



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, MAY 18, 2020  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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The City Council convened at 6:30 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 Jim Matherly presiding (telephonically) and with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present: Shoshana Kun, Seat A (telephonic)  
June Rogers, Seat B (telephonic)  
Valerie Therrien, Seat C (telephonic)  
Aaron Gibson, Seat D  
Jerry Cleworth, Seat E  
David Pruhs, Seat F

Absent: None

Also Present: Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer (telephonic)  
Paul Ewers, City Attorney  
D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff  
Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director (telephonic)  
Nancy Reeder, Police Chief  
Tod Chambers, Acting Fire Chief (telephonic)

City Clerk Danyielle Snider read the Mission Statement of the City of Fairbanks.

### INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

### FLAG SALUTATION

**Mayor Matherly** asked everyone to join him in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### CEREMONIAL MATTERS

**Mayor Matherly** asked Police Chief Reeder to come forward to recognize Officer Phil James for his years of service to the Fairbanks community. Chief Reeder spoke of Ofc. James' history with the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) and to his accomplishments throughout his career. She spoke of his efforts with the D.A.R.E. program and of his service to the youth in the community. She thanked Officer James for his service to the City of Fairbanks and wished him well in his retirement. She presented Ofc. James with a City of Fairbanks retirement gold pan.

Ofc. James thanked everyone for being a pleasure to work with and shared that he loved working at FPD over his 25-year career.

**Mayor Matherly** stated Officer James is well-respected and highly regarded by the community and by his coworkers.

**Mr. Cleworth** thanked Ofc. James for his service and congratulated him for the professionalism he carried with him throughout his career.

**Mr. Pruhs** thanked Ofc. James for his service and for setting a great standard for policing.

**Mr. Gibson** shared a little-known fact that Ofc. James gave him his first traffic citation when he was 16 years old.

**Ms. Kun** thanked Ofc. James for the smiles he has brought to the citizens of Fairbanks.

**Ms. Rogers** stated Ofc. James is a role model and an excellent example of community policing. She shared that he would be missed.

**Ms. Therrien** wished Ofc. James well in his travels and thanked him for his 25 years of service to the community.

Chief Reeder introduced lateral hire officers Brett Welborn, Cameron Glodowski and James Kuplak, and she administered their oaths of office.

**Mayor Matherly** welcomed the new police officers to the City.

**Mr. Cleworth** welcomed the officers and expressed hope that they have careers like Ofc. James.

**Mr. Pruhs** congratulated Chief Reeder on hiring the lateral officers.

**Mr. Gibson** congratulate Chief Reeder on hiring officers who are choosing to make Fairbanks their home.

**Ms. Kun** thanked the Chief for bringing lateral hires to FPD and welcomed the new officers.

**Ms. Rogers** welcomed the officers to their new department and thanked Chief Reeder for building a strong team that will be enhanced by lateral hire officers.

**Ms. Therrien** welcomed the officers and shared her hope that they will work for the City as long as Ofc. James did.

Acting Fire Chief Chambers recognized Sean White's 27 years of service to the City and wished him luck in retirement. Acting Chief Chambers spoke about Mr. White's career and of his accomplishments dating back to 1993 when he joined the Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD).

**Mr. Cleworth** wished Mr. White well in whatever he chooses to pursue in retirement.

**Mr. Pruhs** thanked Mr. White for his years of service and wished him well in the future.

**Mr. Gibson** echoed Mr. Cleworth's and Mr. Pruhs' sentiments.

**Ms. Kun** thanked Mr. White for his service to the community.

**Ms. Rogers** thanked Mr. White for his service and congratulated him for earning retirement after 27 years.

**Ms. Therrien** thanked Mr. White for his 27-year career at the City of Fairbanks.

### **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

Victor Buberger, P.O. Box 58192, Fairbanks – Mr. Buberger stated he is happy to see Council Chambers open to the public again. He stated he heard that the City will be receiving approximately \$15 million for health and social services, and he suggested that the City use some of the funds to build a public restroom for tourists and locals. He questioned who would be receiving the funds. He suggested that City employees take a 10% reduction in pay to help the economy. He spoke briefly about the Polaris Building and Explore Fairbanks' involvement in that work group. He stated that with millions of dollars floating around, there are going to be a lot of thumbs trying to get in the pie.

Hearing no more requests for comment, **Mayor Matherly** declared Citizens' Comments closed.

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

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Pruhs**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

**Mr. Gibson**, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to AMEND the Agenda by adding Hand-carried Resolution No. 4914 and Resolution No. 4915.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Gibson**, moved to DIVIDE THE QUESTION.

**Mayor Matherly** called for objection on the motion to DIVIDE THE QUESTION and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE AGENDA BY ADDING HAND-CARRIED RESOLUTION NO. 4914 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Gibson, Cleworth, Rogers, Kun, Therrien, Pruhs  
NAYS: None

**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE AGENDA BY ADDING HAND-CARRIED RESOLUTION NO. 4915 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rogers, Gibson, Therrien, Pruhs, Kun  
NAYS: Cleworth

**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Mayor Matherly** called for objection to the APPROVAL of the Agenda, as Amended, and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

City Clerk Snider read the Consent Agenda into the record.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2020

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT**

- a) Special Reports

Scott McCrea, 2965 Westgate Way, Fairbanks – Mr. McCrea reported on behalf of Explore Fairbanks and spoke about the dramatic changes in the tourism industry. He stated they continue to reach out to tour destinations, but it is all completely digital because they cannot travel. He stated Explore Fairbanks has laid off employees, and all remaining employees took pay cuts. He stated they have launched an online site that will promote Fairbanks as a travel destination at any time of the year. He thanked the City Council for their support of destination marketing.

**Mayor Matherly** stated the prior week was the Police Memorial Ceremony, and he thanked Communications Director Teal Soden for putting together a lovely digital presentation since the event could not take place in person because of COVID-19. **Mayor Matherly** stated they released a public safety alert about the dangerous conditions of the Chena River, and he encouraged the public to stay off the river. **Mayor Matherly** stated that over the next three weeks, he plans to reopen City Hall; he stated he would keep the Council updated.

- 1) 2019 Auditor's Report by Garry Hutchison

Garry Hutchison, Kohler, Schmitt & Hutchison PC, Fairbanks – Mr. Hutchison stated he is attending to present the Council with the results of his audit and encouraged everyone to ask questions. He thanked CFO Margarita Bell for all of the work she did in getting his firm the required information in a clear and concise manner. He stated the primary objective of the audit process is to look for errors, violations of law, and fraudulent reporting of accounting. Mr. Hutchison stated there were no issues with the audit of the City's finances. He stated the use of data analytic software has helped in tracking transactions and that the City is in a strong financial position. He continued by providing a thorough presentation of the 2019 auditor's report. He spoke about the different investments and funds that the City has. He and the Council discussed the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) liability.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Resolution No. 4911 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for and Accept Funds from the Alaska Division of Homeland Security for the FFY2020 Emergency Management Performant Grant. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Resolution No. 4912 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for and Accept Funds from the United States Department of Justice for the FFY2020 Bulletproof Vest Partnership Grant. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- c) Resolution No. 4913 – A Resolution Extending for a Third Time the Mayor's Declaration of a Disaster Emergency, Extending the Temporary Provisions of Ordinance No. 6126 Regarding Telephonic Participation of Council Members and Conduct of Council Meetings, and Extending the Mayor's Authority Regarding the Use of City Equipment and Personnel Outside City Limits. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- d) Resolution No. 4914 (Hand-Carried) – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Accept Coronavirus Relief Funds. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

**Ms. Rogers**, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 4914.

Victor Buberger – Mr. Buberger expressed concern about the oversight of the Coronavirus Relief funds, and he asked if a new person would have to be hired for the job. He suggested the City pay citizens' property taxes with the money. He again shared his concern that the "good ole boys and gals" may benefit from the funds.

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

**Mayor Matherly** explained that the resolution is only to authorize the City to receive the funds.

City Clerk Snider advised the Mayor that she just received an email from Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Mayor Bryce Ward in regard to the resolution. She asked whether she should read the letter into the record, and **Mayor Matherly** told her to proceed. Clerk Snider read the letter into the record. The letter encouraged the City Council to work collaboratively with the FNSB and the City of North Pole in distributing the CARES Act Funding to the community.

**Ms. Kun** stated she would support the resolution.

**Ms. Rogers** stated she would support the resolution, thanked Mayor Ward for the letter, and spoke in support of working together.

**Mr. Gibson** stated he would support the resolution.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated he believes Mayor Ward's letter is asking for a unified plan versus the City doing its own oversight of the relief funds allocated to the City. He stated the resolution before the Council authorizes the City to move forward independently, and he asked for a staff report

from CFO Bell. Ms. Bell stated Mr. Cleworth's understanding of the resolution is correct. She stated the City is proposing to use some of the funds to recover allowable expenditures and to work with local financial institutions and organizations to provide grants to local businesses and individuals. **Mr. Cleworth** stated he wants to ensure that the City will oversee the funds.

**Mayor Matherly** confirmed that the City will oversee the funds. Chief of Staff Mike Meeks stated the administration has been in contact with the Borough. He stated the City has offered to share information with the Borough regarding the RFP process and the City's plans for distribution. He stated the City is willing to coordinate with the other local governments.

**Ms. Rogers** stated the level of participation Mr. Meeks spoke about is what she had envisioned.

**Mr. Cleworth** thanked City staff for all the work they have done.

**Ms. Therrien** asked about individuals applying for the funds. Mr. Meeks stated the committee would be discussing fund allocation, and he indicated individuals would be a part of allocations.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 4914 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Kun, Gibson, Therrien, Pruhs, Cleworth, Rogers

NAYS: None

**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 4914 APPROVED.

- e) Resolution No. 4915 (Hand-Carried) – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for Funds from the United States Department of Homeland Security for the FY2019 Staffing for Adequate Fire and Emergency Response Grant Program. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to APPROVE Ordinance No 4915.

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

**Ms. Kun** stated she would support the resolution.

**Ms. Rogers** stated she is supportive of the direction of the resolution, but she would like to hear from Acting Fire Chief Tod Chambers. Mr. Chambers stated they are trying to fill positions with quality people, and the SAFER grant has been modified to fund positions at 100%. He stated they are having a hard time maintaining staff, and the situation is becoming critical and needs to be addressed. He stated the grant would allow for people to become fully trained, and it is a solution to a problem. He stated it will benefit the City.

**Ms. Therrien** asked Mr. Chambers if there would be no cost to the City for the next three years. Mr. Chambers replied that all the costs are funded 100% by the grant, which is unique because typically the grant contribution decreases over the life of the grant. **Ms. Therrien** shared her hope that Mr. Cleworth would support the resolution since it would be at no cost to the City.

**Mr. Pruhs** asked Mr. Chambers for a reporting of his staff. Mr. Chambers stated he has 14 staff on one shift and 13 staff on the other two shifts. **Mr. Pruhs** asked what the staffing level would be if the City got the grant. Mr. Chambers stated with the upcoming retirement of Sean White, they would be staffed at 39.

**Mr. Pruhs** asked CFO Bell whether the Fire Department would have to increase its staffing level from 43 to 46 if the City received the grant. Ms. Bell stated staffing would have to increase to 46. She explained that SAFER grant employees have to be retained for the life of the grant, including the four current SAFER grant positions at the Fire Department. She stated there would be a two-year overlap of the current and new SAFER grant positions if the City received the new SAFER grant.

**Mr. Gibson** asked Ms. Bell if the cost of over \$400,000 a year for two years to retain the four current grant-funded positions would be covered by the City or by the SAFER grant. Ms. Bell stated that as soon as the grant funding runs out, that cost will be on the City for the two remaining years to retain those employees. **Mr. Gibson** stated it would be more accurate to say that the grant has an associated cost and is not free money. Ms. Bell explained that it will have a cost because the City would have to retain both sets of SAFER grant positions for the duration of the grant.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated it is not actually a grant, but rather a bill. He acknowledged that it is a better program than past SAFER grants, but it is still not free. He stated it is better to let the old SAFER grant expire before accepting another, because it is a \$812,000 bill. He stated there can be no layoffs during the life of the grant, and it may unfairly impact the other departments in the City. **Mr. Cleworth** stated the SAFER grant guarantees Fire Department positions at budget season when other departments may be struggling to make ends meet. He stated the Fire Department is staffed accordingly per the population. He stated that while four businesses in the downtown core have gone out of business in the past few months and Explore Fairbanks is laying off employees, the City is talking about adding three more positions. He stated they have to take care of the existing employees, and it would not be good stewardship to accept the funds.

**Mayor Matherly** stated businesses have closed, but ambulance calls have continued to increase. He stated the three-paramedic positions in the grant would be 100% funded, and the City is in desperate need of paramedics.

**Mr. Pruhs** expressed his disappointment in the rush to a resolution and indicated that there has not been enough information presented. He stated he would not be voting in favor of the resolution. He stated the SAFER grant comes out every year, so the Council should let the current one expire before pursuing another. He stated he foresees huge losses as a result of the Coronavirus, and the cost of the grant is over \$800,000.

Mr. Meeks stated that the Administration had been talking with Senator Murkowski's office about SAFER grants, and they made some suggested changes. He stated that Murkowski's office came up with this program, but the City was not notified until May 15 of the new grant opportunity. He indicated that time is of the essence because the grant application deadline is May 27. Mr. Chambers stated there was no intention to apply for the original SAFER grant until

the modified version came out. Mr. Meeks stated the Administration was not trying to pull a fast one, and up until earlier that morning they thought they could get three new positions at no cost. He stated there was no intent to pull the wool over anyone's eyes; the opportunity just came late. He asked the Council whether they wish to maintain the same level of service with the call volume continuing to increase.

**Mr. Gibson** asked whether the City could reduce the staffing numbers at the Fire Department from 43 to 39 when the current SAFER grant expires, then apply for a new SAFER grant. Mr. Chambers stated that will rely heavily on negotiations.

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to POSTPONE Resolution No. 4915 to a Special Council Meeting to be held on or before May 27.

**Mayor Matherly** asked Ms. Therrien her reasoning behind postponement. **Ms. Therrien** stated she feels that the resolution will not pass unanimously, which is required for a hand-carry. She stated that holding a Special Meeting would allow the Council more time to look at the information, and she believes there would be four votes to pass the resolution.

**Mayor Matherly** asked Clerk Snider whether the resolution would still require a unanimous vote if postponed. Clerk Snider stated that it would require only a majority vote if postponed because proper public notice could be given; City Attorney Ewers concurred.

Clerk Snider asked for clarification on the postponement date since the grant application is due by May 27. Council Members discussed the postponement date, and Ms. Therrien stated she would be fine holding the special meeting sometime prior to the grant application deadline so long as there was enough time to turn the grant application in. **Mr. Gibson** stated that he is unable to commit to a meeting.

**Mr. Pruhs** stated that proper preparation prevents pitiful performance, and he is witnessing a pitiful performance.

Ms. Snider stated a date must be set in order to postpone the resolution. **Mayor Matherly** asked whether 3:00 p.m. on May 26 is an acceptable time for everyone.

**Mr. Pruhs** stated that the Mayor is taking people's schedules down and trying to do something that is nefarious at best. He questioned whether the Mayor is sure he would like to continue. **Mayor Matherly** advised Mr. Pruhs to be calm and to not call his staff pathetic and nefarious.

**Ms. Therrien** stated she would like to set the date and time for the special meeting as May 26 at 7 a.m., and no members objected to that specification in the motion.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO POSTPONE RESOLUTION NO. 4915 TO A SPECIAL MEETING TO BE HELD ON MAY 26 AT 7 A.M. AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS:           Therrien, Kun, Rogers  
NAYS:           Pruhs, Cleworth, Gibson, Matherly  
**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION FAILED.



A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 4915 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rogers, Kun, Therrien  
NAYS: Cleworth, Pruhs, Gibson  
**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION FAILED.

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

a) Committee Reports

Polaris Building Work Group – **Mr. Pruhs** stated the group will hold a teleconference to discuss funding ideas for knocking down the Polaris Building, and he asked if Grants Administrator Carrie Peterson could be on the call. He stated the conversation is only about demolition, and conversations about rebuilding need to start.

Explore Fairbanks Board of Directors – **Ms. Kun** stated the Explore Fairbanks Board met but that Mr. McCrea gave a thorough update earlier, and she had nothing more to report.

### WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL

a) Reappointment to the Board of Plumber Examiners

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

**Ms. Kun** gave a land acknowledgement and stated that she is happy to see road construction projects starting back up.

**Ms. Rogers** thanked Explore Fairbanks for their updates to the Council, for their continued resiliency in their approach, and for being a longstanding, strong entity. She thanked Mr. Hutchison and Ms. Bell for the information they provided in the audit presentation.

**Ms. Therrien** shared her frustration that the SAFER grant did not get approved because it would have been a free million dollars to fund paramedics. She wished everyone a safe and happy Memorial Day.

**Mr. Gibson** thanked the Council for passing Resolution No. 4914 and expressed appreciation for the forward thinking. He thanked Mayor Ward for weighing in and the Clerk for reading his comments into the record.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated the Borough is considering adding a new Board of Appeals for Planning Commission decisions. He stated the Council used to serve as the appeals board for issues inside City limits, but now the Borough Assembly will not even hear the appeals. He stated he believes the issue has been postponed, but perhaps the Council should take a better look at the issue. **Mr.**

**Cleworth** stated that SAFER grants in the past have resulted with an additional permanent employees. He stated every department needs more and that all the growth has been only at the Fire Department. He stated it is bad practice to grow only one department, and there are union contracts that still need to be funded. He thanked Ms. Bell for her attention to detail in her work and commended the Finance Department for continuing to receive awards.

**Mr. Pruhs** thanked Ofc. James for his years of service and thanked Chief Reeder for hiring three lateral hires. He commended Ms. Bell for her work.

**Mr. Gibson**, seconded by **Mr. Pruhs**, moved to ENTER Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Potential PFAS/PFOA Litigation – Tolling Agreement with FNSB.

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

**Mayor Matherly** called for a brief recess. The Council reconvened in Executive Session following the brief recess.

### EXECUTIVE SESSION

a) Potential PFAS/PFOA Litigation – Tolling Agreement with FNSB

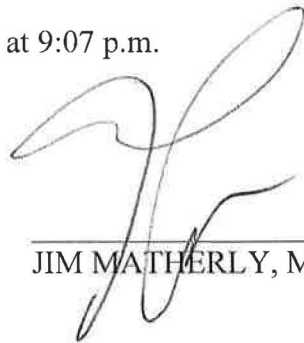
The City Council met in Executive Session to discuss Potential PFAS/PFOA Litigation – Tolling Agreement with FNSB. Direction was given to legal counsel, and no action was taken.

### ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. Gibson**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

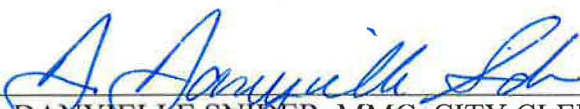
**Mayor Matherly** called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

**Mayor Matherly** declared the meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.



JIM MATHERLY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
D. DANYELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: EB