



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 11, 2023  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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The City Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on the above date 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 Pruhs presiding and the following Councilmembers in attendance:

Councilmembers 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  
   D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
   Thomas Chard, City Attorney  
   Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff  
   Rick Sweet, Deputy Police Chief  
   Scott Raygor, Fire Chief  
   Andrew Coccaro, Assistant Fire Chief  
   Jeff Jacobson, Public Works Director  
   Jeremiah Cotter, Street Foreman  
   Kristi Meredith, Dispatch Manager (remotely)  
   Brenda McFarlane, Crisis Now Coordinator (remotely)

### **INVOCATION**

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

### **FLAG SALUTATION**

**Mayor Pruhs** asked Fire Chief Raygor to lead the flag salutation.

### **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

*[Clerk Note: Names of citizens who provide comments may not be spelled correctly if the citizen did not sign up for comments or if their name was illegible on the physical sign-up sheet.]*

Charity Gadapee, Director of Visitor Services and Partnership Development, Explore Fairbanks – C. Gadapee gave an update on summer visitor statistics. She reported that the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center saw 63,912 visitors from May to August, a 20% increase from 2022. She stated that while many statistics are still down from the last pre-COVID summer, things are in better shape than they were one year ago. She shared that August was the first time since 2019

that they broke 19,000 visitors in a single month. C. Gadapee stated that email, phone traffic, and in-person interactions have increased, as more people are arriving in Fairbanks without planned activities. She shared that Explore Fairbanks will host its political candidate forum on September 22 and hold a viewing party to debut the new destination marketing video on October 20. She thanked the Council for their continued investment in the visitor industry through bed tax funds.

**Ms. Rogers** asked if Explore Fairbanks still hosts events for the military on Friday mornings. C. Gadapee confirmed that they do give tours of the City to groups ranging from 20-40 individuals.

Zeb Mabie, co-owner of Lat 65 Brewery – Z. Mabie explained that after a recent conversation with Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) staff, he is considering purchasing a beverage dispensary license that is outside the city. He stated that his business currently has a brewery license and a winery license, which has limitations on serving hours, drink sizes, etc. He stated it is not his intent to change his business model and serve alcohol until 2 a.m., but he understands there is a process whereby a borough license can be transferred to the city. He stated his is trying to determine whether that makes sense for his business. Z. Mabie stated that the transfer would require approval from AMCO, the FNSB and the City. He indicated that he would like to get a general sense of how the Council would view such a transfer before he puts too much effort into pursuing the purchase of the license.

**Mr. Ringstad** stated that initially he does not have any issue with it. He stated that his judgment would be reserved more for how the business is operated. He commented that sometimes the Council gets requests for license transfers involving locations that have known problems.

**Mr. Marney** indicated that in the three years he has served on the Council, he cannot recall someone asking about this type of situation. He spoke favorably of any business that is compliant and running a positive operation and stated he would be happy to see Z. Mabie's business grow.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked for more information on the difference between the two types of licenses. Z. Mabie explained that the main difference people consider is that more beverages can be consumed with a beverage dispensary license than with a brewery license. He stated, however, that that is not his primary goal. He stated that local customers understand the limitations on servings, but tourists are often surprised and disappointed with the limits. He stated that his staff constantly has to explain the constraints. Z. Mabie stated that more important than being able to sell someone more alcohol is the matter of the business's environment. He stated he would love to have entertainment, bands, shuffleboard, cornhole, and more, but those activities are prohibited with a brewery license.

**Ms. Rogers** recalled many conversations, more at the state level, pertaining to the rise in alternative-style alcohol establishments. She stated that, in the beginning, there was a wide acceptance of new businesses, but off-the-cuff conversations of late have given the impression that there is too much duplication of the same type of business. She stated that it all comes down to a solid business plan. Z. Mabie reiterated that does not want his business to become just another bar serving unlimited drinks, open until two in the morning. He explained that he would like to stay open a little later than their current license allows on the weekends, but the entertainment piece is the biggest factor. **Ms. Rogers** shared her experience with the local music scene, having been involved for over 45 years. She stated that business owners tend to not sufficiently compensate performers. Z. Mabie thanked Ms. Rogers for the input.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked for clarification on the type of license Z. Mabie currently has and is hoping to transfer. Z. Mabie clarified that he currently holds a brewery and winery license in the City, but he has the opportunity to purchase an existing borough beverage dispensary license. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that the potential hangup he foresees is that there are limits on the number liquor licenses allowed in the city. He invited Z. Mabie to stick around, as the issue may be more appropriately addressed under Council Members' Comments.

**Ms. Tidwell** commented that she was not aware of the restrictions on things like entertainment for breweries. She recalled past discussions regarding limits on licenses within the city but stated that Z. Mabie's business is established and well-run. She indicated her support for the effort.

**Mayor Pruhs** called attention to the fact that Z. Mabie took a building that had been vacant for over eight years and rehabilitated it. He stated that his business operation has been clean and sound, with no known complaints from the surrounding neighbors. He recalled that there was a license transfer from the City of Fairbanks to the City of North Pole several years ago. He stated that he could encourage Z. Mabie to explore the opportunity, so long as the City Clerk believes there will not be issues with such a transfer. He stated he believes the Council would be very welcoming.

Randy Griffin, PO Box 73653, Fairbanks – R. Griffin indicated that earlier in the day, he left copies of a letter for all Councilmembers. He alerted everyone to House Bill 99 currently being considered in the State Legislature, a bill that he considers bad legislation. He stated that it is an anti-discrimination bill pertaining to LGBT considerations, and it is sneaky because it proposes to change the interpretation of the term "sex" from that of gender (male or female) to a behavior-related definition based on what occurs in one's bedroom. He stated that the bill would impact a lot of existing legislation that contains the word "sex." He recalled when the Council passed a massive, multi-faceted anti-discrimination ordinance in 2019, which he considered destructive. He stated it was a smorgasbord for predatory lawyers and disgruntled employees to cause trouble and force settlements. R. Griffin stated that Fairbanks businesses have enough to worry about without adding these kinds of issues. He stated he has no negative feelings towards gay individuals, but he is opposed to any anti-discrimination laws because of how they are used; he added that they do more harm than good and affect the freedom to choose.

**Mayor Pruhs**, hearing no requests for additional comments, declared Citizen's Comments closed.

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

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

**Ms. Sprinkle** pulled Ordinance No. 6262, item 12(a) of New Business, 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 OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2023

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

**SPECIAL ORDERS**

- a) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following liquor license applications for renewal:

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
426	The Bakery Restaurant	Beverage Dispensary	The Bakery Restaurant, Inc.	44 College Road, Ste. A
1966	Loyal Order of Moose #1392	Club	Fairbanks Lodge #1392	98 Tenth Avenue

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Liquor License applications 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 APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Tidwell, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Rogers  
NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- b) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following liquor license application for transfer of ownership and Restaurant Designation Permit:

Type/License: Beverage Dispensary, License #4465  
DBA: Roundup Steak House  
Applicant: Com1, LLC  
Location: 2701 South Cushman Street, Fairbanks  
From Owner: The Last Roundup, LLC  
From DBA: Roundup Steak House  
From Location: 2701 South Cushman Street, Fairbanks

**Mr. Marney**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the liquor license application for transfer of ownership and Restaurant Designation Permit.

**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 TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP AND RESTAURANT DESIGNATION PERMIT AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- c) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following liquor license application for transfer of ownership and Restaurant Designation Permit.

Type/License: Beverage Dispensary (Duplicate), License #5291  
DBA: The Attic  
Applicant: Com1, LLC  
Location: 2701 South Cushman Street, Fairbanks  
From Owner: The Last Roundup, LLC  
From DBA: The Attic  
From Location: 2701 South Cushman Street, Fairbanks

**Mr. Marney**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the liquor license application for transfer of ownership and Restaurant Designation Permit.

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

**Ms. Sprinkle** stated that she would have liked to have heard from the new owner in regard to the transfer of ownership applications. **Ms. Rogers** concurred.

Clerk Snider indicated that a representative of the new ownership entity was present. **Mayor Pruhs** invited Greg Wagner to come forward to introduce himself, and he did.

**Ms. Sprinkle** thanked G. Wagner for attending and asked if there were any plans to change current operations. G. Wagner stated there was not. **Ms. Rogers** echoed her appreciation of putting a face to a name and commented on the nature of relationships between business owners and the Council.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE LIQUOR LICENSE APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP AND RESTAURANT DESIGNATION PERMIT AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- d) The Fairbanks City Council heard interested citizens concerned with the following new liquor license application.

Type/License: Beverage Dispensary – Tourism / License #6156  
DBA: Lavelle’s Bistro  
Applicant: Café de Paris Catering Company  
Location: 575 First Avenue, Fairbanks

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the new liquor license application.

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

**Ms. Sprinkle** indicated that she would have liked to hear from either of the owners and asked for more information on the tourism designation. Clerk Snider stated that she spoke with the owner when she received the application. She explained that there is an existing beverage dispensary license at the location; however, the owner had been under the impression that they did not qualify for a tourism license. She stated that a beverage dispensary tourism license has specific allowances and restrictions, such as being attached to a hotel with a certain minimum occupancy level. She stated that the owner indicated that this license would eventually replace the existing license at the location. **Mayor Pruhs** added that this kind of license is only for liquor establishments attached to a hotel with a large number of rooms. He stated that by getting this license, the owner would be able to sell or transfer the existing beverage dispensary license to another location.

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

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

#### a) Special Reports

Upon invitation from **Mayor Pruhs**, Elena Sudduth, Deputy General Manager for Interior Gas Utility (IGU), gave a report on the topic of security of supply. She stated IGU has a mission to provide clean-burning natural gas to the Interior and has been in operation for 25 years. She stated they have over 150 miles of installed lines in the area and local storage facilities with a combined capacity of 5.5 million gallons and that their primary supply source, Hilcorp, in the Cook Inlet area, can satisfy their needs through 2032. She stated that IGU also owns TITAN, a liquefaction facility in Port MacKenzie. She explained that from there, gas is trucked to Fairbanks in specialized trucks capable of maintaining a temperature of -260 degrees. E. Sudduth explained that in April 2022, Hilcorp informed its customers that they may not be able to guarantee future supply. She stated that they communicated that they could supply for current contracts, but there was uncertainty beyond that, which was of significant concern to many utilities within the state. She explained that prior to that announcement, the IGU Board was ready to approve a \$60MM investment in TITAN, due to its growing needs and expansion. She stated that with so much recent press about the uncertainty of supply from the Cook Inlet area, IGU has been lumped into the conversation; she confirmed that concerns about liquid natural gas (LNG) availability in Alaska do not impact IGU. E. Sudduth explained that Alaska has significant reserves of natural gas, with an estimated 40 trillion cubic feet in the North Slope region, and IGU's annual consumption for 2023 will be ~1.3 billion cubic feet (bcf); she added that daily production on the North Slope is 8.9 bcf. She shared information regarding two other contracts IGU has with North Slope LNG parties: Hilcorp North Slope, LLC and Harvest Midstream. She stated that Harvest is the company

that purchased most of BP's assets and has a 50% ownership in the Alyeska Pipeline. She added that both contracts are for a 20-year term with two 5-year renewals, which is longer than the terms of most contracts in the industry. She stated that Harvest will construct a facility to serve the IGU's needs, and there is an option to request up to two more new facilities based on demand. She stated that IGU will be Harvest's priority customer. E. Sudduth added that IGU is close to finalizing a trucking contract. She stated that if Harvest changes direction with their business, IGU has first right-of-refusal to purchase the facility and operate it directly. She shared information about contingency plans in place and other relationships the IGU maintains with other industry companies. She stated that the Cook Inlet Utility Group, formed after Hilcorp's announcement regarding uncertainty, is committed to finding solutions to meet IGU's needs and that IGU may benefit from opportunities that arise from that effort. She shared that there are federal efforts underway to support the construction of a natural gas pipeline that would pass within 30 miles of Fairbanks. She concluded with a summary of IGU operations, long-term supply security, and price stability and stated that they are proud of the solutions they have secured for the future.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked E. Sudduth if Harvest is a standalone company or if it is a branch of Hilcorp. E. Sudduth explained that the two companies share the same owner, but each has a separate CEO and Board of Directors. She further explained that they are affiliated but have no business together unless through contracts. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked whether the Canadian gas mentioned in the report was simply owned by a Canadian company or whether deliveries would come over the border. E. Sudduth clarified that these smaller purchases are on an as-needed basis and involve deliveries that come over the border. **Ms. Sprinkle** stated she would like to see more options in the downtown area for natural gas. E. Sudduth shared that anytime someone inquires about service at a location where no lines have been installed, the person is asked to complete a non-committal service request form; then IGU puts a dot on a map. She explained that whenever investment decisions are made for expansion of the main line, they analyze the dots on the map to identify concentrated areas of consumer interest. **Ms. Rogers** commended E. Sudduth for the report and encouraged her to share the information more frequently.

**Mayor Pruhs** thanked E. Sudduth for the report and congratulated Dan Britton, the current General Manager who will retire soon. He stated that D. Britton is closing out a long, successful career and has served as a guiding light through many years of change. He also commended Board Chair Gary Wilken for his leadership and stated that IGU is in good hands.

**Mayor Pruhs** invited Public Works (PW) Director Jeff Jacobson and Street Foreman Jeremiah Cotter to give a report on snow removal plans for the coming winter.

J. Jacobson began with an explanation that no two Fairbanks winters are alike and that a successful snow removal season requires key elements: equipment, skilled labor, and funding. He stated that the City loses many laborers during the heavy construction season each summer. He thanked the Council for action taken in the spring when additional funding was needed to address the backlog of projects, as it provided a window of opportunity to tackle loose ends. He explained that early in the summer they made significant progress on road repair, which involved the employ of night crews, and he added that essential work was performed on the City's storm drainage system. He stated that recent heavy rainfall revealed some problems, and there was remaining damage from freezing rain incidents in past years.

J. Cotter shared information about storm drain projects performed over the summer. He stated that new drainage was installed near the end of Hanson Road in the Aurora area, and a larger project was completed on Bridgewater Drive to install several new cans and improve the flow of draining water across several properties. He added that another 20 cans were repaired or uncovered. He stated that he hopes that crews can open more drainage across the City with the time remaining in the season. Shifting to the topic of snow removal, he highlighted various challenging scenarios experienced in his 15 years. He reviewed the last five years' snowfall data by month to forecast staffing needs for temporary labor and stated he aims to be fully staffed with a crew of 24 workers split into day and night shifts the first week of December. J. Cotter stated they have increased service to the downtown core area in recent years as part of the City's commitment to do better for residents and businesses. He gave a summary of estimated labor costs through April 2024 and stated that following their operational plan, without overtime, the projected minimum labor cost for the winter is \$810,214. He referenced the handout which showed various statistics of snowfall, labor costs, and City-owned assets that are used in the winter and shared that the City has 48 total pieces of snow removal equipment plus attachments to modify other machines to assist. He stated that the PW shop has been working diligently to prepare for winter, but they are short one permanent and one temporary mechanic, causing delays in maintenance. J. Cotter stated that the major challenge will be filling skilled positions, and he referenced the wage comparisons for operators and mechanics in the handout, which included local union work. He stated that the City falls short in comparison, although the City offers higher wages than the Department of Transportation (DOT), which has had 14 vacant positions for the last two years. He stated that the lack of applicants coupled with the City not being competitive causes him concern about staffing over the winter. He mentioned that another challenge is training workers only to see them leave to work elsewhere for higher pay.

J. Jacobson acknowledged the increases in the current union contract. He stated that PW is now overwhelmed by other forces, causing worry about what will be left for the City in the labor pool, considering the wage issue. He stated that they have a plan, but they cannot guarantee who will show up to work; he added that less experienced workers can create production issues. He stated that the last two permanent positions were given to apprentices, rather than well-seasoned, skilled journeymen, as was common before. J. Jacobson stated it is hard to meet the expectations of service to residents and business owners of the City. He shared some positive news relating to streamlining operations: a survey to residents to gauge their willingness to accept nighttime snow clearing in residential areas. He explained that night crews typically work only on main roads, but there may be times they are available to clear smaller streets. He stated they usually avoid doing so due to potential noise disturbances. He stated that to show citizens their willingness to adjust operations and improve efficiencies, they want feedback. He expressed appreciation for the Council's support.

**Ms. Sprinkle** stated she thinks the survey is a great idea but asked how they will proceed if there is mixed feedback. J. Jacobson explained they would review the data and use discretion, but he clarified that it would not be regular – maybe once all winter for each neighborhood. He stated that some areas must be posted with notice so that would be taken into consideration. He stated that neighborhoods with mixed feedback may be put off until later in the winter when there is more snow build-up. He reiterated that areas with on-street parking would likely not be done at night.

**Mr. Cleworth** commended PW on an excellent job last winter. He stated that summer road patching and downtown snow removal last winter was the best he has ever seen. He stated that



people need to understand the City's limitations when it comes to equipment and personnel, and sometimes delays cannot be helped. He stated all things considered, the City should be proud.

**Mr. Marney** expressed appreciation for PW's performance and thanked staff for thinking outside the box and creating the survey.

**Ms. Rogers** stated that most citizens who express dissatisfaction are not aware of the massive scope of work undertaken by the PW department, nor the challenges they frequently face. She stated that these are stories that need to be shared to increase understanding and support. J. Jacobson acknowledged the partnership with the public.

**Mayor Pruhs** discussed his efforts to coordinate with J. Cotter each winter to keep the public informed about snow clearing. He stated that he also keeps an eye on monthly financial reports to ensure that necessary overtime for snow clearing is approved. He stated the PW department has virtually no overtime during other times of the year, which is commendable.

**Mayor Pruhs** invited Chief of Staff Mike Sanders to give a report his recent ride-along with the Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD). M. Sanders shared that he has enjoyed many ride-alongs over the years, but this was his first one since the addition of the third ambulance. He stated that previous experiences were hectic and chaotic, and the department was slammed the entire time, which was unsustainable. He stated that calls would stack up, and staff could never catch up. He stated that the difference he witnessed this time was incredible. He stated that the department stayed busy but nearly always back to the station before being dispatched again. He stated that, overall, the investment in a third ambulance has produced significant improvements. M. Sanders praised the Mobile Crisis Team (MCT) and explained that one call he rode along on was in response to an individual needing to go to the emergency room (ER); he added that the individual was also experiencing serious grief due to personal loss and had not gotten help. He shared that the paramedic called the MCT, who arrived within minutes to provide support, and a member of the MCT helped the individual overcome apprehensions towards treatment and even stayed with the individual at the ER. He stated it was a great example of a City service operating as intended. M. Sanders also reported that the new budget simulator application, available online to the public, has had over 500 visits, with 11 instances of individuals successfully balancing the budget. He stated that data so far shows that most unsuccessful attempts are a result of individuals trying to eliminate property taxes, adding funds to preferred services or departments, only to realize it cannot be done.

**Mayor Pruhs** shared that City Hall will host trick-or-treating on Tuesday, October 31, 3 – 6 p.m.

### **COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Ms. Sprinkle** reported having visited with staff at the public library and stated she received a request for pothole repair on Margaret Avenue. She thanked PW for all the work they do.

**Ms. Rogers** expressed appreciation for all those who provided reports at the meeting and added that the positive changes in the community are evident. She stated that most people do not understand the specific logistics and challenges of snow clearing and stated that the ingenuity of the PW department is beyond fantastic.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked Clerk Snider for an updated list of current liquor licenses and questioned whether the City was at its limit in any category. Clerk Snider shared that the limit on beverage dispensary licenses, per population-based State regulations, is 11, and there are currently 39 active licenses of that type. *[Clerk's Note: The City's over-limit status for this type of license is due to existing licenses being grandfathered by the State.]*

**Ms. Tidwell** shared that there was an outstanding turnout at the Labor Day parade and thanked FPD for helping with the event. She also thanked IGU for the report.

**Mr. Marney** and **Mr. Ringstad** each stated that they had no comments.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Resolution No. 5076 – A Resolution Amending the City Schedule of Fees and Charges for Services by Adding a Service Fee for Annual Technical Fire Inspections and Increasing the Fee for Fire Inspection, Investigation, and Technical Services. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. POSTPONED from the Regular Meeting of August 14, 2023.

*At the July 24 regular City Council meeting, Mr. Cleworth, seconded by Ms. Sprinkle, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5076. The motion remained on the floor.*

**Mr. Marney**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Resolution No. 5076 by substituting the amended, proposed version.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 5076 BY SUBSTITUTING THE AMENDED, PROPOSED VERSION AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Rogers, Tidwell

NAYS: Cleworth

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Mr. Marney** asked if Assistant Chief Andrew Cocco could provide more details about the *Schedule of Fees and Charges for Services*. Referencing ambulance services, AC Cocco stated that there has not yet been any guidance from national sources regarding base rates and mileage fees for 2024, so they opted to leave them as-is; he stated that the data may come in November.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked for clarification on the edit of “life assist” to “lift assist.” AC Cocco explained that this was likely a past typo and that these are calls where the FFD is asked to assist someone with mobility issues at a residence. **Mayor Pruhs** pointed out that this fee only applies after five visits in a twelve-week period. **Ms. Sprinkle** acknowledged that the fee is primarily to deter abuse. **Mr. Ringstad** asked how often that fee has been charged. AC Cocco stated he is not aware of it ever being charged. He explained that if an individual calls more than once, the department is proactive and helps the individual make connections with local organizations that can assist. Fire Chief Scott Raygor added that they do get two to three lift assist calls per day, but there is not abuse of the system regarding that item.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked for the reasoning behind the increases to fees for the use of the Fire Training Center (FTC) facilities. **Mr. Marney** explained that the fees need to be increased to offset cost. He added that they want to keep the increase minimal so the facility would continue to be used.

**Mr. Marney** shared that the \$50 discount for City residents for ambulance services used to be \$200, but it was reduced in 2019. He stated he would like the discount increased more once they get 2024 rate information from national sources. He stated that the other changes are fairly routine. Chief Raygor added that the increases are meant to keep up with inflation and economic changes.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked what alternative training facilities are available for outside organizations to use. Chief Raygor stated that many agencies have installed smaller training structures at their own locations due to concerns about being too far away when emergency calls come in. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the FTC construction was grant funded. Chief Raygor stated he is unsure. **Mr. Cleworth** wondered how the City ended up being responsible for the facility in perpetuity. Chief Raygor indicated that he would need to do some research but that has been the situation since he began at the FFD. He stated that the State rented an office from the City for their regional trainer until five years ago when those positions were consolidated in Anchorage.

**Ms. Tidwell** asked why the “Emergency Fire Equipment Response to Motor Vehicle Accident” fee was being eliminated. AC Cocco explained that when they reviewed reports of the various fees, that fee was rarely charged, and the time and effort to enforce it was not worthwhile.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked if the rates for the FTC were per hour, or for a four-hour block. AC Cocco indicated that the fees listed are for a 4-hour block. **Ms. Sprinkle** commented that the rate seemed low. Chief Raygor stated the hope is that by keeping rates affordable, more agencies will use the facility; he added that the rates are comparable to other classroom and meeting room spaces. M. Sanders added that last year, the JP Jones Community Center had expressed frustration at being undercut in meeting room rental rates, but the City was not the culprit. He stated they kept that in mind when working on the proposed changes.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5076, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: Cleworth

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 5076 APPROVED.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Ordinance No. 6262 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 42 Labor Relations and Negotiations, Section 42.1 Labor Relations and Section 42.2 Labor Negotiations. Introduced by Council Member Cleworth.

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6262.

**Ms. Sprinkle** indicated that she would like more information about the intent and implications of the ordinance. She stated she believes the ordinance is a result of the recent issues with the FPD contract, and she would like to know more about the changes.

**Mr. Cleworth** explained that several situations arose where the existing language was not clear. He stated that he and City Attorney Chard had lengthy discussions where multiple interpretations of the Code could be argued. He stated that indicated that the Code needed more clarity in order to prevent those types of situations.

Attorney Chard stated that he believes Mr. Cleworth's intent is to clarify Code language so that everyone would understand the procedures to amend an existing collective bargaining agreement (CBA). He stated that the intent of the existing language appears to provide guidance for the negotiation of an entire CBA. He stated that the language was clunky regarding process and defined roles. He expressed hope that the proposed ordinance would provide clear guidance on the process for updating a CBA outside of the normal schedule. **Mayor Pruhs** shared he felt this was the right time for the ordinance. He added that Mr. Cleworth was an excellent person to review the language and process with Attorney Chard.

**Ms. Tidwell** asked to confirm that nothing in the proposal would inhibit the Council from going about things the way it just did. Attorney Chard confirmed and stated that it will provide guidance on when modifications can happen, what processes are in place once a consideration is underway, and the parameters should the Council accept or reject a modification. He stated that everything the Council is accustomed to doing will remain the same.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 6262 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6262 ADVANCED.

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS (Information and Reports)**

**Ms. Rogers** reported that the last few meetings of the Reentry Coalition have been very productive, with innovative discussion and an increase in in-person attendance. She stated that has made the conversations even more positive, and folks are following through with commitments.

**Ms. Tidwell** reminded everyone that early voting starts on September 18.

**Ms. Sprinkle** reported that she met with the Chena Riverfront Commission, but there were technology issues and they struggled a quorum. She stated she will have more to share next time.

**Mr. Marney, Mr. Cleworth, and Mr. Ringstad** each stated they did not have any reports.

**Mayor Pruhs** shared that the Polaris Working Group will meet September 14.

## WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Memorandum to Approve the Appointment of 2023 Election Officials

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- b) Memorandum Regarding Fire Department Clerk Position

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

- c) Chena Riverfront Commission Meeting Minutes of May 24, 2023

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA.

## COUNCILMEMBER COMMENTS

**Ms. Tidwell** and **Mr. Ringstad** each stated that they had no comments.

**Mr. Marney** shared that he will be participating on a ride-along with FPD later in the week.

**Ms. Sprinkle** expressed sentiment to those who lost their lives, and their loved ones, as a result of the attacks on September 11, 2001. She stated that was a sad day in history, and she hopes it never happens again.

**Ms. Rogers** shared similar thoughts of that terrible day. She stated that memories of those events translate personally and inform how City police and fire departments approach the danger in their jobs. She stated that can help strengthen connections with local first responders and stated that the service first responders provide in the community cannot be forgotten. She thanked Clerk Snider for the invocations she prepares for City Council meetings.

**Mr. Cleworth** spoke to item 14(b) on the agenda and stated that it is a memo from the Fire Department noting an adjustment to a vacant position's classification that will result in a savings of \$7,400. He stated that while it may seem like a small amount in the big picture, he commends the effort to save money. He expressed concern about Resolution No. 5076, primarily one component: charging businesses for a service that should already be provided through existing property taxes and license fees. He stated he has a problem with mandating that a business owner let FFD enter their premises to perform an inspection which they may or may not want, then charging for that service. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that the City has gotten away with it for a long time simply because the inspections were not being performed, but the City will get complaints when the inspections ramp things up. He stated that a former City fire official recommended eliminating the fee as it gives the City a black eye and results in numerous complaints. He stated that if the City is going to provide the service, it should be covered by the taxes and fees businesses already pay. He posed the question of what the City would do if someone refused to allow an inspection or wanted to appeal the fee; he questioned how often inspections would occur. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that mandates under the guise of security run against the idea of liberty. He stated the fee is an example of the saying that "The natural progress of things is for liberty to yield and government to gain." He acknowledged being on the losing end of the vote but reminded the Council that the

City exists to provide services that the private sector cannot reasonably provide for itself. **Mr. Cleworth** also shared that he received a call from a citizen who claimed to have heard that Anchorage is starting to send homeless individuals to Fairbanks; he asked whether anyone had more information. M. Sanders responded that that is something which has always happened to a certain degree. He stated that when he was over the Housing and Homeless Coalition, he had access to information on the location of previous services for many individuals. He stated there have never been huge waves of what Mr. Cleworth was referring to, and it is nothing new. **Mr. Cleworth** referenced an earlier comment from Mayor Pruhs about combining Committee Reports and the second round of Council Members' Comments into a single agenda item and stated that it would require an ordinance. He stated that if others agree, it would be prudent to make the change. He also mentioned seeing an obituary recently for Philip Cole, who was a mover and a shaker, involved heavily in the downtown core area, and stated that it is sad to learn of his passing. He stated he fondly recalls many discussions with him over the years on making the City better. He stated that P. Cole ran the Co-Op Diner as long as his health allowed. He concluded by referencing the emails the Council sometimes receives from the Police Chief to announce officer resignations. He stated that while there are usually multiple reasons for a resignation, forced overtime is often the reason. He stated that resignations only exacerbate the forced overtime situation, making it worse for others in the department. He expressed hope that the incentives recently enacted will help alleviate the problem, but in the meantime, the Council should be mindful of the issue.

### **CITY CLERK'S REPORT**

Clerk Snider asked to confirm if Mayor Pruhs, who originally introduced Resolution No. 5076, and Mr. Marney, who provided the substituted version, would both like to be listed as sponsors of the resolution, to which they each concurred. She reiterated details about upcoming early and absentee voting. She shared that a very informative Candidate Pamphlet has been produced, with physical copies available in the Clerk's Office and a digital version online.

### **CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Attorney Chard expressed his appreciation for the Council's service to the community.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ENTER an Executive Session to discuss *Roberts, et al. v. City of Fairbanks, et al.*, Settlement Discussion.

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

**Mayor Pruhs** called for a brief recess, after which the Council reconvened in Executive Session.

- a) *Roberts, et al. v. City of Fairbanks, et al.*, Settlement Discussion. (Entered at 8:40 p.m. Present were all Councilmembers, Mayor Pruhs, the Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Staff, Attorney, and Clerk, as well as outside council Matt Singer and Michael Farnell.)

The City Council met in Executive Session to discuss the above item and provide direction to legal counsel, but no action was taken. The regular meeting resumed at 9:38 p.m.

**Ms. Rogers**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to RECONSIDER Resolution No. 5076, as Amended.

**Ms. Rogers** stated that upon further reflection and discussion with Mr. Cleworth, she believes there is more that should have been considered in their previous dialogue regarding valid concerns.

**Mr. Ringstad** asked for clarification on the timing of the process for reconsideration. **Mr. Cleworth** explained that a successful vote for such would return the Council to the original motion, meaning they would resume discussion as if the roll call vote for approval had not taken place. He stated they could debate matters further, vote on the issue again without changes, make amendments, postpone it, etc., but a motion to reconsider must be approved before that can happen.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO RECONSIDER RESOLUTION NO. 5076, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Tidwell, Sprinkle

NAYS: Cleworth, Ringstad, Rogers

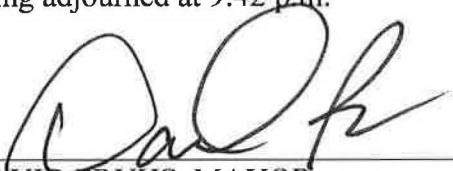
*Clerk Snider read from the Fairbanks General Code, which states that motions for reconsideration require the affirmative vote of four members of the Council, excluding the Mayor, so Mayor Pruhs was not called in the roll call.*

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION FAILED.

### ADJOURNMENT

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

Hearing no objection, **Mayor Pruhs** declared the meeting adjourned at 9:42 p.m.

  
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DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:

  
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D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC