



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 19, 2020
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

The City Council convened at 5:30 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Special Meeting of the Fairbanks City Council at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Mayor pro tempore Valerie Therrien presiding (Council Member, Seat C) and with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present: Shoshana Kun, Seat A
 June Rogers, Seat B
 Aaron Gibson, Seat D
 David Pruhs, Seat F

Absent: Jerry Cleworth, Seat E
 Jim Matherly, Mayor

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
 Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff

Mayor pro tem Therrien called the meeting to order and stated that the Special Meeting was called to consider Ordinance No. 6126, An Emergency Ordinance Temporarily Authorizing the Telephonic Participation of Council Members at Council Meetings and Temporarily Authorizing the Mayor to Modify Provisions of the Fairbanks General Code Regarding Public Meetings and Participation in Order to Ensure the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Our Community During a State-Declared Public Health Emergency. She stated that Charter Section 3.6 provides that an ordinance may be introduced and adopted at the same meeting only in very limited circumstances. **Mayor pro tem Therrien** stated that first, a motion would be needed to suspend the rules to allow Ordinance No. 6126 to be introduced and adopted at the meeting. She explained that the motion must state the nature of the emergency and requires a unanimous vote of all council members in attendance.

Mayor pro tem Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved that the Council SUSPEND THE NORMAL RULES to allow introduction and adoption of Ordinance No. 6126 at this special meeting, based on the emergency created by the COVID-19 virus, as set out in the "whereas" statements in the Ordinance, and based on the need to adopt emergency measures so the council can continue to meet as mandated by the Charter while minimizing the risk of spreading the virus.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO SUSPEND THE NORMAL RULES TO ALLOW INTRODUCTION AND ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE NO. 6126 AT THIS SPECIAL MEETING, BASED ON THE EMERGENCY CREATED BY THE COVID-19 VIRUS, AS SET OUT IN THE "WHEREAS" STATEMENTS IN THE ORDINANCE, AND BASED ON THE NEED TO ADOPT EMERGENCY MEASURES SO THE COUNCIL CAN CONTINUE TO MEET AS MANDATED BY THE CHARTER WHILE MINIMIZING THE RISK OF SPREADING THE VIRUS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Pruhs, Rogers, Kun, Gibson, Therrien

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Cleworth

Mayor pro tem Therrien declared the MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6126 – An Emergency Ordinance Temporarily Authorizing the Telephonic Participation of Council Members at Council Meetings and Temporarily Authorizing the Mayor to Modify Provisions of the Fairbanks General Code Regarding Public Meetings and Participation in Order to Ensure the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Our Community During a State-Declared Public Health Emergency. Introduced by Mayor Matherly. PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Kun, seconded by **Mayor pro tem Therrien**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6126.

Mayor pro tem Therrien called for public comment and, hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

Clerk Snider requested to read comments submitted by Council Member Cleworth into the record. **Mayor pro tem Therrien** advised the Clerk to proceed. Mr. Cleworth's comments were read into the record as follows:

Mayor and Council Members:

I apologize for missing tonight's meeting. I have a conflict that on short notice I could not change. I have read the Ordinance before the Council and offer the following observations and thoughts.

I have no problem with temporarily changing our code regarding telephonic participation by the Mayor or Council members. I would prefer, unless absolutely necessary, that our future meetings still be held in the council chambers with the following conditions:

- 1) Only essential staff be there. If they are not comfortable with this, then provisions can be made to accommodate them. Council members uncomfortable with this or under possible quarantine can participate via phone.
- 2) It is essential to also accommodate the public for their input. I leave it up to the Council to discuss this and come up with the best solution that balance health concerns and open public meetings.
- 3) We have microphones at several tables, and if necessary for "safe distance", the council members could easily spread out farther than our current seating.
- 4) Executive sessions remain a logistical problem. This is one of the primary reasons I still favor having an actual meeting in chambers. I have a great deal of trust with all of the Council Members, and participating via phone should still be temporarily acceptable as long as there is no other person present in the room of the caller.

A final thought – I believe I heard the FNSB School Board recently wrestled with these questions as well, and they seemed to strike a good balance similar to what I have proposed. I may have misheard and apologize if that is the case. But it would be wise to take a look at what they did. Best to all of you! Jerry

Ms. Kun pointed out that the provisions of Ordinance No. 6126 will expire on May 31 unless extended by the Council, and she believes it was wise to include a deadline. She stated the Council will need to decide how to handle telephonic attendance at Executive Sessions.

Mr. Gibson asked for confirmation that Council Meetings would still take place in City Council Chambers and would not be held strictly by phone. Clerk Snider explained that the plan is to continue to hold Council Meetings in City Council Chambers. She stated there is no plan to hold Council Meetings by telephonic participation only.

Mr. Pruhs stated that extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures, and he believes it is in the best interest and safety of the general public, City employees, and Council Members to take these temporary measures.

Ms. Rogers stated the ordinance is prudent and necessary. She stated that the expiration date of the ordinance could be reassessed at a later time, if necessary.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6126 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Pruhs, Therrien, Kun, Gibson, Rogers

NAYS: None

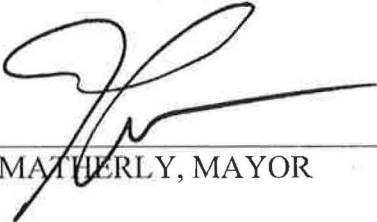
ABSENT: Cleworth

Mayor pro tem Therrien declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6126 ADOPTED.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Pruhs, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Hearing no objection, **Mayor pro tem Therrien** declared the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m.



JIM MATTERLY, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANVUELLE SNIDER, CMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: DS