



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, MAY 22, 2023
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

The City Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on the above date, following a 5:30 p.m. graduation ceremony for the Citizen Engagement Academy, 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 David Pruhs presiding and with the following Council Members in attendance:

Council Members Present: Jerry Cleworth, Seat A
 June Rogers, Seat B
 Sue Sprinkle, Seat C
 Crystal Tidwell, Seat D
 Lonny Marney, Seat E
 John Ringstad, Seat F

Absent: None

Also Present: Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer (remotely)
 D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
 Thomas Chard, City Attorney
 Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
 Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)
 Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)
 Scott Raygor, Fire Chief (remotely)
 Andrew Coccaro, Assistant Fire Chief
 Clem Clooten, Building Official (remotely)
 Robert Pristash, City Engineer
 Jessica Krier, HR Generalist
 Teal Soden, FPD Public Information Officer (remotely)
 Brynn Butler, Housing Coordinator
 Marsha Oss, Reentry Coordinator
 Brenda McFarlane, Crisis Now Coordinator

INVOCATION

The Invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, **Mr. Marney** lead the flag salutation.

CEREMONIAL MATTERS

Marsha Oss, along with Brynn Butler and Brenda McFarlane, shared that in her culture, they honor people who are significant to their community and families with the wrapping of a blanket. Chief

of Staff Mike Sanders was recognized with this honor for his efforts over the last 7.5 years of bringing people of the city together and for his support for the recent Symposium on Opioids.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Aaron Lojewski, 1600 Washington Drive, Fairbanks – A Lojewski acknowledged the Mayor's recent trip to the capital to advocate for funding of various needs, including the Polaris Building, and offered congratulations for his success. He stated he would like to start brainstorming ways for local governmental entities to move towards an approach of unified priorities, so as not to confuse legislators with various asks. He suggested a joint committee or joint legislative priorities dialogue for the future and expressed willingness to coordinate before he terms out from the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Assembly.

Mr. Ringstad asked if A. Lojewski had looked into 'Programs for Progress' from the 1980s. A. Lojewski replied that he had not but that he would reach out to Mr. Ringstad the next day.

Victor Buberger, Fairbanks – V. Buberger spoke of his disapproval of needles being present in public areas and to needles being given out for free. He spoke poorly of heroin addicts in general. V. Buberger discussed the difference in per-night funding for housing inebriated individuals vs. those under influence of other illegal substances.

Corrine Biederman, 717 9th Avenue, #103, Fairbanks – C. Biederman shared that she is a proud, clean, and sober mom who loves her kids. She stated she appreciates all kinds of views and solutions that use outside-of-the-box thinking. Regarding substance abuse, she shared her view that dope is not what kills a user, it is a lack of connection or caring – the dope just finishes the job. C. Biederman shared that her daughter just graduated and is a clean, productive member of society, focusing on giving versus taking. She talked about the positive connections she made during the Citizens' Engagement Academy from which she graduated earlier in the evening. She expressed appreciation for all that the City does and for the life-changing experience of the Academy.

Jomo Stewart, President/CEO of the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) – J. Stewart spoke to a couple of great events/successes at the FEDC. He shared that they just concluded the annual Young Professionals Council (YPC) summit, which gives a voice to young people in the community, and recently concluded the third cohort small business accelerator, which doubled in participation this year over last year. He stated that the focus is on branding, bookkeeping, etc. He stated that they just had their annual pitch competition, with finalists presenting at the Chamber luncheon the following day. He discussed strategic planning efforts at the FEDC and shared that they just approved and adopted a plan; he stated they are discussing how to achieve goals. On personal note, J. Stewart shared that it does not take much to be knocked off one's pedestal.

Ms. Rogers asked if the FEDC mentoring program is still active. J. Stewart stated that the direct, structured mentoring approach ended about five years ago. He explained that a recent focus has been on the YPC summit, where young professionals get to meet established, successful people from across the community to learn valuable lessons from their experiences for professional and personal development. **Ms. Rogers** asked if they are interested in continuing with the mentoring

program and offered her support. J. Stewart shared about the history of the YPC. He stated that a comparable program was started in Anchorage after the success of the Fairbanks group was shared. He shared that the local program has waned over the years, while Anchorage's program has thrived. He stated he would accept Ms. Roger's help to get it restarted.

Mr. Cleworth asked J. Stewart if he had been approached by any major retailers interested in coming to Fairbanks. J. Stewart replied that he had not. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the FEDC makes inquiries to see if companies are interested in doing so. J. Stewart replied that he had a recent conversation with a technology purveyor regarding licensing a piece of technology companies use to determine if they are interested in an area. He stated that Fairbanks has a hard time catching a break and discussed some of the challenges Fairbanks has faced in trying to grow its population and economy, including air quality issues and other issues that make it difficult for big name companies to consider Fairbanks as a location. J. Stewart shared that part of FEDC's strategic planning is determining whether to acquire resources to attract those kinds of businesses or the personnel/resources to do the work of clearing space for new development. **Mr. Cleworth** stated there is good opportunity in Fairbanks, and the numbers that Fred Meyer and Wal-Mart generates, compared to national averages, is staggering. J. Stewart stated that it is not the gross, it is the net.

Ms. Rogers commented that North Pole was selected as a location for a new Three Bears store; she asked J. Stewart whether the company considered Fairbanks. J. Stewart replied that the company was actively courted by the Mayor of North Pole, which is a successful recruitment story for economic development.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

Mr. Cleworth pulled Ordinance No. 6246 and the Memorandum Regarding City Representation on the FNSB Planning Commission from the Consent Agenda.

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

City Clerk Snider read the Consent Agenda, as Amended, into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2023

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

b) Regular Meeting Minutes of May 8, 2023

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 |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| 5262 | Aha Oriental Kitchen | Restaurant/ Eating Place | Moonstone, LLC | 996 Blair Road |

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Liquor License application for renewal.

Mayor Pruhs 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: Cleworth, Marney, Tidwell, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Rogers
 NAYS: None
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR’S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor Pruhs asked Brenda McFarlane, Brynn Butler, and Marsha Oss to give a report on the recent Symposium on Opioids event.

B. McFarlane shared information about the general purpose of the Symposium, its supporters, the wide range of contributors, and the overall result of the week’s efforts.

B. Butler discussed the scope of attendees as well as the supporters who are helping contribute to the changes needed in the community for those struggling with issues.

M. Oss discussed the theme of sharing resources and breaking down silos and using deliberately designed panels to represent different agencies in the community. She shared that the final day included a community awards ceremony and shared that she wanted to recognize regular people working every day to keep the community clean. M. Oss shared a slideshow that was presented at the awards ceremony.

Ms. Sprinkle asked M. Oss to share about the art project she heard they were working on. M. Oss stated that as part of ‘The Opioid Project,’ twelve local individuals got together with some of the visiting contributors to create an art installation and share stories about how people in our community have been affected by opioid use.

Mayor Pruhs asked Aaron Lojewski to give a report from the FNSB Assembly.

A. Lojewski shared that the budget was recently passed by the Assembly and spoke about the history of budget challenges, debt payments, shortages, etc. at the Borough. He stated that, for a time, it was relatively easy to get State funding for additional requests, but funding dried up in

recent years and, as a result, the FNSB started its Capital Improvement Fund to set aside money each year to pay down debt while cash flowing capital requirements. He stated he was pleased to report that during his time on the Assembly, bond payments have dropped from approximately \$19 MM to \$10 MM. He stated that the amount will continue to drop and, unless additional bonds are issued, the Borough is on track to be debt-free by 2027. A. Lojewski stated that the items that made headlines were funding for the Mary Siah Recreation Center and FNSB School District (FNSBSD). He spoke about the consideration of school district funding and reported that the district will receive \$7.2 MM more than what it budgeted in the coming year, largely due to an increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) from the State. A. Lojewski shared that the Mary Siah pool will remain open unless there is an HR crisis for lifeguard recruiting. He stated that some cuts were made to lifeguard positions that were vacant for quite some time, but the facility can continue to operate as it has been; he added that if demand increases, positions can be added back later and services and hours can expand. He expressed some concern about whether the Memorandum Regarding City Representation on the FNSB Planning Commission had been run through the Borough's Legal Department, as he felt there might be some technical issues.

Mr. Cleworth thanked A. Lojewski for his report and stated that the news on reduced bond debt is positive. He asked A. Lojewski to confirm if the State honored any commitments for assistance on repayment of certain bonds. A. Lojewski explained that the State had informally agreed to pay up to 90% of school bond debt reimbursement, but because it was an unofficial commitment, the amount has varied each year. He stated that it was never zero, but some years it would be low, resulting in an increase to the Borough's mill rate. **Mr. Cleworth** asked A. Lojewski if he knows of any bond packages coming from either the Borough or the FNSBSD. A. Lojewski stated that his understanding is that bond packages cannot come directly from the school district – they must be initiated by the Borough, placed on the ballot by the Assembly, and voted on by citizens. He stated that, to his knowledge, there are no bond packages being considered.

Mayor Pruhs recounted a previous meeting where a citizen criticized the City regarding needles on the ground in his neighborhood and talked about his inability to reach the Mayor's Office. He stated that Jessica Krier from the Mayor's Office spoke with the citizen on the phone the same day he called and that Dispatch Manager Kristi Merideth also spent 15 minutes speaking with him. **Mayor Pruhs** shared that he attended Senior Recognition Day at the Carlson Center recently, and someone approached regarding appreciation for the Discretionary Fund grant they had received. He reported that he did a walkthrough at the Golden Heart Plaza (GHP) recently and saw needles firsthand, but when he returned later the needles were gone. He thanked Shawn Lee for being diligent and taking care of the issue. He affirmed that the City takes care of issues when the problems are communicated, and he expressed that he appreciates when that is done in a polite way. He asked City Engineer Bob Pristash to provide an update on the demolition of the Polaris Building.

B. Pristash reported that traffic control for demolition was set up on Saturday and seems to be working. He discussed various disposal methods for certain materials and reported that about one-third of the annex is down after only a day and a half. He shared that the contractor's latest schedule indicates completion by May 27. B. Pristash stated that the carrier for hauling hazardous materials (hazmat) out of state was US Ecology but had to be switched to Waste Management, causing a delay. He stated that it will take months for the materials to reach the final destination. He stated that they are monitoring air quality and testing for asbestos and mold.

Ms. Sprinkle asked about the traffic control component and the impact on local businesses. B. Pristash stated that he met with business owners and answered all questions to their satisfaction.

Mr. Ringstad noted the reported progress on the annex and asked about the timeframe for demolition of the primary structure. B. Pristash responded with more details on the logistics of hazmat removal that he has seen during demolition of the annex and how that is helping eliminate misunderstandings during this process of advertising for the request for proposals (RFP).

Mayor Pruhs reported on the \$3 MM request to the State for funding through the capital budget. He shared that he received a round of positive calls from various legislators who are thrilled for Fairbanks, and he stated that Fairbanks has earned it. He stated that the City Grants Administrator will not be bored due to the number of grants the City is seeking.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth thanked the City Clerk for the Citizen Engagement Academy and noted its success. He thanked the Mayor for his work in Juneau to get funding for the Polaris Building.

Ms. Rogers thanked the Clerk for the Academy and noted all the positive comments that came from those who participated. She shared that the Symposium was wonderful beyond words and she commended B. Butler, M. Oss, and B. McFarlane for their work. She expressed confidence that those who contributed financially were pleased with the result and will have no reservation about renewing their support. She also thanked the large group of others at City Hall who helped with the event and stated that she looks forward to attending next year.

Ms. Sprinkle stated she had no comments.

Mr. Ringstad shared his intention to introduce an ordinance at the next meeting regarding the FEDC's funding from room rental tax revenue, which was removed from the ordinance before the Council.

Mr. Marney thanked J. Stewart for his report and stated that he would like to see him more often. He thanked A. Lojewski for the Assembly report and thanked the Clerk and Department Heads for putting on the Academy.

Ms. Tidwell shared information on the Interior Alaska Transportation Plan Road Show. She reported that Fairbanks is scheduled for the coming Wednesday at 5 p.m. at the Pipeline Training Center, and there will be an opportunity for the public to share ideas.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 74, Article V, Room Rental Tax, to Change the Allocations. Introduced by Council Members Marney, Tidwell, and Ringstad. POSTPONED from the Regular Meeting of May 8, 2023; a PUBLIC HEARING WILL BE HELD.

Note: Multiple proposals for amendments to Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended were included in writing in the agenda packet. A summary of those proposals is as follows:

- *From Ms. Tidwell: Excess funds, post-allocation, would be equally distributed between the City and Explore Fairbanks.*
- *From Mr. Ringstad: Change 30% City allocation for fund collection, administration, and tourism impact to 23% AND allow City to retain 7% to offset expense of security and safety for special events.*
- *From Ms. Sprinkle: Change all allocations to a percentage-based distribution and remove requirement to review allocations every 5 years.*

Scott McCrea, President/CEO of Explore Fairbanks – S. McCrea stated he spent a lot of time working on his remarks and that it is difficult to choose what to say when it feels as though everything has been spoken about many times. He indicated that the goal of conversation has been achieved. He affirmed his understanding of the purpose of the room rental tax and stated that tourism is the community leader when it comes to economic development when defined in terms of new money coming into the area, job creation, and businesses development. He spoke about the relevancy of destination marketing as it pertains to the work of Explore Fairbanks and about the increasingly competitive global market. S. McCrea stated that no one disagrees about the importance of Explore Fairbanks and its efforts, yet an ordinance may now potentially change what has been in place for over 20 years. He stated that Explore Fairbanks' stance on the ordinance as currently written is in strong opposition as they do not want to see their funding capped. He questioned why Explore Fairbanks' funding should be frozen when it is the primary entity responsible for bringing visitors to Fairbanks to contribute to that revenue. S. McCrea commented that capping their revenue as they deal with inflationary impacts would be equivalent to a budget reduction in years to come and would inhibit their ability to grow tourism. In regard to the various proposals before the Council, he spoke in full support of the language put forth by Ms. Sprinkle. He stated that Ms. Tidwell's proposal would remove the cap, which is appreciated, but he questioned the need to split the difference above the \$2.2 MM level with the City when the City is already getting an increased allocation. He presumed that the City would use the extra funds for general services, which he stated is against the purpose of the room rental tax, but he acknowledged that it would still allow some opportunity for growth. He expressed hope that the Council's action would reflect the words of confidence that have been conveyed in regard to Explore Fairbanks and that there would be a conclusion to the ordinance.

Kathy Fitzgerald, Chena Hot Springs Road – K. Fitzgerald stated that she spent many years on different sides of the table, as a member of organizations requesting funding and as a member of the committee allocating funds. She discussed the history of the ordinance and the development of winter tourism and spoke about the value of the travel brochure Fairbanks Convention & Visitors Bureau produces. She stated that the brochure entices people to visit Fairbanks and indicated that a reduction to that allocation would have a negative impact. She stated she does not want Fairbanks to be viewed as a bait-and-switch community. K. Fitzgerald spoke briefly about the history of the barricade package and of her involvement in its origin. She stated that the difference between what is charged for special event barricade packages versus the actual cost to provide the service is about \$6,000. She stated that the difference was covered through discretionary funds, and she is not in favor of the ordinance as it is written. She stated that there are a lot of good revisions being offered, and she spoke in favor of splitting the excess to help with special events. She indicated

that her only concern would be with the timing for the Discretionary Fund Committee to receive updated amounts in order to make recommendations for allocations.

Ms. Sprinkle asked K. Fitzgerald how she felt about the barricade package. K. Fitzgerald stated she is unsure of the current proposal but that she believes it behooves the City to provide the barricade package services. She stated the City has expertise, and it would help reduce liability.

Aaron Lojewski – A. Lojewski thanked Mr. Cleworth for his parliamentary maneuver at the last meeting to ensure Ms. Sprinkle was able to participate in the discussion of the ordinance, thus allowing all voices on the Council to be represented [referring to action taken to remove component that would have presented a conflict of interest for her]. He stated he is particularly grateful for that action because he believes Ms. Sprinkle’s proposal is the best solution to fix some issues with the allocations in the Code, such as no adjustments for inflation for the last 20 years. He expressed hope that the Council would seriously consider passing Ms. Sprinkle’s proposed language.

Leonard Thiltgen, 2263 Bridgewater Drive, Fairbanks – L. Thiltgen stated that he ran a retail business for 40 years, and the number of non-local visitors he received was pretty minimal. He spoke about a room surcharge being implemented in other cities for each night a room is rented. He stated he was surprised to hear a couple recently state that they did not go out much anymore in the evenings because they did not feel safe, and he wondered why there could not be a room surcharge implemented in Fairbanks to go directly towards public safety; he added that everyone would benefit from the surcharge, rather than just those who cater to visitors. He stated that there are many retirees choosing to stay in Fairbanks year-round, and he questioned what benefits those individuals get from the room rental tax. He spoke in favor of a surcharge or other out-of-the-box solutions so that all community members benefit from visitors, not just the visitor industry.

Elizabeth Griswold (via Zoom) – E. Griswold shared that the reason there are not more leaders from the visitors industry in the audience is because many of them are at a conference in Texas, as she is, to sell Fairbanks as a destination. She stated she has reviewed some of the proposals, and she appreciates Ms. Sprinkle’s language. She urged the Council not to cap Explore Fairbanks’ funding, as they work hard to advocate for Fairbanks; she cautioned not to ‘shoot the horse that’s pulling the cart.’ E. Griswold stated that occupancy levels and room rates have gone up, but tourism costs have also increased. She requested a fair and equitable solution to the ordinance and stated that she also wants the city to be safe without capping Explore Fairbanks’ funding. She thanked the Council for its efforts and expressed her hope to see an increase in the funding that benefits the most people. She asked the Council to show visitor industry partners that it believes in them by not capping the City’s support, so everyone can grow, prosper, and work together.

Mayor Pruhs called for additional public comment and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

Mr. Marney expressed his belief that Mr. Ringstad’s proposed language to divide 30% into 23% and 7%, takes care of some issues. He stated that 7% would go towards public safety, which many citizens would like to see the City address. He stated that Ms. Tidwell’s proposed language shows that a willingness to work with Explore Fairbanks. **Mayor Pruhs** asked if Mr. Marney would like

to make a motion. **Mr. Marney** stated that he likes the idea of combining Ms. Tidwell and Mr. Ringstad's proposals.

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended, as follows [new text in **bold/double-underlined** font; deleted text in ~~double-strikethrough~~ font]:

Sec. 74-117. Room rental tax purpose and limitation.

(b) Subject to annual appropriation, revenues collected under this article will be allocated as follows:

- (1) The City of Fairbanks will ~~retain~~ receive ~~23.30~~22.5 percent ~~and any remaining room rental tax revenues~~ for fund collection, administration, and tourism impact.
- (2) **Additionally, the City of Fairbanks will retain 7 percent to help offset its expenses for providing security and safety for special events as well as for other services in support of the intent of this section.**
- (3~~2~~) ~~\$550,000.00~~400,000.00 will be distributed annually as follows:
Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation \$100,000.00
Golden Heart Plaza and Barnette Landing Maintenance ~~\$50,000.00~~30,000.00
Discretionary Grants ~~\$400,000.00~~270,000.00
- (4~~3~~) **Up to \$2.2 million**All remaining room rental tax revenues will be distributed to the Fairbanks Convention and Visitors Bureau, dba Explore Fairbanks (hereinafter "Explore Fairbanks").
- (5) **Any room rental tax revenues remaining after these allocations are made will be distributed equally between the City of Fairbanks and Explore Fairbanks.**
- (6~~4~~) **The allocations under this section will be reviewed by the city council at least once every five years.**

Ms. Sprinkle stated she understands the need for the discussion, but she pointed out that Explore Fairbanks is essentially the City's public relations firm. She indicated that she is against a provision that would cause allocations to become stagnant and that the City taking 30% plus the split in excess funds makes it look greedy.

Ms. Rogers stated that she could not support the proposed amendment.

Mr. Ringstad acknowledged the complexity of the issue and spoke to the challenges of the Open Meetings Act (OMA) in trying to work with other Council members. He stated that the discussion surrounding the ordinance has evolved many times, and the amendment before the Council is the result of a compromise and indicates progress. He stated that there is no cap for Explore Fairbanks with the amendment, and, as revenue increases, Explore Fairbanks will benefit along with the City. He indicated that it is not perfect, but it is workable and it moves things forward. **Mr. Ringstad** spoke about an insert in the newspaper regarding visiting Fairbanks, and after he inquired, he learned that the insert was being distributed elsewhere in the state. He stated that there are others out there who are spending money to market the Interior. He expressed appreciation for the work

everyone put into the ordinance and stated that, like other aspects of the budget, things change more frequently than every 20 years. He stated the issue is worth looking at again in the future.

Mr. Cleworth thanked those Council members who considered his recommendations from the last meeting. He stated that much of what he mentioned has been addressed with the amendment, although it does not take care of everything he spoke about. He stated he received an email recently stating that the Council needs to wrap this issue up, and he agreed.

Mr. Marney asked CFO Bell whether an organization that receives discretionary fund monies can request additional funds through the Mayor. CFO Bell replied that an organization can approach the Mayor to ask if he would consider a request through his contingency fund; she stated the Mayor has the authority to grant such a request, but if it would exceed his budget, he could request a budget amendment. **Mayor Pruhs** added that the Council can do that as well. **Ms. Rogers** added to the question to confirm that the application for discretionary fund grants does not make it clear that this is an option. CFO Bell confirmed that Ms. Rogers' was correct.

Ms. Tidwell state she appreciates being part of the process and indicated support for removing the funding cap for Explore Fairbanks. She stated the Council has heard from many within the tourism industry, and she has heard from many members of the community as well. She commented that an important part of tourism is having a safe community and that looking at ways to have increased safety downtown has been a serious issue. She stated that all solutions require money and that she feels that taking care of those who live in the community is more important than marketing tourism; she stated the amendment provides for both. **Ms. Tidwell** stated that Explore Fairbanks will have the ability to continue to grow, and the City will be able to start solving some of its problems, as recently highlighted. She expressed hope that the amendment passes.

Ms. Rogers stated she has spoken on many occasions over the years about people's perception of downtown Fairbanks. She stated she does not feel that there should be a tie between funding for economic development and safety of the community and that some of these issues are not being employed in ways that are useful. She stated that those are two different things. In regard to compromises, she expressed disagreement with the idea that if both sides disagree a little about certain aspects, and the result is somewhere in the middle, that that is a sign of a good decision. **Ms. Rogers** stated she does not feel she can hear that kind of a comment and agree that there is a good energy to the spirit of discussion, if relying on that view. She stated she has been frustrated over the years about circumstances of attitude about the Fairbanks community and the perception that downtown Fairbanks has been abandoned. She stated that there was an agreement in place for room rental allocations, but early in the Council's discussion of the ordinance, she felt there was a sense of breaking that agreement. She stated she finds it difficult to support any of the proposals.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6223, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Ringstad, Cleworth, Tidwell

NAYS: Sprinkle, Rogers

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended, by striking the language in item 6 [Sec. 74-117(b)(6)]: “The allocations under this section will be reviewed by the city council at least once every five years.”

Mr. Cleworth stated that the Fairbanks General Code (FGC) can be revised at any time by ordinance. He stated that the allocations may be reviewed in that timeframe or they may be forgotten, but ultimately the language is unnecessary.

Mr. Ringstad acknowledged **Mr. Cleworth’s** the point but reminded the Council that the section of the code had not been reviewed for many years. He spoke in support of keeping the language. **Mr. Marney** agreed.

Ms. Sprinkle expressed disappointment that there would be flat funding again and, in time, they will be back where they started from.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6223, AS AMENDED, BY STRIKING THE LANGUAGE IN ITEM 6 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Sprinkle, Rogers, Cleworth
NAYS: Ringstad, Marney
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mayor Pruhs called for any additional amendments and, hearing none, called for a vote on Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6223, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Ringstad, Marney, Cleworth, Tidwell
NAYS: Rogers, Sprinkle
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6238, as Amended – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Sec. 78-572 Special Events by Amending the City Barricade Package Fee and Establishing a Deadline for Permit Applications. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. POSTPONED from the Regular Meeting of April 10, 2023; a public hearing was held on March 27, 2023.

Mayor Pruhs noted that a motion to adopt was already on the floor and no public hearing was scheduled. He called for Council discussion.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6238, as Amended, by reducing the barricade package fee from \$3,000 to \$1,000.

Mr. Cleworth stated that, with the Council’s change to Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended, there would be no reason to raise the barricade package fee and that the amount of revenue it would generate is miniscule.

Ms. Tidwell agreed with Mr. Cleworth. She added that the barricade package is an important service that the City provides and that she supports keeping costs low so as not to hurt the organizations putting on special events.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6238, AS AMENDED, BY REDUCING THE BARRICADE PACKAGE FEE FROM \$3,000 TO \$1,000, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Rogers, Tidwell

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6238, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Rogers

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6223, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6244 – An Ordinance Authorizing and Directing Retention of the Real Property Located at 730 Front Street for Public Purpose Upon Tax Foreclosure. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and Council Member Sprinkle. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6244.

Mayor Pruhs called for public testimony.

David van den Berg, Executive Director of the Downtown Association (DTA) of Fairbanks – D. van den Berg stated that he is speaking on behalf of the DTA and that, although the subject property is outside of the primary downtown area, they understand this can be an agonizing decision in some instances. He recognized that if staff has brought the matter to this point, it is likely a good recommendation and the DTA lends its support.

Mayor Pruhs called for any additional testimony and, hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

Ms. Sprinkle stated that she does not like that the money will come out of the Mayor's contingency fund. She asked if the Council can, in the near future, hear from the Building Official about abatement funds. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that he will be working with staff to start the process and has meeting already scheduled to discuss priorities; he stated he would report back to the Council.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6244 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Ringstad, Tidwell, Rogers, Sprinkle, Marney, Cleworth

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6244 ADOPTED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 5065 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for Funds from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for a Community Paramedic Program. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Resolution No. 5066 – A Resolution Honoring the Fort Wainwright Soldiers Who Lost Their Lives on April 27, 2023. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and All City Council Members.

PASSED and APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Ordinance No. 6245 – An Ordinance Amending the City of Fairbanks 2023 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Second Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Ordinance No. 6246 – An Ordinance to Reduce Overtime at the Fairbanks Fire Department and Secure Additional Savings and Benefits by Adding a Battalion Chief. Introduced by Council Member Tidwell.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6246.

Mr. Cleworth asked for clarification that the plan, as it pertains to the 2024 budget, is to add a full-time Battalion Chief, which would entail an internal promotion, then hiring to fill the position that individual vacated. Assistant Fire Chief A. Cocco replied that, to the best of his understanding, that is correct. **Mr. Cleworth** asked for clarification on other Fire Department staffing items presented in the budget amendment that was just advanced. A. Cocco stated that they are two separate issues. He explained the positions referenced within Ordinance No. 6245. **Mr. Cleworth** expressed confusion and asked for confirmation that the Fire Chief and Asst. Fire Chief positions are with the IBEW. A. Cocco replied affirmatively. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that a Battalion Chief is currently acting as a Deputy Fire Marshal and asked whether that position is a Fairbanks Firefighters Union (FFU) position or an IBEW position. A. Cocco confirmed that it is a FFU position. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that he is not currently in favor of adding more people in the Fire Department. He indicated that the Council has had discussions during budget season regarding the Deputy Fire Marshal position, and he stated that doing inspections is very important for places with liquor licenses, restaurants, hotels, etc., because people rely on the safety of the facility. He stated that doing inspections for other businesses with typical daytime hours and with no one living there is of little importance to him. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that in the past, inspections would occur whether the business owner wanted them or not, then the business owner would receive a bill. He stated that some questioned why their taxes did not cover that kind of thing, and there was not a

good answer. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that a real discussion is needed about the position if it will be added at all. He stated that four new positions were added to the Fire Department a year and a half ago, and the minimum manning was also increased, which had an impact on overtime. He asked Mayor Pruhs whether the administration supports Ordinance No. 6246. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that, at this time, he is going to say yes, but he had hoped the discussion would be brought forth later in June or July after police staffing issues are addressed. He stated that this is one position they can add now at the Fire Department to bring down costs. **Mr. Cleworth** questioned the Mayor regarding his statement about reducing cost when the fiscal note shows an increased cost, despite the ordinance title claiming to bring down cost. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that what is not seen is the offset by reduction in overtime costs. **Mr. Cleworth** pointed out that the fiscal note includes the overtime cost. **Mayor Pruhs** noted a \$55,000 savings in overtime expenses but a payroll increase of \$112,000, and he stated that that is not good.

Ms. Tidwell stated that she believes the cost will very much depends on how the Fire Chief decides to use the position and that the numbers are not concrete.

Chief Raygor stated that he was very conservative with the overtime hours he used for the fiscal note by only including the 'forced hours.' He stated he believes the savings will be a lot higher, but he cannot predict based on unknowns, as it is a position they have never had before. He gave some example scenarios and explained that the CBA also comes into play. He reiterated that in his work with CFO Bell, he was very conservative with his estimates for the number of hours of overtime that will be reduced with the addition of the position.

Mr. Marney thanked Ms. Tidwell for getting the subject introduced sooner rather than later. He indicated that the Council is aware that the overtime is far higher than it should be, and he believes that more time could be spent looking into the financials in a future work session if the ordinance advances.

Mr. Ringstad stated he does not feel educated enough to discuss the duties of a Fire Marshal or a Battalion Chief or how much it will cost to make the change happen. He stated that although, philosophically, he appreciates the thought of departments trying to get overtime under control, he feels like he has some homework to do in order to feel qualified to vote on such a matter.

Ms. Tidwell asked for verification that should the ordinance advance, a work session would be held to review details. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that if the ordinance was advanced, it would be included in the next work session, with a final discussion at the next regular City Council meeting. He repeated that he would like to have seen the ordinance come forward in July, in order to first focus on matters pertaining to the Police Department.

Mr. Ringstad asked if it would make more sense to focus on Police Department matters within the next 60 days, rather than advance the Fire Department ordinance to be concluded within the next 30 days. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that is up to the Council.

Ms. Rogers stated that she feels it would be wise to postpone. **Mayor Pruhs** suggested postponing the ordinance to the second meeting in July.

Clerk Snider asked to clarify if the intent was to postpone or to amend the current motion to advance to an alternative date rather than the next meeting.

Mayor Pruhs, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND the motion to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6246 by changing the date of Second Reading and Public Hearing to the second meeting in July, rather than June 12, 2023.

Mayor Pruhs called for objection and, hearing none, declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 6246 TO THE REGULAR MEETING OF JULY 24, 2023, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Rogers, Marney, Ringstad

NAYS: Cleworth, Tidwell

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- e) Ordinance No. 6247 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Sec. 2-233(c) to Change the Quorum Requirement for the Fairbanks Diversity Council. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and Council Member Rogers.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- f) Ordinance No. 6248 – An Ordinance Amending the Incentive Bonus Program with the Fairbanks Police Department for Recruitment and Hiring. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

DISCUSSION ITEMS (Information and Reports)

- a) Committee Reports

Ms. Tidwell stated she attended a recent Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) meeting for the highway corridor project. She shared that the next meeting set for July. She commented that there have been significant improvements to their website, and the best avenue for public comment is through the website; she added that those communications are shared at committee meetings.

Ms. Sprinkle shared that the Chena Riverfront Commission meeting will occur on Wednesday. She commented that she is anxious for the Finance Committee meeting as those meetings are very interesting and informative; she stated she is learning a lot about the City's financial picture. She expressed an interest in more discussion on the City's tobacco tax.

Ms. Rogers reported that the Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC) recently met, but she was disappointed that there was not a quorum. She stated she is glad to see a new application for that committee, and she also reported that someone who attended a recent FDC meeting intends to submit an application. She stated that should help the group make quorum on a regular basis.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Appointment to the Fairbanks Diversity Council

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Memorandum Regarding City Representation on the FNSB Planning Commission

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to APPROVE the Memorandum Regarding City Representation on the FNSB Planning Commission.

Mayor Pruhs explained that there was an issue with the Borough regarding City representation on the Planning Commission. He stated an attempt was made to move Ms. Tidwell into a vacant City-represented seat while simultaneously not accepting the recommendation for appointment that the City had made for that vacant seat. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that he met with FNSB Mayor Ward and Borough Attorney Jill Dolan and, in summary, the Borough was in error. He stated that the City should have a fourth seat on the Commission based on updated population statistics

Ms. Tidwell clarified that the Borough's error was appointing her to a Borough seat. She explained that her application included her city address, and the seat she was placed in two years ago was a Borough seat, which is not allowed for a city resident. **Ms. Tidwell** explained that there was an open seat on the Commission designated for City representation, and the Council approved the recommendation of a certain individual. She stated that, during that process, the Borough realized the discrepancy with her seat and the residency requirement. She stated that the Borough was going to accept the Council's recommendation for the other individual to take the City seat and 'fire' Ms. Tidwell. She expressed her wish to remain on the Commission and stated that this action will ensure she is moved to the vacant City seat while also allowing the recommendation for another seat to move forward.

Mr. Cleworth indicated that he has a problem with the Borough's solution, stating that it is not Ms. Tidwell's problem and it is not the City's problem. He stated that the issue should be rectified by the FNSB Assembly. He questioned whether the North Pole seat was currently vacant. **Ms. Tidwell** replied that, coincidentally, although the North Pole seat is currently vacant, it was discovered that there is another individual in a Borough seat who resides in the City of North Pole. She stated that that person will be moved from their current seat to the North Pole seat.

Discussion occurred between Mr. Cleworth, Ms. Tidwell, and Mayor Pruhs to clarify the current situation. It was stated that the City of Fairbanks currently has two seats filled and that Aaron Gibson's application was submitted to fill the third City seat. There was discussion that the Borough responded by declining Mr. Gibson's appointment, opting to move Ms. Tidwell to that City-represented seat instead, which was not an acceptable solution. It was stated that the City should be given a fourth seat on the Planning Commission so that both Mr. Gibson and Ms. Tidwell could serve. **Mr. Cleworth** stated he believes this issue should be resolved by the Borough Assembly instead of the City Council.

Mr. Ringstad questioned whether Ms. Tidwell's term of service would change with a new seat placement. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that he could forward emails showing the terms for each of the seats being discussed.

Mr. Marney agreed with Mr. Cleworth that the issue was caused by the Borough.

Mayor Pruhs reiterated that he was not interested in an 'opinion piece' from the Borough attorney and that he wanted clear answers when he met with Mayor Ward and Borough Attorney Jill Dolan. **Mr. Cleworth** asked whether Mayor Pruhs had a commitment by the Borough Mayor to bring the issue forward to the Assembly. **Mayor Pruhs** replied affirmatively and spoke highly of Borough Attorney Dolan. He recalled working with her on the Planning Commission in 2006. He stated that the ideas for resolving this situation are a result of their discussion and Attorney Dolan's suggestions. He stated that if things are not resolved the way they are outlined in the memorandum, it will be because of the Borough Mayor.

Clerk Snider shared information to answer the question from Mr. Ringstad regarding term dates. She stated that Ms. Tidwell's current term expires December 2024 and the vacant seat they are seeking to move her to has a term ending in December 2025.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM REGARDING CITY REPRESENTATION ON THE FNSB PLANNING COMMISSION AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Cleworth, Ringstad, Marney, Rogers

NAYS: None

ABSTAINED: Tidwell

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

c) Fairbanks Diversity Council Meeting Minutes of January 10, 2023

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

COUNCIL MEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth noted that Peter Stern, a longtime member of the Fairbanks Fire Department, had recently passed away. He stated that Mr. Stern was a great asset to the community through years of continued contribution on various committees. Regarding a property on 5th Avenue next to Clay Street Cemetery, **Mr. Cleworth** stated that he was under the impression that a building without water service could not be occupied unless a building permit was issued. He questioned whether the building could be boarded up if people are coming and going. He asked if the City Attorney could research whether there is a public nuisance consideration that could be used to expedite the process of getting the structure secured, considering the number of complaints received about the property.

Ms. Rogers expressed disappointment in not having the opportunity to support Ms. Sprinkle's proposal for the room rental tax ordinance. She stated that the issue affects many programs, events, and organizations that are close to her experience growing up in Fairbanks, as well as those of

many citizens. **Ms. Rogers** stated that money cannot be thrown at any problem that has to do with people while expecting the best results and that an attitude adjustment has to happen in the community. She stated that many people spoke about each other in uplifting ways throughout the entire evening. She recalled having to remind and educate people years ago about not using inappropriate terms in reference to others and stated that there needs to be an effort to rethink how people title and refer to others. **Ms. Rogers** stated that C. Biederman was very eloquent in how she spoke about people working together, especially after comments that preceded her. She stated that it is very heartening to see that kind of recognition for fellow humans, and that is the kind of expression of love and concern that she would like to see in the community. She spoke to the importance of working together, with good personal regard for one another, understanding the hurts that others are going through. She stated that dollars do not work the same way as people to solve problems.

Ms. Sprinkle acknowledged all the efforts and results of the cleanup day held over the weekend. She stated that she loves seeing the results each year, and she encourage all Fairbanksans to continue that throughout the season.

Ms. Tidwell thanked Ms. Rogers for her comments and acknowledged her frustrations. She stated that she believes it takes both dollars and people in the community working together to accomplish things. She expressed hope that some of the extra funding that will be received as a result of the Council's actions will help with that.

Mr. Marney thanked the Council for jumping the hurdle and passing Ordinance No. 6223.

Mr. Ringstad stated that he had no comments.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider congratulated the graduates of the Citizens Engagement Academy. She also congratulated students who recently graduated high school. She shared that the new Deputy City Clerk, Colt Chase, started his first day at the City and invited those present to stop by and meet him the next time they visit City Hall.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard stated he had nothing to report.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to ENTER Executive Session to discuss Fairbanks Police Department Recruitment and Retention Benefit Options as well as the IBEW Labor Negotiation Strategy.

Clerk Snider noted that Ms. Rogers would participate in the first Executive Session and excuse herself for the second.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- a) Fairbanks Police Department Recruitment and Retention Benefit Options
- b) IBEW Labor Negotiation Strategy

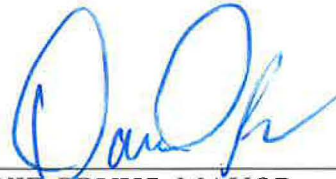
The City Council met in Executive Session to discuss these items. Direction was given, but no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tidwell, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

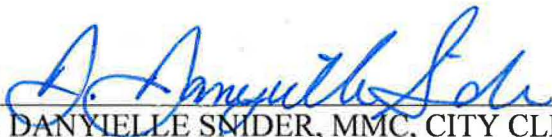
Mayor Pruhs called for a voice vote on the motion to ADJOURN and, with all members voting in favor, so ORDERED.

Mayor Pruhs declared the meeting adjourned at 10:28 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYELLE SMIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC/DS