



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 8, 2021  
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, following a 5:30 p.m. Work Session on the Joint Hazard Mitigation Plan Draft, to conduct a Regular Meeting of the Fairbanks City Council via Zoom webinar and at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Mayor Jim Matherly presiding (remotely) and with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present:        Shoshana Kun, Seat A (remotely)  
   June Rogers, Seat B (remotely)  
   Valerie Therrien, Seat C  
   Aaron Gibson, Seat D  
   Lonny Marney, Seat E  
   Jim Clark, Seat F

Absent:                                        None

Also Present:                                Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer (remotely)  
   Paul Ewers, City Attorney  
   D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
   Jeff Jacobson, Public Works Director (remotely)  
   Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff  
   Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)  
   Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director  
   Tod Chambers, Fire Chief (remotely)  
   Geoff Coon, Assistant Fire Chief (remotely)  
   Richard Sweet, Acting Police Chief  
   Ron Dupee, Acting Deputy Police Chief  
   Gerrit Butler, FPD  
   Dennis Benn, FPD  
   Taylor Burcell, FPD  
   Jill Copeland, FPD  
   Kelly Copeland, FPD

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

**INVOCATION**

The Invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

**FLAG SALUTATION**

**Mayor Matherly** led the Flag Salutation.

## CEREMONIAL MATTERS

Mayor Matherly welcomed new police officers Taylor Burcell, Jill Copeland, and Kelly Copeland. Acting Chief Rick Sweet performed the swearing in duties and pinned their badges on them.

## CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Greg Foster, Fairbanks – Mr. Foster spoke to the hiring process for Police Chief and made clear he was not speaking against any specific candidate. He added that he had previously applied for the Police Chief position in 2019, at which time he had come in second place. He stated that he had also applied for the current opening and had been told he was not qualified. Mr. Foster stated that he had learned that he had not truly been qualified the first time he had applied, and he was concerned that he had been a finalist without making the qualifications. He stated that he had discovered that another applicant had been found unqualified despite his extensive experience and had not been allowed the opportunity to interview. Mr. Foster stated that his greatest concern is that eight individuals were removed from the process prior to the hiring committee review. He stated that he was aware of the subject matter experts used for initial review but felt strongly that internal candidates must be considered to fix the issues within the FPD department. Mr. Foster went on to list his experience in law enforcement and spoke to his disbelief that he would be found unqualified. He stated his concern that the committee that was installed to make these decisions was not allowed to see his or the other qualified applicant he previously mentioned. He went on to state that 18 applications were not a significant number of applications to warrant removal of any of them prior to putting them before the hiring committee and that he did not believe the process to be fair or unbiased. He added that the City Council is the “checks and balances” of the City government and asked that all applications remain until the hiring committee has the opportunity to review all of them, thereby adding transparency and building trust in the process.

City Clerk Danyielle Snider stated that there were no more comments to be heard in person, and testimony over Zoom was heard next.

Victor Buberger, Fairbanks – Mr. Buberger stated that Zoom was very difficult to use and could use improvement. He stated that during Mayor Matherly’s term the City was in the process of hiring its 4th Police Chief and questioned the reasons behind that. Mr. Buberger speculated that newly hired Police Chiefs may be taking the job in order to gain benefits and suggested that the Council place a minimum term requirement. He added that the last hire for Police Chief had been a wild card who had up and left shortly after taking office. Mr. Buberger spoke to Acting Chief Sweet and suggested that the City appoint him considering he has been in the position for some time. He added that the previous speaker had questions regarding qualifications to which Mr. Buberger attributed to the “Alaskan Theory” of whacked up policies. He stated that perhaps the previous speaker could have been the most qualified candidate; however, his application was not even considered. Mr. Buberger stated that he did not think the City was in the right financial shape to undertake the Polaris Building project, especially given the current state of tourism and the potential impact on taxpayers.

City Clerk Danyielle Snider stated that there were no more comments to be heard in person or over Zoom and proceeded to read the following written comments into record:

JoLee Giuchici, Fairbanks – Ms. Giuchici reminded the Council of the November 23, 2021 City Council meeting where Mayor Matherly had stated that the hiring process for a Police Chief would be the same process that had been followed two years previously. She added that Mayor Matherly had also said that even though the hiring committee would be capped at nine members, all citizens’ comments and feedback would be welcome. She stated that Mayor Matherly had claimed that diversity, transparency, and officer training were all important to him and that he would be working hard to ensure the hiring process would be successful with emphasis on transparency and integrity. Ms. Giuchici stated that the process in place was an insult to the community. She added that Mayor Matherly had included a review by “subject matter experts,” which had not been disclosed to the hiring committee, the City Council, or to the public and resulted in eight applicants being removed from the pool of candidates prior to review by the hiring committee. Ms. Giuchici inquired about the matrix used to determine the top ten candidates and noted that this review had not been part of the previous hiring process. She stated that it was her belief that local, qualified applicants were deemed unqualified and asked that the City Council not approve any candidate for the Police Chief position until the hiring committee had the opportunity to review all qualified applications. Ms. Giuchici stated that it was disingenuous to state that the hiring committee had made strides to address the concerns raised by public comments when the committee had not been given all information. She added that three of the five finalists were not from the Fairbanks region and indicated that hiring a non-local candidate has not worked well for the City in the past. Ms. Giuchici clarified that all local applicants who meet the qualifications should be interviewed as it is her belief that local hires would be best suited to build strong relationships and work effectively with many different areas of the Fairbanks community. Ms. Giuchici added that Mayor Matherly could have appointed his choice to the position of Police Chief, but he instead developed a process that proved to be disingenuous at best and fraudulent at worst. She asked why a process should be implemented if the integrity of the process would not be upheld. She ended by repeating her request that the Council not approve any candidate until all applicants, who meet the requirements, have been presented to the committee.

Deborah Hicks, Fairbanks – Ms. Hicks stated her concern in regard to the lack of transparency in the vetting and hiring process for Police Chief. She stated that the Council should not approve any of the five finalists until all applications could be evaluated by the hiring committee. She noted that there had been a total of 18 applications but only 10 forwarded to the hiring committee, and it was not made clear why the eight applicants were eliminated from consideration. Ms. Hicks stated that it is the Mayor’s duty to ensure the hiring process is fair and transparent and, by not allowing the hiring committee to review all applications, it has been neither fair nor transparent. She continued by stating that three of the five finalists were not local to the Fairbanks area. She stated that Fairbanks and the greater Alaskan region are very unique, and it should be considered essential to evaluate all qualified local applicants due to their relationships within the community and their experiences with other local law enforcement agencies. Ms. Hicks stated that hiring local is very important to her as a citizen of Fairbanks. She added that by using a hiring process that is not clear or unbiased results in a disservice to one of the most important organizations within the community, the applicants, and the public. She ended by asking that all applications be reconsidered prior to a formal selection of Police Chief.

Heidi Haas, Fairbanks – Ms. Haas thanked the Council for the opportunity to provide public comment and stated that she had concerns with regard to the Police Chief hiring process. She

added that the information provided in the previous City Council meeting had left her feeling that information had been withheld from the hiring committee. She added that the Mayor had the authority to appoint the Police Chief but, instead, had elected to use a transparent process with the help of the community through a committee. Ms. Haas stated that she felt the process had been less than transparent and had led many to question the steps taken which resulted in two qualified Fairbanks applicants not being considered by the hiring committee. She encouraged the Council to take necessary actions to allow the hiring process to be performed in the fair and transparent manner that it had been presented. She added that all qualified applications should have been forwarded to the hiring committee and the failure to do so has shed a bad light on the City, the process, and the police force and puts the selected candidate at an immediate disadvantage.

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

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

**Ms. Kun**, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

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

City Clerk Snider read the Consent Agenda into the record.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2021.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **SPECIAL ORDERS**

a) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following Liquor License Applications for Renewal.

<b>Lic. #</b>	<b>DBA</b>	<b>License Type</b>	<b>Licensee</b>	<b>Address</b>
3483	Fairbanks Curling Club	Beverage Dispensary	Fairbanks Curling Club, Inc.	1962 2nd Avenue
3282	Sam's Club #6603	Package Store	Sam's West, Inc.	48 College Road
3687	Thai House Restaurant	Restaurant/Eating Place	Boonchoo, Inc.	412 5th Avenue

**Mr. Clark**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Liquor License Applications for Renewal.

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

**Mr. Gibson** asked if the unused license that is being held by Sam's Club could be preventing another business from holding a license. City Clerk Snider replied that it would only pertain to package-store licenses, and the assumption is that Sam's Club would be selling it.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rogers, Gibson, Therrien, Clark, Marney, Kun  
NAYS: None

**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

b) The Fairbanks City Council considered its protest of the following liquor license transfer following a request by the applicant:

License Type: Beverage Dispensary, License #4547  
D.B.A.: Ethos Brewing Company  
Licensee/Applicant: Humble Roots, LLC  
Physical Location: 314 Wendell Avenue, Fairbanks, Alaska  
From: McCoy's Underground / North Star Dining, LLC  
Location: 636 28th Avenue, Suite 2

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Mr. Gibson**, moved to WITHDRAW PROTEST on the Liquor License Application for Transfer.

Rick Mensik, Fairbanks – Mr. Mensik asked the Council to provide the same consideration they had given to Latitude 65, as they too have been encumbered by the 180-day limit to complete construction and obtain approval by the local governing body. He added that due to the added brewery portion of the business, they would also be required to obtain two additional licenses that cannot be initiated until the transfer is approved by AMCO. He clarified his request to have the protest waived pending a certificate of occupancy from the City building department.

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WITHDRAW PROTEST ON THE LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Kun, Gibson, Therrien, Clark, Marney, Rogers  
NAYS: None

**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Ms. Rogers**, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST, Conditional Upon Certificate of Occupancy, on the Liquor License Application for Transfer.

**Mayor Matherly** asked Mr. Mensik when he expected to be finished with construction.

Mr. Mensik stated that they were working as fast as they could to get the building completed; however, he had been informed by his contractor and architect to expect shortages in building supplies due to implications of the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Ms. Rogers** thanked Mr. Mensik for his willingness to keep the Council informed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST, CONDITIONAL UPON CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY, ON THE LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Clark, Rogers, Kun, Gibson, Therrien

NAYS: None

**Mayor Matherly** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

**Mayor Matherly** thanked the eleven individuals who have spent over 30 hours working on the hiring committee for police chief. He added that they will be spending several more hours before selecting their recommendation for the top candidate. **Mayor Matherly** clarified that City Code allows for the Mayor to either select individuals directly or to use a format in order to fill department head positions prior to confirmation by the City Council. He stated that he had opted to use a format more complicated than those used to select the Chief Financial Officer and Fire Chief by including a community panel for the interview process. **Mayor Matherly** expressed his gratitude to the following panel volunteers: Andrew Aquino of the Fairbanks Diversity Council; Fairbanks Fire Chief Tod Chambers; Benny Colbert, former NAACP President; Bobby Dorton, representing Behavioral Health; Joe Dallaire of the Fairbanks District Attorney's Office, Chief Steve Ginnis from the Fairbanks Native Association, Brenda Stanfill from IACNVL, Jeff Hurben, representing small businesses; and Alaska State Trooper Captain Ron Wall. He went on to state that the candidate forum would happen the following evening. **Mayor Matherly** also extended his thanks to Human Resources Director Angela Foster-Snow, Public Information Officer Teal Soden, and Chief of Staff Mike Meeks for their hard work during the process. He added his thanks to the subject-matter-experts who reviewed the initial 18 applications for minimum and preferred experience and qualifications and provided input to the interview panel: Police Chief Ed Mercer from the City and Borough of Juneau and Greg Russell from the Alaska Municipal League. **Mayor Matherly** explained that the subject matter experts selected ten applications for the interview committee to review, from which the interview committee selected five to participate in the public forum. He continued by clarifying that from the five applicants who will be interviewed, the panel will make its recommendation to him, and his appointment will be brought to the Council at the next regular meeting. **Mayor Matherly** thanked the City Council for their continued hard work. He stated that mask wearing is still an issue in the City, and he emphasized the need for everyone to continue to mask-up. He expressed his pride in the successful rollout of vaccines within the community, sharing that many of the first responders had already received their second round of immunizations. He mentioned that there remain several Covid-19 testing places, including the State Health Department trailer located outside of the Public Works department. He encouraged all citizens to continue to wear masks when in public, stating that it will take time for the vaccines to provide the necessary "herd immunity" required before masks will no longer be needed. **Mayor Matherly** added that if local businesses

need help in acquiring masks, he would be happy to bring some by. He ended his report by inviting Scott McCrea from Explore Fairbanks to provide a special report.

a) Special Reports

Scott McCrea, Explore Fairbanks – Mr. McCrea stated that he would be speaking in his capacity as Director of Tourism and Convention Sales for Explore Fairbanks and thanked the Council for the opportunity to give his report. He shared that Canada would be extending the ban on cruise vessels carrying more than 100 passengers from operating within Canadian waters until February of 2022. He continued by adding that the ban had originally been enacted in March 2020 and had been scheduled to be lifted at the end of February 2021. Mr. McCrea stated that Explore Fairbanks, partnered with other tourism advocates, is committed to seeking a different resolution for cruises to Alaska this summer. He emphasized that 41% of Alaskan summer visitors arrive by Gulf of Alaska cruise land tour packages. Mr. McCrea added that while the ban is a blow to potential tourism, these orders can change with circumstances, and the wording in the order allows for Canada to rescind the ban if the health situation approves. He stated that Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), Cruise Line Industry Association of Alaska, along with the Congressional Delegation are pursuing strategies with the hope of a different outcome. He reported that the cruise lines that would be affected by this ban are also hopeful for a different outcome and have not yet cancelled any of their scheduled voyages. He explained that one of the options is a temporary waiver of the Passenger Vessel Services Act, PVSA, which states that foreign vessels cannot cross American waters without stopping at least once in a foreign port, and Canadian ports help serve that purpose for Alaskan bound cruises of which most are foreign flagships. Mr. McCrea stated that Carnival and other cruise companies have committed to continuing their land-based tours for Summer 2021 and have stated that they will be opening and operating their properties within Fairbanks and Denali. He added that prior to the Canadian announcement, his department had been involved in the promotion of land tour itineraries and fly-drive tours. Mr. McCrae stated that travel agents and tour operators are very keen on finding other ways to get tourists to Alaska without the cruises due to the interest expressed in the leisure travel market. He concluded by asking Deb Hickok to speak about a recent survey that speaks to the interest in Alaska tourism, and he thanked the Council for their support and reinvestment of Hotel/Motel tax dollars.

**Mr. Clark** asked for clarification on the percentage of visitors who visit Fairbanks. Mr. McCrea stated that a study done in 2016 by the Alaska Visitors Statistics Program indicated that 41% of visitors to Fairbanks in the summer months arrive by cruise ships.

**Mr. Marney** inquired to the status of local hotel business with regard to local events. Mr. McCrea stated that occupancy is down from previous years, but some are getting bookings by hosting small events.

Deb Hickok, Explore Fairbanks – Ms. Hickok thanked the Mayor and the Council for the opportunity to update them on the status of the travel industry. She shared her apprehension about the pending decision from Canada to extend the ban on border crossings past its current expiration date of February 21, 2021 in addition to the extended port closures. She reiterated Mr. McCrae's statement that 41% of Fairbanks visitors arrive by cruise ship and added that an additional 10% are long-haul highway travelers, making up a total of 51% of the typical summer tourism that is effectively in the hands of the Canadian decision makers. Ms. Hickok went on to

speaking about the more positive situation at Fairbanks International Airport where the expectation is an increase of 120% seats above 2020 numbers. She added that Condor, American, United and Sun Country airlines would be adding flights to and from Fairbanks. She stated that in a recent consumer study conducted by Destination Analyst of American travelers, Fairbanks ranked #1 in likely future visitation of 23 western state destinations, followed by Alaska as a whole and Anchorage, with Hawaii coming in fourth. She stated that the same study found that the most effective tool for learning about and planning trips to new destinations were websites and email, but also official local and state visitor guides. Ms. Hickok stated that the results of the beforementioned study and other studies show that marketing does matter, and the marketing work being done by Explore Fairbanks has been making a positive impact on local business. Ms. Hickok stated that marketing has continued even with the significant budget and personnel cuts demanded by the Covid-19 pandemic. She added that the Council's support of destination marketing has been one of the most important actions by the City government in assisting in the recovery of tourism. She thanked the Council for their continued support and the hard work done by CFO Margarita Bell to distribute stimulus funding to Explore Fairbanks and the community. Ms. Hickok stated that Explore Fairbanks had acquired \$686,000 in stimulus funds from seven different sources, with the two grants provided by the City making up 62% of the total CARES Act funding they had received. She added that without the CARES Act funding the projected revenue loss would have been 51%; instead it was only 34%. Ms. Hickok stated that the majority of the funding had been put into marketing. She added that due to changes in regulations, Explore Fairbanks will be able to apply for the PPP loan in 2021 which will help a great deal. She stated that Mike Meeks had inquired about any resolutions the Council might issue to further help the recovery of tourism; she stated she will be providing a letter with suggestions. She ended by expressing her appreciation of the Council and their support.

**Mayor Matherly** stated that the pandemic has had a very real impact on the community and many organizations such as Explore Fairbanks. He stated he appreciates the efforts the organization has put forth to persevere. He added that he would like to pass his condolences to the Explore Fairbanks staff, and Ms. Geiger in particular.

**Ms. Rogers** asked Ms. Hickok to explain the relationship between Explore Fairbanks and the development of the Condor Airlines partnership. Ms. Hickok shared that in 2001 two individuals initiated the conversation with Condor: Dave Carlstrom, the Marketing Manager at Fairbanks International and Andy Anger, the owner of a backcountry touring company. She stated that Condor had wanted a two-year risk abatement guarantee that would essentially pay the airline in the event of canceled flights. She stated that the first year was guaranteed by the owner of Chena Hot Springs Resort, Bernie Karl. She stated that Explore Fairbanks began marketing immediately and hired a contractor in Germany to help with tourism support. She added that had it not been for the 9/11 disaster, all flights would have been successful. She stated that the second-year risk abatement was provided by the consortium created by Explore Fairbanks and 15 local businesses, and, fortunately, all flights were successful. She concluded by saying that 2021 will be the 20th year Condor has been flying to Fairbanks International Airport.

**Ms. Therrien** asked Ms. Hickok if there was anything the City could do regarding the requirements for Covid-19 testing and quarantining, as that could discourage people from visiting. Ms. Hickok responded that during the recent ATIA meeting, they discussed revisiting the strict social distancing guidelines that are placed on visitors entering Alaska. She added that the guidelines have changed in a number of days and are unenforceable. She stated that the



ATIA had sent a letter to the Governor last week asking that the language be changed from “must” to “recommend” so as not to prevent potential tourists from booking their trips. Ms. Hickok stated that Explore Fairbanks is in favor of the Covid-19 testing. She added that it is similar to the requirements for Hawaii, and they have been very successful with tourism, with some of the lowest incidents of infection, during the pandemic. **Ms. Therrien** asked that the Council be provided with a copy of the letter.

**Mr. Clark** asked for more information regarding the survey that ranks Fairbanks over Hawaii. Ms. Hickok explained that the survey first compares the locations that have been visited, and Fairbanks ranks lower on that list. She explained that the second list is of the cities that people aspire to visit, and when those lists are combined into an index, Fairbanks rises to the top of the list. She clarified that the end result is that Fairbanks has a lot of potential. **Mr. Clark** asked who provided the survey. Ms. Hickok stated that it was Destination Analysts, a very credible company. She added that there are weekly studies done, but Fairbanks had not previously appeared in studies because they had not been including Fairbanks as an option in their research. Ms. Hickok stated that Explore Fairbanks paid for research in order to be added to the list and to gain familiarity with potential visitors.

**Mr. Marney** asked if the survey was done worldwide or in the US only. Ms. Hickok stated that the study was done on American travelers and had been broken down in the Eastern, Central and Western states; she stated Fairbanks ranked number one in the study of Western state destinations.

**Mayor Matherly** thanked Ms. Hickok and Mr. McCrea for their updates. He welcomed the three new police officers and congratulated Officers Bonham and Flesching on the recent additions to their families. He added that Officer Winters and his wife were closely awaiting the birth of their child as well. **Mayor Matherly** reminded the Council of the public forum to be held the following evening at 5:30 p.m. and noted that it will be available online, on the radio, and in person. He stated that following the public forum, the interview panel will make their recommendations and that he would then make his selection to be brought to the City Council.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Ordinance No. 6144 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 2, Article V, Division 3, by Adding a New Section 2-658 Regarding Grant Procedures. Introduced by Council Member Gibson. First Reading of this Ordinance was POSTPONED from the Regular Meeting of November 23, 2020.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Resolution No. 4953 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for Funds from the United States Department of Homeland Security for the FFY2020 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG). Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Resolution No. 4954 – A Resolution Authorizing a Payment in Lieu of Taxes Agreement with the Interior Regional Housing Authority. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- c) Ordinance No. 6148 – An Ordinance Ratifying a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Fairbanks and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1547. Introduced by Mayor Matherly.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Ms. Therrien** stated her concern regarding the process for Chief of Police. She stated that the Mayor had not mentioned that individuals would be selecting the applicants to be interviewed by the committee. She added that it was especially concerning due to the fact that there seemed to be two individuals from Fairbanks that should have qualified. **Ms. Therrien** encouraged the Council and the Mayor to allow all of the applicants to be interviewed by the committee. She added that she would feel very uncomfortable moving forward otherwise. **Ms. Therrien** offered her congratulations to the new police officers. She shared that she had been in attendance at the FNSB Borough Assembly meeting the previous week but had been unable to participate due to the incorrect code given to her; she encouraged all Council members to check with the Borough Clerk to verify they have the correct meeting information in the future. **Ms. Therrien** stated she had also attended the AML meeting on February 5, 2021 and shared that the biggest item of conversation had been the Disaster Declaration (SB56). She spoke to how the House had failed to organize, resulting in the possibility that the Disaster Declaration may not receive legislative approval before it expires on February 14, 2021. **Ms. Therrien** asked if the Mayor might be interested in sending a letter to the Governor in support of the AML recommendations. She added that they had discussed the process behind a bill related to G.O. bonds. She stated that Senator Micciche had proposed a statewide sales tax at 2% in the winter season and 4% during the summer; however the bill had not yet been introduced, nor had an analysis of the impact been provided. She stated that AML had concerns regarding the impact to the cost of living for those communities that already have a sales tax and for those living in rural Alaska. She added that it could bring over \$1 billion in revenue, but not enough to cover the deficit. **Ms. Therrien** stated that the CARES Act had been discussed and that Senator Kawasaki had introduced a PERS bill that could add a Tier 5. She added that a Tier 5 could reduce the amount paid into TRS and PERS. She stated that Title 4 was currently being rewritten by Sen. Micciche which may have an impact on liquor licenses. **Ms. Therrien** shared that she had also attended the AML Board meeting where AML finances were the primary topic of discussion. She spoke about the AML's Municipal Health Trust and stated that the City may want to look into it to see if there can be savings on employee premiums. She reported that she will be attending the AML legislative meeting every Friday. **Ms. Therrien** added that the AML will be hosting a conference of young Alaskans to participate in a mock legislature and that she had missed the City legislative meeting.

**Ms. Kun** thanked Ms. Therrien for her time spent attending meetings and reporting back to the Council. She stated that she agreed with Mr. Foster and felt that all candidates for Police Chief should have been presented to the hiring committee, but she understood the Mayor's attempt at

trying to set up the most transparent process he could; she stated she respected that. She went on to give a land acknowledgment and gave the CARE line number and text information, 741-741, for those who may be experiencing the blues.

**Ms. Rogers** shared that she had attended the legislative meeting with Yuri Morgan, AC Rick Sweet and ADC Ron Dupee along with guest, Senator Elvi Gray. She stated that discussion around legislative priorities would be ongoing and that the next meeting would be on February 16 at 4:00 p.m. She went on to congratulate the three new officers who were sworn in. She added that while she has been off the premises physically for some time, she still enjoys seeing the affirmation of dedication. **Ms. Rogers** stated that she felt the need to speak to the concerns brought up by Ms. Therrien and Ms. Kun. She went on to say that she had received many letters and calls from concerned citizens. She thanked the Mayor for his explanation of process, however, she felt that the Council should have been made aware of it in the beginning. She added that it was very uncomfortable to be receiving the information midway through the process, and it has left individuals confused and guessing at what has been transpiring. **Ms. Rogers** stated that it was very concerning to hear that one person who applied had been deemed qualified for the same position in the past but was found to be unqualified now. She added that it does not coincide with the idea that the City is following the same process as they had done before. She emphasized that the criticisms and concerns presented should not be taken lightly and that the hiring process may need to be postponed. She added that there are a great many parameters within the City Code, Human Resources policies, and Union contracts that require consideration during the process. She stated that she does not feel that the process was presented in a way that has allowed the Council and staff to arrive at this point with all of the same information.

**Mr. Gibson** asked the City Attorney, Paul Ewers, if the state of the Governor's Disaster Declaration would have any effect on the City's declaration. Mr. Ewers responded that the City's declaration is not dependent upon the Governor's declaration and therefore would not be affected in that way. He stated, however, that the Governor's declaration could have ramifications that may impact the City in other ways. **Mr. Gibson** thanked those who had taken the time to send emails and provide testimony to the Council and acknowledged that there have been a lot of concerns presented. He went on to say that it is the Council's role to decide if they want to confirm or deny the Mayor's selection for Police Chief. He added that the Mayor and the administration are working through a process that should be respected regardless of the Council's full agreement of the process.

**Mr. Marney** stated that he would be attending the next meeting by Zoom as he would be visiting family in Ohio. He went on to say that he was very concerned about the Police Chief hiring process. He stated that it feels as if the public and the media have more information on the process than he does and added that he was shocked to realize that Mr. Foster would not be included in the final 5 candidates selected for interviews. He went on to share that he had done research on the communities the non-local candidates were from and found that they were very small and incomparable to Fairbanks. **Mr. Marney** acknowledged the Mayor's work and the process but stated that it is very important that the correct person is chosen and that the person will be committed to staying at the City for a long time. He congratulated the new officers and was heartened by seeing Burcell take his oath, as he has known the family for quite some time. He concluded by stating that it is very good to see local kids growing up to become officers.

**Mr. Clark** shared his excitement at witnessing the three new officers being sworn in and seeing the police force grow. He added that there were a lot of candidates for Police Chief and he predicted that there would continue to be growth in the police department. He stated that, ultimately, it is the Mayor's responsibility to select the Police Chief, and it is the Mayor who will be held responsible for the actions of the new Police Chief. He stated the Council has the right to either agree with the Mayor's selection or to ask him to start the hiring process over. **Mr. Clark** added that he was excited for the public forum the following day and to see who the Mayor would choose to bring before the Council. He concluded by stating that he had missed the legislative meeting due to having the wrong day but plans on being at the next one.

**WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL**

- a) Permanent Fund Review Board Meeting Minutes of October 21, 2020

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Hotel/Motel Discretionary Fund Committee Meeting Minutes of December 21, 2020

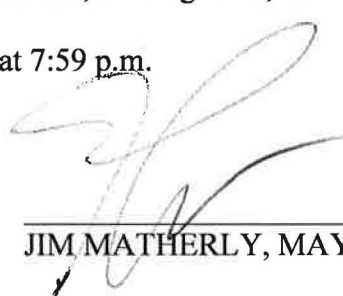
ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

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

**Mayor Matherly** declared the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.



\_\_\_\_\_  
JIM MATHERLY, MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: RR