



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, JULY 27, 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
 Thomas Chard, City Attorney
 Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
 Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer
 Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)
 Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Timothy Zinza, City Engineer
 Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director
 Brenda Geier, FECC Operations Manager
 Brenda McFarlane, Community Response Coordinator
 Shannon Lam, Executive Assistant to the Mayor
 Shane Wooley, 2026 Summer Fellow (Mayor's Office)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the request of Mayor O'Neill, **Ms. Therrien** read the land acknowledgement.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor O'Neill, **Ms. Sprinkle** led the flag salutation.

CEREMONIAL MATTERS (Proclamations, Introductions, Recognitions, Awards)

a) Reading of a Proclamation in Honor of Dan Flaherty

Mayor O'Neill read a proclamation honoring Dan Flaherty, a longtime Public Works employee who had recently lost a battle with cancer. She declared August 8, 2026 as "Dan Flaherty Day" and presented a framed copy of the proclamation to members of D. Flaherty's family.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Brandy Husband – B. Husband asked that the City review traffic control plans for the Golden Days Parade as access to her street had been completely blocked off, with no notice provided. She reported that a recent outdoor concert at The Spur was so loud it was heard and felt in her home. She suggested the Council consider establishing decibel limits for events as other cities have done.

Ms. Sprinkle stated that she had not heard about loud concerts from The Spur before and asked if it was a new thing. B. Husband confirmed it was new, with one other instance recently.

Gary Jenkins – G. Jenkins spoke favorably of the City's recent America 250 Block Party which he and his family had enjoyed. He discussed the significance of the country's founding values and read a portion of the beginning of the Declaration of Independence.

Ms. Therrien noted that similar events had been held throughout the United States at the same time and asked if he enjoyed the Air Force flyover. G. Jenkins stated that he did.

Mr. Cleworth shared that the Council has an annual tradition of reading the Bill of Rights at the last meeting in December and invited him to attend.

Dereck Dickinson (via Zoom) – D. Dickinson reported continued concerning activities at 109 Fifth Avenue since he and a neighbor, Victoria Dowling, last addressed the Council on the matter [*see the Regular Meetings Minutes of July 13, 2026*]. He shared that an altercation between individuals had occurred, with a hatchet being used to smash various objects. He asked what is being done about the numerous instances of criminal activity and blighted properties in the area. He asserted that the quality of life in his neighborhood had declined significantly.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

Mr. Cleworth pulled item 14(c), Ordinance No. 6353, from the consent agenda.

Mayor O'Neill called for objection to the 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.

SPECIAL ORDERS

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

Lic.	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
3467	Lin's Asian Bistro	Restaurant/Eating Place	Lin's Panda Garden, Inc.	1900 Airport Way

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for renewal.

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

There was no discussion.

Mayor O'Neill called for objection to the motion to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for renewal, and hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

- b) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing and considered the following alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership:

Type/License:	Beverage Dispensary, License 727
To DBA:	8 Star Events Center
To Owner:	8 Star Events Center, LLC
To Location:	1485 30th Avenue
From DBA:	Lavelle's Bistro (license surrendered)
From Owner:	Café de Paris Catering Company
From Location:	575 1st Avenue

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

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership.

There was no discussion.

Mayor O'Neill called for objection to the motion to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership, and hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor O'Neill shared that Owen Ackerman has been serving as a Community Response and Reentry Coordination Intern for the summer, working with the warming center. She invited him and Community Response Coordinator Brenda McFarlane to provide a report.

O. Ackerman shared an update on the City Ambassador program, noting that 26 volunteers had contributed a combined 150 hours so far over the summer. He discussed the positive feedback and a high average rating, through their post-shift surveys, of feeling safe. He added that various local nonprofit organizations had also been involved and that businesses owners had reported a perceived slight improvement on the common problems within the downtown area. O. Ackerman also provided an update on the Golden Heart Step Up Challenge.

Ms. Sprinkle asked about the program's footprint. O. Ackerman explained that volunteers keep to the downtown area and that some also attend downtown events as a City Ambassador.

Mr. Marney asked what hours the program runs. O. Ackerman stated that they leave it open to volunteers to choose their schedules, with a requested minimum shift length of two hours. He reported that most serve in the afternoon on weekdays. B. McFarlane shared that any time between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. is available for sign-up. She praised O. Ackerman for his consistent 20 hours of internship each week, noting that the City would not have been able to facilitate the programs in place without his contributions.

B. McFarlane provided an update on the progress to offer a warming shelter for the coming winter. She explained that the Northern Hope Center (NHC) was offering its new location on Twelfth Avenue and shared details about the supportive landlord as well as plans for security. She discussed the various organizations committed to providing services and added that Pete Pinney at the North Star Community Foundation (NSCF) had offered to take the lead on applying for funds for any involved organizations. She reviewed a handout that outlined additional details.

Ms. Tidwell asked where NHC had been located previously. B. McFarlane shared that the organization had been across the street from City Hall.

Ms. Sprinkle asked for more details on the Rural Health Transformation Program (RHTP) grant. B. McFarlane shared that the application made it past the first round of the process and their chances are good, given that mobile, integrated health is the primary focus of the program.

Mr. Cleworth asked about the protocol for grant requests with the Rasmuson Foundation. B. McFarlane described the typical process but noted that the Foundation had dedicated money set aside for housing and homelessness initiatives, making certain funding decisions available through an expedited procedure. She reiterated that NSCF would be the main applicant.

Ms. Therrien, referencing the handout, asked what was being asked of the Council. B. McFarlane clarified that she was seeking the Council's understanding that certain programs may not be able to start as soon as they like without direct funding, as several of the grants would not be disbursed until later in 2026 or even 2027. **Ms. Therrien** acknowledged that NHC was referenced as a viable location for the coming year but asked if there was any update on plans for a permanent solution. B. McFarlane shared that a group had been formed to pursue a long-term location but that there were no current proposals as the focus was on the coming winter.

Mr. Ringstad asked if the plan would require additional Community Paramedic (CP) staffing. B. McFarlane confirmed that the grant application included funding to provide 24/7 CP coverage, as their plan would require more than the two existing positions. **Mr. Ringstad** acknowledged that the CP program had been working well and asked if this would increase the cost to the City. B. McFarlane explained that it would not and clarified that any assistance provided by certain City staff at the facility would be treated as an in-kind contribution.

Mr. Marney asked what the capacity would be for NHC's new location. B. McFarlane reported that the occupancy limit is listed as 120 but that they plan to tour the space with the Fire Department to determine a more accurate number.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the building was equipped with a fire suppression system. B. McFarlane confirmed that she had seen overhead sprinkler heads.

Ms. Tidwell thanked B. McFarlane for her work, noting the incredible progress with so many invested entities collaborating. She recounted that homelessness was one of the Council's top priorities and stated that she would be happy to sponsor a resolution in support of the project.

Mayor O'Neill thanked O. Ackerman and B. McFarlane for their continued dedication.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Therrien spoke highly of the Golden Days Parade and the newspaper's coverage of the recent World Eskimo-Indian Olympics.

Ms. Sprinkle shared that she had received a text from someone involved with the sound setup for the concert at The Spur, which explained that they had made a change to the acoustics layout from the previous show. She stated that she could follow up on the matter.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 5224 – A Resolution Awarding a Contract to Great Northwest, Inc. for the Moore Street Senior Apartment Parking Lot Improvements in the Amount of \$416,741.00. Sponsored by Mayor O'Neill.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Resolution No. 5225 – A Resolution of the Fairbanks City Council to Counter Challenge the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly to a Friendly Miniature Golf Match. Sponsored by Councilmember Sprinkle.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Ordinance No. 6353 – An Ordinance Amending the Local Amendments to the 2018 International Fire Code Adopted by Reference at Fairbanks General Code Section 30-32, Creating Appeal Procedures. Sponsored by Mayor O'Neill.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6353.

Mr. Cleworth noted that the ordinance would establish a system where an order related to a fire inspection by the Deputy Fire Marshal could be appealed to the Fire Chief, and an order by the Fire Chief could be appealed to the State Fire Marshal. He suggested another route, where an impartial audience, outside of the system, could hear the matter. He suggested that this could be the existing Building Code & Landscape Review & Appeals Commission, with its great expertise, or even the Mayor or City Council. He clarified he was not seeking amendments presently but would like to consider the idea at the next work session.

City Attorney Chard acknowledged the desire for an outside, neutral arbiter. He advised that the other proposed language in Section 109.1 could also benefit from additional clarification if the Council chose to add an additional process as had been suggested.

Ms. Sprinkle pointed out that if the Council was added as a part of the appeal process, its meeting schedule may not work within appeal timelines.

Ms. Therrien asked if the State Fire Marshal's Office was aware of the ordinance. Attorney Chard confirmed that they were and that they had agreed to the proposed process.

Mr. Ringstad asked if the Council had the authority to tell a State employee what to do. Attorney Chard reiterated that the State Fire Marshal's Office had been asked and had agreed to review appeals as a courtesy. He explained that the Fire Chief conducts very few inspections, thus the number of potential appeals to the State would be limited. He noted that there is an existing relationship and oversight as the Fairbanks Fire Department operates under the delegated authority of the State Fire Marshal's Office. **Mr. Ringstad** asked if the agreement should be referenced within the ordinance. Attorney Chard stated that he would defer to the Fire Chief on the matter.

Mayor O'Neill called for objection to the motion to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6353 and, hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Therrien spoke of the continued Special Sessions by the Alaska Legislature over the proposed liquid natural gas line as well as upcoming meetings with the Alaska Municipal League.

Mr. Cleworth recounted that Fairbanks last hosted the Arctic Winter Games in 2014 and shared that the North Pole Mayor was sponsoring a resolution to request hosting consideration again in the future. He suggested the administration reach out and potentially draft a similar resolution.

Ms. Sprinkle shared that the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce had also been discussing a desire to host the Arctic Winter Games again and that she could follow up with them for an update.

Mr. Marney noted that the Council had not heard from the Building Official in some time and asked if he could provide a report on his department's progress at an upcoming meeting.

Ms. Tidwell stated that the Golden Days events of the past weekend were fantastic for the community, especially seeing the large turnout for the parade.

Mayor O'Neill acknowledged the significant work by multiple departments that goes into preparing for and cleaning up after such large community events and thanked everyone involved.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider noted that the candidate filing period for the regular election would close on July 29.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard shared having read that the Golden Days parade was the largest parade in Alaska and provided a brief history.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ENTER into Executive Session for:

- a) Legal Guidance to Council: 109 5th Avenue [permissible under State law, including the provision at AS 44.62.310(c)(3)]

Mayor O'Neill called for objection on the motion to ENTER into Executive Session and, hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

Mayor O'Neill called for a recess at 7:23 p.m., then the Council reconvened in Executive Session.

The Executive Sessions began at 7:35 p.m. Those present were Mayor O'Neill; Councilmembers Cleworth, Therrien, Tidwell, Marney, Ringstad and Sprinkle; Clerk Snider; Attorney Chard; Chief of Staff Sanders; CFO Bell; Code Compliance Officer Jarrod Zerbe; Fire Chief Cocco; Police Chief Dupee; Human Resources Director Merritt; Public Works Director Cotter; and Building Official Falke. The session concluded at 8:51 p.m.

Mr. Cleworth stated the Council met in Executive Sessions for Legal Guidance to Council: 109 5th Avenue. He affirmed that no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor O'Neill called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

Mayor O'Neill declared the meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.


For

MINDY O'NEALL, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC