



**FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, MARCH 10, 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 the City Council Chambers located at 800 Cushman Street, Fairbanks, Alaska, with Mayor pro tem Cleworth (Seat A) presiding and the following Councilmembers in attendance:

Councilmembers Present: Valerie Therrien, Seat B
Crystal Tidwell, Seat D
Lonny Marney, Seat E
John Ringstad, Seat F

Absent: David Pruhs, Mayor (excused)
Sue Sprinkle, Seat C (excused)

Also Present: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
Thomas Chard, City Attorney
Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
Ron Dupee, Police Chief
Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief
Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief
Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)
Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director
Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

Mayor pro tem 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.]

Charity Gadapee, Director of Visitor and Community Engagement for Explore Fairbanks – C. Gadapee reported on visitor statistics for 2024, comparing them to those of 2023 and the current year to date. She reviewed community engagement activities that Explore Fairbanks has facilitated and shared details about the organization's new mascots, Felix the Fox and Irene the Raven. She discussed fundraising plans to support the Greater Fairbanks Community Hospital Foundation.

Mr. Cleworth asked if the Alaska Public Lands Information Center had been shut down already. C. Gadapee reported that the non-renewal of their lease had been rescinded by the federal government, so the office will remain open for the foreseeable future.

Ms. Therrien asked if Irene the Raven was named in honor of Irene Sherman, a locally celebrated figure born in the early 1900s. C. Gadapee indicated that there could be a possible connection.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger asked for an update on the public restroom that had been slated for installation in the downtown area. He acknowledged that the summer season is approaching, and he committed to continuing to share with the City information about potholes he notices. He praised the Public Works Department for its efforts over the winter months.

Vivian Stiver – V. Stiver thanked the City for including the Moore Street Senior Apartments' needs into the State's Capital Projects Submission and Information System (CAPSIS). She provided copies of a booklet from the Alaska Commission on Aging which highlighted data and prioritized needs for the senior community in the near future. She discussed an initiative in the legislature regarding licensing for a new type of facility that would provide greater care for those with behavioral issues. On a separate note, she added that after a recent fire in her own kitchen she could not be more impressed with the response from the Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD).

Mr. Cleworth recalled that not long ago, several new assisted-living facilities were added in the community. He asked if those were already at capacity. V. Stiver stated that they had actually lost facilities due to their inability to provide necessary services for those with additional needs. She explained that often when a business owner retires, the new ownership finds themselves unable to maintain operations and/or staffing, which leads to a shortage of facilities. She confirmed that many seniors get stuck at the hospital as it is the only place available to care for their needs, which is an unsustainable solution for both the individual and the hospital.

Mr. Marney asked how many total individuals are without adequate housing. V. Stiver stated that she has personally met with a few and is aware of several more. She added that there is no viable place for them to be discharged to and that the lack of certified nursing assistants has created an impossible situation. She described the situation as dire and advocated for people to start early when it comes to planning for the future of their own parents.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth, hearing no more requests comment, declared Citizens' Comments closed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Therien, Ringstad, Cleworth, Tidwell

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Clerk Snider read the consent agenda into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of February 24, 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
5816	Ajimi Japanese Restaurant	Restaurant/ Eating Place	Ajimi, Inc.	69 College Road
5877	Lat 65 Brewing Company	Brewery Manufacturer	Latitude 65 Brewing Company, LLC	150 Eagle Avenue
5878	Lat 65 Ciderhouse	Winery Manufacturer	Latitude 65 Brewing Company, LLC	150 Eagle Avenue
328	Lat 65 Brewing Company	Beverage Dispensary	Latitude 65 Brewing Company, LLC	150 Eagle Avenue
4880	Friar Tuck's Hoagie House	Restaurant/ Eating Place	Joshua Roach & Stafford Roach	427 Merhar Avenue, Unit 2
4076	Brown Jug – Fairbanks	Package Store	Liquor Stores USA North, Inc.	559 Harold Bentley Avenue

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

Mayor pro tem Cleworth called for public testimony.

Youngbaek Lee, Owner of Ajimi Japanese Restaurant – Y. Lee, through the translation assistance of an unnamed friend, asked if there was any particular license required for him to offer a weekly discount on alcohol sales at his restaurant. Clerk Snider explained that that was a matter governed by the State, not the City of Fairbanks. City Attorney Chard suggested that they contact the State Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) Board in regard to the question. Y. Lee asked for clarification on the status of his license's expiration date. Attorney Chard stated that, to his understanding, the ABC Board temporarily extended all license expiration dates in the previous year to allow them to catch up with a backlog of renewals. He indicated that he believes the Board is back on track, which is why Ajimi's application was now being considered for renewal. He encouraged the applicant to reach out to the State for confirmation. Clerk Snider clarified that the letter they received was likely from the State to inform them that their application was to be considered at the April 15, 2025 ABC Board meeting. She offered to speak with them the next day to help answer questions about process and ensure they have the correct contact information for the State.

Ms. Therrien thanked Y. Lee for attending the meeting. She asked if he understood the action the Council was taking in regard to their application. Y. Lee replied affirmatively. **Ms. Therrien** stated

that she does not believe the Council would have any reason to protest the application and asked how the restaurant was doing. Y. Lee shared that things have been going well.

Mr. Ringstad noted that Ajimi is directly behind his property, across the slough, and that they seem to run a clean, responsible business.

There being no more comments, **Mayor pro tem Cleworth** closed the public hearing.

Mr. Marney referenced the reports attached to the application packets. He stated that he preferred the previous format and that he did not feel that the updated report gave sufficient information. Clerk Snider clarified that the attachment referenced indicates that there were no calls that met the criteria the Council had requested to be made aware of for alcohol license applications. She suggested that, if desired, reports with no entries could be left out of future packets. **Mr. Marney** acknowledged that his concerns could be addressed at a later time.

Ms. Therrien recounted that Mayor Pruhs requested that she and Mr. Cleworth meet separately to discuss certain issues, some of which pertain to the issue raised by Mr. Marney. She indicated that Mr. Marney would be welcome to join them.

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

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Tidwell, Ringstad, Therrien

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth 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
13479	North Star Fire	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	North Star Fire, LLC	3780 Leasure Street, Suite 3
11927	Green Life Supply, LLC	Retail Marijuana Store	Green Life Supply, LLC	511 30th Avenue
10958	Green Life Supply, LLC	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	Green Life Supply, LLC	511 30th Avenue

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

Mayor pro tem Cleworth called for testimony and hearing none, closed the public hearing.

Mr. Ringstad discussed the multiple odor complaints about Green Life Supply. He recalled that the Mayor was planning to speak with the owners but was unsure of the status.

Clerk Snider reported that she had spoken with the manager of the facility who had indicated that a representative would be present to address Councilmember questions. **Mayor pro tem Cleworth**, noting that a representative was present, invited him to speak.

Brandon Emmett – B. Emmett shared that he is a paid consultant for Green Life Supply and that the company's majority owner had unexpectedly passed away, which resulted in serious setbacks for the business. He explained that the existing management team had hired him, as an industry expert, to provide assistance. He indicated that upon assessment of their systems, he believes that there can be significant improvements with some investment in new filtration equipment.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth acknowledged that the City receives more complaints about the Green Life Supply facility than any of the others in town. He asked if they use charcoal filtration technology. B. Emmett confirmed that they do, although it was a more rudimentary system and that some materials were past their life expectancy. He affirmed that upgrades are planned.

Ms. Therrien asked B. Emmett if he would report back to the Council once the new filtration system had been installed. B. Emmett indicated that he would and that he expects there will be no more smells once the upgrades are done, as is the case with the other facilities he operates.

Ms. Tidwell asked if there is a timeline for the filtration system upgrades. B. Emmett explained that he had only been hired by the business one week ago and that this task is at the top of his list. **Ms. Tidwell** noted that the list of complaints goes back for a year and that it would be prudent to have an expected timeframe for completion.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth reminded the Council that it has the right to protest a license renewal or waive the protest with reasonable restrictions or conditions.

Ms. Therrien pointed out that the City must respond to the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) by April 11, which may not be enough time for the company to make the necessary improvements. B. Emmett stated that he believes 30 days is a reasonable timeframe. **Ms. Therrien** suggested that the Council could trust that the work will be done, that B. Emmett will follow up with the City as he said he would, and that they need not put any restrictions on the license renewal.

Mr. Marney asked B. Emmett for more information on his role. B. Emmett shared that he is being paid to consult with the management team and grower to clean up the facility, assist with bookkeeping, catch up on taxes, and give general management guidance. **Mr. Marney** asked B. Emmett if he believes the management team can handle the job. B. Emmett declared that he believes they will, that the bones of the business are good, and that leadership development will help them succeed.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth reiterated that a condition would still be prudent despite the timeframe for a response to AMCO, and that a follow-up visit would ensure that the work is done.

Mr. Ringstad asked what the regular process is for communicating the Council's decision to AMCO. Clerk Snider shared that the day after a Council meeting, she emails AMCO to inform them of the Council's decision on an application. **Mr. Ringstad** asked if she could wait to convey the Council's decision until closer to the deadline to ensure that the requested improvement is

completed first. **Mayor pro tem Cleworth** noted that the Council would still need to officially include a condition on their action. B. Emmett confirmed that he could come back before the Council prior to April 11 to confirm completion of the necessary updates. Clerk Snider noted that the next Council meeting was scheduled for March 31.

Attorney Chard advised the Council of its other options besides waiving protest outright:

1. Postpone any action on the cultivation facility license until the next meeting, with the expectation that proof of filtration system upgrades be provided prior to that date; or
2. Waive protest on the application for renewal with a restriction that the filtration system is installed.

Ms. Therrien stated that she believes B. Emmett has made positive representations, in good faith, and that the Council need not postpone the vote.

Mr. Marney asked B. Emmett if he believed the work could be completed before the next Council meeting on March 31. B. Emmett stated that given the timeframe for ordering equipment, March 31 would be a difficult deadline to meet. He indicated that 30 to 45 days would be manageable.

Mr. Cleworth asserted that a restriction, as advised by the City Attorney, would be the most reasonable step forward. He suggested that they separate the applications prior to taking a vote.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to DIVIDE THE QUESTION by separating License No. 10958 from the other two applications for renewal.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO DIVIDE THE QUESTION BY SEPARATING LICENSE NO. 10958 FROM THE OTHER TWO APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Ringstad, Marney, Therrien, Cleworth

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE MARIJUANA LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL [LICENSE NOS. 13479 AND 11927] AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Ringstad, Cleworth, Therrien, Tidwell

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the marijuana license application for renewal for license no. 10958, with the condition that the business install a filtration system that does not cause odors within the next 45 days.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE MARIJUANA LICENSE APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL FOR LICENSE NO. 10958, WITH

THE CONDITION THAT THE BUSINESS INSTALLS A FILTRATION SYSTEM THAT DOES NOT CAUSE ODORS WITHIN THE NEXT 45 DAYS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Ringstad, Therrien, Marney, Cleworth, Tidwell

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- c) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing on the following application for a new Marijuana Retail Store License:

Type: Marijuana Retail Store, #39378

DBA: Blaze, LLC

Applicant: Blaze, LLC

Address: 607 Old Steese Highway, Suite 106, Fairbanks, Alaska

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the new Marijuana Retail Store License application.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth called for public testimony.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger asked if the Council was still taking public comments on license no. 10958. **Mayor pro tem Cleworth** informed V. Buberger that the Council had moved on to the next agenda item. V. Buberger stated that he always enjoys the smell of marijuana as he drives on the overpass. He expressed his wish that the entire town could smell like that instead of diesel fumes.

There being no more comments, **Mayor pro tem Cleworth** closed the public hearing.

Ms. Therrien asked if approving the license was within the allowable number within the City. Clerk Snider reported that this would be the 14th or 15th license issued and that she believes the limit is 25. **Ms. Therrien** expressed disappointment that the owner had not attended the meeting to speak on behalf of their application or to be available to take questions.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth recalled the heated discussion years prior when the limit of 25 licenses had been established and that a concern for market saturation had been expressed. He noted that now, years later, they are still nowhere close to that limit.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE NEW MARIJUANA RETAIL STORE LICENSE APPLICATION AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Therrien

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor pro tem Cleworth invited Chief of Staff Sanders to provide an update on the public restroom that V. Buberger had discussed during Citizens' Comments.

M. Sanders reported that the public restroom, referred to as a “Portland Loo,” was ordered in January 2024, and most components arrived in August. He explained that the final parts were not received until October, after snowfall. He shared that the invitation for bids for the installation work had been sent out and that the City Engineer has indicated that they are only waiting for the ground to thaw. He added that the Borough had recently completed repairs on its own public restroom located nearby in Griffin Park, so there will now be two facilities in the area.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Ringstad indicated he had no comments.

Mr. Marney shared that he and Mr. Cleworth had attended the first session of the 2025 Citizen Engagement Academy where they had the chance to meet the City’s new Community Paramedic, Melody Smith. He praised the Fire Chief and Human Resources Director for hiring Ms. Smith.

Ms. Tidwell, Ms. Therrien, and Mayor pro tem Cleworth each indicated they had no comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6311 – An Ordinance Ratifying a Collective Bargaining Agreement Between the City of Fairbanks and the Public Safety Employees Association. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6311.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth called for testimony and hearing none, closed the public hearing.

Mr. Ringstad stated that it would be good to have the agreement finalized.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth thanked M. Sanders for the work put into the process and declared that it was the most expensive City labor contract he had ever seen. He indicated that the types of increases in the contract would be unlikely to continue given that they exceeded the Consumer Price Index (CPI). He pointed out that comp time was not included in discussions during negotiations, but he believes it is a topic worth addressing in the future for this and other labor contracts. He suggested that comp time is creating a growing liability for the City.

Ms. Therrien spoke in favor of the ordinance and the support it provides for staff in the FECC and FPD. She stated that the lack of communication between union members and their negotiation team was unfortunate but expressed hope that situation would improve.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6311 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Therrien, Tidwell

NAYS: None

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6311 ADOPTED.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Clay Street Cemetery Meeting Minutes of February 5, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Appointment to the Chena Riverfront Commission

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Ringstad indicated that he had no report or additional comments.

Mr. Marney reported that he had attended Explore Fairbanks' most recent board meeting and that Borough Mayor Grier Hopkins had spoken with great excitement about economic development.

Ms. Tidwell noted that the upcoming Borough Assembly meeting would include an update about Veteran's Memorial Park, which is located next to City Hall. She requested that whoever represents the City at that meeting share the details with the Council.

Ms. Therrien indicated that she would be the Council representative at that Assembly meeting. She stated that the Legislative Committee recently met and provided a report of what had transpired so far during the legislative session in Juneau. She shared that it appears, given the State's fiscal challenges, that the City will not receive any funding for its capital project requests as they are being viewed as discretionary. She added that the State's budget will likely be very tight until new revenue sources are established. She shared that she will be traveling to Juneau in April and that there will be continued coordination with the City's lobbyist on the City's priorities.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth asked what revenue sources were being considered, other than mining.

Ms. Therrien explained that there have been discussions about eliminating oil tax credits. She affirmed that there was no current effort to pursue a statewide income or sales tax.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth asked if there was an update on streetlights in the Westgate area. Public Works Director Cotter reported that the City submitted a ticket to the contractor to check on the lights in Westgate, and the last he heard a fuse had been ordered. He shared that the lights in Taku Subdivision were now repaired and shutting off at the appropriate time. **Mayor pro tem Cleworth** stated that it seems streetlights are lost for a period of time every winter and wondered if there were any permanent solutions. J. Cotter acknowledged that there are some issues he hopes to discuss with the City Engineer and that they intend to search for outdated equipment that might be causing problems. He noted that they are continuing to replace older lights with new materials each year.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth indicated that he would be absent for their next meeting and asked to be excused. All Councilmembers present gave concurrence to excuse his absence. **Ms. Tidwell** noted that she would be absent for the Regular Meeting of April 28. All Councilmembers present gave concurrence to excuse her absence.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth shared that he asked the Borough Assembly to select a date for the bowling match and asked Ms. Therrien to follow up. He encouraged the Council to bring him questions regarding Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning matters. He stated he hopes to share a new Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) with updates on local projects to better help the Council answer questions from constituents on work that is planned or underway.

Ms. Therrien asked if the jurisdiction problem between FAST Planning and the State's Department of Transportation had been resolved. **Mayor pro tem Cleworth** replied that it had not and that it would likely not be resolved anytime soon. He asserted that the issue is not stopping any work at this time but that it is discussed every meeting as something needing resolution.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider indicated that she had nothing to report.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard reported that the vacant position of Deputy City Attorney was currently open for applicants and mentioned where the job was being advertised. He noted that the application window closes in April and thanked the Human Resources Office for its work in spreading the word. He discussed Alaska being the only state without a law school and how Alaska's law journal was handled through Duke University out of North Carolina. Attorney Chard shared that a team of law school students are currently visiting Fairbanks, that he is hosting one of the students for the week, and that there had been much excitement from the group about life and work in Alaska.

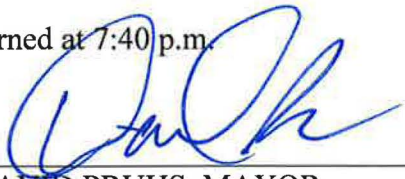
Ms. Therrien asked if a date had been set for arbitration regarding the Fairbanks Firefighters Union contract. Attorney Chard reported that it is scheduled for the week of June 9.

ADJOURNMENT

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

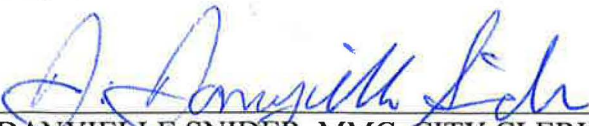
Mayor pro tem Cleworth called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

Mayor pro tem Cleworth declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC