



**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, June 5, 2023, in the North Pole City Hall Chambers.

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL**

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, June 5, 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 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. Jacobson *moved* to approve the agenda of June 5, 2023

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to amend the agenda of June 5, 2023, to consent the following items:

New Business

- a. Resolution 23-07, A Resolution of the North Pole City Council to Establish the Rate of Tax Levy for 2023 Real Property Taxes of the City of North Pole
- b. Resolution 23-08, A Resolution of the North Pole City Council to Distribute Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Grant Funds

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

**On the Amendments**

**DISCUSSION**

None

**PASSED**

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

**On the Agenda as Amended**

**DISCUSSION**

None

**PASSED**

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the 5/15/2023 meeting.

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

**On the Minutes**

**DISCUSSION**

None

**PASSED**

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

**COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR**

- Mayor Welch read the proclamation for the Student of the Month – Aaron Zeisel.
- The Mayor congratulated Rachel Wing on her 5 year anniversary with the city.
- Mayor Welch filled the Council on what he has been working on since we met last. He participated in the Torch Run that was held at Chena lakes. He said he shaved 3 minutes off his last years' time and they had a good turn out there. Last week he was in Anchorage at the Governor's Sustainability Conference. While he was that way, he stopped to talk to reps from 3 Bears. 3 Bears will be having a public meeting, June 28 from 5-7 at the North Pole branch library to talk to the public about the plans. He met with various other State representatives talking about housing while he was there as well. He had a lot of take -aways from the conference and made good contacts. On the way back to North Pole he also stopped to talk to the owner of Camper Valley RV about coming to the 3 Bears site with a camper sales store and also potentially an RV park.
- The Mayor also shared that the Combined Heat and Power project that he has been working on is stalled at the moment. The Department of Energy had so many entities that put in for the grant money they had to give away that the Department discouraged us from continuing with the request. The project is still in

the works and they are working on an agreement with GVEA for them to purchase power from the project and they will be considering other grant/money opportunities.

- The Mahn Cho mining project regarding trucks on the road continues to be a big talking point in the area. The city has been applauded for the well written Resolution that the Council accepted.
- Shelley Shubacha has approached the city with a contact from a company called Ballard, who are interested in financing some senior housing in the city. Her rep will be meeting with the Mayor mid-month.
- He will be meeting at EAFB to meet with the under Secretary with the Air Force to talk to the interior Mayors about housing.

Mr. Skippy asked about the HC lawsuit and test.

- The Mayor said that he cannot talk about that here, but they can touch base later.

Mr. Jacobson asked the Clerk to send the 3 Bears flyer and Resolution 19-03 to the Council.

### COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- None

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

- Scott McCrae was with us from Explore Fairbanks to give an update on tourism in the area.

### COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

#### Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Last month I traveled to Anchorage to talk about our range project and was surprised by the statewide APOA 2022 Member of the Year award. This is a very prestigious award and I am humbled to receive such an honor.
- My AACOP President hat – I have been feverishly working the legislators and committees and other groups across the state for my pet project to bring a policy manual to all police departments across the state. I sought \$550K in funding to help kick start this project and learned last week this funding made it into the budget. I am stoked and excited to see this project through. It will have a profound impact on policing across the state.
- We officially hired 3 positions last week. One Sergeant, one Detective, and one new recruit police officer. We are currently evaluating 4 for the final position. Thank you, council, for the wage increases as it has had a direct and immediate effect on our recruitment.
- Both our new cars are being shipped to Dana Safety in California.
- May Stats are in front of you.
- JAG Grant has been submitted seeking full funding for our Drug Detective.
- Final purchase method for camera and door locks has been approved by SOA and will come to council at next meeting.
- I would encourage everyone and their family kids and to attend: Paul Butler - Leadership for a Lifetime Tickets, Tue, Jun 20, 2023, at 5:30 PM | Eventbrite
- I am meeting next week with NAACP to discuss the Alaska Policy Manual Project.

- Police Memorial Day was a great success. Thank you to APOA for their support of this amazing event.
- Torch Run was also amazing. I made it through without a heart attack and we raised the most money of all the agencies, thank you Mr. Mayor.
- Just FYI our Executive Assistant is out of office until October and our Evidence custodian is out of town in training this week so, please bear with us. Our Evidence Custodian is carrying out our EA's work until she returns.

The Mayor asked about the nuisance properties that have been an issue the last few weeks.

- Chief reminded the Council that there was a property owner that came to the Council a few months back asking for an extension for his property clean up, that property does not been cleaned up and is becoming an issue again. There is at least one other property that the department is keeping an eye on also.

The Mayor thanked the Chief for the beautiful Police Memorial ceremony last month.

Mr. Jacobson thanked Chief Dutra for all of his accomplishments and said that he is an invaluable asset to the City. He also suggested that we offer tickets to our staff, department heads and Council for the Paul Butler session coming up on June 20.

Mr. Keller asked about the possibility of needing to add on that 14<sup>th</sup> officer position back to the roster at some point.

- Chief Dutra agreed that yes, at some point they will have to look at that.

Ms. Welch thanked the Chief for everything that the department does to keep everyone safe. She is looking forward to going on a ride along with one of the officers later this week. She shared that she has heard nothing but good things regarding the department's behaviors with citizens.

#### **Fire Department, Chief Heineken**

- Although it has been seasonally cold lately the summer wildfire season is upon us. Today's fire danger was listed by State Forestry as HIGH, burning is only allowed with a current burn permit. The fire department would like to remind everyone to be fire wise when burning. Whether burning a brush pile or having a cooking fire please have necessary resources available to fully extinguish the fire prior to it being left unattended.
- Our EMS contract with the Fairbanks North Star Borough is up for renewal at the end of June. I did not receive the contract from the borough in time to get it onto this agenda so it will appear on the June 19th agenda for council approval.
- The committee to determine where Engine 24 will be donated will be meeting the evening of June 28th to score and rank all applications. The deadline for a fire department to apply is June 20th.
- I will be on leave June 7-16, I will be in state but out of town for most of this time period and can be reached via email or cell phone if needed.

Ms. Welch thanked the fire department for the quick response to the fire in a dumpster at the transfer site. She said that she called the non emergency number and was told that she needed to call 911. She said that she did not think that was a good use of time because she was on hold for over a minute.

- Chief said that people should always call 911 because the dispatch will find the fire department wherever they are, busy or not, so it is really the best way to get a hold of them.

#### Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty was not with us tonight.

#### Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

- Summer Hires
  - All three of our summer hires are now on board (two are working for PW and the third is our summer intern). We're getting our money's worth from all three with Derick Johnson and Tina Raman (PW) focusing on beautification efforts and Owen Luo (Intern) assisting with scanning, filing, and proofing the new website. All three are getting great exposure to the inner workings of the City.
- Grant and Congressionally Directed Spending Submissions
  - For the Combined Heat and Power Plant, we received word on Friday that our grant submission for \$50M to the Dept of Energy was processed and "discouraged" from completing the full packet. There were 370 submissions and only 28 are slated to be approved in the process. We have a strategy meeting tomorrow with our grant writers to determine options on the way forward for funding that project.
  - We still have three CDS requests through Sen Murkowski's office (City Water Main, Utilities Lines of Distribution, Sewer Outfall) pending. We do not expect to hear back on those until the federal budget is passed (late 2023)
  - We also submitted the City Water Main project to the Denali Commission for grant funding. They mentioned that they should have a decision in the next two months..

#### Building Department

- IGU submitted a permit application for gas installations this summer and are in the process of paying the associated fees. They plan to install 27 residential lines and 2 gas main lines.
- Mr. Jacobson asked about the IGU building near the Santa Senior Center. Last week, I called them about the status of the building, which seems to have been hit by a vehicle. I'm still awaiting an answer.

#### Public Works Department

- Street sweepers (Groundhogs LLC) finished sweeping the gravel and sand throughout North Pole last week. We also potentially have them on tap to do sweeping at the end of the summer to clear debris.
- Flowers are being planted throughout the City and we expect mowing to begin soon.
- We anticipate that the City Hall parking lot will be sealed and restriped sometime this month. We'll provide at least a week's notice – this project will require alternate parking for 2-3 days (we're working on that plan)

#### Utility Department

- There are handouts provided from DEC on sulfalane contamination in the area. More detailed info is available at their website listed on the final page of the document.
- In Moose Creek, the final water utility installation should be completed this week. The only items left are minor ground work and reseeding of a few areas that needed additional attention. The documentation requirements will probably last through the end of the project timeframe, October 2023.
- Additionally, there were several Air Force, EPA, and ADEC individuals who toured the Moose Creek project to include the infrastructure. Respec (David Sandberg) and our Utilities Supervisor, Paul Trissel, facilitated the visit, which included a tour of the pump house. This went very well, and they were pleased with the effort from both Respec and the City on this project.
- Finally, we had two utilities folks who last week passed their Level I utility operator exams. Huge congrats to Lafi Skipps and Jonathan McBroom.

The Mayor asked about the carpet cleaning schedule for the new carpets in City Hall.

- Mr. Wallace said that they have already started the process, the Mayors, Ms. Fogarty, Ms. Glab and Mr. Wallace's officer have already been clean and the PW staff will be working on the rest soon.

Ms. Welch asked to get a map with the sulfalene plume on it so that she could study it further. She also asked about the garden areas around City Hall that were previously maintained by the Rotary Club.

- Mr. Wallace said that he would send her the map and investigate the gardens.

Mr. Jacobson asked about the replacement water meters that were mentioned previously in the year.

- Mr. Wallace said that the cost for those replacements will be integrated into the budget next year.

### Human Resources, Ellen Glab

- Ms. Glab reminded everyone that she pushed out the new trainings last month, she shared a graph showing where the staff was with the training. All 4 trainings are about 50% complete.
- She has been working on getting ID's for the PW and Utility staff showing that they are CNP staff both for purchases and for citizens.

Ms. Welch asked about one of the questions that she thought was wrong on one of the training courses. She also shared that she thinks the trainings drag and repeats too often and felt that they were not good. She also thanked Ms. Glab for her answers when she called her regarding the training.

- Ms. Glab answered her question about the answer and cited the source for her. Ms. Glab as well as many Council members felt that the trainings were fine and reminded her that some of the city staff have never taken these courses and the material should not be rushed.

Mr. Jacobson asked for the future if Ms. Glab could not send so many trainings at once, 4 was excessive, and asked that she space them out one a month. He also welcomed her back.

Ms. Clack also welcomed Ms. Glab back and congratulated her on her new baby.

### Borough Representative

- None

#### City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne let everyone know that the website is just about ready to go, she is giving the departments time to update their pages before going live.
- She also reminded the Council that she had requested bios and pics from them for the new website.

#### ON GOING PROJECTS

- None

#### COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Ms. Clack thanked everyone from the CNP, the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, Danny our City Services Director, Tricia – who is working really hard to get ready for our audit, all the rest of the ladies, who at the present time names escape her, and to Ellie for returning back and being a happy mom of a brand-new baby. She asked everyone to have a great weekend and reminded everyone to remember that the airshow at Eielson is next month. She said that she likes this leadership training that is coming up on the 20<sup>th</sup> and asked everyone who can attend to please do that.
- Mr. Skippy apologized that he has been out at the last 2 meetings due to family obligations and that he will not be in attendance at the next one due to a family vacation.
- Ms. Welch said that she continues to see people on the road driving crazy and that we still have a bunch of people who have not gotten the message about not driving on the sidewalks with motorized vehicles. She recently challenged a lady with a motorized bike who argued with her about needing to be on the sidewalk. She suggested we reshare the rules that Lt. Smith shared on FB recently and asked that others who have FB also share it. It really is a safety issue and all it takes is one person coming onto a sidewalk for something bad to happen. She is glad that we are getting the nuisance properties in the city taken care of but said that there are others that need to be addressed. These properties are an eyesore to our city. She ended with reminding everyone to stay safe out there.
- Mr. Cromer wished everyone a happy Father's Day coming up on the 18<sup>th</sup> and asked everyone to stay safe.
- Mr. Keller welcomed summer and said that hopefully it is back to stay for a few weeks or months. He echoed Ms. Welch's comments on safety and recreational vehicles. He has had conversations with the family of the young man that was killed last month in a 4-wheeling accident, they are forever changed in a blink of an eye. He wanted everyone to think about mental health, it is a huge problem in our area, and we continue to have issues with suicide, mostly on post. He reminded everyone that while Vitamin D is more readily available in the summer because of the sun that often it still isn't enough. He reminded everyone that they should be getting more whether through food and the fish that we eat or through taking supplements. It plays a huge part in our mental health, as well as our overall health. And sleep, the rate of suicide in the summer increases because we do not get enough sleep and we go a little maniac. So, make sure that you get adequate sleep and rest. He asked that we keep an eye on ourselves and those around us. He ended by saying that it is a great time to get out and to get to know our neighbors with this beautiful weather we are having.
- Mr. Jacobson shared that he was appreciative of all the hard-working employees that we have here in the City, especially the department heads. He said that there is always more work than what they can do, and

they wish they could do but he appreciates what they do get done. He asked everyone to take some time to enjoy the summer with their families, it is important to find that balance with work and family and the pursuit of happiness. He said that he appreciates the Mayor representing the City at so many events, he doesn't know how he does it. He thanked him for being present and representing the City. He ended by asking everyone to be safe.

- The Mayor shared that one thing he learned while being in Anchorage and spending time with the various people he was able to meet with, is that we do not have the turmoil, the angst, that they seem to have down there. We do not have the same amount of turmoil, we don't have everybody sharp shooting for you all time, that seems to be the soup de jour down there in Anchorage. He said that he is sort of caught about being between there and going down there in the first place but of course you get all tied up in those conferences and you kind of seem to forget about it but you can't help but to ignore the Anchorage newspaper or the stuff that come on the television news or whatever when you are down there. We are, for the most part, a better, different kind of community in his opinion. Maybe that just goes for having so many people crammed into such a small area down in Anchorage. The municipal area of Anchorage starts in Girdwood and goes all the way up past Eagle River. It's just a feeling he has, he always really likes it when he gets to come home. He said it's like does he have to stay another day, yes, he does because he is committed to getting this thing finished. He shared that he has something to send to the Clerk, they are not finalized yet, but all the vignettes that he went to, as well as for the ones he didn't go to, because you can't go to all of them, you must pick and choose to be forwarded to the Council. But you will be able to click on each one and listen to the recording on what's going down with the Alaska sustainable energy that came out of that conference. He thanked everyone for listening to him tonight and to each other.

## ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn.

Seconded *by* Mr. Cromer

The regular meeting of Monday, June 5, 2023, adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

**These minutes passed and approved** by a duly constituted quorum of the North Pole City Council on Monday, June 5, 2023.

**ATTEST:**

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Melissa Dionne, City Clerk