FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 14, 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'Neall 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
Absent:	John Ringstad, Seat F
Also Present:	Thomas Chard, City Attorney Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff (remotely) Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer Ron Dupee, Police Chief Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director Timothy Zinza, City Engineer Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director Brenda Geier, FECC Operations Manager Jarrod Zerbe, Code Compliance Officer (remotely)

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

At the request of Mayor O'Neall, **Ms. Tidwell** read the land acknowledgement.

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Deputy City Clerk Colt Chase.

FLAG SALUTATION

Mayor O'Neall led the flag salutation.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Vivian Stiver – V. Stiver stated that she was there as a representative of the Alaska Commission on Aging and provided a booklet titled "Senior Snapshot 2025." She highlighted certain items from the publication, such as senior population growth and housing shortages that strongly affect the senior demographic. She noted that recent inflation hit harder for those on a fixed income and

discussed healthcare challenges seniors face. She noted that many people are surprised by how minimal support can enable a senior to continue living independently at home. She asked that the Council continue its tradition of being willing to adopt resolutions to support any future state legislation that would be beneficial to seniors in Fairbanks and across Alaska.

Ms. Therrien asked V. Stiver if she was excited about the potential housing options that were proposed as part of the new construction at the former Polaris Building site. V. Stiver stated that she was not up to speed on the project but was excited to hear about the possibility.

Mr. Marney asked about the new pavement at the Moore Street Senior Apartments. V. Stiver stated that it was wonderful and described other improvements to the property. She shared that residents are grateful for the renovations.

Aaron Lojewski – A. Lojewski expressed appreciation that the document for agenda item 16(a), Mayor's Memorandum to Department Heads (August 19) Regarding Procedure for Councilmember Requests, had been brought to the public's attention. He asserted that the direction to department heads could be problematic and potentially result in information being withheld from the City Council. He stated that the additional instruction to inform the Mayor of any directive, request, or inquiry from a Councilmember rubbed him the wrong way. A. Lojewski noted that the job of both the Council and the administration is to help City departments provide services to the public effectively and outlined several potential negative impacts of the directives in the memo. He suggested that the Council, department heads, and the community deserved better.

Derek Dickinson – D. Dickinson recounted his recent testimony and grievances over chronic nuisance properties, trespassing, and disorderly conduct in his downtown neighborhood. He shared that since last addressing the Council he has had continued problems, including an individual coming onto his property and stripping naked. He added that the following morning he stepped on a used needle while leaving his house. He noted that while the Council had included traffic volume in its discussions about nuisance properties, the bigger concern is high frequency, low-duration stops during the middle of the night, which is often an indicator of drug activity. He suggested that the Council adopt specific language to address that in the ordinance being considered.

Ms. Therrien asked D. Dickinson if he had read Ordinance No. 6354. D. Dickinson stated he had not but that he would be soon. He stated he had listened to the last work session on the topic.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the individual who had disrobed on his property was associated with the specific property that had been discussed in recent meetings. D. Dickinson explained that there are multiple properties in the neighborhood that are blighted and problematic but that one in particular had been the location of constant criminal activity. He stated it was the home of the individual he had mentioned, whom he was not comfortable naming on the record. He added that the individual constantly trespasses on his and other neighbors' properties, including climbing onto roofs.

Betsy Campbell – B. Campbell shared that she had lived in Fairbanks her entire life, graduated from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, is the Vice President of a local bank, and is a mother to two teenage boys who ride e-bikes. She spoke of Ordinance No. 6355 and advocated for the safe, responsible, and accessible use of e-bikes in the community. She asserted that e-bikes represent the future of transportation and that she wants to work together to resolve any concerns. She stated that she intends to return and continue to speak on the matter.

Ms. Sprinkle asked B. Campbell how the Council may best utilize her passion on the topic to pursue a common goal. B. Campbell indicated that she was not entirely sure yet but that she planned to be involved in the process. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked how she felt about the safety concerns expressed by other community members. B. Campbell suggested that the ordinance was a result of complaints on social media and could potentially result in prohibiting the use of e-bikes anywhere in the city. She stated that she does not want to see the option to ride taken completely away from kids and would like to see a happy medium.

Mr. Cleworth asked B. Campbell if she would be willing to send the Council her suggestions on the ordinance after reading it. B. Campbell stated that she would.

Mr. Marney listed the different types of "e-motos" and asked which version her family uses. B. Campbell shared that the one she rides has pedals but the ones her sons ride do not.

Ms. Therrien shared details about an upcoming Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning Walk, Ride & Roll Advisory Committee (WRRAC) meeting where the topic of e-bikes would be discussed and encouraged B. Campbell to attend.

Olivia Rodriguez – O. Rodriguez provided a recap of the second season of the Fairbanks Downtown Market, noting the great vendors, crowds, music, and weather at each event. She expressed concern over increasingly troubling situations requiring police intervention, including fights, theft, and threatening behaviors, especially towards vendors. She reported that someone had tried to steal from her truck and that she had been assaulted during the takedown of their final event. O. Rodriguez shared that she and her husband have had difficult conversations about whether to bring the event back for a third year in 2027. She asked how the community can be expected to occupy a place where the people working to activate it do not always feel safe. She acknowledged that most of the time, the Golden Heart Plaza is exactly what they want it to be but that the truth about the problems that persist in the Plaza needs to be spoken; she cautioned against growing complacent. She asserted that people want to be downtown but that the powers that be needed to make sure it is a place that people want to return to.

Ms. Therrien asked O. Rodriguez if she had any suggestions to help solve the problem other than a stronger police presence. O. Rodriguez suggested that a stronger anti-loitering ordinance may be helpful. She recounted that things were great when the seasonal foot patrol officers were present but that the problems spring right back as soon as they leave. She added that stronger enforcement of laws prohibiting public consumption of alcohol in the Plaza and on the streets would help, along with monitoring activity in the middle of the night. She cited instances of full-on parties out in the open. She declared that there is a sense that people can do anything they want downtown, especially in the Plaza, which gives a poor impression of Fairbanks to both locals and visitors.

Arthur Warbelow – A. Warbelow shared that he owns Trike Alaska, which sells recumbent tricycles, many of which have electronic assistance systems built into their design, and that all include pedals and are limited to 20 miles per hour. He stated that people use those types of cycles for a variety of reasons and that usage of such "Class 1" devices on bike paths should be supported. He advocated for reasonable limitations on higher-powered devices and recounted troubling instances of minors engaging in unsafe behavior at high speeds all across the city, particularly on

sidewalks. A. Warbelow expressed similar concerns over the use of other gas-powered machines on sidewalks, which he is surprised to not see when he rides around Anchorage.

Douglas Yoder – D. Yoder stated that he had recently gotten more involved with local matters and expressed agreement with A. Warbelow's recommendation to implement reasonable limitations for e-moto devices above the Class 1 designation. He discussed considerations such as horsepower, overall speed capacities, and more, as well as how usage on sidewalks versus streets should be regulated. He noted that enforcement is essentially non-existent and that this would need to change. He shared details about his family history related to the former Polaris Building and advocated for any new development to include commercial business options on ground level, with assisted living units on upper floors.

Ms. Sprinkle asked D. Yoder if he was aware that the current proposal for redevelopment of the former Polaris Building site included commercial business on the ground level with residential units above. D. Yoder stated that he was happy to hear that and shared additional thoughts on what he believed the project should entail. He also shared some history about the property.

Ms. Therrien reiterated information about the upcoming WRRAC meeting.

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.

Ms. Therrien pulled item 14(a), Resolution No. 5233, from the consent agenda and asked that it be addressed as the next item of business.

Mr. Marney pulled item 14(d), Ordinance No. 6355, from the consent agenda.

Ms. Sprinkle pulled item 15(d), Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation Grant Analysis & Timeline Report, from the consent agenda.

Mr. Cleworth pulled item 15(g), Appointment to the Discretionary Fund Committee, from the consent agenda.

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

Deputy Clerk Chase read the consent agenda, as amended, into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

a) Regular Meeting Minutes of August 10, 2026

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

b) Regular Meeting Minutes of August 24, 2026

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

SPECIAL ORDERS

Clerk Note: Prior to Special Orders, item 14(a), Resolution No. 5233, was taken up, as approved by the amended agenda.

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

Lic.	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
15800	Baked Alaska, LLC	Marijuana Product Manufacturing Facility	Baked Alaska, LLC	2745 Hanson Road, Unit B
20287	Good Titrations	Retail Marijuana Store	FSE, Inc.	506 Merhar Avenue
20289	Good Titrations	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	FSE, Inc.	506 Merhar Avenue

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

Mayor O'Neall noted that the memo for this item included a recommendation by Chief Financial Officer Margarita Bell to protest License No. 20287. She indicated that it was the Council's purview as to whether to entertain a motion on all three licenses or to consider each separately.

Ms. Sprinkle suggested that they take up each license individually. **Mr. Marney** concurred. **Mayor O'Neall** called for any objection and none was heard.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on License No. 15800.

There was no discussion.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON LICENSE NO. 15800 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Sprinkle, Marney, Therrien, Cleworth
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Ringstad
Mayor O'Neall declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to PROTEST License No. 20287.

Ms. Therrien stated that her reason for protesting the license was the applicant's failure to timely report and pay marijuana sales taxes on multiple occasions over the last couple of years.

Ms. Tidwell noted that the next license to be considered was for the same licensee. She asked if the problems and associated recommendation pertained to both businesses or just the retail store. CFO Bell confirmed that her recommendation was limited to License No. 20287 as this was the license associated with the taxes. **Ms. Tidwell** referenced the note in the memo that the Building

Official had not gotten a response from the licensee and, upon visiting the location, encountered a sign stating the store was permanently closed. **Mr. Marney** confirmed that he had driven by and seen the same sign earlier in that day. **Ms. Tidwell** asked why the licensee was still seeking to renew. Deputy Clerk Chase reported that the applicant had been notified of the hearing, that no response had been received, and that social media posts by the business had confirmed its closure.

Ms. Therrien asked if anyone knew whether the Good Titrations cultivation facility at the same address was also closed. **Mr. Marney** explained that he only saw the one entrance to the business, with the aforementioned closure sign displayed. **Mayor O'Neall** agreed that it was unclear.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO PROTEST LICENSE NO. 20287 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien, Marney, Sprinkle, Cleworth, Tidwell
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Ringstad
Mayor O'Neall declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if this was a situation where the State of Alaska Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) would have already ruled on the application regardless of whether the City had voted on it yet. Deputy Clerk Chase explained that they were still within the 60-day response window for the local governing bodies to weigh in and that even if AMCO had approved the renewal, it would be "with delegation," meaning a protest would be taken into consideration.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to PROTEST License No. 20289.

Ms. Sprinkle explained that given the signage on the building indicating that the retail business was permanently closed and that the licensee had not responded to the Building Official's attempts reach them, it would not make sense to approve the application for license renewal.

Mr. Cleworth added that if the same licensee had been failing to pay required taxes, there would be no reason to authorize continued cultivation, especially if the retail side had been shut down.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the licensee still owed the City money or if the issue was simply the tardiness of numerous filings. CFO Bell confirmed that the licensee currently owes four months of taxes. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked what they do in such situations. CFO Bell reported that she plans to meet with the City Attorney to discuss next steps.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO PROTEST LICENSE NO. 20289 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Cleworth, Marney, Sprinkle, Therrien
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Ringstad
Mayor O'Neall declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor O'Neall shared year-to-date statistics for calls handled by the Fairbanks Fire Department and Community Paramedic team. She provided an update on the new warming shelter which had raised $75,000 so far and was slated to open October 1st. She acknowledged that the facilitating entity, Northern Hope Center, still had a ways to go but that the support from the City Council and community had been tremendous so far.

Ms. Therrien asked if the shelter had received any funding from the Rasmussen Foundation. **Mayor O'Neall** stated they had not yet but were still in communication with the organization.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Marney reported that he had been given a tour of the warming shelter and was very impressed at the clean, structured system in place for the coming winter.

Ms. Therrien asked if the City could loan funds to the Northern Hope Center while they wait for grants and other funding sources to come in. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that would not be necessary nor possible. **Ms. Therrien** apologized for not having had time to work with the City Attorney on the e-bike ordinance but expressed appreciation over the growing public interest on the topic. She stated that she hopes many will engage with the Council during the process and that perhaps postponement should be considered so that more public input could be gathered.

Ms. Sprinkle congratulated Mr. Marney and all those who had advocated for the recently signed "Baby Box" bill *[see Alaska Senate Bill 9]*. She asked if the Council should determine where unit(s) would be installed. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that she was unsure but expected to receive further directions from the Governor's office soon.

NEW BUSINESS

a) Resolution No. 5233 – A Resolution Honoring the Life, Service, and Contributions of Long-Time City Employee William "Bill" Rogers. Sponsored by Councilmembers Therrien, Cleworth, Sprinkle, Tidwell, Marney, Ringstad, and Mayor O'Neall.

Clerk Note: As approved by the amended agenda, this item was taken up prior to Special Orders.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5233.

Ms. Therrien, read the full text of the resolution and asked that it be passed by unanimous consent. **Mayor O'Neall** called for any objection, and none was heard. **Ms. Therrien** presented flowers to the wife of W. Rogers, former Councilmember June Rogers, who requested to speak.

J. Rogers expressed gratitude to the Council and City staff for the resolution. She spoke of her husband's wonderful life and acknowledged that navigating his loss was the biggest hill she has ever had to climb. She asserted that Bill deserved all the kind words that were being shared about him and more. She stated that she was glad that so many had the opportunity to know him.

b) Resolution No. 5234 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply For Funds from the State of Alaska Department of Public Safety Division of Administrative Services Grants Office for the FFY2022 – FFY2025 Edward Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP). Sponsored by Mayor O'Neall.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

c) Ordinance No. 6354 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 46, Article IV, Division 5 - Illegal Activity Nuisance. Sponsored by Councilmember Cleworth.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

d) Ordinance No. 6355 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 78, Traffic and Vehicles, Adding Definitions Including Electric-Assisted Bicycle and Motorized Bicycle and Providing for Impoundment. Sponsored by Mayor O'Neall.

Mr. Marney stated that he pulled the item from the consent agenda to acknowledge that it was a good start, although the majority of the e-bikes across the community would likely be going into storage within the next few weeks. He suggested that the Council has until April 2027 to fine tune the ordinance. He shared that one of his main worries is liability in the event of a minor injuring someone or causing property damage. He asked what happens when an incident occurs involving a young person speeding around town at high speeds without insurance.

Mayor O'Neall acknowledged that this was the first time the ordinance had appeared on an agenda and that the Council would have the next work session to work through details. She stated that at that time the Council could decide whether to advance or postpone the ordinance. She asserted that the public had not been informed that the matter would be up for discussion, so she would not be entertaining discussion—only a motion to advance the ordinance.

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6355.

Ms. Therrien asked if the Council could consider putting off a vote until January in order to allow FAST Planning's WRRAC to complete its review of the e-bike issue. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that the Council could address that at the work session. **Ms. Therrien** questioned whether that was something that could be decided at a work session rather than a regular meeting. City Attorney Thomas Chard clarified that the work session could include thorough discussion on the ordinance but that any Council action would need to occur during a regular meeting.

Mr. Cleworth recounted that whenever an item is pulled from the consent agenda, the Council has had the ability to ask questions and discuss the item. He asked if the Mayor was asserting that the Council could not ask questions at this time. **Mayor O'Neall** confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Cleworth called a POINT OF ORDER to question whether the Mayor's ruling to prohibit discussion was in order.

Mayor O'Neall reiterated that the public had not been informed that the item would be discussed. **Mr. Cleworth** argued that it had been noticed as it was published in the newspaper. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that it was only noticed as a New Business item, up for advancement but not

discussion. **Mr. Cleworth** asserted that by being noticed in the newspaper, citizens could speak on the matter during Citizen's Comments, with another opportunity for public testimony when it returned for a second reading. He stated that he could not recall a time when the Council was unable to discuss an item removed from the consent agenda or ask questions about an ordinance under consideration for advancement.

Attorney Chard acknowledged a conflict between the technicality of what had been publicly noticed and the precedent of past practice. He confirmed that Mayor O'Neall was correct that the ordinance had been noticed as New Business, so the scope of discussion should be limited to whether not to advance the item. He confirmed that Mr. Cleworth was also correct that the Council traditionally had taken a broader approach, allowing discussion. He noted that the ruling of the Chair was that discussion beyond whether or not to advance the ordinance would not be permitted. He added that the Council may override the ruling.

Ms. Therrien asked if it was correct that because the ordinance had been pulled from the consent agenda, it would not automatically be advanced, which is why discussion should be permitted. Attorney Chard confirmed that the motion on the floor was whether or not to advance the ordinance, so discussion on that question was appropriate. He acknowledged a grey area regarding the scope of questions and other discussion that would inform Councilmembers' vote.

Ms. Sprinkle asked for clarification on parliamentary procedure. **Mayor O'Neall** indicated that the motion on the floor was whether to advance the ordinance and called for any further discussion on that motion.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to AMEND the motion to advance by allowing for discussion. **Mayor O'Neall** stated the motion was not allowed. Attorney Chard explained that the maker and second of the original motion would need to agree on the motion to amend but that it would essentially result in a motion to override the Chair's ruling. **Mayor O'Neall** reiterated that the motion was not in order.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he did not understand why the Mayor would not allow discussion when the Council had always been free to do so for 30 years. **Mayor O'Neall** explained that public testimony and transparency is important to her and that her intention is to notify through posted agendas when something would be worked through. She suggested that it is chaotic and confusing to entertain discussion without notifying the public. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that other ordinances, such as ordinances to approve an annual budget, are often amended at first reading prior to being advanced to second reading and public hearing. He asserted that the practice allows the public more time to see what changes were intended by the Council, that this had always been protocol, and that the Council has a right to make amendments prior to advancement. He reiterated that this had always been the Council's procedure, that he was alarmed by the significant changes to procedure, and that it made no sense to disallow greater transparency by allowing discussion.

Mayor O'Neall stated that having a discussion and making amendments on an ordinance which had not been discussed at a work session on was undue process to the public, regardless of past protocol. She asserted that it also violates the intent of the agenda.

Ms. Tidwell recounted the upcoming WRRAC meeting, which would be an informative opportunity to see what technical aspects are addressed by that body prior to the Council's work

session. She expressed agreement with Mr. Marney's comment about having plenty of time to get things right over the coming winter months. She stated that she looks forward to learning as much as she can on the issue and working through it together.

Mr. Marney asked if the front-page article in that day's newspaper counted as notice to the public.

Mr. Cleworth stated he is very alarmed by the Mayor's protocol and that he is glad to hear that FAST Planning would be working on the issue as their observations are valuable. He added, however, that the matter will ultimately be up to the Council. He acknowledged that the conversation would continue at the work session but noted that many people had conveyed to him a desire to be part of the process. He expressed hope that the Council does more than just rely on the input a FAST Planning committee.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 6355 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Sprinkle, Therrien, Tidwell
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Ringstad
Mayor O'Neall declared the MOTION CARRIED.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

a) Fairbanks Diversity Council Meeting Minutes of June 9, 2026

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

b) Clay Street Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes of August 5, 2026

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

c) Memorandum to Approve the Appointment of 2026 Election Officials

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

d) Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation Grant Analysis & Timeline Report

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ACCEPT the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation Grant Analysis & Timeline Report.

Ms. Sprinkle expressed concern and confusion over whether grantees who receive a large sum of bed tax funds from the City, such as Explore Fairbanks and the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) were conveying significant information by written report only, with the Council expected to read through it on their own, rather than a robust conversation as in the past.

Mayor O'Neall clarified that the report was required to be sent by FEDC and shared with the Council. CFO Bell confirmed that the Council had passed a resolution earlier in the year setting forth objectives for the FEDC, one of which was to identify $2MM in regional development grants

and to prepare a report of such by August 2026 *[see Resolution No. 5196, as Amended]*. She noted that another report traditionally occurs in November via a special work session for the FEDC and Explore Fairbanks to give a presentation and answer questions. She asked whether those work sessions had been scheduled. Deputy Clerk Chase stated that they had not and confirmed that the report before the Council was different than the annual presentation. **Mayor O'Neall** indicated that the Council could hold the annual presentations earlier than November, if desired. **Ms. Sprinkle** stated that she had only wanted to confirm that those presentations were in the works.

Ms. Therrien requested that the special work sessions allow more time than had been allowed in the past. She added that she would prefer up to two hours to go through the grant analysis and timeline report. Deputy Clerk Chase reiterated that the referenced report was separate from the annual presentation and asked if the request was to schedule a longer session to review the report in addition to the special work session for annual presentations. **Ms. Therrien** stated that she would be in favor of having only one longer, thorough meeting with the FEDC. **Mayor O'Neall** confirmed that she would work the Clerk's Office to schedule the special work sessions.

> **Mayor O'Neall** called for objection to the motion to ACCEPT the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation Grant Analysis & Timeline Report and, hearing none, declared the motion CARRIED.

e) Explore Fairbanks Draft Financial Statements (2024 & 2025)

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

f) Community Response Report

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

g) Appointment to the Discretionary Fund Committee

Mr. Cleworth stated the seat was previously filled by Samantha Kirstein. He asked if S. Kirstein had been invited to continue on the Committee. **Mayor O'Neall** confirmed that S. Kirstein had submitted an application for reappointment. **Mr. Cleworth** asserted that one of the City's strengths is its committees, with the Discretionary Fund Committee (DFC) being a good example. He declared that the Committee, with Mr. Marney as Chair, had done great work and that things had not always gone so smoothly. He stated that S. Kirstein was exemplary and choosing to not reappoint her concerned him. He acknowledged the Mayor's authority to select appointees, noted the Council's authority to approve or deny them, and stated he would not support the appointment.

Ms. Sprinkle acknowledged S. Kirstein's past service and expressed strong support for applicant Brenda Riley, noting B. Riley's extensive nonprofit experience. She regretted the contention surrounding the appointment but spoke highly of B. Riley.

Deputy Clerk Chase noted that the Fairbanks General Code included a limit of two consecutive full terms, which S. Kirstein had served. **Mayor O'Neall** confirmed that S. Kirstein had served two terms but clarified that DFC term limits had been eliminated *[see Ordinance No. 6336]*.

Mr. Marney shared that several Committee members were devastated to learn that S. Kirstein was not being reappointed. He explained that he had worked to keep the Committee roster stable in preparation for his departure and that he hopes there are no other resignations. He spoke of chairing the DFC for six years and stated that, although his term on the Council would soon end, he would like to meet with B. Riley to go over as much as possible before his departure.

Mayor O'Neall asserted that the appointment was by no means intended as a slight to any previous Committee member. She acknowledged the great heart of those who serve and how when a new individual expresses a desire to have that same chance, she wants to support the opportunity. She spoke to the credentials of B. Riley and declared that she would be an outstanding Committee member and would surely be happy to meet with Mr. Marney.

Ms. Therrien pointed out that one of the pages in the appointment packet also referenced the former term limits. Deputy Clerk Chase indicated that information would be corrected.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE the Appointment to the Discretionary Fund Committee.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE APPOINTMENT TO THE DISCRETIONARY FUND COMMITTEE AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Therrien, Sprinkle
NAYS: Marney, Cleworth
ABSENT: Ringstad
Mayor O'Neall declared the MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

a) Discussion on Mayor's Memorandum to Department Heads (August 19) Regarding Procedure for Councilmember Requests [item added by Councilmember Cleworth]

Mr. Cleworth stated that he had asked that the item be added to the agenda after it came to the Council's attention that there was a change in policy. He read excerpts from the memo and asserted that the direction to department heads would make the free flow of information more difficult. He noted that department heads had long been free to share information in meetings and that, while the Mayor did not always agree, they were consistently able to speak openly. He noted that employees must now be cautious when speaking with Councilmembers about matters that may differ from the administration's position and are required to report any such inquiries immediately. He added that he had never seen this occur before. **Mr. Cleworth** acknowledged that the Council had a right to make direct inquiries through the City Attorney and City Clerk and asked if requests to other departments through these two offices must also be reported to the Mayor if it was coming on behalf of a Councilmember. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that it did not and that this would be the appropriate way to request information from the administration. **Mr. Cleworth** reported that he recently notified the Engineering Department about several lights being out, and the issue was resolved within 24 hours. He stated that the memo implied his request should have been reported to the Mayor's office and asked whether that had occurred. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that it had not but that it should have so the administration could have reported back. **Mr. Cleworth** discussed another recent request asking the Fire Chief to provide an opinion on a matter which he had

planned to testify to at a coming FAST Planning meeting. He noted that the Fire Chief had committed to get back to him the following morning but that the follow-up never occurred, which he later learned was due to the new policy. He reiterated concerns about the flow of information. **Mayor O'Neall** asked Mr. Cleworth if he testified at FAST Planning that he had heard from the Fire Chief. **Mr. Cleworth** indicated that he had not, on this subject, as he still had not received an answer. He asked if the new process was that the Fire Chief should share the requested information with the Mayor who would then relay the information to him. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that would work. **Mr. Cleworth** asserted that this seemed to be how it had to work, asserting that the Fire Chief clearly did not feel like he could provide the answer directly.

Ms. Therrien shared that she had spoken to staff at the Public Works Department about water buildup outside her condo and asked if that needed to go through the Mayor or if that was considered communication as a citizen. **Mayor O'Neall** indicated that the latter was correct.

Mayor O'Neall clarified that the memo was for department heads working directly for the administration and that the directive's intent is to have everyone on the same page, especially when sharing anything with the Council, and to relay clear, consistent information. She stated that managing her staff is within her prerogative, and others are entitled to disagree. She clarified that the memo was simply a leadership directive intended to ensure the best service to the community, and that any other interpretation was incorrect.

Ms. Therrien shared that she had called the Building Department regarding a permit for work her building's elevator. She asked to confirm that the Mayor's directive did not apply as this was unrelated to her work as a Councilmember. **Mayor O'Neall** confirmed that this was correct.

Ms. Sprinkle acknowledged the Mayor's authority to manage her staff but suggested that the memo gave the impression that information flow may be negatively impacted. She discussed how she and other Councilmembers regularly engage with those on the frontlines to gather information and be informed enough to answer citizens' questions. She asked if that would no longer be possible. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that was not the case and while some Mayors had restricted communications between staff and Council, that was not her intent. She added that if it was, she would have indicated that in the memo. She stated that her intent is to uphold the chain of command and continue providing the Council and community with accurate, consistent information.

Mr. Cleworth discussed a hypothetical scenario of approaching the CFO during the budget process to ask if she agreed with certain aspects of the budget as presented to the Council. He asked if the CFO would have a right to give her opinion. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that she would. **Mr. Cleworth** noted that the memo states that the CFO would be required to immediately report the inquiry to the Mayor and asked if that was correct. **Mayor O'Neall** stated that it was and suggested that if Mr. Cleworth was looking to do something without the Mayor's knowledge, he should do so through the City Attorney or City Clerk.

Mr. Marney shared that he had a few recent incidents of reaching out to Fairbanks Police Department staff for various items and had received no response. He stated that it had been a pleasure over the past six years to get to know employees across all departments and noted that the Council had achieved significant progress during his tenure, particularly in the areas of recruitment and retention. He asserted the accomplishments were due to the many one-on-one

conversations, hearing staff's side of an issue, and working together to fix it. He expressed his belief that the community was now broken and that perhaps it was a good time for him to leave.

Ms. Therrien asked to be excused for the next two work sessions and the next regular meeting as she would be traveling out of the country. She provided a report on the recent Alaska Municipal League Summer (AML) Legislative Conference which had occurred in Fairbanks. She expressed a desire to stay on the Legislative Committee next year.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if there had been any discussion about data centers at the AML conference. **Ms. Therrien** indicated that the Legislative Committee had not been involved with the issue but noted that the Municipality of Anchorage had passed an ordinance earlier in the year about data centers. She asked that the Clerk's Office share that document with the Council.

Ms. Tidwell suggested that more had been read into the Mayor's memo than was intended. She recounted joining the Council years ago and learning that direct engagement with department heads was inappropriate. She concurred that communication and requests from the Council to staff should go through City Clerk and City Attorney. She shared having attended a play at the Hap Ryder Riverfront Theatre and spoke highly of the experience and venue. She reported that she participated in the annual Great Alaska Stair Climb, which was an incredible experience.

Ms. Therrien added that she would miss out on the mini-golf match with the Borough Assembly.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Deputy Clerk Chase reviewed details about the Council's mini-golf match against the Assembly, provided details about in-person absentee voting at the Clerk's Office, and recognized young Fairbanksans participating in student council elections at many local schools.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard reported recently running into Victor Buberge, who assured him that while his health had been a challenge as of late, he was taking note of which streetlights were out and planned to report on such to the Council in the near future.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ENTER into Executive Session to discuss Negotiation of 123 Lacey Street Agreement.

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

Mayor O'Neall called for a recess at 8:12 p.m. after which the Council reconvened in Executive Session.

a) Negotiation of 123 Lacey Street Agreement [permissible under State law, including the provision at AS 44.62.310(c)(1)]

The Executive Sessions began at 8:25 p.m. Those present were Mayor O'Neall; Councilmembers Cleworth, Therrien, Marney, Tidwell, and Sprinkle; Deputy Clerk Chase; Attorney Chard; Chief of Staff Sanders (remotely); CFO Bell; Human Resources Director Merritt. The session concluded at 8:51 p.m.

Mr. Cleworth stated that the Council met in Executive Session to discuss Negotiation of 123 Lacey Street Agreement. He affirmed that no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

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

MINDY O'NEALL, MAYOR

ATTEST:

D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC