



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, SEPTEMBER 29, 2025
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 City Council Chambers at 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Mayor David Pruhs 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

Absent: None

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
 Thomas Chard, City Attorney
 Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
 Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer
 Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director (remotely)
 Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)
 Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief (remotely)
 Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief
 Dominic Lozano, Fire Battalion Chief
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Jarrod Zerbe, Code Compliance and Safety Specialist (remotely)

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, **Mr. Marney** led the flag salutation.

CEREMONIAL MATTERS (Proclamations, Introductions, Recognitions, Awards)

Mayor Pruhs shared that City Hostess Pearl Watson had recently passed away and stated that they would be creating a space in City Hall to display information about past City Hostesses. He read the full text of Resolution No. 5187, a Resolution in Recognition of and Appreciation for Pearl Watson, the Official Hostess of the City of Fairbanks. He presented a framed copy of the resolution and a custom gold pan to her family. He concluded by sharing a personal memory of P. Watson from his youth.

Fire Chief Andrew Cocco recognized retiring Battalion Chief Dominic Lozano for his 20 years of service to the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks Fire Department.

Buddy Lane, Environmental and Safety Manager with Golden Heart Waste Management, shared that his company had recently hosted its second annual Family Fun Day and Big Truck Show. He presented an award for 3rd Place in the Vocational category of the Truck Show to the City of Fairbanks Public Work Department for the garbage collection truck they had entered. He thanked the City for participating and invited more equipment to be brought to next year's event.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

[Clerk Note: Names of citizens who provide comments may not be spelled correctly if their name was illegible on the physical sign-up sheet.]

Bill Wright, Director of Tourism and Meeting Sales for Explore Fairbanks – B. Wright gave a report on his team's work showcasing Fairbanks as a travel destination, including familiarization tours and site visits as well as international sales missions. He shared that due to heightened interest from Latin American areas, Explore Fairbanks will be publishing new travel brochures in both Spanish and Portuguese. He reported that year-to-date comparisons from 2024 show a 6% decrease in hotel occupancy, a 3% increase in nightly room rates, and a 3% increase in traffic coming through Fairbanks International Airport. B. Wright thanked those who had attended Explore Fairbanks' recent candidate forum and the City Council for supporting the organization's efforts.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger asked if there was any rush to determine what would be built on the Polaris Building site. He urged the Council to consider holding off on making any decisions for a year or two rather than taking on a multimillion-dollar project that would fall to the taxpayers. He suggested letting the space be a temporary park and spoke against any project that would increase congestion in the area. He pointed out that the building sat vacant for decades, so an empty lot for a couple years would not be terrible. He stated that private development may be the best approach.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to APPROVE the agenda and consent agenda.

Ms. Sprinkle pulled item 12(e), Resolution No. 5190, from the consent agenda.

Mr. Cleworth pulled item 12(a), Resolution No. 5186, from the consent agenda.

Mayor Pruhs called for objection to the APPROVAL of the agenda, as amended, and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of August 25, 2025

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Regular Meeting Minutes of September 8, 2025

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
3050	All Star	Restaurant/ Eating Place	All Star, LLC	1448 S. Cushman Street
3336	Soapy Smith's Pioneer Restaurant	Restaurant/ Eating Place (Seasonal)	Nicholas V. Stepovich	543 2nd Avenue

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

Mayor Pruhs called for testimony and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
10131	Pakalolo Supply Company, Inc	Retail Marijuana Store	Pakalolo Supply Company, Inc	1851 Fox Avenue
10230	Pakalolo Supply Company, Inc	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	Pakalolo Supply Company, Inc	1851 Fox Avenue

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the marijuana license applications for renewal.

Mayor Pruhs called for testimony and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor Pruhs reported it had been a busy week cleaning up the properties at 1725 Willow Street and 1037 Third Avenue; he added that adding the Code Compliance and Safety Specialist position the year prior was a wise investment. He declared that the site of the former Polaris Building will henceforth be referred to as the "Starter Block on Lacey Street" as a way to move forward from the past and look to the future. He shared that installation of a temporary ice rink on the property would begin soon. **Mayor Pruhs** discussed the annual Halloween event taking place at City Hall, including plans for the Council to decorate Council Chambers and to find a sponsor to cover the cost of candy. Chief of Staff Sanders estimated that between three and four thousand people participated in 2024.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth asked what the official block number was for the Starter Block on Lacey Street. **Mayor Pruhs** admitted that he was unsure of the exact block number.

Ms. Therrien stated that she would like to give a land acknowledgement but had misplaced her printed statement. She asked if the City Clerk could look up the statement and read it on her behalf.

Ms. Sprinkle reported that she attended the last Borough Assembly meeting as the City Council representative and gave a lengthy report on the recent work done by the Council. She shared that Assemblymembers appeared to be impressed and that she fielded several questions.

Mr. Ringstad indicated that he had no comments.

Mr. Marney shared that he had been to two separate candidate forums in the past week and that it was enjoyable to attend as a someone who was not running for office.

Ms. Tidwell provided a report of recent activity by the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC), including an update on the FEDC's effort to become the Alaska Regional Development Organization for the Fairbanks area. She shared details about an upcoming candidate forum and an event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the completion of the Yukon River Bridge.

Clerk Snider, fulfilling the earlier request of Ms. Therrien, gave a land acknowledgement.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6325, as Amended – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Section 2-63, Succession to Office of Acting Mayor, and Section 2-64, Salary of Acting

Mayor. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. POSTPONED from the Regular Meeting of September 8; a public hearing was held at that time.

Note: Ordinance No. 6325, as Amended, was introduced at the Regular Meeting of August 25, 2025, and ADVANCED to the Regular Meeting of September 8, 2025, at which time a motion to ADOPT was made and a public hearing was held. The ordinance was then AMENDED and POSTPONED to the Regular Meeting of September 29, 2025. The motion to ADOPT remained on the floor.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6325, as Amended, by substituting the amended, proposed version.

Mayor Pruhs called for objection to the motion to AMEND Ordinance No. 6325, as Amended, by substituting the amended, proposed version and, seeing none, declared the MOTION CARRIED.

M. Sanders explained that the changes in the proposed version were primarily to designate that, should the office of Mayor be vacated, the Chief of Staff would temporarily step in to fulfill those duties, without any additional compensation, until the City Council performed its obligation to appoint someone to the position, who would serve until an election could be held.

Mr. Marney stated that he believes Ordinance No. 6325, as Amended, and Ordinance No. 6327 have the full support of the Council and suggested that everyone be added as co-sponsors. **Mayor Pruhs** asked if any Councilmember objected to the suggestion and none did.

Ms. Therrien recounted that she had missed the previous Work Session and asked for a recap of the discussion on the ordinance. **Mayor Pruhs** summarized the issues that had been presented and reviewed the solutions offered within the proposed version.

City Attorney Chard clarified that while the Chief of Staff would temporarily assume the duties of the office of Mayor under the ordinance, the Council would be required to meet within seven days to determine how to proceed with filling the vacancy, which would vary based on the length of time until the next regular election.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6325, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6325, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6326 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Section 14-433 Rotation Tow List Eligibility Requirements. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6326.

Mayor Pruhs called for testimony and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

Ms. Tidwell expressed disappointment that the single towing company being accommodated by the deadline extension in the ordinance was not there to answer questions. She stated that while she empathizes with them, she is concerned by the distance people may have to drive to retrieve their vehicle. She also was concerned about the six-month extension to enforce the 10-mile proximity requirement. *[see Ordinance No. 6312, as Amended, and the Regular Meeting minutes of April 12, 2025]*.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if there was a way to limit the mileage charge for towing fees to 10 miles. **Mayor Pruhs** explained the concern of individuals from Fairbanks having to drive beyond North Pole to pick up their vehicle.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6326 by adding "This will be the final exemption allowed" as a new item 5 under Sec. 14-433(a).

Attorney Chard pointed out that the motion would add the language to the Fairbanks General Code (FGC). He suggested instead that the Council remember the sentiment of the amendment should there be an additional request for extending the implementation date.

Mr. Cleworth, with the concurrence of the second, revised his motion to AMEND to instead insert the proposed language as a fourth "Whereas" statement.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6326 BY ADDING A FOURTH WHEREAS STATEMENT TO READ "THIS WILL BE THE FINAL EXEMPTION ALLOWED" AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6326, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Ringstad, Cleworth, Marney, Therrien

NAYS: Tidwell

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6326, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6327 – An Ordinance Enacting Fairbanks General Code Chapter 25 Emergency Operations. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Tidwell, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6327.

Mayor Pruhs called for testimony and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

M. Sanders explained that Ordinance No. 6327 is a result of several senior staff members attending a presentation at UAF regarding organizational best practices during emergencies. He reported that the training also including important details on how the City could be reimbursed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in the event of a declared emergency. He shared that the ordinance was the product of significant collaboration between senior staff.

Mr. Cleworth stated that the last time an emergency declaration was put into effect was under Mayor Matherly during the COVID-19 pandemic. He recounted the troubling experience of the Mayor determining which businesses could remain open, noting that many decisions were eventually rethought and closure mandates were lifted within a month. He asked if the language in the ordinance included granting the Mayor that kind of authority should a similar situation arise in the future. M. Sanders explained that the Mayor already has that authority under state law, and it is not changed by the ordinance. **Mr. Cleworth** acknowledged that a system of checks and balances is in place so the Council could end an emergency declaration or alter certain conditions.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6327 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6327 ADOPTED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 5186 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for Funds from the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5186.

Mr. Cleworth noted that the grant is to be used at the former Polaris Building site. He pointed out the possibility that a proposal could be accepted by the Council for development of the block with construction potentially commencing as early as 2026. He asked if the City would be allowed to use the grant funds for a different project if that happened. M. Sanders explained that while the City would not be able to use the funds for another project, the grant would be written in such a way that the materials being purchased could be used at another location.

Ms. Sprinkle expressed support for the resolution and thanked M. Sanders for spearheading it.

Mayor Pruhs shared that he and staff had a great meeting with the Alaska Department of Natural Resources where they were informed of the grant opportunity and were encouraged to apply.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5186 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Marney, Therrien, Ringstad, Cleworth, Tidwell
NAYS: None
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution
No. 5186 APPROVED.

- b) Resolution No. 5187 – A Resolution in Recognition of and Appreciation for Pearl Watson, the Official Hostess of the City of Fairbanks. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Resolution No. 5188 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply and Accept Funds from the FY2024 Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Appropriations for the Wastewater Biosolids Treatment Project. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Resolution No. 5189 – A Resolution Approving the Purchase of Lots 9 and 10, Block 6, of the Johnston Subdivision, Also Known As 1725 Willow Street. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- e) Resolution No. 5190 – A Resolution Seeking Support to Alleviate the Burden on the City of Fairbanks if a Gas Line is Constructed from the North Slope. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5190.

Ms. Sprinkle asked to be added as a co-sponsor. She noted that the Council did not have a chance to discuss the resolution at the last Work Session and requested a brief summary.

Mayor Pruhs shared that he has been interested in natural gas for the Fairbanks area for over a decade and that had been too complicated for the City to purchase it directly. He expressed support for those local individuals who made bold decisions with the creation of the Interior Gas Utility (IGU) and efforts to make natural gas installation and purchasing affordable for their members. He acknowledged that with the potential construction of a new gas line, the cost of constructing a dedicated spur to Fairbanks would be untenable for the current 2,400 IGU ratepayers to shoulder. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that the goal should be to advocate that the majority of the cost for a spur line be tied into the construction budget for the main line, thus alleviating the burden on current and future IGU ratepayers, as well as the City. He reiterated that they want to see natural gas come to Fairbanks in the cheapest manner possible.

Mr. Ringstad expressed frustration with existing policies and contracts in the oil industry where in-state users pay higher rates for the oil that is produced and refined in Alaska. He reported that other places in the country and world have arrangements where those that live in the place where a resource is developed enjoy a lower rate than others and that that is how it should be for Alaskans. He agreed that the resolution is an example of doing the right thing for the public.

Ms. Sprinkle reported that the Chamber of Commerce's Board of Directors, several of their committees, and the City's own lobbyist are vigilantly discussing the issue. She concurred that it will be an important discussion at the state level.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5190, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 5190 APPROVED.

- f) Ordinance No. 6328 – An Ordinance Amending the 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Third Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Board of Plumber Examiner Meeting Minutes of June 17, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Fairbanks Diversity Council Meeting Minutes of July 8, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Fairbanks Diversity Council Meeting Minutes of August 12, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Appointment to the Fairbanks Diversity Council

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Tidwell stated that she had no reports or comments.

Mr. Cleworth spoke of two abandoned vehicles in the Lavery Transportation Center (LTC) and stated he hopes to see them removed before winter. He discussed a recent study done by Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning, using congestion mitigation funding, to predict future electric vehicle (EV) presence and needs in the community. He reported that a request for proposals (RFP) would be issued for the construction and maintenance of an EV charging facility. He shared that a challenge is that it may have to be located on public property, which would be subject to approval by the Department of Transportation (DOT). **Mr. Cleworth** pointed out that

the private sector is moving forward with EV efforts, noting that charging stations are reportedly being installed at Fred Meyer West as well as the North Pole Three Bears store. He discussed the likelihood of an EV boom in Fairbanks being impacted by barges being unwilling to transport EVs due to the fire risk. He shared that EV sales have been decreasing nationwide but increasing in Europe and that the majority are being manufactured in China. He suggested that a charging station could be installed at the LTC. He acknowledged that it is a rapidly changing and interesting topic.

M. Sanders stated that he was under the impression that the two vehicles had already been removed from the LTC. He affirmed that they would be removed within the next day.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the library would be a feasible location for an EV charging station. **Mr. Cleworth** explained that the library is Borough property and could be considered, but the Borough would then be responsible for maintenance. He noted that fast-charging stations are preferred for public use, but they are expensive and grants are in the multimillion-dollar range.

Ms. Therrien shared that she had just returned from a trip to Iceland, where they have a goal to be completely converted to EVs by the year 2027. She pointed out that the country benefits from a significant amount of free geothermal energy.

Mr. Ringstad stated that a company had recently put a hydrogen-powered engine on the market.

Mr. Cleworth discussed fuel cells as another option and stated that the market is rapidly changing.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if FAST Planning had any more details on why the Minnie Street Bridge was not included in its projects. **Mr. Cleworth** reported that FAST Planning would soon be reviewing the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), and he hopes the Minnie Street Bridge will be included.

Ms. Therrien shared that Pearl Watson had been a good client of hers and suggested that all Councilmembers be added as co-sponsors of Resolution No. 5187. No Councilmembers objected.

Mr. Marney reported that Explore Fairbanks' final audit was scheduled for completion by September 30. He discussed legislative priorities, such as the proposed Alaska Long Trail as well as the desire of the Fairbanks Police Department to bring back retired law enforcement personnel to assist during times of staffing shortages, training, or other temporary assignments.

Mr. Ringstad pointed out that when the Council lists so many things in the City's legislative priorities, the majority never get touched. He expressed his preference to not include everything on the City's wish list but rather focus on the realistic and important items.

Ms. Sprinkle stated that she loves the Mayor's plan to display information about past City Hostesses within City Hall. She indicated that the quality of work done on the Cowles Street reconstruction was great but that she does not like the design of Airport Frontage Road having two giant cul-de-sac dead ends on either side of Cowles.

Mayor Pruhs read correspondence from the Alaska Municipal League (AML) inviting him to speak at their annual conference in December on "Revitalization Strategy and Community

Building – How Local Leaders Spark Renewal Through Housing, Small Business Support, and Year-round Placemaking Through Aligning Tribes, Cities, and Nonprofits to Create Resilient Public Spaces.” He shared that the letter suggested that the City’s recent work downtown would be an excellent example to point to. **Mayor Pruhs** asserted that the Fairbanks City Council is the best municipal government in the Interior, if not the entire state, and that the City’s efforts to rebuild Fairbanks are being recognized.

Ms. Therrien asked Mayor Pruhs if would like the Legislative Committee to take a first look at a list of legislative priorities, then bring something to a Work Session before the Council gets busy with the annual budget process. **Mr. Ringstad** stated he would prefer individual Councilmembers to come up with their own priorities for discussion. **Mayor Pruhs** requested that Councilmembers submit to him their own lists of ideas by October 30, after which he, Ms. Therrien, and Mr. Ringstad would go through and rank them prior to a Work Session.

CITY CLERK’S REPORT

Clerk Snider reminded everyone that Early Voting and absentee in-person would remain open until the close of business Monday, October 6, and that the Regular Election is Tuesday, October 7, with polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

CITY ATTORNEY’S REPORT

Attorney Chard shared that the new Deputy City Attorney starts on Wednesday and that he would bring her to the next Work Session or Regular Meeting to introduce her to the Council. He expressed appreciation for the Councilmembers’ commitment and service to the community.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor Pruhs called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

Mayor Pruhs declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC