



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, NOVEMBER 27, 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

Absent:                                John Ringstad, Seat F

Also Present:                        D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
   Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff  
   Thomas Chard, City Attorney  
   Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer  
   Ron Dupee, Police Chief  
   Nathan Werner, Police Captain  
   Scott Raygor, Fire Chief  
   Andrew Coccaro, Assistant Fire Chief  
   Angela Foster-Snow, Human Resources Director (remotely)  
   Jessica Krier, Human Resources Generalist  
   Brynn Butler, Housing Coordinator

**INVOCATION**

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

**FLAG SALUTATION**

**Mayor Pruhs** asked Attorney Thomas Chard to lead the flag salutation.

**CEREMONIAL MATTERS (Proclamations, Introductions, Recognitions, Awards)**

Addressing Human Resources (HR) Director Angela Foster-Snow, whose employment with the City would end on November 30, **Mayor Pruhs** stated that it is with a sense of great loss but also appreciation that they recognize her nearly nine years of service to the City of Fairbanks as HR Director. He highlighted A. Foster-Snow's professionalism and deep care for the City, which left an indelible mark on City employees and the community. He stated that her tenure has been characterized as one that fosters inclusivity, fairness, and growth. On behalf of the Council, City staff, and the entire community, he expressed sincere gratitude for A. Foster-Snow's service and

extended best wishes for her future. He presented an inscribed gold pan to her to commemorate her career with the City. A. Foster-Snow's son, Ryker Snow, accepted the gold pan on her behalf.

## **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

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

Julie Jones, Executive Director, Festival Fairbanks – J. Jones wished the City a happy birthday, noting that Fairbanks was founded 120 years ago this month. She reported on an electrical issue for the light cylinders on the downtown bridge, where a faulty switch in the ground occasionally surges and turns the lights off. She confirmed that an electrician has been hired to correct the issue and stated that the lights should be operational soon. She spoke in favor of establishing permanent, public restroom facilities at the Golden Heart Plaza (GHP) and cited restroom access as a basic human right as well as a solution to many health concerns. She noted that there are very basic, efficient designs which could be cleaned and maintained by staff of an organization like her own. She indicated that a permanent facility would be a much better solution than the portable, plastic restrooms that get delivered each summer. She also spoke to the urgent health crisis of hazmat materials being discarded in public places and how her staff frequently is required to clean up and dispose of such items. She shared that in the past summer, the GHP saw over 7,000 visitors during lunch hours alone that were dropped off by tour buses, and she commented that the limited and inadequate public restroom facilities was an area that could be improved upon to elevate the tourism experience. She concluded by speaking against Senate Bill 150, which pertains to gaming regulations, and indicated that it will hurt a lot of nonprofit organizations.

**Mr. Cleworth** recalled past discussions about a public restroom facility in the GHP area and stated that the primary concern always came back to maintenance and cleaning. He asked J. Jones if her organization was truly prepared to take on that responsibility. J. Jones responded affirmatively and stated that they already check the portable restrooms seven days a week, cleaning and mopping them each morning. She reported that they also replenish the toilet paper at their own expense. She noted that she already has staff on-site attending to plants, so throughout the day the individuals could check on the restrooms and address any issues. She explained that permanent, stainless-steel facilities are much easier to clean and have a better aesthetic, noting the lessened visual appeal of brightly colored, plastic restroom near the iconic First Family statue and fountain.

**Mr. Marney** asked J. Jones to confirm the bill she referenced at the end of her comments. J. Jones stated that it was SB 150.

**Ms. Rogers** spoke to all the work J. Jones does and asked how they could clone her.

**Mayor Pruhs** notified attendees that the internet was currently down, so the meeting was not being broadcast via all typical methods.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger called attention to the loss of Frank Turney, who passed away four years ago. He noted that it has been six weeks since he informed the Council about the lights outage on the Old Steese Highway and how almost all of them are still not working. He questioned

whether the City would wait to repair them until springtime or summertime when they are not needed. He also noted a few lights out on Cushman Street and asked what happened to the old tree pots that used to be located in that area. He asked if they had gone to auction or if City employees or Councilmembers had taken them home, stating that if the latter were the case, he would like one for his own yard. He expressed gratitude that someone had addressed the need for public restroom facilities downtown and encouraged the Council to do something like that for tourists and the community. **Mayor Pruhs** reported that there are supply chain issues with the parts ordered to fix the streetlights.

Hearing no additional requests for comment, **Mayor Pruhs** declared Citizen’s Comments closed.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

**Ms. Tidwell**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda and Consent Agenda.

**Ms. Sprinkle** requested to pull Ordinance No. 6268, item 12(b) under New Business, from the Consent Agenda. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that with the absence of Mr. Ringstad, he would prefer that the item not be pulled for discussion; he declined the request. **Ms. Sprinkle** indicated she would like to talk more about the ordinance. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that it will be on the Council’s agenda at the next meeting. **Ms. Sprinkle** indicated that was satisfactory.

**Mr. Cleworth** requested to pull Ordinance No 6267, item 12(a) under 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.

**SPECIAL ORDERS**

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

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
11503	True Dank	Retail Marijuana Store	True Dank, LLC	1550 Cushman Street, Ste. A
30593	Pipe and Leaf: Premium Alaskan Cannabis	Retail Marijuana Store	Pipe and Leaf, LLC	899 Old Steese Highway
10112	Great Alaskan Bud Company	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	SP&C Enterprises, LLC	1905 Livengood Avenue

**Mr. Marney**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the marijuana 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 MARIJUANA LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Sprinkle, Tidwell, Marney, Rogers

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Ringstad

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

**Mayor Pruhs** noted a recent article in the News-Miner which nicely highlighted the 28-year career of Fire Chief Raygor, who is retiring, and expressed appreciation for his service. He asked Housing Coordinator Brynn Butler, also the subject of a recent newspaper article, to give a report.

B. Butler acknowledged that she is approaching the one-year mark of serving in her role and provided a report on housing and homelessness issues from the past year, along with plans for the future. She shared about successfully housing dozens of individuals and also spoke to registrations within the Homeless Management Information System, a program that allows better tracking of the needs of those seeking assistance. She provided details about regular, in-person outreach tasks she does on a weekly basis, often with the assistance of certain Councilmembers and the Mayor. She stated that although they are not always well-received, their efforts are to ensure individuals do not fall through the cracks. She shared details about a new nonprofit organization, HopeLink, which is making progress towards opening an overnight warming station. B. Butler noted that a button has been added to the City website for citizens to click to report unauthorized encampments. She concluded by sharing that there was approval to receive funds through the Ray of Hope grant, which will help prevent homelessness through assistance with past-due rent.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked B. Butler if she had an update on the individual that she and Julie Jones were reported to have helped out of a dire situation recently. B. Butler stated that due to HIPAA constraints, she does not have anything to share at this time. She reported that the person has not been seen since which, given the situation, can be interpreted as good news.

**Mr. Marney** thanked B. Butler for doing a great job.

**Ms. Rogers** echoed the commendations for B. Butler's performance in her role.

**Mr. Cleworth** extended kudos for the great article in the newspaper and stated that reading it was a nice way to start his morning. He asked B. Butler if she is limited in what services she can offer or suggest to individuals she encounters who may have a past felony conviction. B. Butler stated that such a conviction often allows for more assistance to individuals, particularly if they have recently been released, as there are State-allocated funds available for reentry programs. She noted that the primary challenge for individuals in that situation is if they have an open case, as many landlords are apprehensive to enter into a rental agreement with someone in limbo.

**Mayor Pruhs** recognized recent advancements at the FPD, with Officers Caleb Reuter and Stephen Hancock being promoted to the rank of sergeant and Officers Jason Pace and Mayra Reyes

being promoted to detective. He thanked Police Chief Dupee for sharing the information with them, commended the hard work of the FPD, and noted the filling of ranks taking place as new officers are in the queue to join the department in the coming months. He referenced the late Frank Turney's desire to have the Bill of Rights read annually at Council meetings in the month of December and indicated that he will do something to continue the tradition in the next month.

Clerk Snider reported that the internet feed was still down, but they had established a phone line for individuals to call in. She established a connection with the radio station over the phone line.

### **COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Mr. Marney** stated that he hates to see A. Foster-Snow leave the City but appreciates her service. He also thanked Chief Raygor for his excellent career and stated that he was the man for the job and will be missed.

**Ms. Tidwell** echoed sadness for the departure of Chief Raygor, praised his leadership, and shared excitement for his new endeavors.

**Mr. Cleworth** thanked A. Foster-Snow for her service, noting that in the past she would fill in as Acting Chief of Staff in their absence. He spoke of his own history with Chief Raygor, particularly with contract negotiations, citing his sense of humor during often tense situations. He wished the best to him and his family.

**Ms. Rogers** repeated many of the previous comments about both departing staff members. She spoke highly of A. Foster-Snow's support of various groups, such as the Fairbanks Diversity Council. She noted the empathy and professionalism that she exuded during difficult situations, bringing joy to those around her. She acknowledged not knowing Chief Raygor as well as others but stated that her memories of him include excellent communication and an ever-present smile.

**Ms. Sprinkle** admitted to not knowing A. Foster-Snow well but wished her the best. She stated that she does know Chief Raygor well and will not wish him goodbye, but rather "see you around." She stated he is liked by the community and that he will be missed; she wished him luck.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Ordinance No. 6265 – An Ordinance to Accept Board of Adjustment Duties from the Fairbanks North Star Borough to Hear and Decide Appeals of Certain Land Use Decisions for Land Located Within the City of Fairbanks. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and Council Members Cleworth, Rogers, Sprinkle, Tidwell, Marney, and Ringstad. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6265.

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

**Mr. Cleworth** expressed appreciation to those on the Borough Assembly who helped make the change happen. He stated he did not think he would ever see Board of Adjustment duties come back to the City. He recalled many City staff, particularly those in the Engineering and Public Works departments, being frustrated about losing the delegation of appeal authority in 2015. He explained that City staff often had opinions based in knowledge and expertise beyond what some Borough commissioners and staff had in regard to the subject of appeals. He added that City staff was usually right.

**Ms. Rogers** stated the ordinance demonstrates the reality of working together.

**Ms. Sprinkle** thanked Mr. Cleworth for spearheading the effort and stated she believes that in the long run it will benefit both the City and the Borough. **Mr. Marney** and **Ms. Tidwell** agreed.

**Mayor Pruhs** concluded that the best government is often the one closest to the citizens it impacts. He noted that the ordinance puts an important item of authority back where it belongs and expressed appreciation for Mr. Cleworth's efforts on the matter.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6265 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Rogers, Cleworth, Marney, Sprinkle, Tidwell

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Ringstad

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6265 ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6266 – An Ordinance Establishing a Hiring Incentive Bonus Program for the Recruitment and Hiring of First-Time Law Enforcement Officers at the Fairbanks Police Department. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6266.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6266 by substituting an amended, proposed version.

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

**Ms. Rogers** thanked Mayor Pruhs for sharing his thoughts on the ordinance in its earlier stages.

**Mayor Pruhs** thanked the Council for working through various efforts to help the FPD in 2023. He noted that this ordinance fills one missing piece: providing an incentive for brand new officers – not just for those transferring. He stated that the ordinance ultimately gives FPD's community outreach lead, Teal Soden, a more complete recruitment toolkit. He shared that there are indications that they should see several new officers in the coming months.

**Mayor Pruhs** called for objection to the motion to AMEND Ordinance No. 6266 by substituting the amended, proposed version and, seeing none, declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6266, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Cleworth, Marney, Sprinkle, Rogers

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Ringstad

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6266, as Amended, ADOPTED.

### NEW BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6267 – An Ordinance Amending the 2023 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Fourth Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6267.

**Mr. Cleworth** noted that during the 2024 budgeting process, the Council discussed two new pieces of equipment for Public Works and that one of them, a truck with a snowplow, had been eliminated.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Rogers**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6267 by adding \$84,000 under Public Works expenditures in the Capital Budget to fund the purchase of a truck with a snowplow before the year ends.

**Ms. Sprinkle** expressed confusion with the amendment. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that the amendment would authorize the purchase of a new piece of equipment for Public Works that was not included in the 2024 budget. He added that it would increase the 2023 Capital Budget.

**Mr. Marney** asked for Mr. Cleworth to expound upon the need for the amendment. **Mr. Cleworth** explained that during the Council's budget discussions, the piece of equipment was eliminated with an intent to address it in a different way; however, it was left unresolved. He stated he believes there is no reason not to take care of it in the current budget, noting that 2023 funds are available.

**Ms. Tidwell** shared that her recollection was that Public Works Director Jeff Jacobson stated that the department would make do with what it had. She noted that, to her understanding, the bigger challenge at Public Works is maintaining personnel for snow removal. She indicated that if additional funds are available, the Council should use the funds elsewhere.

**Mayor Pruhs** clarified that the equipment in question was originally included in the 2024 Capital Budget, but the Public Works Director requested that it be exchanged for something else, as another piece of machinery had broken down. **Mayor Pruhs** affirmed that the amendment does not take away from any operational budget or funds for future considerations. He acknowledged that he had not done as well as he could have in explaining that distinction previously.

**Ms. Sprinkle** recalled that the Public Works Director indicated that the equipment would be purchased locally, which she is pleased with.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6267 BY ADDING \$84,000 UNDER PUBLIC WORKS EXPENDITURES IN THE CAPITAL BUDGET TO FUND THE PURCHASE OF A TRUCK WITH A SNOWPLOW BEFORE THE YEAR ENDS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Cleworth, Rogers, Sprinkle, Tidwell

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Ringstad

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Mr. Cleworth** discussed another piece of equipment the Council recently considered, an older platform at the Fire Department that needed an estimated \$225,000 in repairs. He stated that a new platform is about \$1.5MM and that, just like new fire engines, the only way the City can afford such large purchases is through deliberate budgeting of certain amounts each year. He expressed concern only about \$300,000 will be carried forward from the 2023 budget and asked how old the platform in question is. Fire Chief Raygor stated that is in its 13th year in what they typically consider a 20-year lifecycle. **Mr. Cleworth** indicated that he is not a fan of pouring money into older equipment, citing the challenges of finding parts for repairs in most machines after they reach a certain age. He wondered if the Council should use some of the available Capital funds to plan for a new platform purchase in coming years, rather than spend money to upgrade a 13-year-old piece of equipment. He noted that if the City does not receive grants for such a large purchase, it is on its own. Chief Raygor recommended inviting the mechanic foreman, Jeremiah Record, to the next meeting to discuss the pros and cons of updating versus replacing the platform.

**Mayor Pruhs** recommended sticking with the plan to fix the platform. He noted that the Council has already gone through its budget process and the platform needs repaired immediately. He stated it should last for many more years. Chief Raygor added that a rebuild of the ladder could extend the lifecycle beyond 20 years. **Mayor Pruhs** stated he wants to hold off on overloading the December 11 agenda, as it will already be lengthy with other budget-related discussions expected. **Mr. Cleworth** indicated he could talk to the appropriate staff on his own before the next meeting.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 6267, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Cleworth, Marney, Tidwell, Rogers

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Ringstad

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

b) Ordinance No. 6268 – An Ordinance Adopting the 2024 Operating and Capital Budgets. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

ADVANCED on the Consent Agenda



## WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Appointment of Fairbanks Fire Chief

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to CONCUR with the Appointment of the Fairbanks Fire Chief.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO CONCUR WITH THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FAIRBANKS FIRE CHIEF AS FOLLOWS:

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

- b) Reappointments to the Permanent Fund Review Board

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Reappointment to the Finance Committee

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Appointment to the Fairbanks Diversity Council

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- e) Discretionary Fund Committee Meeting Minutes of January 11, 2023

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- f) Approval of Revised 2024 City Council Meeting Schedule

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

## COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

**Ms. Tidwell** indicated that she had no report or comments.

**Mr. Marney** reported that the Discretionary Fund Committee would hold its presentation meeting on December 1. He stated he will also attend Explore Fairbanks' Board meeting on November 29.

**Ms. Sprinkle** stated that she will attend a Chena Riverfront Commission meeting November 29.

**Ms. Rogers** reported that she has several meetings in the coming week, including the Opioid Work Group as well as coalitions for Housing and Homeless and the Behavioral Health Community.

**Mr. Cleworth** shared that he received a phone call from a citizen asking him to share a concern with the Council about certain airlines that serve the bush communities allegedly maintaining a “no-fly list” and decline to transport individuals back to their home communities when they are caught for offenses such as attempting to transport alcohol to dry communities. He reported that the citizen’s concern was that Fairbanks was thus becoming a “dumping ground” for these kinds of people. He indicated that he had never heard of such a thing but that the police may be aware of the issue. He stated he was unsure if it was something the City should look into and was seeking input from fellow Councilmembers or staff.

**Mayor Pruhs** indicated that he was also not aware of this practice but that he would ask the City Attorney to review the matter; he indicated that he could speak directly with some of the carriers. He expressed disgust that this kind of thing could be happening and committed to looking into it.

**Mr. Cleworth** addressed the issue with a particular house on 5th Avenue where the street had been torn up and water access was supposed to be restored, but never was. He asked why that was so. **Mayor Pruhs**, with confirmation from Ms. Sprinkle, explained that the owner failed to pay the water bill from Golden Heart Utilities (GHU). **Mr. Cleworth** stated he is puzzled why the City has not put plywood over the doors. He thanked the Mayor and Ms. Sprinkle for the information.

**Ms. Rogers**, in response to the first issue Mr. Cleworth addressed, shared outrage that people might be prohibited from returning to their homes and stated it should be their right to do so.

**Mayor Pruhs** thanked the Council for confirming the appointment of the Fairbanks Diversity Council member and reported that the only remaining vacant seat is Borough-appointed.

### **CITY CLERK’S REPORT**

Clerk Snider stated that it has been a great opportunity to work with both Chief Raygor and A. Foster-Snow and wished them both well.

### **CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT**

Attorney Chard echoed Clerk Snider’s comments and thanked Councilmembers for their service.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to ENTER an Executive Session to discuss two items: Fairbanks Firefighters Union Labor Negotiation Strategy and *Roberts 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.

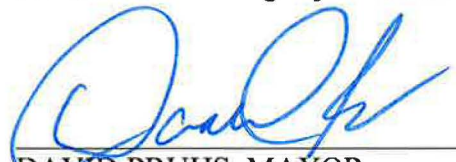
- a) Fairbanks Firefighters Union Labor Negotiation Strategy (*entered at 7:44 p.m.*)
- b) *Roberts v. City of Fairbanks, et al.* Settlement Discussion (*entered at 9:04 p.m.*)

The City Council met in Executive Sessions on the two items. Guidance was given to the negotiator and the City Attorney; no action was taken. The regular meeting resumed at 9:17 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

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

Hearing no objection, **Mayor Pruhs** declared the meeting adjourned at 9:18 p.m.



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DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



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D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC