



**FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, FEBRUARY 24, 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 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: Thomas Chard, City Attorney
 Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
 Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer
 Colt Chase, Deputy City Clerk
 Ron Dupee, Police Chief
 Richard Sweet, Deputy Police Chief
 Nathan Werner, Police Captain
 Andrew Coccoaro, Fire Chief
 Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)
 Jake Merritt, Human Resources Director (remotely)
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Brynn Butler, Housing Coordinator

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by Deputy City Clerk Colt Chase.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, intern Skye Kaquatosh led the flag salutation.

CEREMONIAL MATTERS (Proclamations, Introductions, Recognitions, Awards)

Fire Chief Andrew Coccoaro recognized Fairbanks Fire Department (FFD) member Cacy Wilfer who was recently promoted from Driver to Captain. A pinning ceremony was performed. Chief Coccoaro shared details about the promotion process at FFD and offered congratulations.

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.]

Marylee Bates – M. Bates shared that she is the founder and former director of Fairbanks Youth Advocates, which operates The Door, a local shelter for youth that provides services, supplies, and connections to community resources. She recounted coming before the Council many years prior to present the idea of The Door, which was initially met with rejection. She discussed how the project ultimately moved forward with the combined support of City, State, and Federal resources. M. Bates stated that she recently felt prompted to come before the Council again to thank the City for taking a risk and supporting their mission. She shared statistics for the number of young people who have been served by the shelter since its inception. She noted that many youths who have been served by the shelter are now productive adult members of the community. She added that the organization has also helped intervene in situations involving potential teen suicide. She encouraged the Council to continue to be willing to take chances when it comes to doing what is right for the community.

Ms. Sprinkle thanked M. Bates for her comments. She stated she believed she heard that the shelter would be lowering the minimum age for those who may be served to only eight years old and asked if that was true. M. Bates acknowledged that she is no longer directly involved with the facility's operations but that she had heard the organization was working with the Office of Children's Services to allow for the admission of younger children when there is a lack of foster home options. She encouraged the Council to contact the current Executive Director for details.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger asked for an update on plans for the downtown area after the demolition of the Polaris Building is complete. He discussed other currently empty lots in the central Fairbanks area and suggested that there are several opportunities for development other than the Polaris site. He stated that the community would appreciate insight on what is planned.

Mayor Pruhs, hearing no requests for additional comments, declared Citizens' Comments closed.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

Ms. Therrien pulled item 12(a), Resolution No. 5164, from the consent agenda.

Mr. Ringstad pulled item 13(c), Memorandum Regarding Use of Police Department Capital Funds, from the consent agenda.

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

Deputy Clerk Chase read the consent agenda, as amended, into the record.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) Regular Meeting Minutes of February 10, 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
145	Boatel	Beverage Dispensary	Abie Neubauer, Inc.	3368 Riverside Drive
5736	Soba, LLC	Restaurant/Eating Place	Soba, LLC	535 2nd Avenue, Suite 106
1912	The Crepery	Beverage Dispensary	Bulgar Corp	523 2nd Avenue
4720	Corner Point Kitchen	Beverage Dispensary	Michael Rasmussen	No Premises
2512	Speedway Express	Package Store	AK, Inc.	2110 Peger Road
4216	Speedway Express	Package Store	AK, Inc.	99 College Road
4565	Speedway Express	Package Store	AK, Inc.	3569 S. Cushman Street

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

Mayor Pruhs called for Public Testimony.

Patrick Holland – P. Holland spoke in favor of the Soba, LLC renewal application. He shared that he works in the same area as the restaurant and that he has always found the owners to be responsible in their service of alcohol while maintaining other excellent business practices.

Mary Theresa Norman – M. Norman shared that she owns Terry's Vintage Boutique, which is located in the Co-Op Plaza downtown, across the hall from Soba. She expressed support for the Soba alcohol license renewal and stated that she has never witnessed any problems related to the restaurant's service. She acknowledged problems with intoxicated individuals coming from outside the building but not from Soba. She agreed that the business is responsible and respectful.

Daniel Duce – D. Duce spoke in support of the Soba renewal, stating that he believes it is a fantastic addition to the community. He added that they are responsible in terms of serving alcohol.

Mayor Pruhs, hearing no additional requests, declared Public Testimony closed.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if there had been any protests from City staff regarding the applications before the Council. Chief Financial Officer Margarita Bell clarified that the Finance Department had

initially submitted a protest for Speedway Express pending a compliance review. She indicated that the review had been satisfactorily completed and, as such, the protest had been rescinded.

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, Sprinkle, Therrien

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
11051	Northlink, LLC	Standard Marijuana Cultivation Facility	Northlink, LLC	1550 Cushman Street, Suite B
11053	True Dank	Retail Marijuana Store	True Dank, LLC	1550 Cushman Street, Suite A

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

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

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- c) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing on the following Package Store Repackaging Endorsement Application:

Type/Lic.: Package Store Repackaging Endorsement, Lic. #703

DBA: Gavora's Fine Wine

Applicant: Market Basket, Inc.

Location: 250 Third Street, Fairbanks

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the Package Store Repackaging Endorsement Application.

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

Ms. Therrien indicated that she was not familiar with that type of endorsement. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that it was also new to him but that he believes it allows the business to subdivide cases of product to sell individually or in assorted collections.

Ms. Sprinkle stated that she believes that is already being done and wondered if that means they have been doing so without proper endorsement. City Attorney Thomas Chard explained that the State of Alaska Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) had undertaken a large rewrite of Title 4, which governs regulations on alcohol. He stated that specialized endorsements have been implemented across the industry which is why they are now seeing this type of application.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION WAIVE PROTEST ON THE PACKAGE STORE REPACKAGING ENDORSEMENT APPLICATION AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- d) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing on the following alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership and restaurant endorsement:

Type/License:	Restaurant/Eating Place, License #5736
To DBA:	AK Burger Zone
To Owner:	AK Burger Zone, LLC
To Location:	20 College Road, Suite 8E, Fairbanks
From DBA:	Soba
From Owner:	Soba, LLC
From Location:	535 2nd Avenue, Fairbanks

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership and restaurant endorsement.

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

Ms. Therrien noted that the City Clerk's memo indicated that the location is in an area that does not currently have an active alcohol license. She asked if the applicant had completed all necessary requirements for the process. Attorney Chard explained that whenever a new license is being considered for an area, property owners within a 500-foot radius must be notified and public notification must be published in the newspaper. He pointed out that the Clerk's memo confirmed that all owners had been mailed the required notification and that the public notice had been printed in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner.

Mayor Pruhs stated that it is uncommon to have no objections from the public or surrounding property owners when an alcohol license is transferred to a new area. He indicated that suggests the transfer is seen in a positive way.

Ms. Sprinkle noted that the license is being transferred from Soba, but the next agenda item is for another alcohol license transferring to Soba. She asked for clarification on the shuffling of licenses. Attorney Chard clarified that one license is a Restaurant/Eating Place license while the other is for a Beverage Dispensary license. He explained that there are differences in what is allowed to be served under each license.

Mr. Marney asked what the license being transferred to AK Burger Zone allows. **Mayor Pruhs** indicated that it would allow only for the service of beer and wine to those dining at the restaurant.

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- e) The Fairbanks City Council held a public hearing on the following alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership and restaurant endorsement:

Type/License:	Beverage Dispensary, License #3489
To DBA:	Soba Authentic Moldovan Cuisine
To Owner:	Soba, LLC
To Location:	535 2nd Avenue, Fairbanks
From DBA:	Tuffy's
From Owner:	Tuffy's, LLC
From Location:	3550 Airport Way, Unit 6, Fairbanks

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for transfer of location and ownership and restaurant endorsement.

Mayor Pruhs called for testimony.

Bill St. Pierre – B. St. Pierre stated that his son is the current owner of the alcohol license being considered for transfer and that he could answer questions on his son's behalf. He echoed the earlier comments about the owners of Soba being respectful and hardworking.

Alla and Stanislav Gutsul – A. Gutsul and S. Gutsul introduced themselves as the owners of Soba.

Ms. Therrien asked the owners for more insight on their reasons for wanting a full dispensary license at their restaurant. S. Gutsul explained that they would like to serve a larger variety of drinks to increase the immersive, enjoyable dining experience. **Ms. Therrien** asked if Soba customers have requested liquor other than beer and wine. S. Gutsul stated that such requests are frequent and that they have to turn customers down. A. Gutsul added that many customers are tourists who would prefer a quick appetizer and cocktail as they often only have a 45-minute window, which is not enough time for a full meal.

Mayor Pruhs suggested that the operation is similar to The Crepery nearby. A. Gutsul confirmed that was correct and that the same applies to several other nearby restaurants.

Mr. Marney expressed his appreciation for Soba remaining in the downtown area.

Ms. Sprinkle shared that she has had several positive experiences at the Soba restaurant.

Mr. Cleworth asked about the logistics of entering the restaurant in the later hours of the evening when the rest of the businesses within the Co-Op Plaza are closed. S. Gutsul described how they handle entrances and exits when the other businesses are closed. A. Gutsul shared that they take responsibility for the entire building and patrol the space throughout every shift to ensure individuals coming in are only doing so to come to the restaurant. She explained that they will be using portable dividers to block off the hallways into the other areas of the building after the other shops close each day.

Mayor Pruhs asked the Gutsuls if they were the owners of the building and can control access parameters for patrons. A. Gutsul confirmed that they are the owners of the building. S. Gutsul added that they also have surveillance systems in place for security.

Mr. Ringstad thanked the Gutsuls for being responsible for a building so important to Fairbanks.

Ms. Therrien asked if they have problems with individuals who should not be coming into the restaurant and, if so, what they do in those situations. S. Gutsul acknowledged the challenges of being located downtown, including intoxicated individuals coming in from the street as well as those who are just looking to get out of the cold. He shared that they often allow folks to come inside to briefly warm up but that if they are intoxicated or otherwise cause a disturbance, they are asked to leave. He confirmed that they call the police when necessary. A. Gutsul confirmed that they have a multi-step procedure in place to address such issues.

Mayor Pruhs, hearing no additional requests, declared Public Testimony closed.

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

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

Mayor Pruhs shared that the Polaris Working Group had begun meeting again, with a shift in focus from demolition to development. He described two paths forward for development at the site of the Polaris Building, summarized as follows:

- Plan A is for an entity to build a facility, approved by the City Council, either through purchase or lease of the property.

- The expectation would be a two-year plan to finalize occupancy of the property.
- Details will be published in mid-March.
- The City will accept letters of interest for the following two months.
- Those invited will have four-to-six months to submit full proposals.
- Development should begin between May 2026 and May 2027.
- Plan B would involve the City developing the property to create an attractive space that benefits the community, at an affordable price.
 - This would be pursued only if there are no interested parties or acceptable proposals for development that would occur in the next two to ten years.
 - A subgroup within the Polaris Working Group has been created to come up with viable ideas. Ms. Sprinkle is a part of that subgroup.
 - Development should begin in May 2026.
 - Any associated costs for Plan B that would be incurred in 2026 would need to be identified by October 1 in order to be included in the 2026 budget.

Mayor Pruhs declared that they are not going to let the property sit vacant and that the City Council will be included in all major decisions along the way, regardless of which plan is pursued.

Mayor Pruhs discussed the current the personnel situation at the City. He reviewed the total vacancies at FFD, noting that there are dozens of applicants in the queue. He provided details on the number of open dispatcher positions as well as those who are currently in training. He discussed Fairbanks Police Department's (FPD) staffing levels being stagnant, with challenges to grow numbers as added officers only serve to replace those who have retired or who will soon retire. He indicated that the losses have stopped, but they have yet to see growth. **Mayor Pruhs** provided details about his recent trip to Juneau to meet with legislators, which included discussions on changing rules about retired personnel coming back to work at a full-time status rather than only part-time. He shared that there is a new project underway to help with that challenge, and it will require some "outside-the-box" thinking. He stated that his number one priority while visiting the Capital was to advocate for no increases to municipal contributions to public employee retirement plans. **Mayor Pruhs** described how cities like Fairbanks have been paying high rate for the last 18 years and that they cannot allow it to go any higher. He shared that he also met with officials to advocate for the removal of certain regulations that are a part of the Community Development Block Grant program. He noted that the restrictions are not based in statute and should be able to be revised. He stated the goal is to allow the grant funds to be available for use towards the City's work on the Moore Street Senior Apartments as well as the City's efforts to combat blighted properties. **Mayor Pruhs** gave an update on blighted property work, stating that a list is being finalized by staff, to be reviewed by the City Attorney, of the locations to focus on for the year. He shared that the City has received complaints about certain properties, and each situation is reviewed to determine if there is a violation. He explained that while he will share the addresses of any property being looked into, he will not share full details on every case as the City Council is the appellant body for any owner wishing to appeal an action taken by the City. **Mayor Pruhs** reminded the Council that because of their role in an appeal process, members should not participate in any ex parte contact or investigation on any subject properties.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Ringstad stated that he had no comments.

Mr. Marney thanked Mayor Pruhs for his detailed report.

Ms. Tidwell stated that she had no comments.

Ms. Sprinkle shared that at the recent Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce meeting, it was reported that Chamber members and staff had participated in a successful fly-in to the State Capital, meeting with dozens of legislators. She stated that their primary focus was on affordable energy and workforce development.

Ms. Therrien asked if the Mayor had been able to attend any of the Alaska Municipal League (AML) meetings while in Juneau. **Mayor Pruhs** shared that he had and that he had been debating whether to run again to serve on the AML Board of Directors. He stated that while in Juneau, he realized that his involvement with that body serves as a great benefit to the City, so he will run again. He asserted that it was a very successful trip and that he would like to see such things continue. **Ms. Therrien** asked if there had been any discussion on the recent layoffs of federal employees and how the layoffs would impact Fairbanks, particularly the tourism industry. **Mayor Pruhs** reported that for the first ten minutes of the AML board meeting, the Executive Director reviewed the current situation, stating that everything is broken, funding is down, and it is unknown if things can be fixed. He stated that he had been asked for his opinion, which prompted him to share the importance of municipalities focusing on what they can control within their respective budgets and doing more with less. He declared that Fairbanks has done just that and indicated that complaining about issues beyond the City's control is not an option.

Mr. Cleworth asked if the request for proposal (RFP) for development at the Polaris Building site would include just the property where the building sits or the entire block. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that either option would be open for consideration, noting that if someone was interested in purchasing the entire block, there would be two other property owners that would need to be involved. He explained that either scenario would be considered in the initial letter of intent and that the four-to-six month window he described earlier would allow interested parties to work out details with any entities that may be involved in their overall proposal. **Mr. Cleworth** expressed hope in the RFP process, referencing a similar situation many years ago which ultimately resulted in the construction of the Marriott Hotel on First Avenue.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6309 – An Ordinance Amending the 2025 Operating, Capital, and Fairbanks Transportation Center Budgets for the First Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6309.

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

Mayor Pruhs asked CFO Bell to review the items in the ordinance. CFO Bell explained that the budget amendment includes encumbrances and reappropriations from the prior year for open purchase orders and existing contracts. She highlighted changes including transfers from the General Fund to the Capital Fund and new expenditures from both accounts. She reviewed the various purposes for reappropriations across each department.

Mayor Pruhs stated that he wants to ensure the Council understands the ordinance in its entirety.

Mr. Ringstad expressed his concern that it can be difficult to navigate the numerous items within the ordinance. He pointed out that the Council gave up half of November and December to adopt a 2025 budget, and it is frustrating to see so many significant changes just two months into the year. He recalled that five budget amendments occurred in 2024. He stated that he would like to see a change in how the City budgets in the future, with a goal of setting amounts for the year and not having to revisit issues multiple times thereafter. He asked for further clarification on what items in the ordinance were housekeeping processes and which involve new expenditures. CFO Bell reviewed each item in detail, answering Mr. Ringstad's questions.

Mr. Ringstad asked for additional information on the language in Section 3 that addresses the lapse of appropriated funds as of December 31. Attorney Chard confirmed that if funds are not spent by the end of the year, they return to the General Fund and would need to be reappropriated the following year in order to be used for the originally intended purpose. **Mr. Ringstad** asked for, and received from CFO Bell, additional details on specific line items in the ordinance. He expressed concern over tying up more money on projects, citing the potential for negative financial impacts on other issues to be discussed later in an Executive Session.

Ms. Sprinkle referenced the money being moved to the Capital Fund and asked if it would be prudent to hold off until some of the City's pending financial unknowns are clearer.

Mr. Cleworth stated that the City was fortunate to have a surplus at the end of 2024, which exceeded the mandated fund balance. He noted that the ordinance proposes moving some of that surplus into the Capital Fund. He recalled that for many years the Council would put several million dollars into Capital as a way to plan ahead for vital, large equipment purchases. He suggested that it was prudent to make the transfer now, given that the original budget did not commit anything to Capital needs, which was one of the primary reasons he voted against the budget ordinance at the end of 2024. **Mr. Cleworth** reminded the Council that there is currently nothing available for FFD equipment purchases and that the necessary equipment for FFD can cost millions. He pointed out that what will remain in the fund balance is over \$15MM, which is \$5MM over their mandated minimum amount. He stated that the bigger concern is on page 2 where it shows the remaining balance of funds for the current year budget being only \$1.6MM, of which \$1.23MM may be eaten up by the contract associated with Ordinance No. 6311. He expressed worry in having only \$400,000 to get through the year. He reiterated that the budget is deficient in Capital considerations, and if any major problems arise the City would be in a difficult situation. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the \$5.5MM shown for the Transportation Center Fund balance was actual money. CFO Bell clarified that the amount represented the value of the building and property itself. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the number represented an original or depreciated value. CFO Bell confirmed that it was the depreciated value of the Transportation Center.

Ms. Sprinkle shared that there is still work being done on Ordinance No. 6285, which is intended to provide financial incentives for economic development within the City; she added that the ordinance had been postponed until May. She expressed concern that there would be no funding left to create any incentive program by the time the Council readdressed the ordinance.

Ms. Therrien agreed with Mr. Cleworth about the need to transfer money into the Capital Fund, given the surplus in the minimum General Fund balance. She noted that the Transportation Center Fund information was not available when the Council was working on the 2025 budget. She indicated that had no problems with the budget amendment as proposed.

Mayor Pruhs reiterated that his job is to ensure that the Council understands all aspects of the City's finances and that budgets are often fluid. He acknowledged that the Council has to perform the annual process of encumbrances and reappropriations and stated that the questions asked had been great. He added that he would be concerned if no questions were asked.

Mr. Ringstad agreed with the need for Capital funds. He explained that his concern was primarily with timing given the large unknowns looming ahead. He stated that it feels like the Council is painting itself into a corner and will soon be at a point where there is no other option but to go to the taxpayers for an increase. **Ms. Therrien** pointed out that any claims or judgements are outside of the tax cap. **Mr. Cleworth** confirmed that was correct but stated that such situations often involve a gap between the need for funds and when funds can be recovered through the tax cap.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6309 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien, Cleworth, Tidwell, Pruhs

NAYS: Sprinkle, Marney, Ringstad

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6309 ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6310 – An Ordinance Authorizing the Lease of Office Space in City Hall to the Denali Commission. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6310.

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

Mr. Marney asked if the space being leased was in the recently renovated area that was intended for a new childcare facility. Chief of Staff Mike Sanders clarified that the leased area would be unused space in the Building Department.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6310 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance
No. 6310 ADOPTED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 5164 – A Resolution Opposing the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Energy Rating Requirement for Residential Property Sales. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and Councilmember Therrien.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5164.

Ms. Therrien spoke in favor of the resolution and encouraged others to sponsor it.

Ms. Sprinkle, Mr. Cleworth, Ms. Tidwell, and Mr. Marney asked to be added as sponsors.

Mr. Ringstad stated that the community had been at odds with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) mandates regarding air quality and that they have reached a point where the most onerous parts have been taken out. He suggested that the recent regulations seem to be a compromise, and he would hate to see things swing back to more restrictive measures or for the whole process to start over if opposition is not well-received. He acknowledged that the energy audit requirement does not make sense but expressed concern with the potential to lose ground.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5164 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien, Marney, Sprinkle, Ringstad, Tidwell, Cleworth
NAYS: None
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution
No. 5164 APPROVED.

- b) 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.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Fairbanks Diversity Council Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) 2024 Sole Source Purchasing Report

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

c) Memorandum Regarding Use of Police Department Capital Funds

Mr. Ringstad asked if the request for funding was new or whether it had been previously authorized. CFO Bell confirmed that it is a reallocation of funds originally budgeted for \$120,000 for FPD car cameras and \$300,000 for new vehicles. She explained that there are still unresolved issues with the camera technology and that the department would like to reallocate the funds to purchase four vehicles instead of three. **Mr. Ringstad** asked what would happen with the cameras. CFO Bell clarified that FPD will continue to seek a solution and then come back to the Council. Chief of Staff Sanders shared that the issues raised in the recent Work Session were referenced in a newspaper article which caught the attention of Motorola. He reported that the company has since reached out to schedule a meeting to work with the City and find solutions.

Ms. Sprinkle expressed support for the reallocation of funds but asked for clarification on whether the change had already been approved. CFO Bell stated that the memo had not yet been accepted.

Mr. Marney asked if FPD lost a vehicle in a recent incident involving a reckless driver. Police Chief Ron Dupee reported that a few vehicles had sustained minor damage but nothing that had sidelined any units. He explained that their fleet is slowly aging as they work on a backlog of equipment orders. He shared that an order for three trucks, placed in November 2023, is still waiting for upfitting in Texas. He reported that they got an unexpected call from the supplier informing them that another vehicle was on the lot and available, if the City would like to add it to their order. Chief Dupee explained that given the increasing delays in order fulfillment timelines, the City would do well to take advantage of the opportunity.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if those who cause damage to FPD vehicles in the course of committing a crime are made to compensate the City for the cost of repairs. Chief Dupee confirmed that they provide the District Attorney's Office with the cost to repair or replace vehicles in such situations, although that does not guarantee that the City will receive compensation as part of a judgement. He added that the City also files claims with insurance companies whenever possible.

Ms. Therrien asked about the cost of the fourth vehicle. Chief Dupee replied that an upfitted Chevy Tahoe costs around \$90,000. He indicated that they also have unused funds from the previous year due to changing the graphic design. He explained that the vehicles are now easier and cheaper to maintain, saving up to \$1,400 per vehicle. **Ms. Therrien** asked why \$120,000 should be reallocated instead of \$90,000, leaving \$30,000 for cameras. Chief Dupee confirmed that they only need enough for the fourth vehicle. **Mr. Cleworth** noted that what is not spent would remain in the Capital Budget for FPD and be available for cameras when those issues are resolved.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to ACCEPT the Memorandum Regarding Use of Police Department Capital Funds ("Memorandum").

Mr. Ringstad asked for more details about the process of reallocating the funds via memorandum versus a budget amendment ordinance. CFO Bell reiterated that the funds were already appropriated and that the only change is for the use of the funds. She noted that anytime a change in a budget narrative or stated purpose of a line item is considered, an ordinance is not necessary

if there is no change to the dollar amount. She added that the memorandum seeks authorization for the change even though there is no change in the dollar amount. CFO Bell summarized that the FPD's budgeted amount for vehicle purchases and camera equipment is \$420,000, and they are simply revising how that dollar amount is divided between the two items.

Mr. Ringstad raised issue with the language of the motion stating that the Council was "accepting" the memorandum rather than "approving" the change contained therein.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND the motion to accept the memorandum by changing the action from "accept" to "approve."

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MEMORANDUM BY CHANGING THE ACTION FROM "ACCEPT" TO "APPROVE" AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE MEMORANDUM AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Ringstad, **Mr. Marney**, and **Ms. Tidwell** each stated that they had no reports or comments.

Mr. Cleworth asked what happens to the \$10,000 annual supplemental permanent life insurance plan payments made for FPD officers who leave prior to reaching the threshold to receive the plan benefits. CFO Bell reported that the funds are returned to the City and go back into the General Fund. She added that this had occurred twice for employees who have left and that the City also receives accrued interest from those policies. **Mr. Cleworth** discussed the Council's recent challenge to the Borough Assembly to participate in a friendly bowling match. He shared that he spoke with the bowling alley and it appears that Saturdays are the only day available that would not conflict with the regular meeting schedules for the two bodies.

Ms. Therrien shared that the State Legislature would hold a hearing the following day for a bill that addresses the safe surrendering of infants, an issue which she believes **Mr. Marney** had raised in the past. **Mr. Marney** confirmed that he will testify at the hearing. **Ms. Therrien** reported that those in the Fairbanks area will also have an opportunity to testify regarding the State budget during the Legislature's Finance Committee meeting on February 26. She noted that the 2024 Sole Source Purchasing Report included a \$130,000 expense for the City to transport a fire engine to

Pennsylvania for repairs. She expressed disappointment that there was not a local or otherwise less-costly option. **Mayor Pruhs** stated there had been much discussion about the issue at the time.

Ms. Sprinkle stated that she had nothing to report and no comments.

CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Deputy Clerk Chase stated that he had nothing to report.

CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard stated that he had nothing to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ENTER into an Executive Session to discuss *Roberts v. COF, et al.*

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

Mayor Pruhs called for a brief recess. The Council reconvened in Executive Session at 8:21 p.m.

- a) *Roberts v. COF, et al.* – Guidance from Council [permissible under State law, including the provision at AS 44.62.310(c)(3)] (ended at 9:47 p.m.)


Mr. Cleworth stated that the Council met in Executive Session to discuss the *Roberts v. COF, et al.* case. He affirmed that direction was given to legal counsel, and no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

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

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

Mayor Pruhs declared the meeting adjourned at 9:48 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC