



**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, November 6th, 2023, in the North Pole City Hall Council Chambers.

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

Mayor Welch called the regular City Council meeting of Monday, October 16, 2023, to order at 7:00 p.m.

Present:

Mayor Welch
Chandra Clack – Mayor Pro Tem
Anton Keller – Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Larry Terch – Alt. Deputy Mayor Pro Tem
Jeffrey Jacobson
Benny Williams

Absent:

David Skipps

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE U.S. FLAG

Led by Emily Braniff

INVOCATION

Given by Mr. Jacobson

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Keller *moved* to approve the agenda of November 6th, 2023

Seconded *by* Mr. Terch

Mr. Jacobson *moved* to amend the agenda of November 6th, 2023, to consent the following

Unfinished Business

- a. Ordinance 23-14, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the 2023 Budget to Accept Grant Funds

New Business

- a. Ordinance 23-15, An Ordinance of the North Pole City Council Establishing the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and Levying the Mill Rate
- b. Ordinance 23-16, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Pay Policy for City of North Pole Employees
- c. Ordinance 23-17, An Ordinance of City of North Pole, to Amend Title 10, Unsafe and Hazardous Vehicles

- and Title 1, Minor Offense Fee Schedule
- d. Memo – Renewal to the Contract between Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center and the City of North Pole to Provide Emergency Dispatching Services for Police and Fire
 - e. Memo- Request to accept the 2023 Emergency Performance Grant, EMS-2023-EP-0001.
 - f. Memo - Utility Account Write-off Request

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

On the Agenda, as Amended

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Clack, Terch Keller, Jacobson, Williams, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

On the Agenda

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Jacobson, Williams, Terch, Clack, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 – Skipps

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Keller *moved* to approve the minutes from the October 16th, 2023, meeting.

Seconded *by* Mr. Keller

On the Minutes

DISCUSSION

None

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Terch, Keller, Jacobson, Clack, Williams, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE MAYOR

- The Council was reorganized, and positions were recognized immediately.
- Mayor Welch spoke to the 2023 Bed Tax Grant Applications and Committee meeting.
- Mayor Welch spoke to North Poles Legislative Priorities and what he plans to tell the Legislators at the meeting the following day at the Fairbanks Legislatures Information Office.

COUNCIL MEMBER QUESTIONS OF THE MAYOR

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

COMMUNICATIONS FROM DEPARTMENT HEADS, BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE AND THE CITY CLERK

Director of City Services, Danny Wallace

- **Budget Questions and City Services Tours**
- Last week, there were a few questions on the budget to include wage information for City Services and a more nuanced look at sewer spending. I sent responses to those to each of you and if you have additional questions, please let me know. On a related topic, we were able to provide tours of City Services operations to two Council Members last week – we'd be happy to do this for anyone on the Council. Touring Utilities and Public Works operations and doing ride-alongs with our crews provides important insight into what it takes to provide services to the City.
- **Building Department**
- We had a meeting with our City Building Inspector, Charlie Jeannette, last week on Three Bears requirements and reviewed the plans for the interior of the buildings. There were no issues and both that project and the Wescott Pool upgrades are moving as planned. We also issued a building permit to Santa Claus house, as they constructed new pens for the reindeer using 8 ft fences. Any installed fences over 6 ft require review from the City.
- **Public Works Department and Code Compliance**
- Winter operations are well underway, and you'll see gravel put on City intersections at least twice per week, to include on Fridays. We do not generally put down gravel on straight roads (similar to DOT). The City's dump truck, which we use to sand roads, was outfitted with new rear rims and tires. That vehicle remains a key part of our fleet and remains in good shape, despite being a 1991 International Harvester.
- Our new snow removal contract is working well, and our first snowplow of the year occurred on Oct 24th at a cost of \$10,000, which is a 26% decrease per plowing from last year. Hubbard Construction used two plows this year and was able to finish within 7 hours of beginning at 2am in the morning.
- On a related note, beginning this summer, we've been working with three specific homeowners that had put fences or metal stakes up in the right of way along their roads. All three had the potential to interfere with snow operations and we were able to convince two of these individuals to remove their fences. We have one citizen still not in compliance and we have sent four letters and had one face-to-face meeting with that homeowner with no luck. We are working with the Mayor on compliance and potential citation options.
- The installation of the 15 candy cane lights has been completed by Graham Construction. During the reinstallation, they found that two of the bases had been hit (not by our plows or DOT's plows) and the supporting bolts had been sheared off. DOT offered both parts and advice on how to fix (they saved the project) and we greatly appreciate their help. The rest of the Candy Cane lights (17 additional) along with the three lights around City Hall will be painted next summer (this is included in the budget).
- Downtown City Core lights are all in place but awaiting parts to be turned on. Right now, they are looking at mid-December to have those new lights turned on. Supply chain issues are causing the delays.

- We will participate in the Winter Maintenance Forum hosted by the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) group. This is the second year in a row that we are participating in this event, which allows us to talk about our operations and answer questions about NP winter operations. This event will also include participation from the City of Fairbanks' Public Works Director, Fairbanks North Star Borough, DOT, and many other organizations. This will be held at the Morris Thompson Cultural Center on Tuesday, Nov 14th from 5:30-7:30pm and will also be streamed live on the FAST Facebook Page.
- **Utility Department**
- Based on information from Mr. Jacobson, we've begun discussions on how to get our Utilities and Public Works crews their CDL licenses. This provides important driver's **training for four of our crew** members (2 from Utilities and 2 from PW). The cost for those licenses is about \$5,000 per person if we partner with DOT and potentially the City of Fairbanks. This represents an extremely good deal, as private CDL licensing costs between \$10-15k per person for basic commercial driver's training
- Otherwise, the Utility Department remains stable in efforts to provide both clean water and sewer services to the city.

Finance, Tricia Fogarty

- Ms. Fogarty stated the budget book has been finalized and then re-finalized and is now on the city website.

Fire Department, Chief Heineken

- The North Pole High School senior class held their 1st haunted asylum on October 27th and 28th. The event had a great turn out and was enjoyed by all that were involved. We look forward to working with them in the future and possibly making this an annual event each Halloween.
- NPFDD had multiple staff members participate in a Fire Officer 1 class over the last few weeks. AC Chambers along with other members of the IFCA training committee hosted, coordinated, and instructed this training that was open to all the area fire departments. NPFDD had 3 staff members attend, Robert Dobson, Brayden Masneri and Parker Jarvis were enrolled in the course. At the end of the course all students were able to take the State of Alaska IFSAC certification test, all 3 of our staff passed the practical testing and are awaiting the results of the written tests. The Fire Officer 1 course is a critical component to the fire department's continued education and allows the opportunity for staff to learn to be leaders and managers.
- I again would like to thank the City Council for their time last week during the budget workshop, I really appreciate the open dialog and feedback received during our presentation. The fire department's budget as proposed makes some significant changes within our department, if any member of the council or the public has questions, comments or would like clarifications please get ahold of me and I would be happy to schedule time to meet.

Police Department, Chief Dutra

- Chief Dutra thanked Ms. Clack, Mr. Terch and Mr. Williams for helping at the events at Costco over the

weekend. He thanked Mr. Skippis for the food donation, and he reported the totals that have been donated to the Food Bank to date.

- Chief Dutra spoke of traffic stats and of the decline of serious traffic crimes.
- Chief Dutra spoke to the hardship of not having their own firing range.

Human Resources, Douglas Fisher

- Mr. Fisher introduced himself and shared that he has a welcoming personality, and he is here to help people.

City Clerk's Office, Emily Braniff

- Ms. Braniff reported she had passed all the background checks that come with the position and has completed the required training for the position. Ms. Braniff reported that the Clerk's Office has received 8 Bed Tax Grant Applications and thanked the Council for their time during budget presentations.

Borough Representative, Council Member Chandra Clack & Council Member Jacobson

- Ms. Clack shared the information that was relayed at the past two Borough Assembly meetings, the first being the long meeting discussing changing the date of the Municipal Election. Ms. Clack reported the ordinance was voted down at the reconvened meeting.
- Mr. Jacobson stated there was a change in the Planning Commission requirements, which is now open to all North Pole area residents. Mr. Jacobson spoke to a Planning & Zoning issue that happened between the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough in Slaterville in 2017 which took away the City's ability to appeal to the Planning Commissions decisions.
- Mr. Jacobson reported on the reconvened meeting which included first sitting through a long Finance Committee meeting, he shared playground improvements plans and other Borough proposed projects.
- Mr. Jacobson provided an update on the Municipal Election Day change debate that occurred at the reconvened meeting, which he reported did not pass.

ON GOING PROJECTS

- Mayor Welch asked Mr. Wallace to speak to combined heat and power, Mayor Welch first explained the enormity of the project. Mr. Wallace stated the city is not financially committed to the project because it is still in the brainstorming stage. Mayor Welch shared that he has been studying about it with Bernie Karl for three years so he can look people in the eye and speak with knowledge of the project.

NEW BUSINESS

- Ordinance 2023-15, An Ordinance of the North Pole City Council Establishing the 2024 Operating and Capital Budget and Levying the Mill Rate.

Mr. Keller *moved* to advance Ordinance 2023-15, as Amended.

Seconded by Ms. Clack

On the Ordinance, As Amended

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Clack, Terch, Jacobson, Williams, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Mr. Jacobson *moved to amend* Ordinance 2023-15 to move \$242,570 to line item 9918-0 in the budget.

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

Yes: 6 – Williams, Terch, Keller, Clack, Jacobson, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Mr. Clack *moved to amend* Ordinance 2023-15 to increase the Clerk's Office Election's Budget by \$4000

Seconded *by* Mr. Williams

Yes: Clack, Terch, Jacobson, Williams, Keller, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 – Skipps

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Mr. Keller *moved to amend* Ordinance 2023-15 to increase Public Works Travel and Training Budget by \$10,000

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

Yes: Keller, Clack, Terch, Williams, Jacobson, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 – Skipps

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Mr. Keller *moved to amend* Ordinance 2023-15 to increase Water & Sewer Travel and Training Budget by \$7,000

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

Yes: Clack, Terch, Keller, Williams, Jacobson, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skippis

- Ordinance 2023-16 An Ordinance of the City of North Pole Amending the Pay Policy for City of North Pole Employees.

Mr. Terch *moved to advance* Ordinance 2023-16

On the Ordinance

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Yes: Clack, Terch, Keller, Williams, Jacobson, Welch

No: 0

Absent: Skippis

- Ordinance 2023-17, An Ordinance of the City of North Pole, to Amend Title 10, Unsafe and Hazardous Vehicles and Title 1, Minor Offense Fee Schedule.

Mr. Jacobson *moved to advance* Ordinance 2023-17, as Amended.

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

On the Ordinance, As Amended

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Yes: 6 – Williams, Terch, Keller, Clack, Jacobson, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skippis

On the Amendment

DISCUSSION

PASSED

Mr. Terch *moved to amend* Ordinance 2023-17 to strike line number 63 and to add “failure to contain, secure, or confine load” to line number 69.

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

Yes: Clack, Terch, Jacobson, Keller, Williams, Welch

No: 0

Absent: 1 - Skipps

On the Memo

DISCUSSION

APPROVED

Memo – Renewal to the Contract between Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center and the City of North Pole to provide emergency dispatching services for Police and Fire.

Mr. Keller *moved to accept* the Memo

Seconded *by* Mr. Terch

Yes: Clack, Terch, Keller, Williams, Jacobson, Welch

No:

Absent: 1 - Skipps

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mr. Jacobson reported he brought packets to members regarding Man Cho Mine project, and they are being expedited at a rapid rate. Mr. Jacobson welcomed the new Mayor Pro Tem, Deputy Mayor Tem, and Alternate Deputy Mayor Pro Tem.

Mayor Welch reminded everyone about the meeting at the Legislature the following day, he asked those who were attending to be there at 2:30 pm.

Council member comments were kept short so Mr. Jacobson could make his flight.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Keller *moved to adjourn*.

Seconded *by* Ms. Clack

The regular meeting of Monday, November 6, 2023, adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

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

ATTEST:

Emily Braniff, CMC
City Clerk