



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 13, 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 and with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present: Jerry Cleworth, 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
 Angela Foster-Snow, HR Director
 Rick Sweet, Deputy Police Chief
 Tod Chambers, Fire Chief
 Robert Pristash, City Engineer (remotely)
 Clem Clooten, Building Official (remotely)
 Jeff Jacobson, Public Works Director
 Teal Soden, Communications Director
 Dominic Lozano, FFD Battalion Chief
 Mike Mathers, FFD

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

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by City Clerk Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

Mayor Matherly lead the Flag Salutation.

CEREMONIAL MATTERS

Mayor Matherly recognized Mike Mathers for his years of service with the City of Fairbanks Fire Department and congratulated him on his retirement. He went on to read a brief biography about Mike Mathers and his history with Fairbanks.

Fairbanks Fire Chief Tod Chambers recognized Mike Mathers for his years of service, adding that he would be missed at the department. He presented Mike with a fire axe that held significant personal value to him and thanked him on behalf of the City and the citizens of Fairbanks for his dedication and service.

Mike Mathers thanked former Fire Chief Warren Cummings for giving him the inspiration and support to pursue a career in firefighting, and he thanked Chief Chambers for his leadership. He concluded by expressing his gratitude for the open lines of communication and thanked the City Council for keeping the City stable.

a) Reading of the Bill of Rights

Mayor Matherly stated that it is important to be reminded of the reasons behind elected service and what makes America the greatest country to live in. He went on to introduce the annual reading of the Bill of Rights by Matt Cooper and Boy Scout Troop 38, adding that the troop was currently working on their citizenship badge. Cupcakes were shared with the audience and the Council.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Roscoe Britton, Fairbanks – Mr. Britton shared that he had earned his Eagle Scout title in 1976. He expressed appreciation of the Council involving the scouts and encouraging them in community service. He noted a previous conversation regarding a work session to discuss the homelessness issues and asked that the session be scheduled for mid-January. He went on to share about an individual camping outside of the warming station who does not have any other place to go; he stated that the person indicated he was not local and was unsure if he would make it through another night in the cold. Mr. Britton asked that everyone remember those who are less fortunate, adding that everyone deserves a second chance at life.

Kelvin Lee, Fairbanks – Mr. Lee emphasized that the purpose of a work session on homelessness would be to come up with a plan for what can be done within the City. He added that there is some space at the warming center at night, stating that they would likely be able to house the individual camping outside, but space is not always available. He stated he would like feedback from the Council, adding that it is important to be a community that works to keep people safe and warm rather than only talking about it.

Ms. Rogers asked Mr. Britton and Mr. Lee if they were aware of the listening audience, and Mr. Lee stated that he was. He added that they heard from someone who had been listening to the previous City Council meeting. He stated that they want to educate those who want to help.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Britton and Mr. Lee if they had the staff or were aware of organizations that could open up during the extremely cold weather. Mr. Lee stated that there are churches that want

to help but need assistance getting set up. Mr. Britton added that they have a lot of ideas but need the platform to get those ideas put into action before situations arise.

Victor Buberger, Fairbanks – Mr. Buberger recognized Frank Turney, who had initiated the annual reading of the Bill of Rights before he passed two years ago. He went on to ask about the status of the Polaris Building demolition, adding that Mr. Shields' ideas had essentially been ignored. Mr. Buberger noted that the roundabouts near Costco are in very bad shape and that some of the roads are down to one lane. He compared the maintenance of the Chena Hot Springs Road roundabout to those in the City and asked about the additional cost to keep them cleaned. He ended by asking the City to try and keep up road maintenance and wished the Council a Merry Christmas.

David Joseph, Fairbanks – Mr. Joseph shared that he was the pastor of the Friendship Baptist Mission, located a block behind the warming station ran by No Limits. He shared that his church had recently fed the man who passed away from the extreme weather. He mentioned the passing of another homeless woman named Ellie, who died in the woods outside of town after being attacked. He went on to share that his congregation had been saddened to hear of their deaths. Mr. Joseph indicated that his church was interested in becoming involved with the homelessness issue and hoped to partner with other organizations, as well as the City, to help come up with a solution. He added that he would attend a work session and encouraged anyone listening to get involved.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Joseph if he had reached out to any other organizations; Mr. Joseph indicated that they were working on that. **Mr. Clark** requested Mr. Joseph's contact information.

Kara Carlson, Fairbanks – Ms. Carlson shared that she is the Interim Deputy Director of the Interior Alaska Center for Non-Violent Living (IACNVL) and the newly appointed chair of the Fairbanks Homeless and Housing Coalition. She shared that she would be hosting a meeting in Council Chambers and via Zoom on Thursday, December 16, where the group would discuss the point-in-time count and Project Homeless Connect. She explained that the point-in-time count is a literal count of the homeless population at a given time and is important to bring in funding for homeless services; she added that the point-in-time count would take place on January 26, 2022. Ms. Carlson spoke to Project Homeless Connect, which did not happen last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that they are eager to plan this year's event to coincide with the point-in-time count. She invited the Council and anyone listening, to attend the meeting later in the week and to contact her if they are interested in assisting with the event.

Mayor Matherly asked Ms. Carlson to reach out to No Limits and indicated that he would join the Thursday meeting via Zoom. Ms. Carlson stated that she is in the process of reaching out to interested organizations, adding that she has only been in her current position for three weeks.

Ms. Therrien asked Ms. Carlson if she had contacted the former Housing and Homeless Coordinator, Michael Sanders. Ms. Carlson stated that she had worked with him in the past and had a close connection, adding that this was very important work that needed the City's support.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Therrien, seconded by Mr. Marney, 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.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of October 25, 2021.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

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
727	Lavelle's Bistro	Beverage Dispensary	Café de Paris Catering Company	575 1st Avenue

Mr. Marney, seconded by Ms. Therrien, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Liquor License Application for renewal.

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

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

b) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following Marijuana License Applications for renewal:

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
10112	Great Alaskan Bud Company	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	SP&C Enterprises, LLC	1905 Livengood Avenue
10113	Great Alaskan Bud Company	Retail Marijuana Store	SP&C Enterprises, LLC	1905 Livengood Avenue
10869	Grass Station 49	Retail Marijuana Store	The Grass Station, LLC	1326 Cushman Street

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Marijuana License Applications for renewal.

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

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- c) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with a request for a second hearing of the following Liquor License Application for transfer:

Note: A motion to protest the transfer was passed unanimously by the Council on August 23, 2021.

Type/License: Beverage Dispensary/License #4720

DBA: Lefty's

Applicant: Michael Rasmussen

Location: 1107 College Road, Fairbanks

From Owner: Gallantino's, Inc.

From DBA: Gallantino's Italian Restaurant

From Location: 1446 S. Cushman Street

Mayor Matherly called for Public Testimony.

Tanya Schletner, Goldstream Valley – Ms. Schletner stated that she works at the emergency veterinary clinic near the proposed location and that she was in favor of the Council's decision to protest the liquor license transfer. She went on to share that the business has already had many problems with intoxicated and homeless persons, and she fears it would be much worse if the liquor license transfer was approved.

Robert Bowers, Fairbanks – Mr. Bowers spoke in favor of the protest and stated that the location is directly adjacent to his home. He went on to share his great concern for the already busy street, adding that the proposed location is directly across the street from Creamer's Field where he has witnessed unsafe driving and multiple collisions. Mr. Bowers went on to share that the neighborhood is plagued with crime, including shootings and constant police presence; he stated he fears damage to and trespassing on his property. He added that there are many nearby businesses to purchase alcohol from and provided a diagram showing where his property is in relation to the proposed location.

Mr. Cleworth asked for clarification on the location of Mr. Bowers' property and if he was aware of the zoning in the area. Mr. Bowers stated that he believed it was currently zoned as residential and that the applicant had requested that the Borough change the zoning.

Ms. Therrien asked Mr. Bowers if Mr. Rasmussen had contacted him regarding the application. Mr. Bowers stated that he did not; however, he had built a fence after he demolished the existing structure.

Erica Hawkins, Fairbanks – Ms. Hawkins stated that she testified during the original hearing and supported the Council’s original decision to protest the license transfer. She noted that there are at least four different businesses that sell alcohol within a mile of the proposed location; she stated that the property is currently zoned as residential.

Elizabeth Roger, Fairbanks – Dr. Roger shared that she owns the afterhours veterinary clinic approximately a block from the proposed location. She explained that at her business they have had to deal with multiple cold and intoxicated people, sometimes calling the police to escort them to a safe place. She added her concern that having a bar near her business will add to that issue, stating that the location is not appropriate for that type of establishment.

Ms. Rogers asked Dr. Roger if the applicant had contacted her; Ms. Roger replied they had not.

David Hawkins, Fairbanks – Mr. Hawkins shared that the Police Chief had previously commented on the application, and he felt that adding the establishment would cause the already troubled neighborhood to boil over. He went on to state that it would detract from the scenic Creamer’s Field, adding that the traffic in that area is already at a very dangerous level.

Michael Rasmussen, Fairbanks – Mr. Rasmussen stated that he has successfully run a coffee shop in that area for the past 10-12 years. He went on to state that he purchased the property in question after the resident passed away and that he had put a lot of work into cleaning up the property and demolishing the old structure. Mr. Rasmussen stated that he had erected the six-foot vinyl fence and applied to have the property rezoned from residential to commercial use at that time. He added that his intention is to open a restaurant, not simply a bar, and to capitalize on the beautiful Creamer’s Field across the street. He clarified that while the license type is for a bar, he has every intention of serving food and making it into an establishment he would want to take his family to. He concluded by stating that he would be willing to work with the City to make this happen.

Mr. Gibson asked Mr. Rasmussen to share his vision of the property. Mr. Rasmussen stated that he owns multiple businesses in and around Fairbanks, including The Garage, a drive-thru liquor store on College Road; he added that he has already invested over \$250,000 into the proposed location. He stated he was not aware that he needed to contact all of the neighboring property owners. He shared that he envisions a nice eating establishment with prices that deter the type of people that most of the testimony raised concern about. He added that there are many abandoned buildings on College Road, and he wants to build something to improve the area.

Ms. Rogers asked Mr. Rasmussen why he did not contact the neighbors, especially given that the neighborhood has been historically residential.

Mr. Rasmussen stated that he wished he had contacted people individually, as he believed he could have alleviated many of their concerns. He added that he had gone through all the other proper channels, including the Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board, who has the final say. He went on to share that he could bring in many supporters of his business; however, they do not happen to

reside within the neighborhood. He added that there was one resident on Kathryn Street who did not have any issue with the license transfer. He stated that he wants to be a good neighbor as well as a good steward of the community and felt that he was well within his legal rights to open the establishment. Mr. Rasmussen continued by stating that he pays a great deal in property taxes to the City and employs at least 30 people; he added that the new establishment would create an additional 8 – 10 jobs. He concluded by stating that he is not bringing in some debauchery-type establishment, noting that plenty of people have drinks at cafes and do not end up intoxicated.

Mr. Marney asked if Mr. Rasmussen's testimony had changed the minds of any of the neighborhood residents in the audience. **Mayor Matherly** stated that he did not believe that was a question the Council could pose during public testimony.

Hearing no more requests for public comment in-person or on Zoom, the following comment was read into the record:

Tina Laird, Fairbanks – Ms. Laird spoke against the liquor license transfer application, adding that she has been a lifelong resident of Fairbanks; she noted that her home can be seen in the photos provided in the application. She added that crime has become a problem in the neighborhood, sharing that her home has been robbed multiple times, and once the door was kicked in by an intoxicated individual in broad daylight. She added that the applicant has not been forthcoming with information, refusing to return her calls. Ms. Laird went on to share that she is in support of healthy business development and has not protested the rezoning of the area. She added that she is against a liquor establishment due to the well-documented incidents of increased criminal activity and the degradation of neighboring property values.

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

Mayor Matherly explained that the Council may withdraw the prior protest in order to reconsider the liquor license transfer application but that no motion or action is required if the Council chooses to uphold its original motion to protest. No motion was made.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor Matherly thanked the Council for their hard work, adding that while it is not an easy job, it can be incredibly rewarding. He went on to express his gratitude that the Council was able to work together as a body through the pandemic, even as it persists, noting that not all municipalities have been as fortunate. **Mayor Matherly** recognized the department heads for their work, adding that strong leadership is needed now more than ever. He shared that this would be his last Christmas serving as Mayor and noted that he was slightly sentimental. He stated he was glad to see Ms. Carlson in the role of Housing and Homeless Coordinator, noting the importance of that position. He stated that homelessness is not the only issue plaguing people this time of year but noted that it is an incredibly dangerous time to be homeless. He asked that citizens take the initiative to contact emergency services if they see someone suffering. He added that he would be setting up a work session to discuss ways Fairbanks can bring its level of homelessness down and shared that the Housing and Homeless Coalition would be meeting later in the week. **Mayor Matherly** shared that he, Chief Dupee, and Deputy Chief Sweet, along with District Attorney Joe Dallaire and Sgt. Rupe of the AST had attended a missing persons rally at the JP Jones Center put

on by the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA). He added that the families and members of the public have more resources to help locate these individuals than law enforcement often has access to, asking that anyone with any amount of information reach out to law enforcement. He stated it could make a real difference. He added that the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) is currently working the Debbie Nictune investigation. **Mayor Matherly** recognized and congratulated Mike Mathers on his retirement, expressing his appreciation for his hard work. He went on to address the Polaris Building, adding that the RFP is the first step in the process to getting it demolished, which was the goal. He spoke to Mr. Joseph's concerns regarding the homeless and again expressed his excitement for the Homeless Connect project that would be happening on January 26, 2022; he invited the Council to attend. **Mayor Matherly** wished everyone a Merry Christmas and encouraged everyone reach out and check on their friends and family, as it is not always the merriest of times for everyone. He concluded by thanking the public for their involvement, adding that it is a pivotal part of successful governing.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth thanked the Mayor for remembering the Bill of Rights and spoke briefly about Mr. Turney and the great tradition he started; he added that the history behind the Bill of Rights is quite interesting. He expressed anticipation for the homelessness discussions and the proposed involvement of Mr. Joseph's church. He recalled that The Door formerly operated out of a church basement. **Mr. Cleworth** spoke to the liquor license application for transfer, noting a previous time when the Council did not protest a controversial alcohol license on College Road and was then chastised by the ABC Board for not listening to the neighboring citizens.

Ms. Rogers thanked the Mayor for his comments and noted how nice it was to have the Boy Scouts reading the Bill of Rights. She recognized Mr. Mathers on his retirement, adding that he is also a well-respected artist within the community. She shared her struggle with the liquor license transfer application, noting the obvious issues that already exist within the neighborhood. She expressed hope that it could be explored further.

Ms. Therrien addressed the questions regarding the Polaris Building, stating that Senator Murkowski had included a bill for \$10MM in the State budget to facilitate the demolition and added that it was likely to pass. She offered her well-wishes to Mr. Mathers in his retirement.

Mr. Clark thanked the public for their testimony, adding that it is an important part of the Council's decision-making process. He recognized the effort made by the neighborhood to show their discomfort with having another liquor establishment near their homes. He thanked Mr. Joseph for his compassion, adding that he looked forward to working closely with him in the future. He spoke to the local missing persons, adding that he lost a friend last year who was not found until after the snow melted.

Mr. Marney shared his agreement with Mr. Clark, adding that his church opens every Wednesday to feed those in need. He stated that they started their own winter clothing closet, adding that homelessness has been an accelerating problem in Fairbanks for the past ten years.

Mr. Gibson shared his anticipation for the good work that will be done with the leadership back in place at the Housing and Homeless Coalition.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6187 – An Ordinance Adopting the 2022 Operating and Capital Budgets. Introduced by Mayor Matherly. Postponed from the Regular Meeting of December 6, 2021. Public Hearing was held at that time.

The motion to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6187 was made by Mr. Gibson and seconded by Ms. Therrien at the December 6, 2021, Regular Meeting and remained on the floor.

Mayor Matherly called for a brief recess. The Council reconvened following the brief recess.

Mayor Matherly shared that the City was currently holding \$335,210 in surplus funds, thanking Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Margarita Bell and Chief of Staff Mike Meeks for their help in bringing the budget before the Council.

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187 by capping all salary increases to a maximum of 2% for IBEW employees and exempt staff, not to include the increases to the Engineering staff salaries.

Mr. Marney stated that he felt 2% was an adequate increase to wages considering that the FPD contract was still in negotiations.

Mayor Matherly stated that he felt 5% was a fair increase, noting that the City is not an extremely high paying employer.

Ms. Rogers questioned a possible conflict of interest. City Attorney Paul Ewers and CFO Bell confirmed that Ms. Rogers would not have a conflict of interest on the amendment.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Gibson**, moved to AMEND the motion to amend by requesting that each department budget be considered individually.

City Clerk Snider stated that the proposed amendment was not germane to the original amendment, and it was disregarded.

Mr. Gibson asked Mr. Marney if his intent was to cap any raise that was presented in the Mayor's budget to 2%, except those in the Engineering Department and the IBEW bargaining agreement. **Mr. Marney** confirmed that was his intent.

Ms. Therrien asked what the financial impact of the amendment would be. CFO Bell indicated she would need time to determine the exact savings.

City Clerk Snider asked for a point of clarification regarding Ms. Rogers' concern about a conflict of interest. Attorney Ewers stated that there was no conflict of interest because the motion did not affect the IBEW collective bargaining agreement (CBA); he stated that Ms. Rogers may vote on the motion.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to LAY ON THE TABLE the motion to amend Ordinance No. 6187 to allow the CFO time to calculate the financial impact of the motion.

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

Mr. Cleworth noted that the current proposed budget includes a lot of new revenue that will not likely be sustained. He shared his belief that the following year would include drastically less revenue, adding that without a healthy bottom line the City could be facing some dark times. He stated that there was a lot of work to be done, adding that he would like to see \$800,000 in the bottom line of the final budget.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187 by reducing the Mayor's travel budget from \$14,000 to \$12,000.

Mr. Cleworth spoke to the history of the Mayor's travel budget, adding that the Mayor has a contingency fund that could be used to make up for the lost travel funds, if necessary.

Mayor Matherly noted that the Risk Management training and travel is also included in the Mayor's travel budget.

Ms. Rogers stated that it might be worthwhile to recategorize the travel budget so that it includes training as well.

Ms. Therrien asked whether the Alaska Municipal League (AML) would cover the Mayor's travel as President of the organization.

Mayor Matherly stated that much of his AML travel would be covered by the organization and noted that he often stays with family when traveling to Anchorage to save on costs to the City.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187 BY REDUCING THE MAYOR'S TRAVEL BUDGET FROM \$14,000 TO \$12,000 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing the Deputy City Attorney position to a half-time position.

Mr. Cleworth spoke to the history of the Legal Department and the use of the Deputy City Attorney positions, adding that a new City Attorney may want something different than what is being requested. He added that he will be addressing any changes to positions throughout the Mayor's proposed budget. He stated that only by reducing costs can the City gain a sustainable budget without going to a vote of the people in order to increase revenues on a permanent basis.

Mayor Matherly noted that his proposed change to the Deputy Attorney position would not occur until the third quarter of the year and was for the purpose of training a replacement for the current Deputy Attorney who would be leaving the City.

Ms. Therrien spoke against the amendment, adding that the current Deputy Attorney will require time to train the person replacing her.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING THE DEPUTY CITY ATTORNEY POSITION TO A HALF-TIME POSITION AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Clark, Cleworth, Marney
NAYS: Gibson, Therrien, Rogers, Matherly
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by changing the Finance Department temporary positions to one full-time and one part-time permanent position, an increase from \$15,720 to \$31,440.

CFO Bell explained that she while she found multiple, qualified candidates for the positions, she was unable to hire them based on the temporary status of the job description. She added that she believed she would not have the same issues when hiring for permanent positions.

Mr. Cleworth asked if it would be appropriate to add these positions in a budget amendment for the current year to encumber the funds for the next budget year. CFO Bell stated that it would not be an appropriate way to address the issue.

Mr. Gibson asked for clarification regarding the status of the positions. CFO Bell stated that salaries for permanent and temporary positions have the same object code regardless of the classification.

Ms. Therrien noted that the increase will be offset by the next amendment, which will be removing funds allocated to Outside Contracts.

Mr. Gibson asked what the additional increase to Employee Benefits would be, and CFO Bell stated it would be an increase of \$3,590.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY CHANGING THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT TEMPORARY POSITIONS TO ONE FULL-TIME AND ONE PART-TIME PERMANENT POSITION, AN INCREASE FROM \$15,720 TO \$31,440, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Gibson, Rogers, Therrien, Clark, Marney
NAYS: None
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing the Finance Department Outside Contracts Account 5599 by \$75,000.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING THE FINANCE DEPARTMENT OUTSIDE CONTRACTS ACCOUNT 5599 BY \$75,000 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by funding the FPD Captain position for one-half the year and by increasing the FPD Lieutenant positions from three to three-and-a-half.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he believed the Captain position was only to continue through the end of the current year, and he did not feel that it was necessary to continue it further. He expressed concern that there were more administrative positions than he was comfortable with.

Mr. Clark asked Mr. Cleworth if his intent was to split the one-half year position between the Captain and Lieutenant positions, and Mr. Cleworth confirmed.

Ms. Therrien spoke in support of the Captain position as recommended by the Chief of Police.

Chief of Staff Mike Meeks pointed out that the proposed funding for the Captain position came from a lieutenant position, resulting in a savings of \$14,370. He added that increases in unfunded mandates from the State and Federal levels have made these extra administrative positions necessary.

Mr. Clark asked if the reduction in the Lieutenant positions from four to three was to fund the Captain position; Mr. Meeks confirmed that was true.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he believed the Captain position was to absorb two funded positions, but the proposed budget indicated that it would only eliminate one. He added that he felt that having fully trained officers performing desk duties was a waste of resources and suggested that the City investigate alternatives.

Mr. Gibson stated that the original proposal was that two officer positions would not be funded to pay for the Captain position. He stated that the proposed budget is taking away one of the four Lieutenant positions instead.

Ms. Therrien noted that the Council could also choose to not fund two more police officer positions, based on the assumption that they would not likely be filled in the coming year.

Mr. Meeks stated that there was a low probability of being able to fill all officer positions and that non-funding two of them would not have a big impact on the department.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY FUNDING THE FPD CAPTAIN POSITION FOR ONE-HALF THE YEAR AND BY INCREASING THE FPD LIEUTENANT POSITIONS FROM THREE TO THREE-AND-A-HALF AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth
NAYS: Therrien, Marney, Rogers, Gibson, Clark
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Gibson**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing the number of sworn FPD officers from 26 to 25.

Mr. Gibson pointed out that the motion would remove a position entirely, which is different from non-funding a position for the budget year.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF SWORN FPD OFFICERS FROM 26 TO 25 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Gibson, Clark, Cleworth, Marney, Rogers, Therrien
NAYS: None
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Clark, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by adding three FPD Clerk positions.

Mr. Clark stated he felt that this was a better option for fulfilling the requirements of reports instead of keeping sworn officers off the streets or defunding the much-needed positions.

CFO Bell reported that the three added positions would cost approximately of \$230,000.

Mr. Cleworth questioned whether the amendment was legal and expressed his desire to wait until the PSEA negotiations had been completed. He noted that it had been discussed in the past, but he did not believe the current Chief of Police was in favor of it. He stated that without the Chief's support, success would be less likely.

Mr. Clark stated that he had spoken with Chief Dupee who indicated he was in favor of more data entry clerks.

Ms. Therrien asked whether the change would affect the PSEA contract. Mr. Meeks indicated that the positions would be included in the bargaining unit.

Mr. Gibson stated he felt it was prudent to wait until contract negotiations had been finalized before adding positions.

Attorney Ewers stated that if the motion was to add more positions than currently exist, it could be an appropriate budget amendment; he stated, however, new positions would require negotiation of job descriptions and salaries, which could not be accomplished through a budget amendment.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY ADDING THREE FPD CLERK POSITIONS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Clark
NAYS: Cleworth, Rogers, Marney, Therrien, Gibson
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Gibson**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing FECC Dispatch positions from 14 to 13.

Mr. Cleworth stated he felt that it was not necessary to increase the number of Dispatch positions. He noted that there are currently six unfilled positions, and the funds saved by the amendment will help the overall budget and perhaps even the FECC budget in a different manner.

Ms. Therrien noted that the City paid over 9,530 hours in overtime in 2021, and if all positions could be filled, there would be a significant cost savings.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he would consider those savings if the positions were filled or nearly filled, adding that setting aside funds for positions that would not likely be filled did not make sense.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING FECC DISPATCH POSITIONS FROM 14 TO 13 AS FOLLOWS:

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

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD) positions by attrition on March 1, 2022 from the 2021 level by three positions.

Mr. Cleworth noted that the four requested positions are funded through February of 2022 by the SAFER grant. He added that he does not want to lay anyone off.

Mr. Meeks stated that the UAF and Steese Fire Departments indicated they would not be responding to as many calls as they have been. He added that the SAFER grant funds, if awarded, would not be available until the following year.

Mr. Gibson stated that there was evidence that the FFD needed additional ambulance and EMS staff, noting that there did not appear to be as much need for fire calls. He added that the City

needs to consider that and that he felt the Council had missed the mark when they failed to obtain an additional ambulance.

Mr. Cleworth stated that the odds were four times greater that an ambulance would be needed before a fire call comes in. He added that the CBA is currently written in a way that makes it very difficult to staff both engines and ambulances. He asked why most of the FFD staff is left waiting for a fire call when the chances are much higher that an ambulance would be needed. He added that that is a great disservice to the citizens.

Fire Chief Tod Chambers stated that there are clearly defined roles within the contract that are followed and that while ambulance calls are more common, the staff at FFD are kept busy assisting the EMS, especially in advanced life support situations. He clarified that while the percentage is lower for fire calls, there are still many fires within the City. He reported that in November there were 14 structure fires.

Mr. Cleworth agreed that due to the current terms and roles defined in the contract, the ability to staff more ambulances has been hindered.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING FFD POSITIONS BY ATTRITION ON MARCH 1, 2022 FROM THE 2021 LEVEL BY THREE POSITIONS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Gibson, Cleworth, Clark
NAYS: Therrien, Rogers, Marney, Matherly
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by adding an FFD Training Captain position (increase to salary and wages of \$145,000 with \$70,000 being offset by overtime savings).

Ms. Therrien stated she felt that the required training was difficult to obtain, and given the large number of new employees, it would be in the City's best interest to grant the department's request to allow for a training Captain.

Chief Chambers stated that new recruits are currently being trained by a Captain who is responsible for running a regular shift on top of their training duties, adding that there is a lot of overtime accrued during those times. He noted that a dedicated training officer would also allow for the training facility to be better utilized.

Ms. Therrien asked if that position required a Captain to fill it. Chief Chambers stated that if hired internally, it would take a Captain to have the necessary experience to fulfill the duties of the job, but if the hiring was done externally, it may not.

Mr. Gibson asked if the current CBA allowed for external hiring and the difference in cost between a Captain position versus a firefighter position. Chief Chambers stated that external hiring is an option if there are no internal applicants. CFO Bell stated that the package cost for a new Captain position would be \$145,480, while a firefighter position would cost \$104,760.

Mr. Gibson asked if Chief Chambers would rather have a training Captain, or 1.5 new firefighter positions. Chief Chambers stated that in this case he would rather have the Captain position.

Ms. Therrien asked what the savings in overtime would be by adding the Captain position. CFO Bell indicated that there could be savings of about \$70,000.

Mr. Gibson asked what the three-year cost would be for the Captain position. CFO Bell stated that a conservative estimate, based on a 1.5% annual increase, would cost an additional \$5,000 over three years.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED BY ADDING AN FFD TRAINING CAPTAIN POSITION (INCREASE TO SALARY AND WAGES OF \$145,000 WITH \$70,000 BEING OFFSET BY OVERTIME SAVINGS) AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien, Rogers
NAYS: Marney, Clark, Gibson, Cleworth
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Ms. Therrien asked for clarification regarding equipment replacement and the use of ARPA funds. CFO Bell stated that the FFD transfers funds to the Capital Fund to pay for its equipment replacement and that those costs are not shown within the FFD budget.

Ms. Therrien moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by adding an Operator position to the Public Works budget, an increase of \$109,010.

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED for lack of a second.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing the Public Works Operator/Mechanic positions from 15 to 14.

Ms. Therrien shared her concerns regarding the number of Operators and the amount of new equipment that had been purchased, adding that the potential cost of overtime is another concern.

Public Works Director Jeff Jacobson stated that in the previous year, they had transitioned an unfilled Oiler position into an apprentice Mechanic position, adding that the City's software system has made it difficult to record properly. He stated that the CFO had added a temporary position to address the situation and that his 2022 request is to make that position permanent to help keep up with the various repairs needed to keep the equipment functioning efficiently.

Mr. Cleworth clarified that he does not want to reduce the staff, but he is also not in favor of adding an additional position.

Ms. Therrien stated that she understands Mr. Cleworth's motion but is not in agreement.

Mayor Matherly noted that the original department request had been for two additional mechanic positions and he had only recommended one.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING THE PUBLIC WORKS OPERATOR/MECHANIC POSITIONS FROM 15 TO 14 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Gibson, Cleworth, Marney, Clark

NAYS: Therrien, Rogers

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Clark**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing Public Works Account No. 5701, Purchase Repairs, by \$10,000.

Mr. Cleworth stated that in 2021 the budgeted amount was \$120,000, but the YTD expenditures only totaled \$43,000, making it difficult to justify \$120,000. He stated that the Council has historically been supportive of the extra needs of the department when they arise.

Ms. Therrien asked CFO Bell how many months of expenditures were reflected in the November 2 projections. CFO Bell stated that all expenditures through October 31, 2021 were included in the November report.

Mr. Gibson spoke against the amendment, sharing concerns that with new equipment and young mechanics the funds could be needed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING PUBLIC WORKS ACCOUNT NO. 5701, PURCHASE REPAIRS, BY \$10,000 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Clark, Rogers

NAYS: Therrien, Gibson

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by reducing the Property Replacement Expenditures in the Capital Budget from \$630,000 to \$500,000.

Mr. Marney stated he felt that the carpet replacement costs at City Hall and FPD seemed extravagant, adding the estimated painting costs for the FFD seemed high as well. He noted that if the situations become dire, the budget can be amended in the future to accommodate those needs.

Mr. Gibson asked for clarification on all projects that Mr. Marney would like cut.

Mr. Marney stated that he had questions about the HVAC and Engineering carpet projects at City Hall as well as the carpet replacement at the FPD, the interior and exterior painting projects at FFD, and the parking lot extension at Public Works. He also stated that he did not see a benefit to adding a camera system at the Golden Heart Plaza.

Mr. Meeks shared that the HVAC system may qualify for funding through the infrastructure bill being passed through the State, but the other projects would have to be funded by the Capital Fund. He added that there has been a lot of vandalism at the Golden Heart Plaza, and the camera system would be an attempt to stop the vandalism.

Public Works Director Jacobson reported that there was an increasing and aggressive vandalism problem at the Golden Heart Plaza, adding there has been a lot of damages to the benches, plaques, and vegetation, as well as parts of the railing and ramps being tossed into the river. He added that a camera system would at least record the activity, allowing for prosecution of the vandals who are actively keeping tourists and locals from visiting the park and creating a safety hazard.

Mayor Matherly asked the maker of the motion to specifically name the projects and associated costs that he would like to reduce.

Mr. Marney listed the City Hall carpet replacement at \$30,000, the HVAC ventilation system at \$150,000, the FPD Carpet at \$32,000, the FFD exterior painting at \$40,000, the FFD interior painting at \$20,000, the Public Works parking lot extension at \$50,000, and the Golden Heart Plaza camera system at \$55,000.

Ms. Therrien asked about the Public Works parking lot extension. Mr. Jacobson stated that the intention is to eliminate some of the congestion that occurs and to allow for more employee and City vehicles to be plugged in during the winter.

Ms. Therrien asked about the City Hall carpet replacement in the Engineering Department. Mr. Jacobson explained that there are missing pieces of carpet at each threshold, adding that it is one of the few departments that has not had their flooring replaced.

Ms. Therrien asked if the HVAC system would also filter and clean the air as it heated and cooled. Mr. Jacobson stated that it would filter the air and have a positive impact on the air quality within City Hall.

Mr. Cleworth stated that his impression was that the original motion simply reduced the amount to be spent on Property Replacement, and if passed, the Finance Committee could then address the specific projects and decide which ones to complete with the remaining funds.

Mr. Gibson noted the Finance Committee already discussed and made modifications to the projects. He asked the CFO if the City is able to fund the HVAC project and simultaneously apply for grant funds. CFO Bell stated that to do so would be considered supplanting.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to AMEND the motion to amend by removing the HVAC project, further reducing the decrease to the Property Replacement Expenditures in the Capital Budget by \$20,000.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MOTION TO AMEND BY REMOVING THE HVAC PROJECT, FURTHER REDUCING THE DECREASE

TO THE PROPERTY REPLACEMENT EXPENDITURES IN THE CAPITAL BUDGET BY \$20,000 AS FOLLOWS:

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

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING THE PROPERTY REPLACEMENT EXPENDITURES IN THE CAPITAL BUDGET FROM \$630,000 TO \$480,000 BY REMOVING THE HVAC VENTILATION SYSTEM AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Clark, Gibson, Marney, Cleworth
NAYS: Rogers, Therrien

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to TAKE FROM THE TABLE the motion to amend Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, by capping all salary increases to a maximum of 2% for IBEW employees and exempt staff, not to include the increases to the Engineering staff salaries.

Mayor Matherly called for objection to the motion to TAKE FROM THE TABLE, and hearing none, so ORDERED.

Mayor Matherly asked CFO Bell for an update on the budget bottom line prior to the discussion on the amendment and after the passage of the other amendments.

CFO Bell stated that with the amendments, the budget surplus funds was now \$595,710, and she summarized the changes. She explained that the motion before the Council would reduce salary increases in six departments: the Mayor's Department by \$1,760, the Legal Department by \$3,340, the FPD by \$1,880, the Public Works Department by \$3,250, the Engineering Department by \$3,340, and the Building Department by \$3,180, for a total reduction of \$16,750.

Mayor Matherly asked the Council to approve the requested 5% increases in his budget, stating that keeping competitive wages is important for retention and recruitment.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, BY CAPPING ALL SALARY INCREASES TO A MAXIMUM OF 2% FOR IBEW EMPLOYEES AND EXEMPT STAFF, NOT TO INCLUDE THE INCREASES TO THE ENGINEERING STAFF SALARIES, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Clark, Marney, Cleworth
NAYS: Gibson, Rogers, Therrien, Matherly

Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Mr. Cleworth expressed disappointment that more was not cut from the budget and expressed concerns about future revenues. He added that the current contractual increases, as well as the increases that come with time, will leave the City struggling without a strong bottom line to help

fund the expenditures. He spoke against the budget as it stood and stated that he would be voting against it.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6187, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rogers, Therrien, Gibson, Matherly
NAYS: Marney, Clark, Cleworth
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6187, as Amended, ADOPTED.

b) Ordinance No. 6189 – An Ordinance Amending the 2021 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Fifth Time. Introduced by Mayor Matherly. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Gibson, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6189.

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

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6189 by substituting Ordinance No. 6189, as Amended.

Mr. Gibson stated that he had proposed the substitution, but after speaking with the Public Works Director he felt that it was pertinent to leave the ordinance as originally introduced.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6189 BY SUBSTITUTING ORDINANCE NO. 6189, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: None
NAYS: Cleworth, Gibson, Rogers, Therrien, Clark, Marney
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION FAILED.

Ms. Therrien noted that there is a lot of time spent developing and passing an annual budget and yet the 2021 budget is being amended for the fifth time.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6189 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Gibson, Therrien, Clark, Cleworth, Marney, Rogers
NAYS: None
Mayor Matherly declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6189 ADOPTED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6190 – An Ordinance Amending FGC Sec. 2-651 to Change the Minimum Unassigned General Fund Balance. Introduced by Mayor Matherly and All City Council Members.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Ordinance No. 6191 – An Ordinance Amending FGC Sec. 2-118.1 to Clarify Finance Committee Meeting Procedures. Introduced by Council Members Cleworth, Rogers, Marney, and Clark.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO COUNCIL

- a) Discretionary Fund Committee Meeting Minutes of January 15, 2021

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Clark wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Marney shared that the Discretionary Fund Committee would be meeting on Wednesday at 5:30 p.m. to hear presentations from the grant applicants. He stated that the meeting would be held in person and on Zoom.

Mr. Gibson stated it had been an interesting meeting. He shared that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing repeatedly and expecting different results. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Mr. Cleworth wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He stated that it is the last meeting of the year and that, at times, discussions have been contentious. He added that he has a strong love for the City of Fairbanks and wants to see it succeed but finds himself frustrated at the lack of effort in presenting a smart budget. He repeated his concerns about future revenues and the lack of foresight to address impending issues. He concluded by thanking everyone who worked on the budget.

Ms. Rogers shared that she had attended an Opioid Crisis meeting through AML, and it has been encouraging to see the progress made locally over the past five years. She spoke about the upcoming Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC) meeting and the resurgence of purpose happening with the Housing and Homeless Coalition. **Ms. Rogers** stated that she was heartened by the discussion, adding that everyone's unique perspectives bring a lot towards the success of the City. She thanked everyone for all their hard work and wished everyone a wonderful holiday season.

Ms. Therrien wished everyone happy holidays and stated she felt that there had been a lot of good work done on the budget. She stated it was encouraging to see over \$200,000 added to the bottom line.

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to ENTER Executive Session to discuss Public Safety Employees Association (PSEA) 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) Public Safety Employees Association Labor Negotiation Strategy

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

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Therrien, 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 11:28 p.m.



JIM MATHERLY, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: RR