



FAIRBANKS DIVERSITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JULY 14, 2020, 5:30 P.M.  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA



The **Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC)** convened at 5:32 p.m. on the above date to conduct a Regular Meeting at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, and via Zoom online with Mayor Jim Matherly presiding and with the following members in attendance [Z = Zoom; P = In Person]:

Members Present: (Z) Kennita Williams, Seat A (Z) Andrew Aquino, Seat G  
(Z) Robert Dorton, Seat B (arr. at 5:35) (Z) Doug Toelle, Seat J  
(Z) Jose Luis Martinez, Seat C (Z) Sara Harriger, Seat K  
(Z) Juanita Webb, Seat D (Z) Angela Foster-Snow, HR Dir.  
(Z) Shelissa Thomas, Seat E (Z) June Rogers, Councilmember

Members Absent: Rita Davis, Seat F Kelvin Lee, Seat I  
Vacant, Seat H

Also Present: (P) Mike Meeks, Chief of Staff (P) D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk  
(Z) Nancy Reeder, Police Chief (Z) Mike Sanders, H&H Coordinator

### **CALL TO ORDER & READING OF THE FDC MISSION STATEMENT**

**Chair Matherly** called the meeting to order and read the FDC Mission Statement. He welcomed newest member, Jose Luis Martinez, and asked Mr. Martinez to share a little about himself.

**Mr. Martinez** thanked the Mayor for the opportunity to serve on the FDC and stated he has known the Mayor for over 20 years. He stated he is immersed in the community and has connections and friends from all sorts of diverse backgrounds. He stated he hopes to bring to the FDC his experiences as a financial professional, a Rotarian, a father, a community member, and a friend.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Ms. Thomas**, seconded by **Ms. Williams**, moved to APPROVE the Agenda.

Hearing no objection, the agenda was APPROVED.

### **CITIZENS' COMMENTS**

There were no citizens who wished to provide comment.

### **MAYOR'S COMMENTS & REPORT**

**Chair Matherly** asked Housing and Homeless Coordinator to speak about the efforts in the community to address the COVID-19 pandemic as it relates to the most vulnerable population.

Mr. Sanders stated that the non-profits in Fairbanks are top-notch. He stated that before the pandemic became a local crisis, there was already a targeted approach to address it. He stated that local organizations such as Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, the Center for Non-Violent Living, The Door, the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, and others were involved from the beginning, then they began involving all the other local housing providers. He stated they began early enough that they were able to order and stock up on N95 masks. Mr. Sanders recognized Mr. Dennis Wise's contributions to the community years ago when he donated the Food Bank, the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, and other key buildings that played a part in making their approach a success. He stated that on any given night in Fairbanks, there are about 200 homeless people in Fairbanks, and there is enough room to accommodate each one in a shelter locally. He stated that the Rescue Mission met the CDC guidelines for social distancing, and they were able to spread beds out with at least 6 feet between each. He stated that the Rescue Mission, The Door, and the Center for Non-Violent Living all went into lockdown, unlike other rescue missions throughout the state. He thanked all those responsible for the local housing and resources that have been provided. Mr. Sanders spoke briefly about those in the community who need the services but are not willing to accept help. He recognized The Bread Line, No Limits, Inc., and the Fairbanks Ranger Coalition (who set up in the JP Jones Community Center) to provide food and warming centers for the homeless. Mr. Sanders stated that the next challenge was with how to isolate folks who needed to be quarantined. He stated that the City of Fairbanks helped fund and facilitate a way to get people who needed isolation a place to stay.

**Chair Matherly** thanked Mr. Sanders for the update. He stated that the City acted quickly – even before COVID-19 hit in the City. He stated that precautionary measures were taken, and it was an incredible team effort. He stated that City Hall will be closing to the public again on Monday, July 20. He stated that several City employees have been tested for the virus, but only two have tested positive so far. He stated that City services must continue, so employees are being split up to help mitigate the risk. **Chair Matherly** stated that the City has recently begun accepting applications for CARES Act funds. He explained that there will be three application types accepted: health care facilities, businesses, and individuals. He added that there are only certain expenses that qualify for the funds, and the Borough is working on their CARES Act funding process also. He thanked City staff for their hard work in preparing the application process, and he gave instructions on how to apply through the City's website. He shared that the City can reimburse itself for certain COVID-related expenses.

### **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**Chair Matherly** stated that most major events have been canceled in the community. No members shared upcoming events.

### **APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2020

**Mr. Aquino**, seconded by **Mr. Toelle**, moved to APPROVE the Regular Meeting Minutes of February 11, 2020.

Hearing no objection, the minutes were APPROVED.

## HUMAN RESOURCES REPORT

**Chair Matherly** acknowledged the hard work of HR Director Angela Foster-Snow throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated that Ms. Foster-Snow has had to work through all the federal guidelines and regulations for employee leave and provide guidance to employees. He stated that she has done an incredible job. He asked Ms. Foster-Snow to provide an HR report to the FDC.

**Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that City leaders began having meetings at the beginning of March to address the possible closure of City Hall and teleworking to ensure employee safety and the continuance of City services. She stated that one of the things she is most proud of is that the administration put employees' minds at ease by ensuring that any employee who may miss work due to COVID-related issues would be paid administrative leave. She stated that not one employee lost time or money in March. **Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that, starting April 1, the federal government enacted the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) which allowed every employee in an organization with 500 or fewer employees access to up to 80 hours of federally funded COVID leave if they qualified under the guidelines. She stated that the administration then met with various unions and determined that the City would work with employees who may need more than the FFCRA-allotted 80 hours. **Ms. Foster-Snow** shared that the City did not layoff any staff due to the pandemic, and everyone has been able to continue working. She stated that each City department head has worked with their respective employees to ensure that staff is able to work safely and has reasonable accommodations (if necessary) to do their jobs. **Ms. Foster-Snow** stated that the City has been struggling with staffing at the Police and Fire Departments, and one big goal for HR is to have access to rapid testing in order to get employees back to work. She stated that the City had access to first responder COVID testing at the hospital, but since cases increased locally, they ran out of test kits. She stated that the City reached out to Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and was able to enter into an agreement for rapid, first responder testing at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center. She stated that the City has learned a lot working through the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. She thanked the Council and administration for offering great support to City staff.

## DIVERSITY TOPIC OF THE MONTH

- a) Local Government Response to the Murder of George Floyd

**Chair Matherly** stated that masking has been a controversial issue in the community, and he clarified that he has authority over only the area within the City limits. He stated the Borough Mayor does not have the same areawide mandate powers. **Chair Matherly** stated that he has been promoting masking and social distancing strongly, although he has not implemented a mandate. He stated that it is up to Governor Dunleavy on whether to require a statewide masking mandate. He shared that he, Mayor Ward, and Mayor Welch recently signed a joint Proclamation promoting masking and social distancing in the community. He stated he also signed earlier in the day a joint Proclamation regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). **Chair Matherly** stated that both the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) recently approved resolutions addressing the murder of George Floyd. He stated that he understands why people are so upset and that he has been working closely with Police Chief Reeder. **Chair Matherly** stated that the Chief had already begun putting some trainings in place for the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD). He stated that he and Chief Reeder met with rally organizers in advance of

the recent local rally in response to the death of George Floyd, and the rally was done peacefully. He asked Chief Reeder to update the FDC on things that are being done at FPD.

Chief of Police Nancy Reeder stated that before the incident in Minneapolis, FPD was already moving toward getting more training for officers, including crisis intervention training and de-escalation training. She stated she contracted to have “verbal judo” training at FPD, but it had to be rescheduled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. She stated the training has been rescheduled for the first week in August, and the entire department will participate in that training. She stated she is committed to the training because she believes the City needs to provide every tool possible to police officers. She stated that training is limited as far as including other local police departments due to social distancing requirements. Chief Reeder stated that her hope is to send two officers out of state to be trained as verbal judo instructors, so they can offer the training on a more community-wide basis in the future. She stated that officers need to be kept up to date on the training each year. She stated that crisis intervention training (CIT) was also scheduled for this spring but had to be rescheduled due to the virus. She stated that, currently, eighteen FPD officers have had the CIT training, and she hopes to have all officers receive the training. Chief Reeder shared that in October there will be an out-of-state instructor to offer implicit bias training to FPD staff. She stated that everyone has biases, whether they are aware of it or not. She stated she believes the training will be eye opening. Chief Reeder thanked Ms. Foster-Snow for helping with FPD recruitment, and she stated that there are currently nine officer vacancies. She stated that the City is sending two new officers to the academy right now, and she announced that two new female officers were recently added to FPD, making a total of four female officers. She explained that FPD was able to make the testing process available online in May so that applicants could pay for and perform testing online. She stated that for the nine current vacancies, there are three applicants in the testing process for each vacancy. She stated that the testing is a collaborative effort between FPD, Alaska State Troopers (AST), and Juneau Police Department (JPD). She stated that four officers – to include two females – are currently in the background process and have been given conditional offers. Chief Reeder shared that the City Council recently approved an optional, alternate work schedule for FPD officers, which may help with recruitment. She explained that the alternate schedule would allow officers to work two weeks on, and two weeks off, which could be especially beneficial to someone who does not live in the community.

**Ms. Thomas** thanked Chief Reeder for all the work she has been doing to increase diversity at FPD. She thanked the Chief for her foresight.

**Chair Matherly** stated he supports police, but he does not support bad policing. He stated he is no expert on the issue, but he has been communicating closely with Chief Reeder. He stated there is a place for mental health professionals in the department in some form, and he publicly thanked Chief Reeder for her work. He stated police are needed, but good training is also vital.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Notes from March 10 Work Session (Informational Only)
- b) Date for Next Review of Diversity Action Plan (DAP)

**Chair Matherly** stated he would like the FDC to set up a follow-up meeting for review of the DAP. He asked how everyone’s schedule looks for the next regular meeting date of August 11.

**Ms. Harriger** indicated she would not be able to attend on August 11, so **Chair Matherly** polled members about potentially meeting on August 18 instead. Members present confirmed they could attend a meeting on August 18.

### **FDC MEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Ms. Harriger** thanked Mayor Matherly and Chief Reeder for all the information. She expressed hope that the FDC could make progress on the DAP at the next meeting.

**Mr. Martinez** stated it is interesting to hear all the updates from local leaders from a different perspective.

**Ms. Webb** welcomed Mr. Martinez to the FDC and stated she looks forward to the FDC getting back on track.

**Mr. Dorton** stated it is nice to gather again and see everyone's faces. He shared that he has been having Human and Health Services board meetings via Zoom. He stated that he was recently appointed as co-chair for the Reentry Coalition, and he is looking forward to playing a bigger role in the future of the Coalition. He stated he keeps reminding himself that the goal is to make the City safer and stronger.

**Mr. Toelle** stated he was happy to hear the update on the CARES Act funding being that his business has been directly affected by COVID-19. He encouraged everyone to wear a mask and not make it a political issue. He stated that it is good to see everyone.

**Mr. Aquino** said hello to Mr. Martinez. He stated that hearing from Chief Reeder gave him hope, and the work she is doing is preventative. He spoke briefly to biases that people carry, and he stated he is excited to continue in the work of the FDC.

**Ms. Williams** stated it is good to see everyone, and she thanked Chief Reeder for the update. She stated that Fairbanks has done things well, and she is proud of the community. She thanked Ms. Foster-Snow for the HR report, and she welcomed Mr. Martinez. She thanked Mayor Matherly for his work and for continuing to encourage folks to wear a mask.

**Chair Matherly** asked Ms. Rogers for comment, but the group was unable to hear her comments via the Zoom meeting.

**Ms. Foster-Snow** stated she is glad to see everyone again, and she hopes the meetings can continue.

**Chair Matherly** announced that candidate filing will open locally on July 15.

Chief Reeder stated that over the past few weeks, FPD has been escorting soldiers from the airport to Fort Wainwright as they return to the community from deployment. She thanked Mayor Matherly for allowing FPD to do so and spoke to her support of the U.S. military.

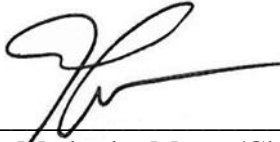
**MEETING DATES**

The next regular meeting of the FDC will be held on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. and will include a review of the DAP.

**ADJOURNMENT**

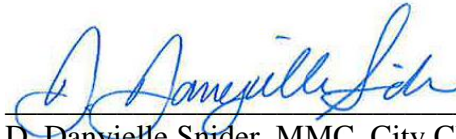
**Ms. Williams**, seconded by **Mr. Martinez**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

Hearing no objection, **Chair Matherly** declared the meeting  
ADJOURNED at 6:48 p.m.



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Jim Matherly, Mayor/Chair



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D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk

Transcribed by: DS