shop marginally better but not enough to have it consistently in service. They will continue to trouble shoot it and keep the Council updated with it.
- Firefighter Marino, the newest fire department employee unfortunately had some family issues that she had to take care of. AC Chambers said that she was a great find and had come out of the Ester volunteer fire department and was fitting in very well, he said that both he and Chief Heineken support her putting

family first and she will continue to be on the part time roster. Her last day with the department will be May 8. After the last round of hiring, they did have a wait list for positions and were able to go to the next person on the list, they have a few more steps to complete but they will be coming onboard soon.

- The fire department open house is officially scheduled for July 29th. The new engine will be here by then and they will be able to share it with the community and have a ceremony.

The Mayor asked about the award that Captain McGilvery was just given.

- AC Chambers shared that Cpt. McGilvery was awarded as the EMS instructor of the year. AC Chambers said that the Captain is an amazing asset to the department. Although Cpt. McGilvery does not do all the classes for the department, but a lot of the training on his shift and he is the liaison to FMH and their physician sponsored position and is the one coordinating it all and he is a tremendous asset. AC Chambers also shared that they received the award for EMS service of the year award.
- AC Chambers also shared a bit about the intern position that Chief Heineken is working on in coordination with NPHS. They feel like there just isn't a lot of local feed into the fire science program at CTC and they are hoping through this program they will get some local interest in coming on board and staying in Alaska.

Ms. Welch asked if they were working with the high school so that the interns get credits for their effort in school. She said that she would love to help support the program.

- AC Chambers said that yes that is the plan, and they will be working out details in the coming weeks.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty was not with us tonight.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

Special Topics

- Summer Hires
 - We had applicants for all positions (7 for the intern position, 3x seniors and 4x college students). We did interviews for the internship last week and PW will do their interviews for two positions tomorrow. We chose Owen Luo, NPHS grad and current University of Minnesota undergraduate.
- Combined Heat and Power Project
 - Our application with the department of Energy is being reviewed
 - We also are considering applying for a Defense Department Infrastructure grant - still working the details on that.
 - We also met with Zane Wilson today on the next step which should include a Power Purchase Agreement
- HC Contractors Continue to Dispute Payment for Snow Removal in April 2022
 - HC Contractors (Bill Hoople) continue to dispute the City's snow removal bill from last year.
 - The City paid HC \$413,280 for snow removed based on the number of loads reported by HC; HC is seeking the full contract price (\$628,170)

- HC claims that the snow is compacted when loaded (in a 3 to 1 ratio) and should be paid for the amount of snow on the ground, rather than the amount of snow hauled
- The City disagrees, but, on the advice of Zane Wilson, attended a demonstration in Fairbanks. We are awaiting the report from HC on this event
- The City's position on this remains unchanged, as per the contract, HC will only be paid for the amount of snow that it hauled.

Building Department

- The Wescott Pool project is on hold - we received word that it is going back out for bid
- For the natural gas rate changes, we've gotten great support from our building inspector, Charlie Jeanette. We have solid processes in place if this is approved.

Public Works Department

- We finalized the Street Sweeping contract and we anticipate sweeping streets in the next couple of weeks when the snow melts in the ditches.
- We've established the summer projects list (on screen).
- The glass dividers in the Chambers were removed and are in storage.

Utility Department

- We had one major water main break in the last two weeks behind the Hotel NP.
- We've had some queries from Design Alaska regarding Matt Gavoras property. We're planning to support their efforts with City code info for that private line.

Mr. Jacobson passed out some information to the Council about an artist that approached him about doing a mural. He said that he thinks we should talk about doing a mural on the old water treatment plant.

- Mr. Wallace agreed that this is a project that we could look into.

Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- Ms. Glab is out on maternity leave.

Borough Representative

Borough meeting 4/27/2023 (this will be filled in later)

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne reminded everyone that the Revize training has been set for May 3, there will be at least 1 rep from each department from the city in attendance. After this training she is going to give the departments a week or so to review their info and change as necessary before giving the ok to go live with the site. The website will not be down at any point during this switchover.
- She let everyone know that in the packet were 2 different PIO training courses that she is interested in taking and said that she is open to advice on which to take. Due to budget restraints, she will not be

attending PD2 this year, instead will save that for next year after she has earned her CMC. She said she felt that spending the money for the PIO training was more important than PD 2 this year.

The Mayor thanked Ms. Dionne for putting together the basket for the Mayors Gala event and for being conscious of her training budget for the year.

- Ms. Dionne thanked Mr. Jacobson for the things that he brought in for use in that basket and agreed that it did look good.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- The Mayor shared that recently he was talking with the owner of Camper Valley RV's and asked him to consider coming to North Pole over in the Brookside Park area. He will be meeting with him again later in the month and will keep the Council apprised.

NEW BUSINESS

- Resolution 23 – 07, A Resolution of the North Pole City Council in Support of SB 128 (Pgs. 19-20)

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the Resolution

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

Ms. Welch *moved* to Amend the Resolution to change the title and add 'HB 180' were applicable.

Seconded *by* Mr. Jacobson

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Jacobson, Cromer, Keller, Mayor Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

On the Resolution as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – A. Welch, Clack, Jacobson, Cromer, Keller, Mayor Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

* The attending Council members asked if they could all be added as sponsors of this Resolution

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Ms. Welch thanked the United Way for the Mayor's Gala she said it was a fantastic event. She said that she enjoyed having her younger grandchildren there. Her granddaughter wandered up on stage with the

Mayor when it was his time to talk and she thanked Mr. Keller's wife for stepping in when her granddaughter almost fell off the stage. She said that the entertainment was fun, and her grandchildren got an introduction to using the silks from the performers.

- Ms. Clack said that she is glad she was able to reach out to everyone and join us via Zoom tonight. She shared that the gala was nice and that the Mayor forgot to mention that she was also there. She said that it was excellent and that she enjoyed the part of the Mayor's gathering together to take pictures. She ran into some other people that she hadn't seen in a while who thought that she had left town. She said it was a very interesting meeting.
- Mr. Keller said that he thought attending the gala with his wife was a good first experience attending those types of events. There was one thing that was brought to attention by the local police force and that is that DUI's has picked up. So what he would recommend to anyone who is out drinking is to go ahead and have a plan A of how you are going to get home without the keys to your car. Call a friend. He said that he is pretty sure the officers would rather take you home before you get in your own car. For the soldiers and airmen out there there's out outlets for you SADD, soldiers against drunk driving, he has seen their van. For those going out single drinks there is avenues, take those avenues. Call a friend, ask the bartender for someone to drive you. If you are drinking at home, stay home. These DUI's are unnecessary at any cost. There are too many dangers that we could go into with having people behind the wheel. If your addicted get help, there are a lot of different avenues for help. He would like to thank our first responders for their service. His closing thoughts are for the aviation unit 125 that recently lost the 3 soldiers, he knows some of the people in that unit. It is a hard hit to the community. He said that he has thoughts and prayers towards the families involved, those personally impacted and those impacted by the friendships they have because he knows that it is a tight knit community over there.
- Mr. Jacobson said that the legislature winding up, the senate and house bills are quiet a bit apart, the house bill for the state budget is \$1.7 billion funding a \$2600 PFD payment and also a \$175 million dollar payment in a one-time additional education funding but it requires a \$580 million to draw down from the states piggy bank which is the constitutional budget reserve. The senate version of the budget reduces the PFD to \$850 million or \$1300 per person and leaves considerable room for increased education funding and a sizeable capital budget without drawing any from the CBR. The CBR from the governors from the last decade has gone from almost \$20 billion to just \$2 billion because the legislature didn't want to do any belt tightening, they just blew it. So stay tuned, they have extended it until May 17th, so hopefully between the 2, the house and senate they will come up with a compromise. There are 2 bills, he said he is not sure how much traction they are going to get but 1 is on legalizing gambling. He encourages everyone to oppose that because what it will do is effect pull tabs and bingo halls which really funds most of the nonprofits statewide. That is how they get money for their operations. This bill would allow pull tabs to move from a paper form to an electronic form that would be regulated by the manufacturer/distributor of the pull tab and reduce the amount of profit to those nonprofits by 50%. So it would decimate the nonprofits funding and causing those other companies to get richer. He said that he is not in favor of gambling or pull tabs but this is a legal and healthy way to support nonprofits. He shared that we used to have pull tabs here in North Pole and the city council used to approve those licenses and it really did help provide the community nonprofits to supply services to our residents. Many years ago when Jimmy was alive, he was the owner of the Refinery Lounge, and he would have some

pretty wild events there that would attract a lot of young folks off the base. Human bowling balls, sumo wrestling, Velcro walls, those were fun times. The owner had a really great relationship with the military so when there was a soldier or airman that was not good to drive, he or his staff would help them with ride and this wasn't a negative, it was a positive. He encourages anyone who goes to the Alehouse here, or any of the other establishments, to encourage them to reach out to the military to come up with a similar situation to make sure that our highways are safe and that these young men and women get home safely. The governor has proposed a state sales tax and Mr. Jacobson feels like that is the worst idea. For municipalities like us that generate income by sales taxes. To have to have a state sales tax plus a city one would be quite burdensome for our residents and the state has many other tools to generate income than a sales tax that would affect so many Alaskan communities. And finally, he said that he is disappointed and somewhat disgusted with the borough assembly and their treatment of the City of North Pole, the school board, and the City of Fairbanks as far as their representatives' reports. The whole idea of those reports was to bring to each other's attention events and concerns that we had. The sad part of the situation is that the genesis for all of this change was because a Fairbanks City Council woman report ran 20 minutes long and instead of dealing with that one incident and going to the City of Fairbanks and saying no more, they put this ordinance out there that is questioning why we would even want to go there. He thinks that we should consider taking a hiatus for the months of May through August and not go to the borough assembly meeting and just see what they have to say because how they treated Ms. Welch and anyone else who would be going there who wants to try and comment about something that is pertinent to us. They themselves sound very confused about what their rules are and what does apply and what doesn't and what agenda items you can and cannot speak on. This nonsense has to stop. He said perhaps our lack of participation will get them to rethink 'mmm let's do something to invite our neighbors down the road back'. Happy spring.

- The Mayor said that he would like to segway right off of what Mr. Jacobson said, you never know who is listening to those borough meetings just like ours or who is going to go back and watch it. 2 weeks ago he was actually at the borough meeting at 6:40 and at 9:40 he gave up because what he was there to listen to never came up. Brent Sheets was also on there and he only lasted an hour, but the Mayor said that he needed to give them more than an hour to get through what they needed to get through. Last Monday, a week ago today, Mayor Ward was in his office from 4:30 to 5:40; with him was also Mr. Wallace and Ms. Welch. Mayor Ward told him that he was going to bring up the idea about the park, the Mayor was telling him that he would be surprised that we have an acronym on Mr. Wallace's whiteboard on his wall where they are calling it the mother of all amusement parks or some acronym for that because we want to be able to go to this company that could make a motif that would be like a North Pole express and Mayor Ward expressed gratitude that the Mayor was willing to do that. The Mayor said yes he will find a way to do that and to work with the NPCCC to get that park done. He was looking forward to listening to what they had to say at the borough meeting that Thursday. He shared that the reason he has not been letting just one person be the borough rep is because, without unveiling someone, they were trying to tell him as of last summer that there was a big push to try and shut us down, to shoot everyone down, specifically what Mr. Jacobson just told us about, he doesn't want to bring up names, and it failed initially. Then after the new assembly came on and it was shifted a little more right and now they had the traction they wanted to get. He said that he is just going to say how he feels and is not going to apologize, he was pissed. So the

first thing he did Friday morning was contact the borough. He said that he is not going to sit back and let them step on any one of us when we are supposed to be able to participate and let us keep in mind that the City of Fairbanks came long before the borough, the City of North Pole came long before the borough. The borough didn't come into being until January 1, 1964, and yes we did cede certain powers over to them but that was because of efficiency and effectiveness, but not to shut us down. So when you are going to be the borough rep you better know that your mayor is going to have your back. He said that he was sitting there listening to this and couldn't believe what they had done. He couldn't get the borough clerk and instead spoke to the deputy clerk, who has only been onboard since December. The Mayor said that he did not pepper him with what he heard, he wanted the deputy clerk to tell him in his own words and he what he shared was proof that it was unfavorable against our city and that it wasn't correct. He immediately called to make an appointment with CSG to talk to our attorney for first thing this morning. Our attorney had already spoken to the borough attorney, Jill Dolan, and she agreed that a mistake had been made. Mr. Wilson also talked to the Borough clerk, and she also said that a mistake had been made. He thinks that what possibly happened, and he would like to give the assembly the benefit of the doubt, was when the presiding officer for our rep to wait to talk about it until such a time that when this ordinance was going to be brought up about transferring the park , even though she could have mentioned it in her report she was persuaded to wait until the ordinance was brought up. He said that as the city rep to the borough assembly that she had ever right to speak to it. He does not know why the borough mayor did not speak up, the topic had been brought up to the city. He said that he does not understand where they are going with this but that he is not going to allow us to be stepped on like that. He said that it had occurred to him what Mr. Jacobson had previously said, that maybe we should stop going to the assembly meetings until they can straighten out. He said that after talking to the borough clerk and attorney that some of the assembly members seemed confused about what they were voting for. They should have been voting for yes or no should the City of North Pole be allowed to debate on it. But what they were actually voting on was shutting the rep off and not allow her to say anything. So they voted the wrong way and you can see that that happens and he gives them the benefit of the doubt. And what they thought they were voting on was 'yes, yes let's transfer the park' but what they actually were voting on was let' not let the City of North Pole rep talk. So, by going online and saying this tonight on the record saying that we are not going to be treated that way and now that it is out in the open he will talk to the borough Mayor, clerk and attorney along with our clerk and attorney and get it straightened out. He let the Council members know that if they go to the borough to represent us, if it is something that does not pertain to the city and they tell you that it doesn't, to go along with them. But if it does pertain to the city to not let anyone step on you, don't get into an argument with them, be civil, but do not let them step on you because we have every right to be there. He said that he has seen a lot of representatives, and this is their decision to, that give their report, pick up their book and leave. He was never that way and Council woman Welch is not that way, nor is Jacobson. He said that some of us are into it because we have a vested interest in the borough and about how our direction is going and our future. To get back on a happy note, the Gala was a big deal for him, and he really enjoyed it. He said what he learned from it was that the United Way of the Tanana Valley did something like 8,000 health screenings last year, provided almost 80,000 shelter nights, they provided services to 72,000 people and gave out 210,000 meals. That is a lot of services that they provide. One thing that he always remembered

as a boy was that in the Wizard of Oz everyone is looking to get their brain and their heart, and their courage and he always thought that it was fantastic that the wizard couldn't pronounce the word philanthropy. So, when he gives the tinman his heart, he called them good deed doers because he couldn't say philanthropist and he always thought that was a good thing. So, in his speech at the gala, he told everyone if they didn't know what a philanthropist is, or if they can't say it or spell it, to just be a good deed doer. Use your heart, give the most that you can, help those that are disadvantaged through the Uniter Way. He said that they had a great time.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

The regular meeting of Monday, May 1, 2023, adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, May 1, 2023.

ATTEST:

Melissa Dionne, City Clerk