



**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, October 2, 2023, in the North Pole City Hall Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, October 2, 2023, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

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

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Melissa Dionne

INVOCATION

Given by Ms. Welch

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the agenda of October 2, 2023

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

Ms. Welch *moved* to amend the agenda of October 5, 2023, to consent the following

Unfinished Business

- a. Ordinance 2023-12, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Causes for Disciplinary Action for City of North Pole Employees

New Business

- b. Approval of Liquor License Transfer – Three Bears Alaska, Inc.

Seconded by Mr. Skipps

On the Agenda as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

On the Agenda

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Ms. Welch *moved* to approve the minutes from the September 18, 2023, meeting.

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

On the Minutes

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

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

No: 0

Absent: 0

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- Mayor Welch spoke to the events he has participated in since the last regular Council meeting. He thanked Mr. Skipps for having him invited to the Mayor's Bowl but he had to attend the 76th Birthday of the Airforce with the Mayor of the City of Fairbanks, which was scheduled on the same day. Mayor Welch spoke to the lack of housing for Air Force soldiers and that he is in discussions on how to help solve the housing problems. Mayor Welch spoke of the need for combined heat power and all the components that would go into making it happen.
Mayor Welch asked Ms. Dionne to introduce Emily Braniff, the new City Clerk, and to perform the Oath of Office, Ms. Dionne performed the Oath of Office and swore Ms. Braniff in.
Mayor Welch reminded everyone to get out and vote the following day as it is Municipal Election Day.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

- Mr. Jacobson asked if the Mile 351 interchange at 12 Mile was a complete design yet as he has not heard anything about it in 2023. Mayor Welch stated he would have to investigate and get back to him as he had no update to report.

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

Michael Gendreau suggested that in the future the election ballot include party affiliation. Mayor Welch shared that it is a State Statute that regulates Municipal elections and that they are required to be non-partisan elections. Ms. Welch asked Mr. Gendreau if he had seen the election pamphlet that has a bio of each candidate, Mr. Gendreau stated he only wanted to know party affiliation. Mr. Gendreau thanked the Council for their time.

Ben Brees spoke to his concern for pedestrian safety on Homestead Road. Mr. Brees shared vehicles drive extremely fast down the road and now that school is in session he has concerns for the safety of the children. Mr. Brees stated that as soon as it gets dark it is pitch black and you cannot see in front of your hand because there are no streetlights, and he fears someone is going to get hurt.

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty stated she sent out financials earlier in the day and that if anyone has any questions to please let her know. Ms. Fogarty stated general fund budget sheets have been sent to department heads. Mayor Welch stated those budget sheets are due back October 13th.

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- The Career Skills Program allows us to integrate active-duty military folks into our training programs without costing the city any funds and allow a bridge into police work.
- A new police officer was hired for the open position, she will start October 9th at 0700 hours. Officer Gregory comes with 8 years of LEO and 4 years as a correctional officer.
- The NPHS football team, all 70 of them, enjoyed a visit with PD- conducted tac vest races and gave a speech about law enforcement as a career.
- We received quotes for our ceiling tile and grid replacement that is 40-plus years old.
- We also received a quote for our air conditioning needs. I will bring both to the council. either in budget 2024 or 2023 fund adjustment.
- Statistics will come at the next meeting. Short of admin staff at the moment.
- We have been approached by a TV show to do a series for "The Force," working with
- Zane to see if we can get a contract that we can live with.

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

Special Topics

- Alaska Infrastructure Symposium Participation
- Last week, I attended the second annual Infrastructure Development Symposium in Anchorage. This was hosted by the Alaska Municipal League (AML), Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), and the Office of the Governor, the Alaska Congressional Delegation, along with other statewide partners. The symposium was structured to prepare Alaskans to take advantage of the significant opportunities provided for in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and other sources of federal infrastructure funding. I was able to

discuss City of North Pole priorities with state, federal and non-governmental organizations and we emphasized the importance of information sharing at all levels of government (municipal, state, federal) on key issues, such as emerging contaminants. Also of note, in discussions with Senator Murkowski's staff, they mentioned that our \$2.5M request for utilities infrastructure support for Brookside Park was moving forward and that if the budget gets passed as written, we would be able to apply for and receive those funds. This was another example of the advantages of the Alaska Municipal League and the events they sponsor.

Building Department

- We have had contractors do roofing work in the city without permits, although when we contacted them, they were happy to comply. As a reminder, for roofing permits, shingles only does not require a permit (by code), but roof replacements do.
- We're continuing to work with Three Bears on utilities permitting requirements as well as FNSB on the Wescott Pool upgrades. Both projects are moving forward as planned.

Public Works Department

- Summer paving should be complete – you'll see this in selected spots throughout the city.
- Our new snow removal contract is in place with Hubbard Construction – they are ready for the snow.
- Work on City Lights continues – although you'll see almost all the new lights installed, they are still being checked for wiring and power. We anticipate that most of them will be powered on by the end of October. Also, work on repainting the Candy Cane light poles continues, and they are currently in Graham Construction's shop being prepped and painted. The current completion date is slated to be in 2-3 weeks.
- PW finished work on the new Deputy Clerk / HR office. We're working with Star Electric to get computer drops installed and the FD will assist with furniture installation.

Utility Department

- The State of Alaska hosted the EPA-Western States Area Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) workshop in Fairbanks. This is an event that occurs at least once per year and rotates among states, and this will be the first time for Alaska in many years. On the 27th, they toured the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) and the Moose Creek pump station. They used that location as a practical exercise for gathering water quality data and will provide a report to the North Pole Utilities.
- Utilities also had three visits from Ms. Rebecca Missler's NP High School Chemistry class -- about 90 students toured the treatment plant in three sessions.
- Nothing else significant to report from the water and sewer utilities departments, although the upcoming ballot propositions are important for our future ability to provide clean water.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- Chief Heineken reported he is happy to be back to work after his vacation and that he is proud of the strong staff that he has at the Fire Department. He shared his staff did a phenomenal job in his absence.
- Chief Heineken reported the roads are getting dangerous and advised everyone to get their snow tires on

their vehicle. He reported an emergency that occurred earlier in the day resulting in the death of two soldiers due to icy road conditions. He reported there was mutual aid from outlying emergency service providers.

- Chief Heineken stated he is happy to report of a collaboration between the North Pole High School and the North Pole Fire Station, he shared this year they will use the training facility at the department to host a Haunted Asylum to raise funds for the senior class. The Asylum will run October 27th & 28th for a small nominal fee.

City Clerk's Office, Melissa Dionne

- Ms. Dionne shared that Ms. Braniff started earlier in the day and it is a trial by fire with a first day Council meeting and elections the following day.
- Ms. Dionne stated the new HR person has accepted the position and that he will start on October 30th.
- Ms. Dionne shared that she has completed the sign up with Workshield and that she will get training pushed out to employees, so everyone knows how to use it.
- She reported municipal election day is the following day and encouraged everyone to vote.

Borough Representative

- Ms. Welch attended the last Borough Assembly meeting, her notes follow.
- School Board:
- October is Attendance awareness month.
- Please see the website for events and board meetings.
- Borough Ordinances Discussed
- ORDINANCE NO. 2023-51. An Ordinance Repealing Chapter 4.64 FNSBC, Land Management Advisory Commission, And Chapter 4.88 FNSBC, Public Transportation Advisory Commission.
- (Sponsor: Mayor Ward). Pass
- The Land Management Advisory Commission was removed by amendment from this ordinance so only Public Transportation Advisory Commission has been repealed.
- ORDINANCE NO. 2023-52. An Ordinance Repealing FNSBC
- Priorities Committee and Creating FNSBC 3.24.080, Committee of The Whole. (Sponsors: Assembly members Lojewski and Cash) Pass This will help to ensure the assembly has input and also help having a quorum.
- ORDINANCE NO. 2023-53. An Ordinance Amending FNSBC Title 7 To Create the Education Investment Reserve and Provide for Submission Requirements in The Mayor's Total Proposed Comprehensive Budget And Amending The Land Revenue Reserve Fund Including Related Changes In Chapter 4.64 FNSBC. (Sponsors: Assembly member Lojewski and Cash) Pass
- ORDINANCE NO. 2023-54. An Ordinance Amending FNSBC 21.28.040 To Clarify Eligibility for The Solid Fuel Burning Appliance Removal Program Incentives. (Sponsor: Mayor Ward) Pass
- ORDINANCE NO. 2023-20-1E. An Ordinance Amending the FY 2023-2024 Budget by Appropriating \$65,246 In Additional Local Matching Funds from The General Fund Balance to The Capital Projects Fund For The Tanana River Recreation Access Improvements Project, Otherwise Known As Lathrop Street Extension, Being Constructed By The Federal Highway Administration. (Sponsor: Mayor Ward) Pass

ON GOING PROJECTS

Mayor Welch stated he is working with Tech Wise to do an assessment for cyber security and that he will bring more details relating to it in the future.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- Ordinance 2023-13, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Leave Policy for City of North Pole Employees

Mr. Skippis moved to approve the Ordinance.

Seconded by Ms. Welch

Mr. Skippis moved to amend Ordinance 2023-13 to reflect any excess leave above maximum accrual not used within the pay period will be forfeited.

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: Keller, Clack, Cromer, Skippis, A. Welch, Mayor Welch

No: Jacobson

Absent: 0

On the Ordinance as Amendment

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: Clack, Cromer, Skippis, A. Welch, Keller, Mayor Welch

No: Jacobson

Absent: 0

NEW BUSINESS

- Memo to Council regarding BlackHawk Works bill for \$32,000 for city wide brush cutting.

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to approve the Memo.

Seconded by Ms. Welch

On the Memo

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: Skipps, A. Welch, Cromer, Keller, Clack, Jacobson, M. Welch

No: 0

Absent: 0

Resolution No. 23-15 A Resolution to Authorize the City to Submit to the State of Alaska Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Application to Assist with Playground Equipment Purchase and Installation at Highway Park.

Mr. Keller *moved* to approve the Resolution.

Seconded by A. Welch

On the Resolution

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: Clack, Cromer, Skipps, Jacobson, A. Welch, Keller, M. Welch

No: 0

Absent: 0

COUNCIL COMMENTS

- Mr. Skipps welcomed the new Clerk, Ms. Braniff, and shared that the coming weekend is the quarter finals for North Pole Patriot football. He stated the game is at West Valley at 7:00 p.m. Saturday and that he would continue to report on the quarterfinals.
- Ms. Clack shared she had the honor to attend the opening of the Talen Luth-Ney Youth Center at the go cart facility, she stated there was a nice turnout. Ms. Clack reported the youth center would be preschool to age seven group, an 8 to 12 centered group and then a 12 to 17 group all having separate group days and times.
- Mr. Cromer had nothing to report.
- Mr. Keller shared that he and Ms. Clack attended the Mayor's Bowl together and shared their follies of the game. He stated he wore one of the new jerseys and that they have a large amount of protective padding in them. Mr. Keller shared that he presented a cup to one of the fire fighters at the game. Mr. Keller spoke to the article in the News Miner being a misprint and that it is a low interest loan, and it is good for citizens. Mr. Keller stated the most important thing for children is not going to school, it is parenting and reading to your children. Mr. Keller shared reading to your children even in the womb is important, reading to them when they are younger and to have them read to you when they get older.

He shared that having patience with your children is important because it safeguards against negative forces that are out there in society. Mr. Keller stated it is important to take time and care of their own children because if you do not someone with poor intention may influence them. Mr. Keller advised if anyone is going to go to the Friday football game to dress warmly.

- Ms. Welch agreed with Mr. Keller that spending time with your own children is the best way to parent, the children will always be most comfortable coming to their parents when they are reared that way. Ms. Welch shared how hard covid was on parents and that it does take a village to raise a child. Ms. Welch spoke to the need for children to dress for the weather and with reflective gear so cars can see them when they are out waiting for the bus.
- Mr. Jacobson thanked everyone for all the work they covered during the night's meeting and thanked Ms. Clack for attending the youth facility ceremony. Mr. Jacobson shared his concern for the Man Choh mine truck route that will start running in January. Mr. Jacobson stated he was hoping they would start in the summer of 2024 and not in the winter and shared his concern for the safety of the citizens on the road. Mr. Jacobson stated white out conditions happen when a truck passes in the fast lane now and that he is very nervous about how the trucking route is going to go. Mr. Jacobson shared that since the Chena Flood project, the bridge is not strong enough to hold the trucks they will be directed across traffic and down across the flood plain to connect back to the highway. Mr. Jacobson shared the plan for the truck route has not been very well thought out and that every twelve minutes there is going to be a 90-foot truck rolling in front of your car. Mr. Jacobson stated Kinross is saying that this is only a five-year project but what they are not telling us is that they have five other mines in the hopper. Mr. Jacobson stated it is in all actuality 25 to 30 years of trucking and that it is not about if there will be fatal car accidents, it is when and how many. Mr. Jacobson shared his concern for Ordinance No. 2023-58 introduced by Tammie Wilson at the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly meeting. Mr. Jacobson shared that if the plan were to move forward it would greatly impact the City of North Pole because we would have to finance election equipment and it would create a great expense. Mr. Jacobson stated he did not want the municipal citizens to be subjected to the long lines that occur during the federal election voting and that he hopes it does not pass. Mr. Jacobson stated he loved reading to his children and that he loved it when he had a teacher that would read books to him when he was in a classroom. Mr. Jacobson shared that he taught math at North Pole Middle School and that he encouraged kids who knew a different way to get a math problem right to share how not to shy away from it. He shared it was ok to use other avenues to get the right answer. Mr. Jacobson encouraged citizens to have their children dress warmly for the colder weather.
- Mayor Welch shared that the Fairbanks Catholic Diocese is about to install a new Bishop and spoke to the history of religion in Alaska. Mayor Welch spoke to the history of Bishops in the interior of Alaska. Mayor Welch spoke to the little Catholic church built down on the river in 1904 and then two years later they build St. Joseph's Hospital which is now Denali State Bank. He shared that on October 12th he will attend the ordination of the sixth bishop of this north American diocese. Mayor Welch shared that he would be attending HIPOW, the Happiness Is Paying Our own Way benefit before the next regular meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Welch *moved* to adjourn.

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

The regular meeting of Monday, October 2, 2023, adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

These minutes passed and approved by a duly constituted  of the North Pole City Council on Monday, October 2, 2023.

ATTEST:



Emily Braniff, CMC
City Clerk

