



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, OCTOBER 13, 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)
 Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief
 Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Robert Pristash, City Engineer
 Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, Clerk Snider led the flag salutation.

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger shared that one of his biggest concerns is the possibility of hitting someone on the road. He discussed having had close calls with pedestrians around the intersection of Airport Way and Cushman Street. He spoke of public intoxication and the lack of reflective clothing being significant contributing factors and expressed concern that he might someday have to go to court for accidentally hitting a pedestrian despite his best efforts to avoid doing so.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

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

Clerk Snider read the consent agenda into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of September 29, 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
3483	Fairbanks Curling Club	Beverage Dispensary	Fairbanks Curling Club, Inc.	1962 2nd Avenue
4488	RJ's Lounge & Grill	Beverage Dispensary	Roy J. Stoltz	3450 Airport Way

Mr. Marney, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, 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: Sprinkle, Ringstad, Cleworth, Tidwell, Marney, Therrien

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
17250	Pipe and Leaf: Premium Alaskan Cannabis	Retail Marijuana Store	Pipe and Leaf, LLC	3546 Airport Way

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the marijuana license application 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 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Sprinkle, Therrien, Cleworth, Tidwell, Ringstad
NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

Type/License: Beverage Dispensary, License #556
DBA: The International Hotel & Bar
Location: 122 N. Turner Street, Fairbanks
From Owner: Hard Work, LLC
To Owner: The Big Eye, LLC

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

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

Ms. Sprinkle questioned whether there had been any significant police activity at the location. **Mayor Pruhs** responded that there had been no recent issues.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien, Cleworth, Sprinkle, Ringstad, Marney, Tidwell
NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- d) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing and considered the following marijuana license application for transfer of controlling interest:

Type/License: Marijuana Product Manufacturing Facility, License #15800
DBA: Baked Alaska, LLC
Applicant: Baked Alaska, LLC
Location: 2745 Hanson Road, Unit B, Fairbanks

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the marijuana license application for transfer of controlling interest.

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

In response to a Councilmember's inquiry about details of the transfer, Clerk Snider explained that it is a transfer of controlling interest from Steve Hallsten (50%) and Ryan Hallsten (50%) to Ryan Hallsten (100%).

Mr. Cleworth asked if this was one of the businesses for which they had received odor complaints. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that it was not. A brief discussion followed regarding other businesses in the marijuana industry for which the City had received odor-related complaints in the past and how the City has handled such situations.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE MARIJUANA LICENSE APPLICATION FOR TRANSFER OF CONTROLLING INTEREST AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor Pruhs asked Chief of Staff Sanders to provide an update on the childcare facility project at City Hall. M. Sanders reported that he hosted a second walkthrough with representatives from the Enep'ut Children's Center and that they are very interested in the space as well as the area currently used by the Boys & Girls Club (BGC). He was optimistic about the potential partnership.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if there was an anticipated timeline. M. Sanders explained that while it would hopefully come to fruition by the end of the year, such details were still unknown.

Mayor Pruhs reported that the BGC has significant amounts of unpaid rent and that the City would be sending an official letter to them in that regard.

Mr. Marney asked about pricing for a potential rental agreement. M. Sanders explained that the issue would be approached with long-term goals in mind and that details were still being discussed.

Mayor Pruhs discussed the log cabin downtown currently rented by the Yukon Quest. He shared that the organization would like to move out on April 1, 2026 but that doing so would cause them to break their lease. He added that they are also requesting to have their rent waived until that time. He suggested that the City consider creating a lottery to operate out of the cabin in the future.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Ringstad noted that a lot of campaign signs had come down quickly after the recent local election. He expressed appreciation for Fairbanks Police Department officers with whom he had interacted with the night before, highlighting their quick response time.

Mr. Marney, Ms. Tidwell, and Ms. Sprinkle each indicated they had no comments.

Ms. Therrien gave a land acknowledgement and noted that it was Indigenous Peoples' Day.

Mr. Cleworth indicated that he would defer his comments until later in the meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6328 – An Ordinance Amending the 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Third Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6328.

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

Chief Financial Officer Bell provided a summary of the changes included within the ordinance.

Ms. Sprinkle asked for more information about reduced rental revenues and the new vehicle for the Emergency Service Patrol (ESP). CFO Bell provided additional details on both items.

Ms. Therrien asked how the \$275,000 from the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) for the ESP would be used. CFO Bell confirmed that a large portion of the funds would be used to purchase a new van for the ESP. **Ms. Therrien** inquired if the increased payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) would be reflected in future years. CFO Bell stated that the amount would be for the next five years. She explained that the PILT comes from the City's contract with the military and increases whenever there is a Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) increase for servicemembers.

Mr. Marney asked if the ESP would now have three vehicles. M. Sanders confirmed that was so but noted that two of them are nearly non-functional and require significant mechanical work.

Mr. Ringstad asked for clarity on the reallocation of \$100,000 from the contingency fund for an ESP van. CFO Bell explained that the Mayor has a contingency fund for capital needs and that the purchase of the new ESP van would come from that account.

Ms. Tidwell asked if the increase to salary and benefits for temporary workers at Public Works was in addition to the original budget. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that the 2025 budget had not provided as much funding for temporary labor as in the previous year, with the understanding that the item would be revisited in the fall, if necessary. **Ms. Tidwell** asked what the current balance of that line item was, adding that she was under the impression the City would be saving money in that area for the year. CFO Bell clarified that the original budget was \$1.4MM and that, to date, about \$966,000 had been spent. She indicated that the ordinance would ensure the department had sufficient funds to cover a heavy snowfall event before the end of 2025, should it occur.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if any remaining balance to that account would artificially increase the Employee Capital Incentive Program (ECIP). CFO Bell explained that it would not, as the ECIP is based on the original budget.

Mr. Ringstad noted that the transfer ensures labor funding through the end of the year. He pointed out that with emergency funds, the total amount available is \$450,000. CFO Bell clarified that the other funds Mr. Ringstad was referring to may only be used if an emergency is declared.

Mr. Marney asked for clarification on salary savings. CFO Bell explained that the funds being discussed were only related to temporary labor, not regular salaries for permanent positions.

Mr. Cleworth asserted that the City had never done well at being a landlord and suggested that the anytime a portion of City Hall or another City-owned property is leased, the rent should at least cover the space's overhead costs. He recounted that a formula had been created in the past to determine appropriate rent amounts, but the City had long since veered from that practice. He stated that the current situation has resulted in taxpayers subsidizing the BGC, which should not continue. He expressed his belief that the increase to Public Works temporary labor was proactive and that the Finance Committee had a goal of not needing another budget amendment before the end of the year. He discussed how the surplus of \$2.3MM at the start of the year had dwindled to only \$88,000. He expressed concern with spending trends and acknowledged that there may be some salary savings available to transfer to capital needs.

Mr. Ringstad concurred with Mr. Cleworth about the slim budget. He asked if salary savings at Public Works could be used to cover temporary laborers. CFO Bell provided details about the projected salary savings and temporary labor, noting the net amount would be about \$300,000. She confirmed that most of the funds within the budget amendment should come back as surplus if there were not significant needs for snow removal. She expressed concern over the growing practice of treating salary savings as a slush fund.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6328 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Tidwell, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Therrien
NAYS: None
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6328 ADOPTED.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of April 2, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of June 3, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Historic Preservation Commission Meeting Minutes of July 25, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Clay Street Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes of September 3, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- e) Reappointment to the Building Code & Landscape Review & Appeals Commission

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- f) Third Quarter Sole Source Purchasing Report

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Ms. Therrien recounted that the Mayor had asked Councilmembers to submit legislative priorities by October 31 and noted that department heads had been asked to do the same by October 24. She asked that she and Mr. Ringstad receive those requests so they could begin working on them, with the hope to meet with the Interior Delegation sometime in November. She discussed a national Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) competition for middle schoolers which she hopes could be brought to Fairbanks and committed to reaching out to the school district. She spoke of the Alaska Municipal League (AML) annual conference, expressed a desire to attend, and stated that Ms. Sprinkle had also conveyed interest in going. She noted the Mayor had requested an increase in the travel budget and asked if that was for the Mayor and Chief of Staff to attend the AML conference as well. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that was correct.

Ms. Tidwell stated that she had no committee reports. She pointed out that Halloween was approaching and encouraged the Council to put something together for the City Hall event.

Mr. Marney reported that the Q&A session for the Discretionary Fund Committee would take place at noon on October 15. He stated that it had been a pleasure working with Mayor Pruhs.

Mr. Ringstad stated that he had no reports or comments.

Ms. Sprinkle reported that the recent event at the Starter Block on Lacey Street had been great and thanked Mayor Pruhs for his work on the property. She shared that at the recent meeting of Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning's Project Enhancement Committee, she had suggested the Clay Street Cemetery due to its proximity to the Steese Highway.

Mr. Cleworth thanked staff for removing the abandoned vehicles from the Lavery Transportation Center. He asked if a vehicle had been acquired for use by FAST Planning. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that one had been identified, but it had not yet been communicated to anyone at FAST Planning. **Mr. Cleworth** discussed news about a potential bike path on the north side of the Chena River.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider reminded everyone that the final absentee and questioned ballot count would take place the following afternoon at 2 p.m. at the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly Chambers and is open to the public.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

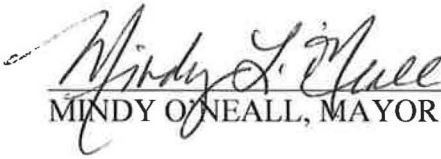
Attorney Chard reported that the new Deputy City Attorney was settling in well and would likely attend the next work session to be formally introduced to the Council.

ADJOURNMENT

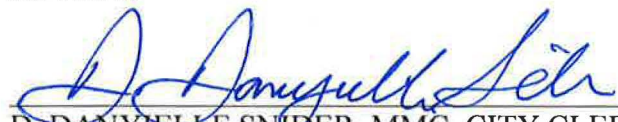
Ms. Tidwell moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

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

Mayor Pruhs declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.


MINDY O'NEALL, MAYOR

ATTEST:


D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC