



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 7, 2015  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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The City Council convened at 7:00 p.m. on the above date, to conduct a Regular Meeting of the Fairbanks City Council at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Mayor John Eberhart presiding and with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present: Joy Huntington, Seat A  
Bernard Gatewood, Seat C  
Jim Matherly, Seat D  
Jerry Cleworth, Seat E  
David Pruhs, Seat F

Absent: Perry Walley, Seat B (excused)

Also Present: Paul Ewers, City Attorney  
D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
Carmen Randle, Chief Financial Officer  
Ben Barrio, IT Director  
Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director  
Pat Smith, Development Manager  
Randall Aragon, Police Chief  
Verg Scott, Public Works General Foreman  
Peyton Merideth, Detective  
Amber Courtney, PIO

### INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

### FLAG SALUTATION

Mayor Eberhart led the Flag Salutation.

### CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

June Rogers, 1908 Esquire Avenue, Fairbanks – Ms. Rogers shared her support for the Police Chief's request for two additional cold case officers. Ms. Rogers stated that it is distressing that there are so many unsolved homicides within the City of Fairbanks. Ms. Rogers shared that she personally knew one of the victims and that she would like his and all of the murders to be solved.

Steve Ginnis, 288 Shannon Drive, Fairbanks – Mr. Ginnis stated that he is the Director of the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) and that he is concerned with the turnover rate within the City. He stated that the City is losing valuable employees and suggested that a salary study be

done to see if the City of Fairbanks is competitive with other municipalities. Mr. Ginnis stated that after he did a salary study at FNA, he adjusted pay by two dollars an hour to make FNA more competitive. He spoke in support of funding two cold case investigators in the 2016 City budget. Mr. Ginnis stated that he knew one of the unsolved murder victims and commented that he would to see a conviction in the case. Mr. Ginnis commended the Mayor and the Chief of Police on the community outreach they are working on, and stated it is something he has not seen in the past. He stated that one of the primary responsibilities of the City is public safety and that hiring two additional officers should be a priority. Mr. Ginnis stated that people will start to move away from Fairbanks if is not s safe place to live. He stated that treating people right has been the reason he has had such great success in his career.

Shirley Lee, 457 Cindy Drive, Fairbanks – Ms. Lee spoke on behalf of Victor Joseph of Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC). She stated that TCC represents over 15,000 Alaskan Natives in Interior Alaska. Ms. Lee spoke in support of funding two cold case investigators at Fairbanks Police Department (FPD). Ms. Lee read the names of each of the victims of the unsolved Fairbanks homicides and spoke to the burden the families carry in not knowing who took their loved ones from them. She stated that City government should not be only about Public Works and labor union contracts; she commented that it is the City's job to ensure the safety of all citizens. Ms. Lee stated that the City Council is budgeting for pot holes rather than solving cold cases. She acknowledged the hard work of FPD in solving the murder of John Kavairlook Jr.

Geri Simon, 825 Ridgpointe Drive, Fairbanks – Ms. Simon stated that she is the Senior Vice President of Administration at Doyon. She spoke in support of the budget ordinance that would add two cold case investigators to the police force. She stated that community safety makes the community look like a more attractive place to live. Ms. Simon thanked FPD for their efforts to solve the Kavairlook murder. She stated that she supports the cold case investigator positions and FPD as a whole.

Joe Blackburn, 3350 Liberty Court, North Pole – Rev. Blackburn stated that he supports the City hiring two cold case investigators. He stated that it is not acceptable to have 14 unsolved homicides. He stated that the murders are unsolved because there is not enough man power to focus on cold cases. Rev. Blackburn stated that the families of the deceased deserve closure to the loss of their loved ones. He stated that he is present on behalf of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of Fairbanks. Rev. Blackburn stated that he was able to do two ride-alongs with FPD and that he was amazed at the tremendous amount of work each of the officers have to do. He stated that the City needs to hire more officers department wide because the current officers have too much work to do during a regular shift.

**Ms. Huntington** asked Rev. Blackburn if he thought one cold case investigator would be enough to make a difference.

Rev. Blackburn stated that one is better than none at all and that it would be a step in the right direction.

Frank Turney, 329 6th Avenue, Fairbanks – Mr. Turney stated that he agrees with all the other speakers regarding the unsolved murders and he spoke to the unsolved murder of Durga Owens that occurred in Chatanika. He stated that Mayor Eberhart is a very intelligent person and the he

believes he is the best Mayor Fairbanks has seen. Mr. Turney stated that members of the Council have lied to the public and not admitted to mistakes they have made. He stated that the morale in City government is not good and that it is hard to find good employees. He stated that he plans to run for Mayor and that he would do everything in his power to change the City back to a City Manager form of government. Mr. Turney stated that former Chief of Staff Jim Williams would have made a great City Manager. He stated he is happy that Ms. Huntington is on the Council and encouraged her to vote her conscience and not be swayed by other members.

Amy Geiger, 4400 Stanford Drive, Fairbanks – Ms. Geiger stated that she is present on behalf of Explore Fairbanks and referenced the 2016 Visitors Guide she distributed to Council Members. Ms. Geiger stated that the guide highlights the six national parks and reserves in the area. She stated that Fairbanks is the start-off place for parks in the Arctic area of the state. Ms. Geiger stated that every year Explore Fairbanks submits 100 events to be recognized by the American Bus Association and that this year World Eskimo Indian Olympics (WEIO) and the Midnight Sun Festival were both recognized. She stated that the American Bus Association is the largest tourism association that works with group travel.

Peyton Merideth, 3017 Riverview Drive, Fairbanks – Mr. Merideth spoke in support of adding two additional cold case investigators to the police force. He stated that the department would like to solve the cold cases but explained that they cannot focus any time to the cases because they are too short staffed. Mr. Merideth stated that there are only three officers that work on crimes against persons at FPD. He expressed his belief that some of the cold cases could be solved if FPD had the resources. Mr. Merideth stated that cases become cold because other things—current things—take priority because there are not enough investigators.

**Ms. Huntington** asked Mr. Merideth where he sees the department in five years if the Council approved funding for no additional officers, for one additional officer or for two additional officers.

Mr. Merideth stated that if the Council approved no additional positions, FPD would stay in the same place with no attention to cold cases. He stated that the best case scenario is to add two positions so cases start getting solved. Mr. Merideth stated that one is better than none but two would be ideal.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that there has been a loss of revenue in DUI's and traffic citations. He asked if there is a way to get back to where the department was in generating revenues to help fund the positions. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that revenue has been declining for the past three years.

Mr. Merideth indicated that asset forfeiture may be a good option to boost revenue. He stated that he could not speak to traffic citations because he is a detective. He stated that he understands that the budget is the issue but that he is the person the families come to inquiring about their murdered loved ones. Mr. Merideth stated that the cold cases could very likely be solved but that nobody has the time to focus on anything other than the present.

**Mr. Pruhs** asked Mr. Merideth if he had reviewed the Mayor's budget for FPD. He asked if he knew that the Mayor budgeted for internal transfers within the department to cold case detectives. He asked if transferring internally would help solve the cold cases.

Mr. Merideth stated that he did not know that the Mayor proposed internal transfers; he stated that if one officer and one sergeant were transferred to cold case detective positions, it would create shortages in the departments they were transferred from.

Police Chief Randall Aragon stated that the Mayor approves of two cold case detectives.

**Mr. Cleworth** called a Point of Order. He stated that when the ordinance comes up on the agenda, the Council may question City staff. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that it is still Public Testimony and that Chief Aragon should wait to speak to the ordinance.

Victor Buberger, P.O. Box 58192, Fairbanks – Mr. Buberger stated that Public Works has done a worse job in snow removal this year than they have in the past six or seven years. He stated that it is time to take the cribbage board away from Public Works employees and force them to get to work. He stated that the town is in horrible shape and that the snow needs to be removed. Mr. Buberger stated that the Mayor did not give a summary of things he had been working on at the last Council meeting and that he hoped to hear an update tonight. Mr. Buberger spoke to the local motel owner who hammered the Mayor in regard to comp time; he stated that he would like to know how much money that motel owner has received from the City and the State. He stated that motel owner blamed the City for all the damage of her building and grounds. He stated that he would like the City to reimburse him for damages to his vehicle caused by potholes. Mr. Buberger congratulated Mayor Eberhart for hiring Chief Aragon and shared that he thinks the Chief really cares about the community. He stated that the City has grant writers and suggested that they draft a grant proposal to fund the cold case investigators.

