



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, JULY 28, 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
 Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief
 Andrew Cocco, Fire Chief
 Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Bob Pristash, City Engineer

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, City Attorney Thomas Chard 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.]

Susan Anderson, CEO of Boys & Girls Club of Alaska (BGCA) – S. Anderson shared that she was hired as the CEO of BGCA in May 2024 and served in an interim capacity prior to that. She reported that the BGCA operates 20 clubs across Alaska, including the local program that rents the back portion of the City Hall building. She discussed the recent financial struggles of many

nonprofit organizations, including the BGCA, and the transition period they are undergoing due to income sources disappearing or diminishing. S. Anderson requested forgiveness of the BGCA's past due rent as well as a reduction in their monthly rent. She asked that the Council view the action as an investment in children and to do so with a spirit of partnership for the benefit of youth. She stated the BGCA's membership represents 20% of kids in out-of-school care across the state.

Mayor Pruhs stated that he will be waiving \$9,090 in past due rent, with the expectation that the BGCA continue paying as normal going forward. He noted that the BGCA has been a stalwart tenant in the building since 1992 and that there was no alternate tenant readily available to replace them presently. He acknowledged the challenge of being new to her position and having to plug many holes across 20 clubs throughout Alaska. He explained that he will review what an appropriate rent adjustment may be and bring a recommendation to the Council for concurrence.

Ms. Tidwell recounted that there used to be a local board to support BGCA matters within the Fairbanks area, including hosting fundraising events. She pointed out that the board had been dissolved and asked if there were any plans for that to be brought back. S. Anderson stated that they are actively seeking board members from the Fairbanks area and extended an invitation.

Mr. Marney asked if the BGCA had made similar requests for rent forgiveness with other municipalities. S. Anderson explained that not all of their clubs are in facilities owned by a municipality. She reported that they are not in arrears at most of their locations and that they are working on resolving things in a couple of other areas.

Ms. Sprinkle asked S. Anderson if she was aware that the City had renovated a portion of the building to create a new childcare facility based on mutual plans that the BGCA would operate it. S. Anderson indicated that she was made aware of the project when she was hired but that she had not seen an actual agreement with detailed numbers. She stated that it is still on the BGCA's radar, although they must ensure solid footing before proceeding. She apologized for the plans not coming together as hoped for and committed to remaining open to the possibility. **Ms. Sprinkle** added that the City had invested a lot in the project and still hoped to see it come to fruition.

Robert Shields – R. Shields discussed the ideals of society portrayed in Star Trek and the hope it could provide for decisions made in the present. He reported that he has spent the last 15 years advocating for community improvements in clean energy, brighter schools, food sovereignty, and zero waste initiatives. He discussed the future of the recently demolished Polaris Building property and his desire to see it serve as a magnet, attracting social impact investors who could renovate all of the downtown area and promote economic development for the entire region. R. Shields stated that he is aware that the proposal period is underway and that his group is ready and willing to work with any entity selected to undertake the project.

Ms. Therrien asked R. Shields for further details on what he is hoping to accomplish. R. Shields explained that they hope to create a community council to explore the concept of "Micro cities" using the Polaris Building site to build something new that will serve as a catalyst for a new approach to economic development and funding approaches. He stated that numerous purposes can be served with one building, mixing residential, commercial, and recreational components while advancing initiatives that would keep Fairbanks in the forefront of innovation. **Ms. Therrien** asked what source of funding his group was able to provide. R. Shields reported that there are

potential entities with standard investment portfolios as well as grants, but that they are most eager to attract private equity investors interested in communities like Fairbanks.

Mr. Cleworth asked R. Shields if his group intends to submit a proposal once the Council reaches the point where a request for proposals (RFP) campaign has begun. R. Shields stated that his group wants to work with any interested party to pursue their goals and that they hope there are several bidders. He reiterated that they are seeking significant economic development and innovation for the downtown area and that while their potential development partner is based in Harrisburg, Virginia, they are open to working with anyone and want to have many voices at the table.

Mr. Marney asked R. Shields if any of his ideas were available in writing for review. R. Shields asked Mr. Marney if he had checked his email. **Mr. Marney** stated that he has not seen anything come through. R. Shields indicated that he would resend his messages. **Mayor Pruhs** suggested he send them to the Councilmembers' official email addresses rather than personal ones.

Kasey Gillam, Director of Communications for Explore Fairbanks – K. Gillam shared that she works with individuals and entities within the travel media to create and share stories about Fairbanks to encourage tourism. She reported that she recently attended two events and met with numerous parties in travel media and that Explore Fairbanks has had the opportunity to host some of them who came to see Fairbanks for themselves. She added that their Public Relations Manager had also recently attended an event, meeting with dozens of entities from across the world which resulted in several new inquiries from tour companies.

Ms. Sprinkle asked what typically occurs when Explore Fairbanks hosts someone from the travel media industry. K. Gillam explained that sometimes folks just show up unexpectedly, but for those they know of in advance, they create an individual itinerary for that particular audience.

Mayor Pruhs thanked Explore Fairbanks for its \$50,000 investment in the Storefront Improvement Program.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

Mr. Ringstad pulled item 13(a), Memo Approving FECC Personnel Changes, from the consent agenda.

Mayor Pruhs indicated that the item would not be pulled as it would be addressed under Mayor's Comments and Report. **Mr. Ringstad** stated that he thought Councilmembers could pull any item they wish from the consent agenda. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that was correct; he added that he would have a report from the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center (FECC) Manager during his comments and hearing the same information later in the agenda would be redundant.

Mr. Marney asked if the Council would be able to ask questions. **Mayor Pruhs** stated they would.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the Council would be voting on the issue. **Mayor Pruhs** declared that they would not and that, as Mayor, he had discretion to approve or disapprove the action. He stated that he wanted the Council to see the memo, hear the report, and have a chance to ask questions.

Mr. Cleworth explained that he sees the issue differently, noting that the memo makes a change to the budget, albeit a potentially positive one. He called a point of order and asked if the Council had to approve such a change. Attorney Chard advised that, although a report and discussion was already planned on the topic, the item should be pulled from the consent agenda to allow the Council to vote regarding the budgetary change, as Mr. Cleworth had noted. **Mayor Pruhs** indicated acceptance of the explanation and confirmed the item would be pulled.

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 July 14, 2025

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

SPECIAL ORDERS

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

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
4763	Bobby's Downtown	Beverage Dispensary	Delta Epsilon, Inc	609 2nd Avenue

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for renewal.

Mayor Pruhs called for Public Testimony.

Catherine Schultz – C. Schultz stated that she was speaking on behalf of the applicants, who were out of town, and that she was available to answer any questions from the Council. She spoke in favor of the restaurant and owners, highlighting their positive efforts within the community and responsible business practices. She encouraged the Council to not protest the alcohol license.

Ms. Sprinkle asked C. Schultz how long Bobby's had been around. C. Schultz gave a brief history of the business over the last couple of decades, including a relocation to their current location.

Ms. Therrien asked C. Schultz what her connection was to the business. C. Schultz shared that she is a retired hotel manager who now works part-time for the restaurant as a hostess.

There being no more comments, **Mayor Pruhs** closed the public hearing.

Mayor Pruhs reported that part of the application process included a review of any issues at the property pertaining to law enforcement or first responders. He stated that there were no concerns about the restaurant itself, although there had been numerous situations in the immediate vicinity which sometimes directly impacted the business, such as homeless individuals causing disturbances after hours inside the post office across the street.

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor Pruhs asked FECC Manager Kristi Merideth to discuss the FECC staffing request and share how it would save the City money while improving operational standards.

K. Merideth explained that the current year's budget changed certain full-time positions to part-time and that as vacancies have been filled, things were not working the way they had hoped for. She discussed the operational benefits of making the changes outlined in the memo in the agenda packet, including adding another shift supervisor. She noted that the changes would result in over \$96,000 in savings according to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO). She discussed the benefits in place with off-site workers as well as numerous challenges, explaining that it is hard to understand unless someone has personally performed the work remotely. She indicated that the staff generally prefers in-person work. K. Merideth highlighted how FECC has the highest level of staffing and longevity of any other dispatch center within the region and that they are often called upon to assist other agencies who do not have the same expertise and training with the various systems they all use. She spoke of the challenges with rapidly changing technology, including physical constraints that make it extremely difficult to fit inside their existing workspace.

Mr. Cleworth asked K. Merideth if the individuals associated with the proposed changes would be working upstairs or downstairs. K. Merideth explained that there is one full-time position downstairs, and the other part-time person usually works upstairs but is capable of filling in downstairs when needed. **Mr. Cleworth** asked for more details on the AS-400 system. K. Merideth reported that it is a State of Alaska system that dispatchers are required to use. She noted that the City had gotten rid of its own AS-400 system many years ago. She shared that because it is at the end of its lifespan, the State would no longer be using the AS-400 system after this year.

Mr. Marney asked K. Merideth if the \$237,480 mentioned in the memo was the actual or just potential pay for the four referenced positions, noting that some only work a handful of hours per week. CFO Bell confirmed that is the total amount of salary and benefits the positions are budgeted

for, which is up to 30 hours a week. **Mr. Marney** acknowledged that the dispatcher they are seeking to promote to a supervisory position is one of their remote workers and asked if the City is paying for any moving expenses. K. Merideth stated that the City is not. **Mr. Marney** asked if the FECC has a policies and procedures manual. K. Merideth confirmed that they use Power DMS, the same resource used by the Fairbanks Fire and Police Departments. **Mr. Marney** asked how long the part-time call taker positions had been vacant. HR Director Merritt explained that they paused recruitment for the part-time jobs not long after the positions had been funded due to the interest in full-time dispatcher positions spiking unexpectedly. He added that the FECC is limited on how many new personnel can be trained at once and that they prioritized the full-time dispatcher roles. **Mr. Marney** asked if the total number of positions would be adequate if the changes were made. K. Merideth confirmed that 22 positions would be sufficient and that she would not anticipate asking for more in the next budget, especially if the remaining vacancies are filled.

Ms. Tidwell pointed out that the included organizational chart did not seem to have a specific shift assigned to the new supervisor position. J. Merritt explained that the chart does not adequately outline that there are three shifts each day and that the additional position would result in having a supervisor scheduled for all but three shifts across the entire week.

Mayor Pruhs asked if any Councilmembers objected to him approving the changes. Clerk Snider clarified that the action to approve should occur when they reach that point in the agenda.

Mayor Pruhs shared that Kellen Spillman, Director of Community Planning with the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB), had requested to address the Council and invited him forward.

K. Spillman stated that he primarily wanted to express appreciation for the Council's efforts to improve the community and highlighted several positive examples from the past year, including:

- The demolition of the Polaris Building;
- A robust abatement and Code enforcement campaign;
- The Storefront Improvement Program;
- Installation of the Portland Loo public restroom downtown;
- Creating a property tax rebate program; and
- Establishing regulations for unsecure, vacant buildings.

K. Spillman spoke highly of the work being done by the recently created position for abatement and Code enforcement, noting that he had authorized the waiving of tipping fees at the Borough landfill for materials coming from properties being cleaned up under that program. He praised the drastic – almost overnight – improvement that is evident in numerous properties, many of which had been problematic for years. He shared some of the recent endeavors taking place under the FNSB's purview to enhance the downtown Fairbanks area, including:

- Updating previously restrictive parking regulations;
- Allowing parking exemptions for ground floor residential units; and
- Renovating the Veterans Memorial Park.

K. Spillman recognized several City employees for their dedication and declared that he is experiencing the best working relationship he has seen in his 13 years of working at the Borough.

Ms. Sprinkle asked K. Spillman if there had been any movement in the Borough to mirror the property tax rebate program that the City enacted. K. Spillman indicated that there are some things in the works, including a look into a former tax incentive for housing that had expired in 2023, but that nothing was far enough along to share at the present.

Mr. Marney acknowledged that the amount of tipping fees waived by the Borough was significant and thanked K. Spillman for the support. K. Spillman stated that as they continue with abatements, he is committed to waiving as many tipping fees as he is authorized and able to.

Mr. Cleworth asked what parameters exist in the Borough's Code to determine when tipping fees can be waived. K. Spillman explained that the requirements are somewhat strict, that an active Code enforcement case must be in place on the property with an accepted clean-up plan, and the owner must sign the fee waiver application. He reported that instances with the City are typically very straightforward as the clean-up plans are simple and the City completes the majority of the paperwork. **Mayor Pruhs** noted that there was one instance where everything was in place but the owner refused to sign the application, so the tipping fees could not be waived. He affirmed that the partnership with the Borough regarding abatement efforts had been exemplary.

Ms. Therrien referenced the work being done by the City to clear brush along the Chena River. She asked if the Borough would also be willing to work with them on that project. K. Spillman stated that he would be happy to explore options, working in conjunction with the Chena Riverfront Commission. He shared that he had not had much involvement with the project yet, but there have been some conversations with the Borough Mayor.

Mayor Pruhs discussed the Storefront Improvement Program and reviewed the various downtown businesses that had applied for and received grants. He provided a description and total cost of each project along with the amount awarded. He reported that a total of \$694,312 in economic improvements would be done downtown with only a \$249,265 investment by the City. **Mayor Pruhs** clarified that the program funds came from room rental taxes paid by visitors and not from local residents' property taxes. He shared that several businesses just outside of the defined area had expressed interest in the program and that the program boundaries may expand next year.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the list of projects included applications from the second round. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that it did.

Mayor Pruhs asked City Engineer Bob Pristash to provide a report.

B. Pristash shared details about his department's recent effort to assess streetlight issues between College Road and the Johannsen Expressway, including which units were sent to the contractor for repairs, as well as some that the City will need to keep an eye on come winter. He discussed the ownership and maintenance arrangements for certain lights in the area which are under the control of the State's Department of Transportation and how handling problems with those lights is different than ones managed solely by the City. B. Pristash discussed the major project underway on Cowles Street, noting a completion date of November 30, 2025. He reported that the primary holdup is the lead time for new traffic signals, which was a known issue from the start. He shared that the contract does not allow work to be performed while school is in session, so progress will continue during evenings and weekends, with a temporary solution in place for the traffic lights.

He shared details about the nearly completed project on 8th Avenue, where underground utilities were being replaced, a new gas line installed, and the surface road being rebuilt at the end. B. Pristash confirmed that the pilot project for bicycle lanes along Barnette Street and 10th Avenue would end later in August and that the temporary markers would be removed before winter.

Mr. Cleworth asked for more information on the automated systems that control streetlights turning on and off. B. Pristash stated that the automatic software never really worked properly since the beginning. He explained that there are three master photocells across town that sense daylight and turn the system on and off, and they can be manually overridden. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the settings on the photocells can be adjusted or if they are set to a standard. B. Pristash indicated that they could adjust the settings at any time.

Ms. Therrien asked about the cost of the bicycle lane pilot project. B. Pristash noted that the City only had to pay a matching portion which was no more than 9% of the approximate \$500,000 total cost. **Ms. Therrien** asked B. Pristash if he thought the project was worth the cost. B. Pristash pointed out that the grant was only available for a project of that type. **Mayor Pruhs** recounted that the original project proposal included up to 15 different streets but that the Council had voted to only test the project on two streets.

Chief of Staff Sanders discussed a handout to the Council asking each member to prioritize City services. He explained that it is tied to the target-based budgeting process that would be used in the coming months and that the questionnaires would help identify desired service level priorities, preferences, and expectations, speeding up the discussion at an upcoming work session.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Ringstad indicated he had no comments.

Mr. Marney shared that he would need to leave the meeting by 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Tidwell stated that she had no comments.

Ms. Sprinkle expressed disappointment that Victor Buberger was not present to hear the update on streetlights, as that is a topic he commonly addresses during Citizens' Comments. She shared that there is a City-represented vacancy on the Chena Riverfront Commission.

Ms. Therrien gave a land acknowledgement. She shared that she and Ms. Tidwell had the opportunity to swing a sledgehammer at the final portion of the Polaris Building during the recent Golden Days festivities and that they each got to keep a few pieces of the debris to commemorate. She recognized Fairbanks Police Department Officer James Kuplack for assisting her on that day.

Mr. Cleworth discussed the request from the BGCA, noting that many years ago the City had several other tenants in City Hall. He recounted that the difficult question at the time was what amount to charge for rent while not being in competition with the private sector. He shared that a formula was created to prorate any rental agreements based on the square footage being leased, which he believes is still in use for the lease with the State of Alaska Information Technology office in the basement. He suggested that the formula likely went out the window the last time rent

had been lowered for the BGCA. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that the same question of what is a fair amount to charge should be considered by the Council. He asked if a tenant should cover all expenses for the space they lease or if a reduced amount is appropriate, pointing out that this would equate to being subsidized by taxpayers. He admitted that he did not have an answer to all those questions. **Mr. Cleworth** shared that Officer Elzey would soon be completing his seasonal position patrolling the downtown area and asked that the appreciation of the Council be conveyed.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6318 – An Ordinance Authorizing the Lease of Golden Heart Plaza to Festival Fairbanks. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6318.

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

Ms. Sprinkle asked for additional details on the purpose of the lease. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that the agreement grants Festival Fairbanks operational control and certain rights over the property.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6318 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6318 ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6319 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Section 2-119 Order of Business; Citizens Addressing City Council and Section 2-120 Rules of Procedure. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6319.

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6319 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6319 ADOPTED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6320 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 2, Article III Boards and Commissions, to Change the Composition of the Board of Plumber Examiners and to Remove the Requirement that the City Council Must Confirm the

Election of the Chair. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6320.

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6320 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6320 ADOPTED.

- d) Ordinance No. 6321 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 2, Article V, Division 3 Budget by Enacting Section 2-659 Capital Projects Fund Preparation and Presentation to City Council and Requiring a Minimum Fund Balance for the City Capital Projects Fund. Introduced by Councilmember Cleworth. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6321.

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

Mr. Cleworth asserted that the primary function of the Council is to plan, using the example of the Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that was overhauled in 2024. He asked what they would do if something happened and used the Public Works facility burning down as an example. He stated that the City must have funds available to use in case of a catastrophe and while \$4MM is not a lot, it is a start. He discussed the provision that would require the funds to be replaced within 12 months, including a tax cap increase that would be activated to allow for replenishment. He suggested that the Council cannot rely solely on the General Fund and that emergencies are not planned. He shared that the CFO reported that the Capital Fund had only dipped below \$4MM once in recent history, so \$4MM would be an appropriate, low threshold.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6321 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Tidwell, Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Therrien

NAYS: Sprinkle

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6321 ADOPTED.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Memo Approving FECC Personnel Changes

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to APPROVE the Memo Approving FECC Personnel Changes.

Mr. Ringstad discussed the difference between potential versus actual savings, noting that the part-time call takers only work an average of six hours a week. He suggested that the salary savings would be eliminated by the requested change and expenses would actually increase. CFO Bell explained that the current budget included four positions working 30 hours a week, which would ostensibly be the same for 2026, and the change would use the same allocated funds within a revised organizational structure for the FECC. **Mr. Ringstad** reiterated that the savings for the current year would be minimal.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the new supervisor position could still be created without the Council's approval, thus keeping the four call taker positions. CFO Bell clarified that the request is one action: to eliminate four part-time call takers, which is budgeted at \$237,480, and create one full-time shift supervisor at a cost of \$141,180. She noted that the organizational structure, if carried into 2026, would result in a budget savings of \$96,300.

Mr. Cleworth stated that he recalls that shift supervisors incur most of the overtime and asked if that was correct. CFO Bell indicated that dispatchers and shift supervisors incur overtime. She reported that in the prior year, the FECC had not been fully staffed in supervisors, so more of the overtime had come from dispatchers, which would likely not be the case for 2025. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if adding the shift supervisor position would result in a reduction to overtime. CFO Bell consulted with K. Merideth and confirmed that was correct.

Mr. Marney asked if the change could be made during the budget process instead. CFO Bell indicated that the Council could wait until then. **Mr. Marney** noted that current FECC staffing includes one remote supervisor. He asked if the intention was to promote a current dispatcher to the new position. K. Merideth confirmed that was their intention and that the referenced individual was going to move to Fairbanks. **Mr. Marney** asked if the quality assurance specialist could be a cross-trained position. K. Merideth explained that they already have cross-training in place for many roles within the FECC but pointed out that between general supervisory tasks, training, and quality assurance responsibilities, there are only so many hats that one individual on a shift can wear. **Mr. Marney** asked if the new supervisor was meant to be for training only. K. Merideth replied that was not correct and that they want all supervisors to be able to manage and train throughout each shift. She added that the remote supervisor would likely take on a greater portion of the research that needs performed to help identify appropriate training options.

Ms. Therrien stated that the present issue is whether the change made last year to create four part-time call taker positions was better for the City than the proposed, revised structure, and it seems it is not. She suggested that the current model seems difficult to manage, that training appears to be more challenging, and that she was in favor of the proposed changes. She expressed concurrence with the salary savings calculations that were presented.

Ms. Tidwell reviewed the current and proposed structures to confirm understanding. She stated she recalled that the call taker positions were created to help fill in when needed or even be promoted into full-time dispatcher roles. K. Merideth explained that the idea never panned out as the call takers have other full-time jobs and are not interested in pursuing dispatcher positions. She

added that she has gone through about six people in call taker spots over the past year. J. Merritt confirmed that there have been only two people they would consider successful with the approach. He pointed out that this is the first time in several years that the FECC has been close to being fully staffed and that they had expected more with the new part-time jobs created for 2025, only to see unprecedented interest in full-time dispatching. He discussed changes in recruitment over the last couple years and how they have strived to make FECC a beacon in the dispatching world. **Ms. Tidwell** expressed concern that while the current staffing would work well in the proposed structure, it could easily change in the future and result in the department being in a worse spot.

Mr. Ringstad pointed out that the City is seven months into its budget, so the amounts stated in the memo are not exact. CFO Bell confirmed that the amounts listed reflect a full, annual budgetary allotment, which is intended to give the Council a more complete picture of future impact. **Mr. Ringstad** indicated that he would have liked to see the prorated amounts for the current year.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if a lot of investment had gone into training the part-time call takers and what kind of loss of knowledge the City should anticipate. K. Merideth clarified that no one would be let go and that the eliminated jobs are vacant or filled by someone moving to another position.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEMO APPROVING FECC PERSONNEL CHANGES AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Marney, Sprinkle, Therrien

NAYS: Ringstad, Tidwell

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

b) Appointment to the Fairbanks Diversity Council

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth noted that while they had just made a change to FECC staffing, changes can always be made again during the annual budget process. He pointed out that the FECC has changed considerably over the years as it took over dispatching duties for numerous agencies.

Ms. Therrien expressed appreciation for Ms. Sprinkle, Mr. Ringstad, Mr. Marney, and Public Works Director Jeremiah Cotter, who volunteered to participate in a fundraiser golf tournament.

Ms. Sprinkle reported that the Chena Riverfront Commission met in the prior week to discuss changes to the boat launch and parking lot on the east side of Peger Road. She shared that the Chamber of Commerce meeting earlier in the day included a review of recent Golden Days data and that everything was being considered a success.

Ms. Tidwell stated that the Economic Development Commission had recently met but that the only item of business was an update on the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) becoming the Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR) for the area.

Mr. Marney shared that he had missed a Diversity Council meeting for the first time but looks forward to getting involved with the group, especially with three new members recently having been added. He stated he hopes that will spur greater participation and attendance going forward.

Mr. Ringstad indicated he had no reports or comments.

Mayor Pruhs wished Ms. Tidwell and Ms. Sprinkle the best in their respective reelection campaigns. He congratulated Clerk Snider on the arrival of her grandchild.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider stated that she had nothing to report.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard stated that he had nothing to report.


Ms. Therrien asked for any details that could be shared regarding the Fairbanks Firefighters Union (FFU) arbitration and what the next steps would entail. Attorney Chard reported that the City had received the arbitrator's decision, and the next steps include meeting with the union and the Fire Chief the coming week. He stated that the arbitrator had retained jurisdiction over the matter and that the parties would be working through any issues of significant concern as well as receiving clarification on areas of uncertainty. He explained that once all issues are resolved, the decision would be incorporated into the contract and an ordinance would be brought before the Council. He committed to providing more details at the next work session. **Ms. Therrien** asked if the decision would impact the 2025 budget. Attorney Chard stated he was not prepared to answer that question. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that the CFO would prepare numbers and provide a report at a future meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Mayor Pruhs declared the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



for **D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK**

Transcribed by: CC