



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, AUGUST 9, 2021
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

The City Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on the above date 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
June Rogers, Seat B
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
Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff
Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)
Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director
Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)
Tod Chambers, Fire Chief
Jeff Jacobson, PW Director (remotely)

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 led the Flag Salutation.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Dennis Kelley, Fairbanks – Mr. Kelley addressed the Council to request an extension to comply with the Findings of Fact from the abatement hearing that was held on June 23, 2021 regarding the property located at 530 Front Street. He stated that he had been unable to obtain the required engineer's report.

Jessica Miller, Fairbanks – Ms. Miller spoke in favor of Mr. Kelley’s request for additional time, adding that the engineer had indicated that an additional four weeks would be required, plus another week to discuss the results with a contractor. She added that the property has some historical value, and, with the extension, the property owners would be able to comply with the requirements.

Dawn Marie Schroeder – Ms. Schroeder gave her support for Mr. Kelley, stating that they had been working very hard.

Mayor Matherly asked if Mr. Kelley had requested an extension from the Building Department. Mr. Kelley stated that he had not been aware of that option, but he had spoken with Mr. Clooten and indicated that he would be attending this meeting.

Ms. Rogers inquired about the historical value associated with the building. Ms. Miller stated that it was in Graehl town, and the property was included in grandfather rights. She added that they were trying to have the structure included in those rights as well.

Ms. Therrien asked Mr. Kelley what progress had been made towards restoration since the structure burned two years prior. Mr. Kelley stated that only one floor of the structure had burned and that due to the condemnation of the structure, he had not been allowed to enter it. **Ms. Therrien** asked him to clarify what progress had been made. Mr. Kelley responded that he was unable to make progress without a permit. **Ms. Therrien** asked if he had applied for a permit; Mr. Kelley stated that he had not applied for a permit because the structure was considered unsafe. **Ms. Therrien** asked if Mr. Kelley had hired a structural engineer. Ms. Miller replied that they had spoken with Frank Thompson with Thompson Engineering and planned to hire him. **Ms. Therrien** asked when they contacted Mr. Thompson; Ms. Miller stated that it was within the last week.

Mr. Marney asked about Mr. Kelley’s relationship with the neighboring property owners. Mr. Kelley stated that other than one neighbor, with whom there is a boundary dispute, they get along with the neighbors.

Timothy Ledna, Fairbanks – Mr. Ledna stated that his appointment to the Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC) is on the agenda and that he wanted to introduce himself to the Council. He noted that he is the Reentry Coalition Coordinator and would be working with the Mobile Crisis team as well. He thanked Chief Chambers for the ride-along and spoke highly of the Fairbanks Fire Department staff. He thanked the Council for their consideration of his appointment to the FDC and stated that he looked forward to serving in that capacity.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

City Clerk Snider read the Consent Agenda into the record.

SPECIAL ORDERS

- a) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following Liquor License Application for Renewal:

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
576	Crowbar	Beverage Dispensary	Randall Kelsch	2712 Jessie Street

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

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

Ms. Rogers asked for information regarding the reported call of attempted suicide at the address. Chief Dupee stated that all calls relating to self-harm are coded in such manner, and it does not mean that a suicide attempt was made. **Ms. Rogers** asked how it attributed to the licensed premises. Chief Dupee stated that it is likely that the individual was outside of the establishment, and the call was attributed to the address. **Ms. Rogers** asked if all calls that pertain to a specific physical location would be attributed to the closest business regardless whether the call related to the business; Chief Dupee confirmed that was the case.

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

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

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

- a) Special Reports

Amy Geiger, Explore Fairbanks Director of Communications – Ms. Geiger stated that in 2021 there had been a concentrated effort to promote and celebrate Native Alaskan Heritage through more activities than had previously been offered. She went on to share the details of the development of a Land Acknowledgment for the Denakkanaaga people through the work of Sharon McConnel, and she read the land acknowledgment into the record. She shared that the acknowledgement can be shared with everyone. She encouraged that it be read prior to meetings and stated that it would be published in various literature provided by Explore Fairbanks and its

partners. Ms. Geiger shared her experience with a statewide committee working to ensure the representation of the Alaska Native people and a committee that has worked with *American Native Magazine* to promote the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics (WEIO). She went on to share the work that Explore Fairbanks does with WEIO and how she hoped to encourage the magazine to cover the Athabaskan Film Festival.

Ms. Kun thanked Ms. Geiger for her report and asked for her assistance in drafting a land acknowledgment to be used at City Council meetings.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification on historical tourism, to which Ms. Geiger replied that there are two types of history tourism: Cultural and Western. She added that Explore Fairbanks and the Fairbanks area represent pieces of both. **Mr. Clark** expressed interest in learning more about the tourists who visit Fairbanks and whether they are looking for either one of those categories more or less than the other.

Mayor Matherly commented on the recent heatwave and the much-needed rain that came the previous week. He shared that he had participated in the AML Summer Meeting, including the Conference of Young Alaskans and the AK Defense Forum. He noted that there had been a lot of discussion regarding state finances, adding that there would be a special legislative session to address the many outstanding state issues. **Mayor Matherly** noted that everyone was respectful and careful given the current COVID-19 situation. He expressed his condolences to the family of Lee DeSpain who recently passed away. He went on to address the request made by Mr. Kelley regarding the property on Front Street, stating that the property had never been referred to as a historic landmark before and that it has been an issue for several years. He added that there have been multiple fires at that address, and nothing has been done to clean it up. **Mayor Matherly** stated that he has spent time talking to frustrated neighboring property owners and would be disinclined to ask the Building Official to grant an extension. He then asked Mr. Meeks and Chief Chambers for their input.

Mr. Meeks gave an abbreviated timeline of events starting in August of 2019, including the various letters and warnings that had been issued to the property owner. He explained that the Building Code and Landscape Review and Appeals Commission met on June 23, 2021, at the request of Mr. Kelley, and provided Mr. Kelley with 45 days to produce a structural engineer's report. He stated it had been 733 days since the first fire that initiated the City's involvement.

Chief Chambers shared that after the initial fire there had been reports of warming fires being started on the property for individuals camping outside the structure and that there had been another structure fire in an outbuilding. He stated that due to the various potential hazards on and within the property, he had instructed his crew to not enter the premises unless there was credible information that a person needed to be rescued. He added that he had received another complaint of a burn barrel being used within the past week.

Mayor Matherly stated that based on the history of this property, he was not likely to grant an extension if one was requested. He went on to share that the FDC would be meeting the following evening and that he is excited to have a nearly full board of members. He asked the

Council to consider the return of the plexiglass barriers in Council Chambers. He concluded by noting the City Employee Picnic that would be happening later in the week.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Kun stated she had no comments.

Ms. Rogers stated that the AML Summer Meeting was full of information and networking opportunities, adding that she really enjoyed being able to attend the event locally. She shared her sadness in learning of Tom Borce's passing, a former City employee.

Ms. Therrien shared that she had also attended the AML Summer Meeting and mentioned the resolution regarding the Young Alaskan delegates; she offered to provide Council Members with additional information. She added that it is important for government organizations to increase their efforts to involve the younger generations. She addressed the request made by Mr. Kelley, stating that it had been over two years with no progress at the property, and if any extension was to be granted, it should be no more than 30 days.

Mr. Clark stated he had no comments.

Mr. Marney stated he had no comments.

Mr. Gibson asked about the process regarding an extension request for the abatement. City Attorney Ewers stated that the request would be received by Building Official Clem Clooten and routed to the Mayor for approval. He stated that the order made by the Appeals Commission was final, but the Mayor could allow an extension. He added that there would be no Council involvement in the process.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6174 – An Ordinance Amending the 2021 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Third Time. Introduced by Mayor Matherly. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6174.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to SUBSTITUTE Ordinance No. 6174, as Amended for Ordinance No. 6174.

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

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

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6174, as Amended, by increasing Public Works' Temp Wages to \$350,000.

Mr. Gibson stated he was not in favor of the amendment and stated that the request made by Public Works Director Jeff Jacobson would be sufficient.

Mr. Jacobson clarified that he had originally requested \$350,000 but had been told \$250,000 would be the approved amount. He shared his concern that \$250,000 would leave the department short \$100,000 from the previous two years' actual cost. He added that any unspent funds would go back to the General Fund.

Mr. Gibson asked about the department's requests for outside bids in the event they are unable to provide crews for sufficient snow removal. Mr. Jacobson stated that he had asked for, and received, a bid for call-out services only in the downtown area.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6147, AS AMENDED, BY INCREASING PUBLIC WORKS' TEMP WAGES TO \$350,000 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rogers, Therrien, Kun, Matherly
NAYS: Clark, Marney, Gibson
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Clark asked for clarification about temporary employees and how funds are allocated. Ms. Bell stated that temporary workers are hired seasonally to help with extra shifts required for snow removal.

Ms. Kun, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6174, as Amended, by increasing the Fairbanks Police Department budget by \$25,000 for retention bonuses.

Ms. Kun stated that to compete with other agencies, namely the Alaska State Troopers, the City needs to increase retention efforts. She added that she would like to work with Police Chief Dupee further to determine the credentials needed to receive the bonus.

Ms. Therrien shared that she had learned that any officers hired by the Alaska State Troopers (AST) were to receive a \$20,000 sign-on bonus in addition to wages \$10 more per hour than the City offers. She added that she supports the idea but believes it may need to be discussed further, outside of this format.

Mr. Gibson stated that he was not opposed to the idea but that believed it needed to be addressed in a different conversation.

Ms. Rogers agreed with Ms. Therrien and Mr. Gibson, offering her initial support of the idea.

Mr. Clark stated he did not support the amendment. He stated that retention should be encouraged but chasing the AST salary from fear of losing officers is a dangerous path.

Mr. Marney stated he did not feel that the City could compete with the State monetarily, but the officers employed by the City have other advantages, such as living and working in the same community instead of in rural or remote locations.

Chief of Staff Mike Meeks agreed that the City could not financially compete with the State or Federal government. He stated, however, that there are things the City can do, if allowed within the bargaining units, to help retain valuable and hard-to-replace employees.

HR Director Angela Foster-Snow shared her anxiety about losing more officers to the State's new recruitment program, adding that the City was currently short staffed by 11 officers. She stated that nationally, turnover rates have increased to 30% which may be the new normal.

Police Chief Dupee added that he had shared the AST information with the Council so that it was not a surprise. He added that he had been working with the Administration to prepare a retention plan and hoped to be able to present it at the end of the month.

Mr. Gibson shared some of the intangible benefits that the City has to offer and asked that the Administration keep those in mind when considering its retention plan.

Ms. Rogers agreed that there are many other ways to retain employees outside of salary increases or bonuses.

Ms. Kun, with the concurrence of the Second, WITHDREW her amendment.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6174, as Amended, by transferring \$500,000 from the unassigned General Fund balance to the Capital Fund.

Mr. Gibson explained that he felt it was important for the Council to capitalize on opportunities to put money toward future Capital projects.

Ms. Therrien asked CFO Bell how much the Council has transferred to the Capital Fund in 2021. Ms. Bell stated that \$1,500,000 had been transferred year-to-date.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6147, AS AMENDED, BY TRANSFERRING \$500,000 FROM THE UNASSIGNED GENERAL FUND BALANCE TO THE CAPITAL FUND AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6174, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6174, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6175 – An Ordinance Authorizing Conveyance of a Temporary Easement to the State of Alaska for the Fairbanks Cushman Street Bridge Project. Introduced by Mayor Matherly. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6175.

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6175 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6175 ADOPTED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6176 – An Ordinance to Amend Fairbanks General Code Sec. 2-233(a) to Allow the Mayor to Designate an Alternate Chairperson of the Fairbanks Diversity Council. Introduced by Council Members Therrien, Rogers, and Kun. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6176.

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6176 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6176 ADOPTED.

- d) Ordinance No. 6177 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Sec. 14-178(a)(11) Regarding Council Review of License Issuance, Renewal, or Transfer. Introduced by Council Member Gibson. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6177.

City Clerk Snider stated there were two typos in the ordinance and noted that, if the Council adopted the ordinance, the typos would be corrected prior to codification.

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

Ms. Kun asked for clarification regarding the term “boutique” used in the “whereas” portion of the ordinance.

Mr. Gibson stated he understood that the “whereas” portion would not be codified and therefore it would not be necessary to change the language. City Attorney Ewers confirmed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6177 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6177 ADOPTED.

- e) Ordinance No. 6178 – An Ordinance to Amend FGC Chapter 78, Article XXII Motor Vehicle Impoundment and Forfeiture, to Remove Driving While License Suspended and No Insurance Convictions. Introduced by Council Member Gibson. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6178.

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

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Kun**, moved to POSTPONE Ordinance No. 6178 to the next Regular City Council Meeting.

Attorney Ewers advised that if any Council Member was considering an amendment to change the fees associated with this ordinance it would be done by resolution. He recommended any proposed amendment to fees be brought forward in time to add a resolution to the next meeting.

Mr. Gibson stated that 69% of vehicle impounds for no insurance or no valid operator’s license offenses are by non-owner drivers. He added that the driver is responsible to pay the citation, but the owner is responsible for paying the administrative, towing, and storage fees.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO POSTPONE ORDINANCE NO. 6177 TO THE NEXT REGULAR CITY COUNCIL MEETING AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 4979 – A Resolution Expressing Solidarity with the Citizens of Cuba Protesting for Freedom. Introduced by Council Member Gibson.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

DISCUSSION ITEMS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

- a) Committee Reports

Mr. Gibson stated he had no comments.

Mr. Marney stated he did not have any committee reports. He indicated he would not be in favor of having the plexiglass reinstalled in Council Chambers, adding that he believed most, if not all, Council Members had been vaccinated.

Mr. Clark shared his concern with the City and State's addiction to federal funds; he urged everyone to consider the ramifications of going into debt to tear down the Polaris Building. He added that the infrastructure bill is a tool for inflation and that using federal funds to start projects that require local upkeep is the prime reason the state has issues balancing its budget.

Ms. Therrien stated that she had toured the Polaris Building Annex with City officials, noting how rotted the structural supports had become. She added that Borough Mayor Ward had indicated that the Borough would direct \$2,000,000 in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds toward the tipping fees associated with the removal of the building. **Ms. Therrien** also shared updates from the Alaska Municipal League (AML) and Board of Directors meetings.

Ms. Rogers shared that she had attended the Opioid Task Force and Housing and Homeless meetings. She added that the new director of AML has done an admirable job of increasing solidarity and communication.

Ms. Kun thanked Amy Geiger for reading the Land Acknowledgement earlier and shared that she had recently attended the Suicide Prevention meeting. She went on to thank those responsible for the Tanana Valley State Fair where the theme was "Don't Stop Beleaving." She added that she volunteered for various things at the fair throughout the week. **Ms. Kun** reminded everyone to check on friends, family, and coworkers and gave the Careline for anyone who may need it.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL

- a) Appointments to the Fairbanks Diversity Council

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

b) Chena Riverfront Commission Meeting Minutes of May 26, 2021

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Kun, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to ENTER Executive Session to discuss Fairbanks Firefighters Union (FFU) Labor Negotiation Strategy.

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) Fairbanks Firefighters Union Labor Negotiation Strategy

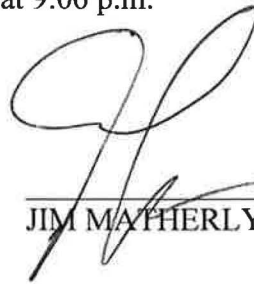
The City Council met in Executive Session to discuss FFU Labor Negotiation Strategy. Direction was given to the negotiating team, and no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Mayor Matherly declared the meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.



JIM MATHERLY, MAYOR

ATTEST:


D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: RR