**Mr. Pruhs** stated that he was the Council Member that dealt with the motel issue and that he would find out how much money the City spent to fix the issues.

Lee Despain, 352 Driveway Street, Fairbanks – Mr. Despain stated that he would like to enlighten the community as to what City employees are paid. He stated that the News Miner would not report anything about it and that citizens do not have a clue what employees are paid. Mr. Despain stated a police officer in 2013 was paid \$86,895.00 but that the total cost to the City was \$123,511.00 including benefits. He listed the annual wages of sergeants, detectives and lieutenants and their total annual costs to the City. Mr. Despain stated that unless he is drastically mistaken, the City's negotiating team grossly misinterpreted the cost of the Public Safety Employees Association (PSEA) contract. He stated that he hears police officers say they need more officers but at the same time they desire a shortened work week. Mr. Despain stated that FPD has claimed to be undermanned for many years. He questioned how long it would be before the other labor unions within the City would expect the same treatment. He asked what it would cost to give all unions within the City the same benefits.

Amber Courtney, 249 Illinois Street, Fairbanks – Ms. Courtney stated that she has been employed by the City for almost nine years and has worked for four Mayors. She shared that she wished more people would take advantage of citizen's comments. Ms. Courtney stated that working in the Mayor's Office has allowed her to see how hard working all the City departments are and that many of them are understaffed. She shared her opinion that having more patrol officers would be of greatest benefit to the FPD. Ms. Courtney stated that one of her duties as



the City's Public Information Officer (PIO) was to post information, education and press releases on the City of Fairbanks Facebook page. Ms. Courtney stated that one of the most common comments from citizens was in regard to their frustration that they could not get assistance from the police after car break-ins and property crimes. She stated that officers respond to 2,400 events in any given month. Ms. Courtney stated that citizens are also frustrated that they are unable to get police reports in a timely fashion. She shared that it is difficult for officers to get police reports done because they are out in the community ensuring public safety. Ms. Courtney stated that Chief Aragon is preparing proposals for a reduction of services because of short staffing and that she cannot imagine what services could be cut. She stated that she would trust any of the police officers with her life. Ms. Courtney asked the Council to consider two new patrol officers in the 2016 budget; she stated that she consistently hears that communities with sufficiently manned departments are more successful.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked Ms. Courtney why she wanted to add patrol officers and not cold case investigators.

Ms. Courtney stated that she considered waiting to make her request until she was no longer a City employee, but that by that time the budget would have been approved and nothing could be done. Ms. Courtney stated the biggest need she sees is in patrol and that two additional patrol officers would help the Police Department tremendously.

Hearing no more requests for public comment, **Mayor Eberhart** declared Public Testimony closed.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

**Mr. Matherly**, seconded by **Ms. Huntington**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

**Mr. Cleworth** pulled Ordinance No. 5997 and Ordinance No. 5998 from the Consent Agenda.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

City Clerk Snider read the Consent Agenda, as Amended, into the record.

#### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of September 14, 2015.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

#### **SPECIAL ORDERS**

a) The Fairbanks City Council, Sitting as a Committee of the Whole, heard interested citizens concerned with the following Liquor License Applications for Renewal:

Lic #	Establishment Name	License Type	Premise Location	Owner Name
4170	Lavelle's Bistro	Beverage Dispensary	575 1 <sup>st</sup> Avenue, Fairbanks	Café de Paris Catering Co.

**Mr. Matherly**, seconded by **Mr. Gatewood**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Liquor License Application for Renewal for Lavelle's Bistro.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for Public Testimony and, hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL FOR LAVELLE'S BISTRO AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Pruhs, Gatewood, Huntington, Cleworth, Matherly  
 NAYS: None

**Mayor Eberhart** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

b) The Fairbanks City Council, Sitting as a Committee of the Whole, heard interested citizens concerned with the following Application for a New Liquor License and Restaurant Designation Permit:

Type: Beverage Dispensary – Duplicate  
 DBA/License #: 28 Below, License #5428  
 Licensee/Applicant: 636, LLC  
 Physical Location: 636 28th Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska

**Mr. Pruhs**, seconded by **Mr. Gatewood**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Application for a New (duplicate) Liquor License and Restaurant Designation Permit.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for Public Testimony and, hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE APPLICATION FOR A NEW (DUPLICATE) LIQUOR LICENSE AND RESTAURANT DESIGNATION PERMIT AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Gatewood, Pruhs, Matherly, Huntington, Cleworth  
 NAYS: None

**Mayor Eberhart** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT**

**Mayor Eberhart** called Sean Aldrich to come forward. He recognized Mr. Aldrich for his 21 years of dedicated service to the City and presented him with a City of Fairbanks gold pan and thanked him for his service.

Mr. Aldrich thanked the City for the opportunities it has provided him and stated that he is extremely proud to have worked with so many great people.

**Mayor Eberhart** requested that everyone pay their respects to the victims of Pearl Harbor and to all members of the armed services. He spoke to the Fairbanks Four case and stated that Judge Lyle may not come to a decision for several months. He spoke to whether the matter was handled properly by FPD. **Mayor Eberhart** stated that most of the police officers that worked for FPD at the time of the John Hartman murder are no longer employed by the City. He stated that he would ask the City Council in the next Finance Committee meeting to consider an independent review of how FPD handled the case. **Mayor Eberhart** shared the importance of bring the community back together and restoring trust and respect between citizens and the police. **Mayor Eberhart** stated that he has heard employees speak of leaving the City of Fairbanks and that, in many cases, it is due to the high cost of health care. He stated that his employee contribution to health care is over \$700.00 a month; he added that he has other health coverage but cannot reject City health benefits because of the no opt out policy. **Mayor Eberhart** stated that the expense of health care is making the City an unattractive place to work. He stated that he and Chief of Staff Jim Williams worked for months to find cheaper health care and, ironically, Mr. Williams left the City to work at the Borough where he pays 1/7 the amount for health insurance. **Mayor Eberhart** stated that people look out for what is best for them and their family and when better opportunities come along they take them. He stated that City union employees may not feel valued and may feel micromanaged by the City Council. He stated that the recent changes to the Mayor's compensation package may raise concern with non-union City employees that their comp time may also be taken away. **Mayor Eberhart** spoke to the amount of complaints he has received about snow removal; he stated that he spoke with FNSB Mayor Kassel who has also received a high volume of similar complaints. He stated that he has asked acting Chief of Staff Angela Foster-Snow to contact Public Works and get an update on snow removal. **Mayor Eberhart** shared that the City has created a Fanano, Italy (Sister City) work group and that a group of Fanano citizens will be traveling to Fairbanks in February. **Mayor Eberhart** spoke to the activities he has been involved with since the last Council Meeting.

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 5994 – An Ordinance to Amend Fairbanks General Code Chapter 14, Article XIII Business Licensing. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

**Mr. Pruhs**, seconded by **Mr. Matherly**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 5994.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for Public Testimony and, hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 5994 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS:	Matherly, Cleworth, Huntington, Gatewood, Pruhs
NAYS:	None

**Mayor Eberhart** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 5994 ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 5995 – An Ordinance Adopting the Goals, Policies and Objectives of the Chena Riverfront Plan. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

**Mr. Gatewood**, seconded by **Mr. Pruhs**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 5995.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for Public Testimony.

Christine Nelson, 1526 Farmers Loop Road, Fairbanks – Ms. Nelson stated that she came to clarify a question Mr. Cleworth had asked at the last meeting regarding the Borough zoning code. Ms. Nelson stated that when she answered the question previously she misspoke. She stated that project zoning rules have been approved by the Chena Riverfront Commission that would give property owners some benefits by improving their riverfront property. Ms. Nelson stated that the Plan has been implemented on a Commission level but that it has not become FNSB code. Ms. Nelson stated that she would be happy to answer any questions the Council may have.

**Mr. Cleworth** thanked Ms. Nelson for the clarification.

Hearing no more requests for public comment, **Mayor Eberhart** declared Public Testimony closed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 5995 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Matherly, Gatewood, Pruhs, Cleworth, Huntington

NAYS: None

**Mayor Eberhart** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 5995 ADOPTED.

- c) Ordinance No. 5996 – An Ordinance to Amend FGC Section 2-654 to Restrict the Transfer of Wages/Benefits to Non-Wage Accounts. Introduced by Council Members Cleworth and Matherly. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Matherly**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 5996.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for Public Testimony and, hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that years ago there were issues with budgeting and departments would hire additional personnel without the approval of the Council. He stated that at the end of the year the Council would find out that a person was hired and they would have to make the hard decision whether to lay off the employee or to fund the position in the next year. **Mr. Cleworth** shared his concern that the state revenue sharing is drying up. He stated that department heads



should be able to move money around within their departments but that if funds are going to be moved to salary and wages, the Council needs to have the opportunity to approve or deny the amendment.

**Mayor Eberhart** stated that Ordinance No. 5996 would take the away the Mayor's ability and discretion to allow departments to move savings to wage accounts or be used for other purposes. He stated that using salary savings for additional training is and should be considered a good thing. **Mayor Eberhart** stated that as long as a department's budget is not being increased some leeway should be given. He stated that one of the unions has expressed concern with Ordinance No. 5996 because it could affect the allocation of wage increases to union members.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that if a department needs temporary staff it would only take two meetings for the Council to approve a budget amendment. He stated that abuse of the budget has occurred in the past and that department heads should not be able to give employees raises from excess wage accounts without Council approval. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that Ordinance No. 5996 creates transparency which the public deserves.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 5996 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Matherly, Gatewood, Cleworth  
NAYS: Huntington, Pruhs, Eberhart  
**Mayor Eberhart** declared the MOTION FAILED.

Special Note: *Originally, the motion was declared adopted by a 3-2 vote, but later in the meeting it was pointed out that four affirmative votes are required to adopt any City Ordinance or Resolution. At that time, Mayor Eberhart voted "nay" and the motion was declared FAILED.*

**NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Resolution No. 4699 – A Resolution to Provide Matching Funds for the FMATS 2016 Improvement Program Surface Upgrades Project. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Resolution No. 4700 – A Resolution Re-Designating Check Signing Authority for Banking and Investment Accounts of the City of Fairbanks, Alaska. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- c) Resolution No. 4701 – A Resolution Stating the City of Fairbanks' Capital and Legislative Priorities for 2016. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- d) Ordinance No. 5997 – An Ordinance Amending the 2015 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Eighth Time. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Matherly**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 5997.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for a five minute recess before discussion on Ordinance No. 5997.

Upon reconvening, Clerk Snider pointed out some typos in the ordinance that were brought to her attention by CFO Carmen Randle. Ms. Snider read the typographical errors into the record and there was no objection by the City Council to the errors being administratively corrected.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that he spoke with City Attorney Ewers during the recess and that Mr. Ewers recommended advancing the ordinance to the next meeting to be debated at that time. **Mr. Cleworth** shared his concern of the impact to the 2016 budget if Ordinance No. 5997 passed. He spoke against funding the PSEA contract and to the dire financial impact that funding it would have to the City of Fairbanks.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 5997 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Pruhs, Huntington, Matherly, Gatewood  
NAYS: None

**Mayor Eberhart** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- e) Ordinance No. 5998 – An Ordinance Adopting the 2016 Operating and Capital Budgets. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Gatewood**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 5998.

**Mr. Cleworth** spoke to the importance of all Council Members being present at Regular Council Meetings. He asked the Council if discussion should continue on Ordinance No. 5998 since Mr. Walley was not present.

**Ms. Huntington** stated that she would be flying to Nome, Alaska and landing at 7:45 p.m. the night of the next City Council Meeting. She stated that she would call in as soon arrived at her hotel because she would really like to take part in the discussion.

**Mr. Pruhs** stated that if the meeting goes faster than usual, the Council could possibly call a recess until Ms. Huntington was able to phone in. He stated that Mr. Walley is an integral part of the budget process and that he would like him to be present for budget discussions.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 5998, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Pruhs, Gatewood, Huntington, Cleworth, Matherly  
NAYS: None

**Mayor Eberhart** declared Ordinance No. 5998 ADVANCED.

- f) Ordinance No. 5999 – An Ordinance Authorizing Conveyance of Easements Requested by the ADOT for the Noble Street Upgrade and Pedestrian Facilities Projects. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- g) Ordinance No. 6000 – An Ordinance Amending the Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Fairbanks and the Public Safety Employees Association to Establish an Intern Program for Students. Introduced by Mayor Eberhart.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL**

- a) Permanent Fund Review Board Meeting Minutes of July 22, 2015

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Hotel/Motel Discretionary Fund Meeting Minutes of December 15, 2014

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- c) Re-appointments to the Building Code Review and Appeals Commission

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- d) Re-appointment to the Permanent Fund Review Board

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- e) Re-appointment to the Public Safety Commission

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- f) Memo of Recommendation by the Local Control Entity Task Force

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Mr. Pruhs** stated the importance of solving the cold cases and commented that he hopes the two cold case officers are funded. He spoke to the City's employee retention issues and to the employees' contribution to health care. **Mr. Pruhs** stated that his road has horrible snow pack issues and that snow removal needs to become a priority.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked Mayor Eberhart about the protocol for Council Members seeking information from City staff.

**Mayor Eberhart** stated that he has concerns with Council Members asking the Finance Department to perform work based on assumptions. He stated that while he would like City staff to cooperate with requests from City Council Members, he prefers that they speak with him before performing tasks that go beyond their regular duties.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that it was only when Finance Committee Member Jeff Johnson crunched the numbers for the PSEA contract in 2014 that the Council got an understanding of how expensive it was really going to be. He shared his fear of implementing the contract retroactively since FPD has been working a 40-hour work week instead of the 36-hour work week outlined in the contract. **Mr. Cleworth** shared his disappointment and sadness that Council Members are being discouraged from asking City staff for information. He stated that the Council should be able to hear from all sides on issues; he commented that what the Mayor is trying to do in regard to Council Members obtaining information from employees is censorship. **Mr. Cleworth** shared his disappointment that so many City employees are resigning; he assured everyone that people are not leaving the City because of their compensation. He stated that he has spoken with all but one of the employees and stated that none of them indicated that they left due to salary issues. **Mr. Cleworth** congratulated Mr. Aldrich and wished him the best of luck.

**Mr. Matherly** echoed Mr. Cleworth's comments in regard to the City Council requesting information from City staff. He stated that eight employees leaving in the last year and a half indicates that something is going on and that he does not believe it can be blamed on salary. **Mr. Matherly** encouraged Mayor Eberhart to look inwardly and to rethink his position on Council Members' ability to request information from City employees.

**Mr. Gatewood** thanked all the citizens who attended the meeting and gave public testimony. He stated that more employees have left the City in the past year than in the entire time he has served on the Council. He shared that the exodus affects everyone whether it is due to money, health care or morale. **Mr. Gatewood** stated that he did not feel attacked by the Mayor when he stated that employees may be leaving because of micro-management by the Council; he stated that everyone shares in the problem and should approach the issue as a team. He stated that it is okay to disagree and that open debate is the greatest asset of civilization but that at the end of the day, everyone is on the same team. **Mr. Gatewood** stated that everyone needs to self-reflect and look inwardly. He stated that the Alaska Labor Relations Agency (ALRA) ruling needs to be taken very seriously by the City and that the upcoming year will be an interesting one.

**Ms. Huntington** shared her sadness about the number of employees leaving the City and indicated that the matter needs to be explored. She shared her appreciation for the degree of professionalism that City employees display. **Ms. Huntington** stated that the problem should not be ignored and that she is sad to see Ms. Courtney resign. She thanked community members for coming to testify during public testimony and expressed hope that the Council would be able to come to a conclusion on the budget ordinances.

**Mr. Matherly**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing AFL-CIO Labor Contract Negotiations and the PSEA v. City of Fairbanks ALRA Decision & Order – Potential Litigation.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

**Mayor Eberhart** called for a five minute recess.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- a) AFL-CIO Labor Contract Negotiations
- b) PSEA v. City of Fairbanks ALRA Decision & Order – Potential Litigation

The City Council met in Executive Session to discuss AFL-CIO Labor Contract Negotiations and the Decision and Order of the ALRA. Direction was given to staff and no action was taken.


**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mayor Eberhart** declared the Meeting adjourned at 11:02 p.m.



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JOHN EBERHART, MAYOR

ATTEST:



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D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, CMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: EB