



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, DECEMBER 1, 2025  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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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'Neal 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. Danyelle Snider, City Clerk  
Thomas Chard, City Attorney  
Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff  
Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer  
Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director (remotely)  
Andrew Coccato, Fire Chief  
Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director  
Robert Pristash, City Engineer  
Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)  
Jennifer Payan, Accounting Specialist (remotely)  
Brenda McFarlane, Crisis Now Coordinator (remotely)

### INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyelle Snider.

### FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor O'Neal, **Mr. Cleworth** led the flag salutation.

### 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.]*

Glenn Carlo – G. Carlo stated that he serves on the board of Denakkanaaga and expressed support for Ordinance No. 6332. He discussed the Caps for Cops program where, for the last several years, Alaska Native Elders have taught law enforcement officers how to make their own fur hats, serving as an opportunity to make connections and build respect. He spoke of the need to work together to celebrate the community's diversity and stated that a land acknowledgement serves to accomplish

that goal. He shared details of a pictograph near Salcha that stood for centuries, used by Alaska Natives as a lookout, noting that it had to be destroyed for construction of the Richardson Highway.

*Steve Ginnis* – S. Ginnis indicated that this was his third time speaking to the Council about the need for a land acknowledgement to be recited at Council meetings and added that the statement did not belong just on the wall outside the chambers. He spoke of the potential for improved relationships. He asked the Council to be mindful of their peoples' contributions to the local economy and to understand that they did not have to live here and could move their businesses away from Fairbanks. S. Ginnis asserted that they were not seeking special privileges but simply recognition that they were the first people to inhabit the area, which he believes is a small request.

*Stacey Fritz* – S. Fritz shared that she moved to the area in 1994 and discussed the term “colonial settler.” She spoke of the challenges of people who are colonized as well as the opportunity for all to succeed when both cultures are celebrated. She spoke in support of a land acknowledgement at the beginning of Council meetings.

*Brian Ridley* – B. Ridley shared that he is from the village of Eagle, Alaska and has served as the Chairman of Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) for the last few years. He stated that Fairbanks sits on the ancestral lands of the Lower Tanana people who lived here long before the city was established. He discussed the strain that has existed for decades between the City of Fairbanks and the Native community, citing a land acknowledgement as a small, meaningful way to bridge that gap. He asserted that it does not assign blame but simply recognizes history, without attempting to rewrite it. He shared examples of land acknowledgement practices in other community settings and reiterated that this was a long overdue step to rebuild trust and foster more inclusivity for all who call Fairbanks home. He added that the few seconds it takes could have a profound impact, potentially preventing serious problems such as the Fairbanks Four tragedy.

**Ms. Therrien** thanked B. Ridley for his comments and stated that anything the Council can do to encourage more communication would be wonderful. B. Ridley shared that the recognition of Indigenous people is very different over the border. He stated that the relationship between Native organizations and government in Canada is much better.

*Shirley Lee* – S. Lee shared that she is the Deputy Director of Fairbanks Native Association (FNA) and that her organization joins with others to support Ordinance No. 6332. She explained that the proposed language was drafted by Alaska Native Elders and that a spoken statement carries more meaning than a written version posted in the hallway. She asserted that the Dená people laid the foundation for what is now referred to as the *Golden Heart City*. She spoke of the respect, gratitude, trust, and relationship strengthening that a verbal land acknowledgement conveys.

*Dorothy Shockley* – D. Shockley shared that she is a member of the Upper Koyukon Dená and that prior to living in Fairbanks she had lived in Tanana, Rampart, Stevens Village, and Manley Hot Springs. She expressed support for a spoken land acknowledgement at the start of City Council meetings. She suggested that a simple vote in favor of the ordinance would be a first step towards reconciliation with the Native community.

*Randy Griffin* – R. Griffin expressed the belief that it would not be appropriate to place a land acknowledgement prior to the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance at the start of City Council meetings. He clarified that he supports acknowledging all that has been done by the Alaska Native

community but that he believes the practice should continue where any Councilmember can voluntarily express such with sincerity, rather than a rote recitation. He discussed the purposes of the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance and suggested that the land acknowledgement does not say much and is bland. He talked about a book he owns regarding contributions to the state of Alaska by Yugoslavian people and asserted that recognition for those individuals also did not belong on the Council's order of business. He discussed the value of visiting the Alaska Native Museum to learn about the culture and history, as well as the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics.

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

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA**

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

**Mr. Ringstad** pulled item 12(b), Ordinance No. 6331, from the consent agenda.

**Mayor O'Neall** called for objection to the APPROVAL of the agenda and the consent agenda, as amended, and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

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 marijuana license applications for renewal:

Lic.	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
10958	Green Life Supply, LLC	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	Green Life Supply, LLC	511 30th Avenue
11924	Green Life Supply, LLC	Retail Marijuana Store	Green Life Supply, LLC	511 30th Avenue

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

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

**Ms. Sprinkle** expressed concern that an issue regarding backflow in their ventilation system had not been resolved. **Mayor O'Neall** pointed out that the Building Official had conveyed a willingness to waive protest with the expectation that the noted issues be resolved before the next renewal period. **Ms. Sprinkle** stated that she was not in favor of waiting another year for the problem to be corrected. Chief of Staff Sanders shared that City Hall has also had challenges with its backflow preventers for a few years and that the Building Official had exercised his discretion with this not uncommon issue.

**Mr. Marney** recounted that the applicant had experienced other significant problems in recent history and that he would have expected them to have things in order prior to a license renewal.

**Mr. Ringstad** concurred that issues with the building, as well as changes in ownership and management, had been part of the Council's discussion a year ago. He suggested the Council consider a follow-up in a few months rather than wait a year.

**Ms. Tidwell** reported that she had visited the business earlier in the year to confirm their progress on a few past issues. She added that she has also had backflow problems with a property she owns and that the owner may have just learned about the deficiency. She expressed a preference to accept the recommendation of the Building Official.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked what options were available. City Attorney Chard explained the options available to the Council. Clerk Snider discussed the timeline and reporting process with the State's Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office (AMCO). **Ms. Sprinkle** reiterated that she was not comfortable waiving protest while unresolved concerns exist and expressed disappointment that the applicant was not present to answer questions.

**Mr. Cleworth** recounted that in the past the Council has waived protest with conditions.

M. Sanders reported that while City Hall's backflow system is more complicated, the City has been working on its own issues for two years.

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND the motion to waive protest by adding a condition that the backflow preventer issue be resolved by July 30, 2026.

**Ms. Therrien** explained that this would give a clear deadline while allowing for a couple of months of warmer weather to resolve the issue.

Clerk Snider shared that there would be one more Council meeting before the January 7 response deadline to AMCO, should there be a desire to postpone the matter. **Mayor O'Neill** confirmed that Clerk Snider had extended an invitation to the owner to attend the meeting and that, should the application be postponed until the next meeting, she could do so again.

**Ms. Sprinkle** clarified that while she is not wanting to shut down someone's business, she believes the Council needs to adhere to standards for applications.

**Mr. Marney** stated that if it was his business, he would be present at the meeting. He concurred that requesting the owner's presence at the next meeting would be helpful.

**Ms. Therrien** pointed out that the memo in the agenda packet stated that there were no departmental protests, which could have been confusing for an owner and might explain why they had not felt a need to attend the meeting.

**Mr. Cleworth** recounted that the business had hired an industry professional to help them through other difficult challenges in the last year and that the individual had come in good faith before the Council to provide an update months earlier. He expressed support for the amendment.

**Ms. Tidwell** stated that she would prefer to have a more direct opportunity to engage with the owner before putting a condition on the license renewal. She agreed that the published memo and packet for the application did not give the impression that the City had any concerns.

**Ms. Tidwell**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to POSTPONE the marijuana license application for renewal to the Regular Meeting of December 15, 2025.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO POSTPONE THE MARIJUANA LICENSE APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL TO THE REGULAR MEETING OF DECEMBER 15, 2025 AS FOLLOWS:

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

b) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing and considered the following Hotel or Motel Endorsement Application:

Type/ID: Hotel or Motel Endorsement, App. ID 1217  
Primary Lic.#: Beverage Dispensary Tourism, #2424  
DBA: Sophie Station Hotel  
Applicant: Fountainhead Development, Inc.  
Location: 1717 University Avenue S., Fairbanks

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

**Mr. Ringstad**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Hotel/Motel Endorsement Application.

There being no discussion, **Mayor O'Neall** called for objection to the motion to WAIVE PROTEST on the Hotel/Motel Endorsement Application and, hearing none, declared the MOTION CARRIED.

### **MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT**

**Mayor O'Neall** shared that beginning in 2026, the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) Assembly will schedule one of its members to give a report to the City Council at regular meetings under the Mayor's Comments and Report.

### **COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Ms. Sprinkle** expressed appreciation for the news about regular reports from the FNSB Assembly.

**Ms. Therrien** gave a land acknowledgment. She discussed receiving communications in support of Ordinance No. 6322 and suggested it was a good step towards mending bridges.

**Mr. Cleworth** thanked all those who had come out to provide comments.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

a) Resolution No. 5194 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Accept the FFY2024 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). Introduced by Mayor O'Neall.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

b) Ordinance No. 6331 – An Ordinance Adopting the 2026 Operating and Capital Budgets. Introduced by Mayor O’Neall.

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6331.

**Mr. Ringstad** pointed out that there would not be a work session before the next regular meeting. He explained that he pulled the ordinance in order to have more time to discuss budget items. He stated he believes the Council should aim for at least \$1MM in reserves going into the new year, noting that there was more than that at the start of 2025, but the funds went quickly after budget amendments were made during the year.

**Ms. Therrien** shared that she intends to advocate for an additional community paramedic (CP) and a clerk position to support the CP program. She indicated that she also would like to see an increase to the Police Chief’s salary. She acknowledged that the Council would not know what the true reserves will be until after the first budget amendment in 2026.

**Ms. Sprinkle** stated that she also supports an additional CP position but would need more information about justification for a salary increase for the Police Chief. She concurred that a \$1MM reserve would be ideal. She asked for clarification about a change in revenue for the parking garage. Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Bell provided details in response to Ms. Sprinkle’s inquiry.

**Mr. Marney** stated that while he also supports funding another CP, he is unsure about adding a clerk position. He shared that he had asked the Fire Chief to prepare a statement outlining how the CP program might offset expenses in other areas.

Fire Chief Coccaro provided a handout showing a timeline of the CP program, from the initial concept to the present. He recounted that the initial goal was to get seven to eight clients willing to work with the CP and how that number has exploded to over 100. He discussed how non-emergency calls in the past only had the option for high-level response through the Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD). He reported that the average cost of this type of call is about \$1,500 and that the CP had reduced overall call volume for FFD by 385 calls since the program began in April 2025. He noted that equated to about \$577,000 in cost avoidance and added that the reduction in use of emergency services saved the local healthcare system an estimated \$1.7MM. Chief Coccaro asserted that the CP program is doing exactly what they intended but that one individual working 40 hours a week is insufficient. He stated that coverage is needed all seven days of the week as many clients are in fragile situations, requiring more frequent contact and support which could only be accomplished with another person. He expressed concern that the single CP would eventually be overwhelmed and leave for a better opportunity, which would pull the safety net out from underneath numerous individuals relying on the support. He acknowledged that the requested new clerk position was for administrative needs to assist with paperwork and scheduling. He encouraged the Council to add the second CP position back into the budget and assured them that he would not ask for a third CP in the future unless he had a confirmed, sustainable funding source.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked if they should only consider adding the second Community Paramedic if they can also add the clerk position. Chief Coccaro stated the positions should be viewed independently

and that the second CP is a higher priority. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked about the current schedule. Chief Coccaro discussed the benefits of a four-day work week with 10-hour shifts.

**Ms. Therrien** noted that the City can often get reimbursement through the federal government for the cost of certain types of ambulance runs. She asked if there was a similar opportunity through the CP program. Chief Coccaro reviewed the various systems in place for payments for other calls performed by FFD. He clarified that reimbursement for the type of services through a paramedic-only model is a fight that many communities across the country are currently engaged in.

**Mr. Ringstad** stated that if the FFD was saving money in other areas, it would be nice to reallocate certain funds to further bolster the CP program. Chief Coccaro confirmed that was an ultimate goal for the department, although it would likely be years before any real reduction elsewhere would be feasible due to call volumes. He discussed how the variable nature of 9-1-1 calls makes real predictions impossible. He spoke of other ways they intend to advocate for reimbursement models to fund the program. **Mr. Ringstad** asked if any other communities in Alaska have a comparable program. Chief Coccaro replied that while no programs are direct comparisons, Juneau, Anchorage, and other communities have integrated health programs. He pointed out that the City's program is unique in that it is 100% self-funded and is more flexible in the services it provides.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked for a more accurate number for the total savings to the local healthcare system. Chief Coccaro indicated that he could reach out to the hospital's emergency department to work on a more accurate estimate. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked Chief Coccaro if he also works with the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC). Chief Coccaro confirmed that while he does have a good working relationship with tribal organizations, he had not brought up financial matters for shared patient services, as he wanted to first ensure the CP program was viable.

**Ms. Therrien** asked for details on readmission penalties. Chief Coccaro explained that hospitals that accept Medicare and Medicaid are assessed a fee if a discharged patient is readmitted for the same condition within 30 days. He stated that the CP program has the potential to prevent such situations and thus partnerships to include financial support may be a possibility.

Attorney Chard noted that the motion on the floor was to advance Ordinance No. 6331 and advised the Council to keep discussions focused on that purpose and avoid deep dives into specific programs or other details.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked City Engineer Pristash if the projects included in the budget were slated for completion in 2026. B. Pristash explained that while some items are dependent on the Department of Transportation (DOT), everything listed was intended for completion in 2026.

**Mr. Marney** discussed the \$365,000 request for Public Works equipment. He noted that there is \$783,000 set aside for garbage truck replacement and asked if some of those funds could be used to fulfil other requests, even if doing so would require an ordinance to amend the Fairbanks General Code (FGC). CFO Bell explained that a certain percentage of garbage collection fees is used for equipment replacement and that any changes to that would require a change to the FGC. **Mr. Marney** stated that many of the City's trucks appear to be in great condition and asked if the current fleet was fairly new.

**Mr. Cleworth** explained that the original intent of the funding structure was to make garbage collection self-funding, with all aspects of the service incorporated into the fees, and that the fees not be used for unrelated expenses. He acknowledged that the Council could change that, but the idea was to have it be an area of City operations that was efficient and self-contained.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked if the fund balance for truck replacement was appropriate or if some may not be needed. CFO Bell explained that the fund's purpose is to reach a level sufficient to cover any purchasing needs, without pulling from the General Fund. She stated that while the balance was currently in a growth state, they would likely see the funds used in the near future.

**Ms. Therrien** discussed the need for a dedicated Information Technology (IT) Director, rather than the current arrangement of having such duties fall to the Chief of Staff. She noted that the Mayor had included the new position in her initial budget and that the City would benefit from a dedicated IT Director. **Mayor O'Neall** confirmed that the position should be considered an important part of the budget for the reasons shared by Ms. Therrien as well as the significant risk the City faces by not having someone with the appropriate credentials to fulfill such a role.

**Ms. Sprinkle** noted that there was a line item of \$100,000 for trainees in the General Fund and that she would like to see \$25,000 of that moved to abatements. She suggested that getting properties cleaned up can actually bring in revenue in the long run.

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6331 by reducing the \$100,000 line item for account 5352 – Trainees by \$25,000 and putting that amount toward budget line item 7213 – Abatement.

**Ms. Sprinkle** explained that the Code Compliance & Abatement Specialist has a long list of properties to address and that this change would support those efforts.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6331 BY REDUCING THE \$100,000 LINE ITEM FOR ACCOUNT 5352 – TRAINEES BY \$25,000 AND PUTTING THAT AMOUNT TOWARD BUDGET ITEM 7213 – ABATEMENT:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor O'Neall** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6331, as Amended, by adding \$144,600 to FFD's budget for a new Community Paramedic.

**Ms. Therrien** asserted that the program is working well, that she is worried the lone CP will burn out, and that there was a need for a CP to be available seven days a week. She suggested that the added position would only help the community and the FFD.

**Mr. Ringstad** stated that he supported adding another CP but recounted that Chief Coccaro had indicated he would try to find ways to help fund the program. He suggested the Council wait to consider the item at the next meeting in case the funding could come from another source.

**Ms. Therrien** explained that she understood Chief Coccaro's comments to be related to finding funding sources for the potential clerk position. She pointed out that the Council could change the funding source for the CP position at a later time.

**Mr. Ringstad** stated he could not support the new position without an identified funding source.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that he had not been prepared to get into budgetary details but pointed out that in 2025 the Council added 10 new positions. He claimed he had never seen another year when so many new positions were added and noted that 9 of the 10 were at the FFD—one of which was the CP. He suggested that if the Council would like to see the program expand, that it consider repurposing one of the other 8 FFD positions that were added. He reported that the FFD's budget had grown from \$7.7MM in 2023 to \$9.7MM and that no other department had grown close to that rate. He suggested that the Council had ignored the needs of other departments and that was a mistake. He stated that based on national averages for community size, the FFD is overstaffed while the Fairbanks Police Department (FPD) is understaffed. **Mr. Cleworth** discussed how quickly the Council blew through the initial 2025 surplus of over \$2MM and how the City will be left with only \$700,000 in surplus funds before the year begins. He declared that the Council cannot keep adding new positions and stated that the bottom line is growing beyond what is sustainable. He asserted that his goal is to take care of the staff the City already has and be able to afford raises when that is in order. He stated that he would likely vote against a budget that includes less than a \$1MM surplus. He reminded the Council that financial forecasts with static employment levels show a budget in the red as soon as 2028.

**Mayor O'Neall** suggested that taking away one position from FFD after adding eight just one year prior felt like a bait-and-switch and did not align with the community's wishes. She discussed the importance of protecting the citizens of Fairbanks and matching the growing need for the services the CP program and FFD provide. She pointed out that the program was successful and deserved support to meet the community's needs but not at the expense of eliminating a firefighter.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that he was not advocating for a bait-and-switch but rather to reallocate resources, citing the more-than \$2MM increase at FFD in three years. He noted that the population of the City had remained essentially unchanged since the 1980s and that the FNSB was not growing as had been suggested. He expressed concern over rapidly growing government with a stagnant population. **Mayor O'Neall** asserted that the level of government had not been sufficient for the community's needs, and the perceived growth was instead an act of rising to meet those needs.

**Mr. Ringstad** recounted that the Council is often told that the majority of FFD's calls are medical-related, which is why so many firefighters are also paramedics. He asserted that reallocating resources to balance workloads and focus on that aspect of emergency services was appropriate. He argued that if the Council is being told that the CP program is reducing calls that previously would have required an FFD response, it only makes sense to adjust staffing. **Mayor O'Neall** clarified that the suggestion would amount to firing a firefighter, whose duties were not limited to paramedic work but instead the actual fighting of fires in an emergency.

**Mr. Marney** asserted that the real issue is declining revenue. He suggested that the Council would continue with these kinds of debates forever unless the revenue problem was solved.

**Ms. Tidwell** concurred that the City needs more money to meet the identified needs. She shared that the additional CP position was at the top of her priority list. She pointed out that the Council still has a surplus, although the Council will need to be careful with 2026 budget amendments. She added that the new FFD positions were created to alleviate overtime costs and that taking a position away could harm that effort. She expressed hope that Chief Coccaro will come back with good news regarding funding, as it is clear that adding both the CP and clerk is not affordable.

**Ms. Sprinkle** pointed out that there is \$3MM set aside for work to be completed in Island Homes.

**Ms. Therrien**, with the concurrence of the second, withdrew the motion to AMEND Ordinance No. 6331, as Amended, by adding \$144,600 to FFD's budget for a new Community Paramedic.

**Ms. Therrien** moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6331, as Amended, by adding \$158,470 to hire an IT Director. The motion died for lack of a second.

**Mr. Cleworth** noted that the budget includes \$10,000 for bank charges although the current year's actuals are only \$5,000. CFO Bell indicated that if that line item was reduced, she would prefer to reallocate the \$5,000 funds to office supplies.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6331, as Amended, by moving \$5,000 from account 5352 – Bank Charges to 5401 – Office Supplies.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6331, AS AMENDED BY MOVING \$5,000 FROM ACCOUNT 5352 – BANK CHARGES TO 5401 – OFFICE SUPPLIES AS FOLLOWS:

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

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6331, as Amended, by increasing the Police Chief's salary by \$15,000.

**Ms. Therrien** noted that the Deputy Police Chief currently makes more than the Police Chief, which she believes should not be the case. She noted that the only increase slated for the position was \$2,970 which is low compared to past years. She expressed concern that it would be a challenge to hire someone at the current salary when the Chief retires.

**Mayor O'Neall** explained that she had not approved the request for the position's increase in her initial budget as there had been a 20% increase for the position in 2025. She also noted that the deputy's salary includes a shift differential and educational components. She asserted that the nuances are important to consider when comparing the two salaries.

**Mr. Ringstad** recounted his frustration in the previous year's budget process when, after going through various contract negotiations, the Council was faced with requests for individual raises. He expressed the desire for a better system. He noted that the Mayor's budget outlined a general plan, and the Council should strive to stick to that plan, rather than entertain individual requests.

**Ms. Sprinkle** indicated that she agreed, recalling the substantial increase given the previous year.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6331, AS AMENDED, BY INCREASING THE POLICE CHIEF'S SALARY BY \$15,000 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien

NAYS: Tidwell, Ringstad, Marney, Sprinkle, Cleworth

**Mayor O'Neall** declared the MOTION FAILED.

**Mr. Cleworth** CALLED THE PREVIOUS QUESTION.

**Mayor O'Neall** called for objection to the motion to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6331, as Amended, and, hearing none, declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6332 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Section 2-119(a), Order of Business, Requiring a Land Acknowledgement at Every Regular Council Meeting. Introduced by Mayor O'Neall and Councilmembers Therrien and Tidwell.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

#### **COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Mr. Ringstad** stated that he had previously requested a list of all City-owned properties with respective uses, and details on any active leases. He asked to have the list by the next meeting.

**Mr. Marney** shared that the Discretionary Fund Committee would hold its presentation meeting the following evening to hear from 26 applicants seeking bed tax funds. He added that the day after that would be the distribution meeting where the committee would announce its allocations.

**Ms. Tidwell** stated that she did not have any committee reports. She expressed appreciation for all the public comments regarding Ordinance No. 6332. She discussed her incredible experience of interacting with those in the Alaska Native community and asserted that while a land acknowledgement may seem insignificant to some people, it carries great value to others.

**Ms. Sprinkle** shared that she had accepted an invitation from Mr. Marney to volunteer for a food box giveaway event and was grateful for the experience. She commented on Mayor O'Neall's report that the Borough Assembly would begin sending a representative to provide a report at City Council meetings. She asked if it would be appropriate to establish a standing invitation, through the agenda, to create the same opportunity for representatives from the local Alaska Native organizations, to further foster positive relationships.

**Ms. Therrien** thanked those who had expressed support for Ordinance No. 6332. She shared details about an upcoming local town hall with legislators who represent the community. She reported that she would be attending the Alaska Municipal League's (AML) annual conference later in the week. She stated that she approaches budget obligations with a question of what the community needs and recognized that the City almost always has leftover funds to allocate.

**Mr. Cleworth** referenced Resolution No. 5194 and recounted that a conflict regarding the project had previously been discussed. He asked if things had been resolved with the Senior Center and Moore Street Apartments. Chief of Staff Sanders confirmed that the conflict had been insignificant and explained that the concern raised had zero chance of occurring.

**Mayor O'Neall** gave additional details regarding the town hall that Ms. Therrien had referenced. She spoke of the food box event that Ms. Sprinkle had shared and thanked the many individuals who had made it possible. She shared that HopeLink, the local warming shelter, had been struggling to fill shifts, so she recently volunteered. She suggested that anyone questioning the need for a Community Paramedic or other program that serves local citizens should take a walk around town in the middle of the night or volunteer at a location that needs support, such as HopeLink. She concluded by extending sympathies to the family of Ashley Spann, who had been murdered a few weeks prior. She shared that mental health had played a role in the tragedy and encouraged everyone to remember and use the resources available locally.

### **CITY CLERK'S REPORT**

Clerk Snider reported that she as well as the Deputy Clerk would be out of the office at various times in the coming two weeks but that she would be reachable and monitoring email.

### **CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT**

Attorney Chard noted that with no work session the following week and a two-week window until the next meeting, Councilmembers should keep in mind the restrictions of the Alaska Open Meetings Act (OMA). He explained that although there are big issues pending, such as Ordinance No. 6332 and the 2026 budget, there are constraints with how the Council may communicate outside of public meetings. He shared that he would try to hold a work session in January to serve as a refresher on the OMA as well as other legal issues that are of importance to the Council. He added that he and the Deputy City Attorney would also be out of town for the AML Conference in the following week but that he too would be available, if needed.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

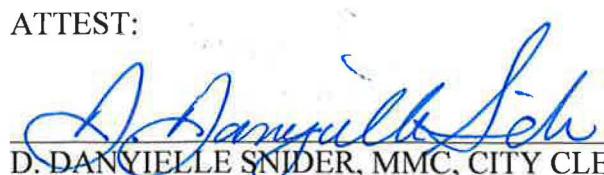
**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ADJOURN the meeting.

**Mayor O'Neall** declared the meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.



MINDY O'NEALL, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANVILLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

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