DISCRETIONARY FUND COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES, JANUARY 9, 2026, AT 12:00 PM
HELD VIA TELECONFERENCE AND AT
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

The Discretionary Fund Committee convened at 11:59 A.M. on the above date to conduct a Wrap-Up Meeting at the City Council Chambers, 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, and via Zoom with Councilmember **Lonny Marney (Seat F)** presiding and with the following members in attendance:

Members Present:	Karen Blackburn, Seat A Thomas Alexander, Seat B Samantha Kirstein, Seat C Traci Gatewood, Seat D Victoria Dowling, Seat E
Also Present:	Diana Hebel, Licensing Clerk/Cashier D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk Sarah Fuerst, Grants Administrator

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

a) Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 2, 2025

Mr. Alexander, seconded by **Ms. Kirstein**, moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes.

There being no objection, the minutes were APPROVED.

b) Approval of Meeting Minutes – December 3, 2025

Ms. Dowling, seconded by **Mr. Alexander**, moved to APPROVE the meeting minutes.

There being no objection, the minutes were APPROVED.

PRESENTATION BY ALASKA WILD LIGHTS, LLC

Ashley Fydenkevez and Kyle Luetkehans presented for Alaska Wild Lights, LLC, who were supposed to have had the opportunity to present on December 2 but was not given that chance due to a staff error.

Committee members asked questions and, after some discussion, decided against funding the application. However, they encouraged the applicant to reapply once they start their venture.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Review of Discretionary Fund Grant Application and Committee Process

i. Sign-up sheet for Q&A

Chair Marney explained that he does not think the Q&A session should be mandatory, but he thinks it is a good idea to have a sign-up sheet. The Committee agreed to have a sign-up sheet.

ii. Whether to make the Q&A session mandatory

Chair Marney called for discussion. Members considered the issue and agreed to make the Q&A session mandatory in hopes that would clear up any confusion or misunderstanding, help applicants submit a successful application, and avoid applications being denied for minor issues.

Chair Marney asked if the Q&A session should also be mandatory for committee members. The Committee agreed to make the Q&A session mandatory for Committee members as well.

Clerk Snider asked if the Q&A session should be available to attend via Zoom. The Committee agreed that a mandatory meeting should be available on Zoom.

iii. Setting a Request Limit

There was much discussion on various ways to set a request limit for the Discretionary Grant. Some members liked the idea of basing the cap on a percentage of what was requested the previous year and others wanted to base the cap on the size of the organization or project.

Chair Marney advised against making drastic changes to the process, noting that community organizations are familiar with the current approach and that maintaining an easy-to-understand process remains a priority.

Clerk Snider pointed out that, according to the Fairbanks General Code (FGC), the Committee does not have the authority to set limits; rather, it could make such a recommendation to the City Council. She further explained that the ordinance states that the City Council will set the criteria and standards for the application process and delegate the work to the Committee.

Discussion continued about using a percentage system and how that may have a negative effect on organizations requesting smaller amounts. Ms. Fuerst pointed out that that issue could make an argument for using a tiered system instead.

Ms. Kirstein stated the Committee ultimately decides allocations, which is the simplest solution.

Chair Marney suggested that applicants need to include in their narrative an explanation as to why they are seeking more funds than previously.

Chair Marney asked members whether they support a tiered system or the status quo.

Ms. Kirstein, seconded by **Mr. Alexander**, moved to keep the application as it is (with no limit).

Hearing no objection, **Chair Marney** declared the motion PASSED.

iv. Review and approve 2026 cover letter and application

Chair Marney requested input on the cover letter, and none was offered. He suggested leaving the 2026 application unchanged and noted he will meet with the City Clerk in August to update the cover letter and clarify that the Q&A session is mandatory.

v. Whether to clarify that the funding request cannot cover items already purchased or paid for

Ms. Gatewood asked if the parameter was already included in the application. Ms. Fuerst explained there is a note in the application guidelines stating that all funds received must be spent within the year awarded. Clerk Snider asked if it is also in the FGC. Ms. Fuerst clarified she does not know if it is in the FGC.

b) Review of the Discretionary Fund Committee Policies and Procedures

Chair Marney asked if there were any changes that needed to be considered.

Ms. Fuerst asked if electronic signatures would be accepted or if a wet signature was required. Clerk Snider stated that digital applications are not accepted because the primary purpose of having applicants submit hard copies is so that the City will not have to expend time and money to make all the necessary copies.

The Committee decided that since hard copies must be submitted, a wet signature is required.

Ms. Gatewood asked that the Q&A session highlight that funds must be spent in the year awarded. Clerk Snider indicated that clarity could be added to the language in the application and the cover letter that states, "Funding cannot cover items already purchased or paid for."

NEXT MEETING – NOVEMBER 2026 (EXACT DATE TO BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMITTEE)

Chair Marney explained that Clerk Hebel usually sends out a Doodle Poll later in the year.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Kirstein, seconded by **Ms. Blackburn**, moved to ADJOURN.

There being no objection, the meeting ADJOURNED at 1:13 P.M.

Sue Sprinkle, Chair

Diana Hebel, Licensing Clerk / Cashier

Transcribed by: DH