



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, MAY 18, 2026
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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 in the City Council Chambers at 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Mayor Mindy O’Neill presiding and the following Councilmembers in attendance:

Councilmembers Present: Jerry Cleworth, Seat A
 Valerie Therrien, Seat B
 Sue Sprinkle, Seat C
 Crystal Tidwell, Seat D
 Lonny Marney, Seat E
 John Ringstad, Seat F

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk (remotely)
 Thomas Chard, City Attorney
 Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
 Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer
 Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)
 Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief (remotely)
 Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager
 Brenda Geier, FECC Operations Manager
 Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director
 Jarrod Zerbe, Code Compliance Officer
 Brenda McFarlane, Community Response Coordinator
 Jennifer Payan, Grants Administrator (remotely)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the request of Mayor O’Neill, **Ms. Sprinkle** read the land acknowledgement.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor O’Neill, **Ms. Therrien** led the flag salutation.

CITIZENS’ COMMENTS

Jarrod Welsh (via Zoom) – J. Welsh spoke of housing challenges facing the Fairbanks community. He shared that a local resident had used personal resources to develop designs for affordable, easy-to-assemble housing solutions suitable for arctic conditions but unfortunately had not been

successful in securing local partnerships and support. He requested that the City consider his suggestions to help increase housing supply, asserting that each were all within the City's capacity:

- Expand and simplify rules for accessory style dwelling units
- Create a fast-track permitting process for modular, arctic-grade housing
- Support local innovators developing climate-appropriate housing solutions
- Strengthen enforcement of basic housing quality and safety standards, while offering compliance assistance to property owners
- Improve coordination with Fort Wainwright housing services to explore targeted incentives to encourage new construction and property rehabilitation

Mayor O'Neall, hearing no more requests for comment, declared Citizens' Comments closed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE the agenda and consent agenda.

Mr. Cleworth pulled item 14(a), Resolution No. 5214, from the consent agenda.

Mayor O'Neall called for objection to motion to APPROVE the agenda and the consent agenda, as amended, and hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

Clerk Snider read the consent agenda, as amended, into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of April 27, 2026

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

SPECIAL ORDERS

a) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing and considered the following alcohol license applications for renewal:

Lic.	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
4168	Food Factory	Beverage Dispensary	CNR Enterprise, LLC	275 Bentley Trust Road
15370	Lat 65 Brewing Company	Winery Retail	Latitude 65 Brewing Company, LLC	150 Eagle Avenue
15329	Lat 65 Brewing Company	Brewery Retail	Latitude 65 Brewing Company, LLC	150 Eagle Avenue
4831	Irashai Japanese Restaurant	Restaurant/ Eating Place	JNJ JJ, LLC	419 Merhar Avenue, Suite B

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license applications for renewal.

Mayor O'Neall called for testimony and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

There was no discussion.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor O’Neill declared the MOTION CARRIED.

b) Intent to Rescind Action from Regular Meeting of May 11, 2026 – New Alcohol License

Clerk Note: At the Regular Meeting of May 11, 2026, the City Council PROTESTED the below new alcohol license with endorsements. Following that meeting, notice was received regarding an intent to move to rescind the action.

Type/License: Beverage Dispensary Tourism, License 5656

Endorsements: Hotel/Motel & Restaurant

DBA: Block 13 Hotel

Applicant: Block 13 Hotel, LLC

Location: 575 1st Avenue

Mayor O’Neill, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to RESCIND the Council’s vote from May 11, 2026 to protest the Block 13 Hotel application for a new beverage dispensary tourism license.

Ms. Therrien shared that she had been contacted by the applicant who apologized for missing the May 11 meeting, with the explanation that a plumbing emergency at multiple hotels in Denali National Park had prevented them from attending. She added that the applicant had also reported that many tourists will not consider staying at hotels that do not have a restaurant and that having a restaurant that could not serve alcohol would also be problematic.

Ms. Tidwell stated that while she appreciates the reasoning for the applicant’s absence, being present was not an unreasonable expectation, nor was communication when something comes up.

Mr. Marney pointed out that local management could have been sent to represent the company and that the Clerk had notified the applicant of the meeting.

Mr. Ringstad noted that the Council made its decision based on one side of the story and that a lack of details can sometimes lead to mistakes. He indicated willingness to hear the other side.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the applicant was present currently. **Mayor O’Neill** confirmed they were.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO RESCIND THE COUNCIL’S VOTE FROM MAY 11, 2026 TO PROTEST THE BLOCK 13 HOTEL APPLICATION FOR A NEW BEVERAGE DISPENSARY TOURISM LICENSE AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Ringstad, Therrien

NAYS: Marney, Cleworth, Tidwell, Sprinkle

Mayor O’Neill declared the MOTION FAILED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor O'Neall invited Community Response Coordinator Brenda McFarlane to provide a report.

B. McFarlane shared details on the following City initiatives:

- The Golden Heart Step Up Challenge
- Recruitment and training for the City Ambassadors program
- Her activities as the Community Response Coordinator
- The Mobile Crisis Team
- The Emergency Service Patrol (ESP), operated by Fairbanks Integrated Community Services (FICS)
- The Housing, Engagement, and Recovery Transitions (HEART), also operated by FICS

She discussed applying for \$275,000 in funding from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation for rental assistance to support permanent housing opportunities for the unhoused in the community. She noted that a transition away from congregate settings can support housing independence as well as recovery efforts with support from FICS and the Community Paramedics.

Ms. Therrien asked if FICS works together with the Community Paramedics. B. McFarlane confirmed that the two frequently work together as many calls have overlapping needs.

Mayor O'Neall shared that an intern, Owen Ackerman, had joined the City for the summer to support the reentry program and other programs B. McFarlane oversees. She invited Fairbanks North Star Borough Assemblymember Patrick Roach to provide a report.

Assemblyman Roach shared that the Assembly had awarded a \$17MM contract to the lowest responsive bidder for the construction of a new animal shelter, noting the staggering and surprising savings from the project's original \$34MM budget. He reported that the Assembly adopted a fairly non-controversial annual budget, and he discussed amendments, both passed and failed, that were made throughout the process.

Mr. Cleworth asked Assemblyman Roach if he knew why there was such a gap between the budget and the winning bid for the animal shelter. Assemblyman Roach shared that there was no definitive answer. He reported that one suggestion had been that the Borough's estimate had used the current cost of goods while many contractors had been stockpiling materials purchased earlier at lower rates, to allow them to undercut the market on projects they choose in the future. He added that the company was one that the Borough had worked with in the past without issues.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth thanked B. McFarlane for her handout outlining local programs and organizations offering various services, noting how helpful it would be for discussions on potential City efforts.

Mr. Ringstad shared that during a recent doctor visit, his provider had spoken highly of the City's Community Paramedics and that medical professionals agree it is a great program.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6347 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 46, Article IV, Division 4 – Illegal Campsites. Sponsored by Mayor O’Neill. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mayor O’Neill called for testimony and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

Mayor O’Neill asked Chief of Staff Sanders to review the ordinance. M. Sanders stated that the ordinance would amend the Fairbanks General Code (FGC) to mirror current practices and reduce the timeline for certain notices, primarily as a safety measure.

Ms. Tidwell, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6347.

Mr. Cleworth asked if Legal had reviewed the ordinance and if the second sentence under Sec. 46-188 was unnecessary given the preceding sentence’s language. City Attorney Thomas Chard confirmed the ordinance had been reviewed and that the sentence could be seen as redundant.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6347 by striking the second sentence under Sec. 46-188 which read: “At the expiration of the ten-day period, personal property at the illegal campsite may be disposed of as waste.”

There was no discussion on the motion to amend.

Mayor O’Neill called for objection on the motion to AMEND Ordinance No. 6347 and hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

Mr. Cleworth asked to confirm the intent of the changes in the next section, reducing certain notice requirements from 72 to 24 hours. Attorney Chard confirmed the intent to speed up the process in situations the Police Chief deems to be an imminent safety concern, such as illegal campsites within the right-of-way or an entrance to a parking lot. He stated that such circumstances warrant more immediate action and that discretion of the Police Chief was the most appropriate.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6347, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor O’Neill declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6347, as Amended, ADOPTED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 5214 – A Resolution to Form a Partnership Agreement Between the City of Fairbanks and Fairbanks Neighborhood Housing Services to Participate in the SFY26 Alaska Recovery Housing Program. Sponsored by Mayor O’Neill.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5214.

Mr. Cleworth noted that the fourth “whereas” statement stated the City would be reimbursed for “all” costs associated with the program and asked if that would include loss of interest. Chief Financial Officer Bell stated that it would not. **Mr. Cleworth** asserted that a loss of interest was real, thus the word “all” was not entirely accurate. CFO Bell concurred but noted that the turnaround for reimbursement should be quick, so the interest loss would be minimal.

Mr. Ringstad disclosed that he currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Fairbanks Neighborhood Housing Services (FNHS).

Mr. Marney pointed out in the fiscal note that the housing assistance was intended for “individuals recovering from substance use disorders.” He suggested that homelessness did not always involve drugs and asked if the parameters had to be limited. B. McFarlane stated that the language of the grant used “recovery” in general terms and could cover those dealing with other challenges such as a mental health crisis. She noted that one of the primary criteria was that the individual be actively participating in a recovery program.

Ms. Therrien asked if there was better language to reflect that they would not be able to recoup lost interest. Attorney Chard advised that simply removing the word “all” would suffice.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND Resolution No. 5214 by striking the word “all” from the fourth “whereas” statement.

There was no discussion on the motion to amend.

Mayor O’Neill called for objection on the motion to AMEND Resolution No. 5214 and hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

Mr. Marney asked if someone from FNHS could explain the mechanics of the program. **Mayor O’Neill** invited Nadine Winters to provide an overview.

Nadine Winters, Executive Director of FNHS – N. Winters stated that the grant would operate similarly to other past programs and was simple: The City identifies a qualifying individual, provides services in accordance with the program, sends FNHS a bill with appropriate documentation, and FNHS sends a check for reimbursement. She explained that the City would carry the expense for about 30 days while awaiting reimbursement from them and that FNHS would carry the cost for a quarter until reimbursement by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if there was an estimate on how many people may be helped by the program. N. Winters shared that they could apply for over \$200,000 and that individuals can receive a maximum of \$1,220 per month.

Mr. Cleworth noted that the third “whereas” statement indicates that the City has identified individuals eligible for the program and asked what would happen if that was not done. N. Winters explained that FNHS will rely on the City to perform that function and if it does not, the process would simply not occur. B. McFarlane shared that the Community Paramedics had already identified qualifying individuals, so there would be no delay in getting started. She added that the other groups referenced in her earlier report would also be able to refer individuals for consideration. She explained that the grant would allow for up to 12 months of assistance with rent

and utilities. **Mr. Cleworth** asked what procedure was in place if an individual fails to abide by the requirements. B. McFarlane stated that if participants do not actively engage in the established recovery program, they would be disenrolled and, if they fail to pay the landlord, they would be subject to eviction. She discussed the importance of maintaining positive working relationships with landlords who volunteer to participate in the program.

Mr. Marney asked if there were other programs or grants the City could pursue that would further help with housing challenges. B. McFarlane confirmed that they continue to monitor options and would bring opportunities they identify to the Council. **Mr. Ringstad** recounted that N. Winters was scheduled for an upcoming work session to further educate the Council on other programs.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the program was confirmed. N. Winters clarified that it was a competitive process with an application deadline of Friday. **Ms. Sprinkle** acknowledged that they may be awarded nothing. N. Winters expressed confidence, citing their history of successful grant writing.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND Resolution No. 5214, as Amended, by adding “and behavioral health” after “substance use” in the second “whereas” statement, so that it reads, “... in recovery from substance use and behavioral health disorders ...”

There was no discussion on the motion to amend.

Mayor O’Neill called for objection on the motion to AMEND Resolution No. 5214, as Amended, and hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5214, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor O’Neill declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 5214, as Amended, APPROVED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6348 – An Ordinance Amending Various Sections of the Fairbanks General Code Dealing with Nuisances. Sponsored by Mayor O’Neill.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Fairbanks Diversity Council Meeting Minutes of March 10, 2026

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS’ COMMENTS

Ms. Therrien, with additional input from **Mr. Ringstad**, gave a Legislative Committee report. **Ms. Therrien** stated that she was glad to see the Mayor’s increased involvement with the

Fairbanks Diversity Council (FDC). She expressed disappointment that the Council had not given the Block 13 Hotel representative, who had flown to Fairbanks for the meeting, a chance to speak regarding the license. She shared details about an upcoming event hosted by her Rotary Club.

Mr. Cleworth noted that the minutes of recent FDC meetings referenced questions over the original intent of the group's formation. He recounted that one of the primary purposes was to advocate for diversity in City hiring efforts from the many groups within the community. He noted that the request for proposal (RFP) for the log cabin downtown was published in the newspaper over the previous weekend. He stated that he would like to see a copy of the RFP and asked if there were any restrictions or if it was wide open for proposals. Chief of Staff Sanders confirmed that the RFP could be viewed on the City's website and that it did not include limited uses.

Mr. Marney concurred on the improved conversations occurring at FDC meetings and expressed hope in continued progress. He shared that he volunteered at the annual clean-up event at the Clay Street Cemetery over the weekend and was thoroughly impressed with the group of people involved with the work. He added that the new headstones, installed over recent years by the Clay Street Cemetery Commission, were remarkable and encouraged everyone to go see for themselves.

Ms. Tidwell thanked those in the community who participated in the recent clean-up day. She shared that the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation Planning Policy Board would meet soon.

Mayor O'Neill discussed the work of FDC over the last several months, which had benefited greatly from a strategic planning session early in the process. She concurred that the group has a renewed energy, which was exciting to see. She confirmed that the RFP for the log cabin was open and encouraged everyone to share that with any potential submitters they may know. She expressed regret that the representatives for Block 13 Hotel were not given the opportunity to speak on their application and discussed the importance of supporting investment and revitalization in the downtown area. **Mayor O'Neill** reported that at least six events occurred over the weekend that involved City employees in some way and spoke highly of the efforts across the community. She stated that it was National Emergency Medical Services Week and highlighted the work done by the Fairbanks Fire Department. She discussed an upcoming press conference to share details about mental health services in the community.

Ms. Therrien recounted that the Co-Op Grocery Market & Deli had sent an email confirming they would be able to quickly commence operations in the log cabin downtown, if the City was interested in a temporary option for the summer season. **Mayor O'Neill** indicated that with an active RFP and the Council's recent action on the project, that would not be feasible. **Ms. Therrien** asked for the RFP deadline. M. Sanders stated that it would be open for three weeks but that following the procedures in FGC, the earliest date that a lease could commence would be August 13. **Mayor O'Neill** confirmed that there would not be a new tenant in the cabin this summer.

Ms. Sprinkle asked for clarification on the Mayor's comment that the Council's action had prevented any potential usage for the summer. **Mayor O'Neill** clarified that because the Council had requested an RFP process, it would be inappropriate for any outside entity to use the building. She noted that this was especially true for someone who may be a potential bidder on the project, as it would create a conflict of interest and be poor procurement practice.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider thanked the Council for allowing her remote involvement and for supporting her participation in the professional development conference she was attending.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard shared that City Hall would be closed the coming Monday in observance of Memorial Day.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor O'Neall declared the meeting adjourned at 7:32 p.m.


MINDY O'NEALL, MAYOR

ATTEST:


D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC