



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, JUNE 9, 2025  
FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
800 CUSHMAN STREET, FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

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The City Council convened at 6:30 p.m. on the above date, following a 5:30 p.m. Work Session for the City of Fairbanks Annual Audit Presentation, 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  
   Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)  
   Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief  
   Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director  
   Robert Pristash, City Engineer  
   Christoph Falke, Building Official  
   Jarrod Zerbe, Code Compliance and Safety Specialist  
   Amy Davis, Police Lieutenant (remotely)  
   Brynn Butler, Housing Coordinator (remotely)

**INVOCATION**

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

**FLAG SALUTATION**

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, Chief of Staff Michael Sanders 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.]*

Anya Toelle – A. Toelle stated she is representing Lichen, a business in downtown Fairbanks, and she spoke about public safety in the downtown area. She discussed visiting downtown numerous times in her younger years, when she experienced a welcoming, safe, vibrant atmosphere – a stark contrast to the rapid decline over recent years. She reported that there are less visitors downtown in general, and the activities that often occur are not positive. She cited issues with drug usage, fist fights, verbal harassment, violence, public urination, intoxication, property defacement, and more. A. Toelle shared that they call 911 on average over 30 times a year, have had people trespass, and have replaced windows broken by gun violence. She stated that they have spent money on upgraded security systems and that this was not the type of downtown business owners want.

Macy Possenti – M. Possenti stated that she was also representing Lichen. She concurred with the sentiments shared by A. Toelle and added that they have a sense of hope and encouragement, particularly as they see the City addressing concerns about the downtown area. She referenced the Emergency Service Patrol (ESP) and Storefront Improvement Program as examples. She noted that these efforts, along with the warming center and other programs surrounding mental health services, are making a difference. She acknowledged that many issues plaguing downtown are complex and that resources are stretched thin. M. Possenti urged the Council to continue to support programs that will help revitalize the downtown area, such as expanding the coverage area of the seasonal police foot patrol as well as considering making it a year-round program. She spoke in support of those who work to make downtown vibrant and declared that in order for downtown to thrive, it must first be safe. She stated they have compiled a summary of incidents they have experienced as well as camera footage and extended an invitation to meet and discuss further.

**Mayor Pruhs** asked M. Possenti to email a link to the resources she mentioned. **Mr. Ringstad** asked M. Possenti if he could meet to continue the conversation. M. Possenti agreed to the requests.

**Ms. Therrien** noted that the Fairbanks North Star Borough's annual budget included more than \$300,000 in funding to the City to support public safety in the downtown area. She asked if there were any specific suggestions for use of those funds in addition to the foot patrol expansion that had been mentioned. M. Possenti indicated that they have some ideas they would love to share.

**Mr. Marney** asked M. Possenti if the issues occur primarily during the winter or year-round. M. Possenti stated that the challenges are year-round as their compiled information will show.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked M. Possenti if she viewed the recent Downtown Market inaugural event as the type of thing they hope to see more of in the future. M. Possenti discussed the positive experiences their business had from the event and shared encouraging statements made by visitors.

Jomo Stewart, President of Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation (FEDC) – J. Stewart provided an update on recent FEDC activities. He shared that the business climate survey results were now available and that they are working through their annual economic analysis. He reported that they served as the lead contractor for the Borough's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy update and that the FEDC recently published a local agricultural directory. He added that they are also working hard to put on the 2025 Alaska Defense Forum.

**Ms. Therrien** stated that she read about the business climate survey in the newspaper and asked what the best and worst takeaways were. J. Stewart noted revenue challenges and the impact of

administration changes across local, state, and federal agencies. He shared that the survey's focus was the for-profit business community, and they learned that 70 cents of every dollar in the local economy originates somewhere in the government. He discussed the vulnerability of relying on a single source of funding, similar to the lessons learned through the oil industry.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked for an update on FEDC's efforts to become the Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR) for the Fairbanks area. J. Stewart stated that the FEDC has received eight of the ten requested resolutions of support from local entities, with the remaining two in progress.

**Mr. Marney** praised the agricultural directory and encouraged everyone to get a copy. J. Stewart gave credit for the project to FEDC staff member Ian Winiarski.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger complimented the Public Works Department for their year-round service to the community. He suggested they look into the issue of unsafe, obstructed views at certain intersections in town and offered some suggestions. He proposed that a casino be built in place of the Polaris Building as a way to bring revenue and life back to the city.

**Mayor Pruhs** pointed out that Ordinance No. 6305 on the agenda addresses intersection visibility.

Don Tangwall – D. Tangwall stated that while he does not live in Fairbanks, he spends a lot of money in town. He expressed concern over the potential increase in property taxes, as it would inevitably be passed on to consumers. He acknowledged that the settlement the City was obligated to fund was important but suggested that there may be other ways to fund it. He asserted that many businesses in Fairbanks accepted COVID-related money unlawfully and that complaints about these actions should be taken by the City Attorney to the U.S. District Attorney's Office. D. Tangwall noted that the federal government extended the deadline for lawsuits of this nature to be initiated and alleged that half of the attorneys in town were guilty of illegally receiving COVID funding. He stated that the worst offender was the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, which received \$5.1MM, with their parent company receiving \$3MM – none of which was spent on employees, rent, utilities, or other approved expenses. He claimed that the City would have the ability to recoup three times the amount that was unlawfully collected by these entities.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked D. Tangwall to confirm that the newspaper had done as he had claimed. D. Tangwall asserted that it had, although hundreds of local businesses had also taken COVID money.

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

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

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

**Mr. Ringstad** pulled items 12(b), Resolution No. 5175, and 12(e), Ordinance No. 6315, from the consent agenda.

**Mr. Cleworth** pulled item 13(d), Memorandum Regarding COPS Promoting Access to Crisis Teams Grant, from the consent agenda.

**Ms. Tidwell** pulled item 12(d), Resolution No. 5177, from the consent agenda.

**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 May 12, 2025

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Regular Meeting Minutes of May 19, 2025

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

### **SPECIAL ORDERS**

- a) Alcohol license application for transfer of controlling interest and restaurant endorsement:

Type/Lic.: Beverage Dispensary, Lic. #727  
DBA: Lavelle's Bistro  
Applicant: Café de Paris Catering Company  
Location: 575 1st Avenue, Fairbanks

*Note: This application was considered at the Regular Meeting of May 12, 2025 and POSTPONED to June 9, 2025. On May 20, 2025, the City Clerk received notification from the Alcohol & Marijuana Control Office (AMCO) that the applicant had rescinded their application. Because the application was pending with the City Council, it was included in this agenda. However, no action was required as the application had been withdrawn.*

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

| Lic. # | DBA                       | License Type               | Licensee                        | Address              |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| 4678   | Fairbanks Junior Ice Dogs | Recreational Site Seasonal | Fairbanks Junior Ice Dogs, Inc. | 1920 Lathrop Street  |
| 4507   | Miguel's Restaurant       | Beverage Dispensary        | Miguel's, LLC                   | 1235 Airport Way, #1 |
| 2124   | Fenders                   | Beverage Dispensary        | D.B. & Fu, LLC                  | 636 28th Avenue      |

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license applications for renewal for License Nos. 4678 and 4507.

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

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATIONS FOR RENEWAL FOR LICENSE NOS. 4678 AND 4507 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to PROTEST the alcohol license application for renewal for License No. 2124 until the Fire Department's identified deficiencies are corrected.

*Note: Due to an oversight, the public hearing for this item was omitted. However, as of the date of transcription of these minutes, the deficiencies referenced have been satisfactorily resolved. AMCO was notified on June 13, 2025 that the City's protest was lifted.*

**Ms. Therrien** asked for more details about the problems. Fire Chief Andrew Coccaro reported that Deputy Fire Marshal Tony Dennis visited the establishment that morning and encountered multiple code violations which could not be overlooked. He stated that he came to provide a second look and confirmed the findings were correct. Chief Coccaro shared that the business owner was very cooperative and worked to correct issues, although it is unknown if the property owner will respond with the same urgency. He expressed hope that the code violations would be satisfactorily resolved so that the department could lift its protest in the very near future.

**Ms. Tidwell** asked upon whom the fault lies when a business and building are not owned by the same entity. Chief Coccaro explained that most findings from the inspection would fall upon the property owner and not the occupant or operator of the business, unless their lease stated otherwise.

**Mr. Marney** asked whether the business would be shut down until the issues are rectified. Chief Coccaro stated that the business is currently under orders from the Deputy Fire Marshal's Office to not occupy the building until the problems are corrected.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO PROTEST THE ALCOHOL LICENSE APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL FOR LICENSE NO. 2124 UNTIL THE FIRE DEPARTMENT'S IDENTIFIED DEFICIENCIES ARE CORRECTED AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

Type/Lic.: Beverage Dispensary, Lic. #252

DBA: The Cabin

Applicant: AVO Hospitality, LLC

Location: 904 Old Steese Highway, Fairbanks

**Mr. Ringstad**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to WAIVE PROTEST on the alcohol license application for transfer of controlling interest and restaurant endorsement.

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

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

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

Type/Lic.: Restaurant/Eating Place, Lic. #4831

DBA: Irashai Japanese Restaurant

From Owner: JNJ JJ, LLC

To Owner: 2GIRO, Inc.

Location: 419 Merhar Avenue, Suite B, Fairbanks

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

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

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

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

**Mayor Pruhs** shared that earlier in the day he saw a cyclist using the new lanes along Barnette Street and 10th Avenue. He stated he will keep an eye out for usage as the City evaluates the pilot program. He mentioned the recent Memorial Day event at the Clay Street Cemetery and thanked those involved with the cemetery. He expressed appreciation for Festival Fairbanks' efforts to keep the Golden Heart Plaza beautiful. He stated that he would discuss with the seasonal foot patrol officers a possible expansion of their walking routes downtown. He reported that he instituted an 11 p.m. curfew in the Plaza and that improved security cameras are being installed there. **Mayor Pruhs** shared an update on the City's work to address blighted properties and reiterated that each location and situation is unique. He thanked Borough Mayor Hopkins for waiving landfill tipping fees for the City's property clean-up projects. He noted that visits to properties often result in neighbors expressing appreciation for the City's efforts. He reported that a final farewell event for

the Polaris Building, as part of the demolition project, is planned for August and that they want to ensure Senator Murkowski can attend as her efforts to secure funding for the project were vital.

### **COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS**

**Mr. Ringstad** indicated that he had no comments.

**Mr. Cleworth** noted the passing of former Councilmember John Immel and shared that he has fond memories of serving alongside him for two terms. He added that J. Immel was involved in many positive things in Fairbanks. He stated that he drives along Barnette Street a lot and has so far only seen one cyclist, although they were riding on the sidewalk and not in the new bike lanes.

**Ms. Tidwell** indicated that she had no comments.

**Ms. Sprinkle** expressed appreciation for the flowers and plants outside of City Hall and excitement with the construction progress being made at the Veterans Memorial Park.

**Ms. Therrien** shared that the committee that reviewed alcohol license processes recommended that the Mayor provide a statement of support or protest regarding each application and that the call reports no longer be included in agenda packets. She gave a land acknowledgement. She noted that the while she was glad to see the bike path pilot program along Barnette Street, the loss of parking spots for businesses was not helpful. She asked if someone is keeping track of the usage of the lanes. **Mayor Pruhs** indicated that there is no formal process. **Ms. Therrien** stated that she could track usage for next few weeks.

**Mr. Marney** noted that it was a new thing to have to look both ways on Barnette Street given that, while it is a one-way street for vehicles, it is now a two-way street for bicycles. He asked how the new Storefront Improvement Program was going. Chief of Staff Sanders shared that he has received many calls about the program and that two businesses have applied so far. He noted that the application period ends in four days, and he continues to talk with those who reach out. He clarified that a second application round would be opened if funds remain after the first round.

**Ms. Tidwell** asked if the eligibility boundary would be expanded if there are leftover funds and if no additional applications are received. M. Sanders indicated that they could do that although based on the number of inquiries so far, he does not anticipate having leftover funds.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- a) Ordinance No. 6283, as Amended – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code by Enacting Section 10-207 to Require That Vacant Buildings Be Secured and Registered and Establishing Fines for Violations of These Requirements. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and Councilmembers Sprinkle, Ringstad, Therrien, and Marney. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

*Note: Ordinance No. 6283 was introduced at the Regular Meeting of June 24, 2024, and a motion to ADVANCE was made by Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by Mr. Ringstad. The ordinance was POSTPONED to the Regular Meeting of August 26, 2024, at which time it was*

*AMENDED and POSTPONED to December 16, 2024. At that meeting, the ordinance was POSTPONED to May 19, 2025, at which time it was ADVANCED to June 9, 2025.*

**Ms. Sprinkle**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6283, as Amended.

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

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6283, as Amended, by changing “30 days” to “60 days” in all instances within Section 10-207(c) and (d).

**Ms. Therrien** explained that 30 days can go quickly when someone is dealing with a difficult situation. She stated 60 days would be more reasonable.

**Mr. Marney** asked how communication occurs in these scenarios and if the City has all its “ducks in a row.” **Mayor Pruhs** affirmed that the established processes, such as using certified mail, are followed by Code Compliance and Safety Specialist Jarrod Zerbe.

City Attorney Chard pointed out that the fiscal note includes a reference to 30 days and asked if the Council’s intent was to also amend that timeframe. **Mayor Pruhs** noted that the fiscal note’s reference was actually to set a cap on the total amount of civil penalties that may be levied for non-compliance and that they should not increase that limit.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6283, AS AMENDED, BY CHANGING “30 DAYS” TO “60 DAYS” IN ALL INSTANCES WITHIN SECTION 10-207(c) AND (d) AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Mayor Pruhs** stated the ordinance is a result of the desire to deal with a known problem and serve the community interest while respecting property owner rights. He thanked those who had put work into the ordinance.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6283, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6283, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6285, as Amended – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Section 74-36 Economic Development Property Tax Rebate and Enacting Section 74-37 Tax Incentive for Property Development, Redevelopment, or Renovation. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs and Councilmembers Sprinkle and Ringstad. SECOND PUBLIC HEARING.

*Note: Ordinance No. 6285 was introduced at the Regular Meeting of June 24, 2024 and ADVANCED to the Regular Meeting of July 8, 2024, at which time a motion to ADOPT was made by Mr. Marney, seconded by Ms. Sprinkle, and a public hearing was held. The ordinance was POSTPONED to August 26, 2024, at which time it was AMENDED and POSTPONED to December 16, 2024. At that meeting the ordinance was POSTPONED to May 12, 2025, where it was POSTPONED again to June 9, 2025, and it was determined that a second public hearing should be held. The motion to ADOPT remains on the floor.*

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

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6285, as Amended, by substituting the amended, proposed version.

**Mayor Pruhs** called for testimony on the amended, proposed version and hearing none, declared Public Testimony closed.

**Ms. Therrien** noted that the original ordinance included a sunset date of December 31, 2025, and the amended, proposed version would extend to December 31, 2027. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that would allow the program to have a sufficient opportunity for success.

**Ms. Sprinkle** noted that the new version also included a revised breakdown of construction cost tiers to hopefully engage more participants.

**Mr. Marney** expressed hope that the ordinance is adopted and that the Borough will adopt something comparable. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked if any such effort was underway by the Borough. **Mayor Pruhs** indicated that he is unsure but explained that the City has a limited number of ways to support economic development and the ordinance is an excellent idea. He stated that giving a tax rebate is a much easier process than other potential mechanisms. He thanked those who had put time into the ordinance.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that he has a lot of concerns with the program and that it would significantly impact the City's budget. He noted that according to the ordinance language, building permits may be waived, which could equate to over \$200,000 in lost revenue based on the current budget. He pointed out that the budget amendment ordinance that will be addressed later in the meeting includes \$424,000 in unexpected income from new construction, which occurred without the program being in place. He asked how much of that revenue the City would have given up, since anyone who could take advantage of the program would surely do so. He discussed the loss of revenue through taxes and other sources and asked if the Council would cover those losses through new taxes or serious spending cuts elsewhere. **Mr. Cleworth** asserted that the City cannot continue to take hits without funds coming from somewhere and that these types of cuts often come from personnel. He suggested that the program may be redundant, as the City's mill rate is low enough that it rarely makes or breaks projects. He reported that he had spoken with contractors who agreed that lower costs would be great, but it would not stop their projects from happening. He raised a concern that the fiscal note does not address the potential loss in building permit fees and reminded the Council that the program was open for both commercial and residential properties. He asserted that the City has never before approved a waiver of building permit fees and that the only instance of waiving property taxes was when the Marriot Hotel was built on what, at the time, was City

property. He declared that the ordinance would set a difficult precedent. **Mr. Cleworth** noted that the use of the word “may” rather than “shall” in various instances affirmed that interested parties would not be automatically enrolled in the program but would have to directly apply, which is an important caveat. He reiterated his concern about the fiscal impact of the ordinance, especially if the Council is not interested in making cuts. He added that it would make the Mayor’s job difficult.

**Ms. Sprinkle** suggested that this was a chance to try something new and asserted that they have to do something as any honest tour of the City gives the impression that they are not taking care of it. She reported having spoken to contractors as well who have expressed a desire to have the burden of projects lessened through a waiver of building permit fees. She asserted that anything that expands a property’s value will ultimately come back to the City in future years through increased tax valuations.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked if Ms. Sprinkle’s concern was for the entire City or just the downtown core area. He added that he is seeing a lot of growth and construction in other areas of town, but not necessarily downtown. **Ms. Sprinkle** expressed her belief that development anywhere in Fairbanks would benefit the core and that a program like this has the potential to generate more development.

**Mr. Marney** noted that language affirming discretion for approval or denial of an application by the Mayor, or their designee, was included as part of the program. He agreed with Ms. Sprinkle’s sentiment that the Council needs to do something to get people excited to build again in Fairbanks.

**Ms. Therrien** asked if similar language should be added to grant discretion for approval or denial of building permit fee waivers to the Mayor, or their designee, under Section 2 of the ordinance.

Attorney Chard pointed out that the motion on the floor was whether to amend the ordinance by substituting the amended, proposed version.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6285, AS AMENDED, BY SUBSTITUTING THE AMENDED, PROPOSED VERSION AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Ringstad, Tidwell, Therrien, Sprinkle

NAYS: Cleworth

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6285, as Amended, by adding the sentence “The mayor or mayor’s designee may approve or deny the waiver of the fees.” to Section 2.

**Ms. Therrien** explained that this would clarify the Mayor’s role waiving of building permit fees.

**Mr. Cleworth** reminded them that the fiscal note already fails to account for the cost of the permitting fees and that if they establish any precedent for waivers the door will be opened, which they have avoided for over 30 years. He asserted that the Mayor should not be on the spot to decide whether to approve some waiver requests but deny others.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6285, AS AMENDED BY ADDING THE SENTENCE “THE MAYOR OR MAYOR’S DESIGNEE MAY APPROVE OR DENY THE WAIVER OF THE FEES.” TO SECTION 2 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Therrien, Marney, Ringstad, Tidwell

NAYS: Sprinkle, Cleworth

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6285, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Therrien, Marney, Ringstad, Tidwell

NAYS: Cleworth

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6285, as Amended, ADOPTED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6305 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Section 70-162, to Ensure Visible and Safe Traffic Intersections and Amending the City Schedule of Fees and Charges for Services. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. POSTPONED from the Regular Meeting of February 10, 2025; a public hearing was held at that time.

*Note: Ordinance No. 6305 was introduced at the Regular Meeting of January 27, 2025 and ADVANCED to the Regular Meeting of February 10, at which time a motion to ADOPT was made by Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by Mr. Ringstad, and a public hearing was held. The ordinance was POSTPONED to June 9, and the motion to ADOPT remains on the floor.*

**Mr. Marney** asked for clarification on the fee for “failure to remove snow from sidewalk” listed in the *Schedule of Fees and Charges for Services*. He explained that he lives in a neighborhood where some property owners clear the snow from the sidewalk in front of their house while others do not. Attorney Chard clarified that according to the Fairbanks General Code (FGC), those who do not clear snow as described would be subject to the fee and also run the risk of civil penalties should someone slip and fall. **Mr. Ringstad** pointed out that the language was already in the Code and not part of the ordinance being considered.

**Mr. Cleworth** pointed out an inconsistency between the title and content of Sec. 70-162.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6305 by changing the header of Sec. 70-162 to “Regulation for safe traffic intersections in or near a public space.”

**Mr. Cleworth** explained that the current heading references “planting” yet the content in the section also addresses other obstructions. He spoke in support of a more appropriate title.

**Ms. Sprinkle** asked for a recap on why the ordinance had been postponed. **Mayor Pruhs** gave a summary on the issues that the City Engineer had presented over past work sessions to ensure the Council was fully informed on the subject. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that one primary concern was how grandfather rights would be addressed to prevent potential appeals. He asserted that he was satisfied with the information that had been provided.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6305 BY CHANGING THE HEADER OF SEC. 70-162 TO "REGULATION FOR SAFE TRAFFIC INTERSECTIONS IN OR NEAR A PUBLIC SPACE" 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 ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6305, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Ringstad, Marney, Tidwell, Therrien

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6305, as Amended, ADOPTED.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- a) Resolution No. 5174 – A Resolution Establishing a Private Property Voluntary Cleanup Program. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Resolution No. 5175 – A Resolution Establishing the Rate of Levy of 2025 Real Property Taxes for the City of Fairbanks, Alaska. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

**Ms. Therrien**, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5175.

**Mr. Ringstad**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to AMEND Resolution No. 5175 by changing the rate of levy for claims and judgments from 1.547 mills to 1.24 mills, which would change the total levy from 6.755 mills to 6.448 mills.

**Mr. Ringstad** acknowledged that the mill rate increase is to cover the City's settlement payment for the recently concluded lawsuit. He explained that the amendment means the City would only recoup \$2MM of the \$3MM that it already paid out, rather than the full amount. He claimed that he had been assured the City has the cash to move forward and that this was a responsible approach, showing that the City would step up to cover what it can.

**Ms. Sprinkle** pointed out that however the City pays for the settlement, it is all taxpayer money.

**Ms. Therrien** shared that she would oppose the amendment as it would set a dangerous precedent by using money from the General Fund to pay for a claim against the City. She indicated a preference to go with the original proposed rates. She noted that the Council has done as much as it can to mitigate the impact on taxpayers by spreading out the payments more than a year and pursuing payment through the City's insurance provider.

**Mr. Cleworth** asserted that the City stepped up and covered the initial \$3MM payment a few months prior, which reduced the General Fund balance and will cost the City about \$150,000 in interest income. He noted the expected revenue drop of \$824,000 for the next year and brought attention to the mill levy handout that was attached to the resolution. He highlighted the history of the City's rates since 1957 and pointed out that the proposed increase would still be less than the 2019 mill levy. He stated that he wishes the Council did not have to do this and acknowledged the sentiment of the amendment, with Mr. Ringstad's desire to give a break to taxpayers. He reiterated that the City's budget has taken hit after hit lately and added that he would oppose the amendment.

**Mr. Ringstad** pointed out that with the full mill rate the City would be getting reimbursed for the \$3MM already paid out and that the only loss would be the interest income. He asked if the Council is going to take City funds to pay some of the expense or put the full burden on property taxpayers. He suggested that doing the latter would be unfair given the City's current cash surplus.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated that his understanding was that the \$3MM already paid out was coming solely from the General Fund and would not be recaptured through the increased mill rate. He asked if the intent was to recapture those funds through the increased mill rate. Chief Financial Officer Bell affirmed that it was. **Mr. Cleworth** admitted that had not crossed his mind and that he believed the increased rate would be solely to collect for the remaining settlement payments.

**Ms. Therrien** shared that she had asked CFO Bell to provide details on the issue. She stated that the FGC allows the levy to include all costs associated with a judgement, and CFO Bell had recommended recovering the funds already paid in addition to preparing for the remaining payments. She added that not recovering the funds would all but deplete the Risk Fund and put the City in a dangerous situation. CFO Bell confirmed the status of the Risk Fund as outlined.

**Mr. Ringstad** shared that his plan would be to propose a transfer into the Risk Fund with a budget amendment. He noted that having a resolution and an ordinance that impact each other makes for a tricky approach.

**Mr. Marney** stated that he is worried about businesses in town that have a lot of property but are struggling with vacant units and lower revenue, such as the Bentley Mall. He suggested that they are likely barely making it through the current economic challenges and that he would not want to see more vacant buildings in the coming years.

**Mr. Cleworth** expressed his preference to have the first \$3MM come from the City and have the remaining settlement payments recuperated by taxpayers. He explained that the money for the initial payment is already gone and that he never thought the Council would try and recover it. **Mr. Ringstad** agreed that he would prefer to have the full \$3MM removed from the levy.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked to confirm that the increase would recover the \$3MM already paid. CFO Bell stated that was correct. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the Council could proceed to assess the mill rate for the following year. **Mayor Pruhs** indicated that the Council could not set the mill rate for 2026 at the present time. He confirmed that the resolution would increase property taxes for the current year to reimburse the City for the \$3MM already paid out. He asserted it was important that all Councilmembers understood the issue.

**Mr. Ringstad** asked if the Council should vote the resolution down in order to keep the lower mill rate. CFO Bell explained that the Council must still set the mill rate, but if the portion of the increase tied to recovering the \$3MM is removed, it would drop the mill rate to 5.833.

**Ms. Therrien** pointed out that the City has little left in reserves, and there is a pending arbitration with the Fairbanks Firefighters Union. She voiced concern that the City may not have sufficient funds to cover the arbitration and that there may be a problem balancing the budget in the future.

**Mr. Cleworth** noted that the remaining available balance after the upcoming budget amendment ordinance passes will be just over \$1MM. He reminded the Council that funding a contract requires an identifiable funding source and that the Council could not view surplus funds as money available to cover ongoing contracts. He declared that the City needs to live within its means.

**Mr. Ringstad**, with the concurrence of the second, withdrew his motion to amend.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Resolution No. 5175 by changing the total levy from 6.755 mills to 5.833 mills, reducing the rate for claims and judgments from 1.547 mills to 0.625 mills.

**Mayor Pruhs** reminded the Council that the only reason the City is in this situation is because it did not carry insurance at a critical time many years ago and that after years of Executive Sessions, court hearings, and trading lawsuits with the insurance company, it was time to move forward. He expressed pride that the Council did not seek to cut staffing as a way to cover the cost of the initial settlement payment and that there was a willingness to let the money come from the General Fund. He suggested that the Council is seeking to handle the situation fairly and that he was proud of the Council's efforts to deal with something that was not their doing but ultimately their responsibility.

**Mr. Ringstad** concurred with the Mayor's sentiments and acknowledged that the Council is not arguing the lawsuit but is instead focusing on paying the bill that has been issued.

**Ms. Therrien** expressed disagreement with the statement that "they" had not caused this problem. **Mayor Pruhs** noted that he was referring to the current Council. **Ms. Therrien** suggested that the way the police department was run at that time is a big factor in the current situation. **Mayor Pruhs** discussed the need for the Council to act in ways that ensure that a future Council will not face similar challenges. He pointed out that taxpayers are paying for something that happened over 27 years ago. He stated that having appropriate insurance at the time would have made a huge difference.

**Ms. Tidwell** noted that earlier it was stated that there was concern about setting a precedent, and she asked if the Council would be doing exactly that with this action. Attorney Chard stated that he does not see any motive or reasoning behind the amendment that would be concerning other than to decrease the overall tax burden on property owners for the near future. He explained that claims and judgments against the City will always result in an impact on the taxpayers. He added that he appreciated the Council's healthy discussion, including appropriate references to the FGC, and the dialogue of how much of the total settlement burden should be levied. **Ms. Tidwell** noted that the amendment could set a precedent that initial settlement payments do not get recovered

through property taxes. **Mayor Pruhs** acknowledged Ms. Tidwell's concern and asserted that future Councils would have the discretion of whether or not to take a similar approach.

**Mr. Cleworth** suggested that the City has the luxury of covering the cost of the first payment, though such may not be the case at any given time in the future.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND RESOLUTION NO. 5175 BY CHANGING THE TOTAL LEVY FROM 6.755 MILLS TO 5.833 MILLS, REDUCING THE RATE FOR CLAIMS AND JUDGEMENTS FROM 1.547 MILLS TO 0.625 MILLS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Sprinkle, Ringstad, Cleworth, Marney

NAYS: Tidwell, Therrien

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5175, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Sprinkle, Marney, Ringstad

NAYS: Tidwell, Therrien

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 5175, as Amended, APPROVED.

- c) Resolution No. 5176 – A Resolution Amending the City Schedule of Fees and Charges for Services by Adjusting Garbage Collection Rates. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Resolution No. 5177 – A Resolution Awarding a Contract to Colaska, Inc. (DBA Exclusive Paving) for the Joyce Drive Improvements Project in the Amount of \$1,235,415.25. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

**Mr. Ringstad**, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5177.

**Ms. Tidwell** stated that she may have a conflict of interest in regard to the award of the contract. She explained that Exclusive Paving is one of the contracts she represents through her work. **Mayor Pruhs** asked if she directly receives any funding specifically from Exclusive Paving. **Ms. Tidwell** stated that she does not. **Mayor Pruhs** declared that there was no conflict of interest.

**Mr. Cleworth** expressed concern over the mechanics of funding for the project and asked that City Engineer Bob Pristash provide additional information. B. Pristash explained that awarding the contract would allow for work to be done from the start of Joyce Drive, near Trainor Gate Road, to the start of the Lazelle Subdivision. He added that because the City was undertaking the project in the current year, Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning had chosen to also fund work on an adjoining street, Shannon Drive. He stated that funding for the \$1.2MM contract was coming from Golden Heart Utilities, who would provide \$400,000 to cover water and

sewer improvements, plus the money for the recently cancelled Lathrop Ditch Project, as well as leftover funds from the Sidewalk Improvement Project that was bid lower than expected.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5177 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 5177 APPROVED.

- e) Ordinance No. 6315 – An Ordinance Amending the 2025 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Second Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADVANCE Ordinance No. 6315.

CFO Bell stated that with the amendment made to Resolution No. 5175 earlier in the meeting to lower the mill levy and not recover the settlement amount already paid, the Council will need to make a transfer from the General Fund to the Risk Fund to cover the payments for the settlement. She provided an explanation on how the City's various accounts and funds operate. She answered specific questions from Mr. Cleworth regarding the funding mechanics of the Risk Fund.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADVANCE ORDINANCE NO. 6315 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

#### **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL**

- a) Chena Riverfront Commission Meeting Minutes of January 22, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- b) Clay Street Cemetery Commission Meeting Minutes of May 7, 2025

ACCEPTED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- c) Reappointments to the Clay Street Cemetery Commission

APPROVED on the CONSENT AGENDA

- d) Memorandum Regarding COPS Promoting Access to Crisis Teams Grant

**Mr. Cleworth**, seconded by **Mr. Marney**, moved to ACCEPT the Memorandum Regarding COPS Promoting Access to Crisis Teams Grant.

**Mr. Cleworth** asked for more details. Chief of Staff Sanders shared that the City had not been successful in securing adequate proposals for the contractor position associated with the program and that upon review, it was determined that more involvement and control will ultimately be needed than what is allowed through a contractor relationship. He stated that the police department is seeking to convert the allocated funds to cover a temporary, part-time position that would go away when the grant period ends, with a similar focus to get staff members trained. He added that, regardless, it will be difficult to get the program going due to how many officers need the training.

**Ms. Therrien** asked if the part-time position would include typical benefits. M. Sanders explained what benefits would be included in the temporary role and added that he believes the position would likely be filled by a retired individual who could come back for that specific purpose.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MEMORANDUM REGARDING COPS PROMOTING ACCESS TO CRISIS TEAMS GRANT.

YEAS: Marney, Therrien, Ringstad, Tidwell

NAYS: Sprinkle, Cleworth

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the MOTION CARRIED.

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

**Ms. Therrien** provided a summary of the May 28 meeting of the Legislative Committee. She shared that the City's lobbyist would be presenting a full update at a later time.

**Mr. Marney** discussed how City property owners pay property taxes to both the City and Borough and that tipping fees are undoubtedly included in Borough taxes. He pointed out that the Borough also charges the City tipping fees when City garbage trucks are emptied at the landfill. He pointed out that those fees are calculated into the rate for City garbage services and asked if residents are getting double-charged for tipping fees. **Mayor Pruhs** asked the City Attorney to look into that.

**Mr. Ringstad** stated that the City is likely one of the biggest customers in terms of Borough tipping fees and asked if there is ever any effort to negotiate rates. He suggested it may be time to do so.

**Mr. Cleworth** stated the City may be able to use that next time the dispatch services contract is negotiated. Regarding Resolution No. 5177, he stated that fixing roads is what cities are all about.

**Ms. Tidwell** stated that she is looking forward to serving as the City representative at the upcoming Borough Assembly meeting and indicated she would convey support for the passage of their resolution regarding the ARDOR. She shared details about a free upcoming Juneteenth local event.

**Ms. Sprinkle** suggested that the Council did some heavy lifting at the meeting and that she is proud. She stated that it is great to see the work that goes into it and the discussion that precedes important decisions. **Mayor Pruhs** noted that one difference he sees between the Council and the Assembly is that at the end of City meetings, the Councilmembers leave and still like each other.

## CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Clerk Snider asked to confirm that the Council wishes to discontinue the inclusion of police call reports with alcohol and marijuana license applications. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that was correct and that in place of the reports, he would ensure that any concerns are provided by him to the Council prior to taking action on license applications. Clerk Snider shared that she and the Attorney are still working on updates to the sections of Code related to alcohol and marijuana licensing.

## CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Attorney Chard confirmed that he and the Clerk are working on those particular items. He discussed procedures in the Code pertaining to postponement and how the general practice is to postpone something to the next meeting, which provides the benefit of the issue still being fresh on everyone's mind. He pointed out that earlier in the meeting the Council adopted two ordinances that had been introduced in June 2024. He acknowledged that the Council has the prerogative to set its own rules for how to handle its business but suggested revisiting the postponement topic, as there may be times when it is prudent to withdraw an item, do the necessary work, then reintroduce it at a later date, rather than postponing it multiple times over a long period of time.

## ADJOURNMENT

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

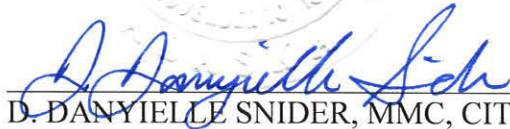
**Mayor Pruhs** called for objection and, hearing none, so ORDERED.

**Mayor Pruhs** declared the meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYIELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC