



FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES, OCTOBER 28, 2024
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: D. Danyielle Snider, City Clerk
 Thomas Chard, City Attorney
 Michael Sanders, Chief of Staff
 Margarita Bell, Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
 Jeremiah Cotter, Public Works Director
 Andrew Coccaro, Fire Chief
 Ron Dupee, Police Chief (remotely)
 Kristi Merideth, FECC Manager (remotely)
 Marsha Oss, Reentry Coordinator (remotely)
 Brynn Butler, Housing Coordinator (remotely)

INVOCATION

The invocation was given by City Clerk Danyielle Snider.

FLAG SALUTATION

At the request of Mayor Pruhs, **Ms. Therrien** 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.]

Kasey Gillam, Director of Communications for Explore Fairbanks – K. Gillam shared details about Explore Fairbanks' updated Winter Guide as well as their annual Visitors Guide. She discussed the purposes of both publications and how Explore Fairbanks uses them for marketing.

Victor Buberger – V. Buberger described the difficult road conditions during the previous week’s storm. He expressed his concern for the safety of pedestrians during inclement weather when sidewalks are not cleared of snow. He encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming election.

Mayor Pruhs thanked V. Buberger for his comments and noted that Cowles Street is a priority for the City in clearing sidewalks, given the proximity of multiple schools, the library, a senior citizens’ residential complex, and more. He committed to checking with the Public Works Department to ensure expectations were continuing to be met.

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

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

Ms. Therrien pulled item 13(b), 2025 City Council Meeting Calendar, from the consent agenda.

Mr. Cleworth pulled the following items from the consent agenda:

- Item 12(a), Resolution No. 5140;
- Item 12(b), Resolution No. 5141; and
- Item 13(a), Permanent Fund Review Board Meeting Minutes of July 24, 2024.

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.

SPECIAL ORDERS

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

Lic. #	DBA	License Type	Licensee	Address
17250	Pipe and Leaf: Premium Alaskan Cannabis	Retail Marijuana Store	Pipe and Leaf, Inc.	3546 Airport Way
30593	Pipe and Leaf: Premium Alaskan Cannabis	Retail Marijuana Store	Pipe and Leaf, Inc.	899 Old Steese Highway

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

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

Ms. Sprinkle asked if they had recently considered another application for the same business. Clerk Snider explained that there had been an application for a transfer of controlling interest in ownership of the business at a meeting earlier in the year.

Mr. Ringstad pointed out that half of the calls on the dispatch report referenced robbery as the reason. He asked if there was an issue with the building's security system or if they really are having that many issues with robberies. He expressed hope that it was just an equipment problem.

Mayor Pruhs noted that other than one record of them needing to trespass an individual, the report shows relatively little activity at either business location.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO WAIVE PROTEST ON THE MARIJUANA 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 considered an appeal of a denied application for a new Chauffeur License for applicant Kimberly M. Griffiths.

Ms. Tidwell declared a conflict of interest, citing a past close, personal relationship with the applicant. **Mayor Pruhs** ruled that the conflict was valid. He asked if any Councilmember wished to appeal his ruling, and no Councilmember indicated such.

Mayor Pruhs invited K. Griffiths to provide testimony to support her appeal. K. Griffiths asked for general guidance on the process. Clerk Snider explained that the reason for K. Griffiths' denial was one eligible for appeal according to the Fairbanks General Code (FGC) and, as such, this was K. Griffiths' opportunity to explain to the Council why she believes she should receive the license.

K. Griffiths began with an apology for events that occurred several years prior, citing challenges in family life leading to poor choices and, eventually, criminal charges. She shared details about her successful efforts towards recovery and restitution, noting the years that have passed since her convictions, plus her continued commitment to sobriety and a law-abiding lifestyle. She stated that she believes she has done well to build her life back to a positive place and that she has been fortunate to experience a return to the morals and lifestyle she knew before her slip into crime and substance abuse. K. Griffiths suggested that those interested in reviewing her history take a look at CourtView records, consider the timeline of events, and recognize that even low-end jobs remain out of reach for individuals in her situation. She expressed a desire to remain stable and provide for her daughter.

Ms. Therrien thanked K. Griffiths for her honesty. She noted that her record included a felony conviction for burglary and asked if she could provide more information about that incident. K. Griffiths shared that her personal life had fallen apart, and she gave in to the draw of illegal substances. She described how that eventually led to homelessness, including during the winter months, which resulted in making the worst decision of her life while heartbroken and under the influence. She explained that she was unarmed and did not harm anyone but acknowledged having made a mess; she offered no excuse for her behavior at the time. **Ms. Therrien** asked what had been stolen. K. Griffiths explained that in the garage of the home, there was a four-wheeler and camping and military equipment. She said that her idea was to take the items and go live in the

woods; however, she stated she never took anything from the property. K. Griffiths indicated that the garage door had been left open and that a little girl, present in the home, had heard her and locked the entrance to the residence. She explained that the girl called her mother who came home while she was still in the garage, at which time she ran away. She shared that she had initially gotten away with incident, until her boyfriend reported her, which began the recovery period of her story three years ago. K. Griffiths reiterated that she has been clean ever since and living a good life, setting appropriate boundaries and working to repair the damage from the past. She spoke about how defeating it was to try to find meaningful employment at this stage.

Ms. Sprinkle spoke to the nature of driving a cab, with the stopgaps in place to ensure drivers are complying with laws and being accountable. K. Griffiths concurred that such work is structured and monitored, adding that she has many positive references. She shared that she was able to set up numerous strong contracts for her dump truck business for the 2025 season but that her present concern was having stable work through the winter. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked K. Griffiths if her driver's license was in good standing. K. Griffiths replied that she has a valid Class A CDL.

Mr. Marney asked K. Griffiths if she had an employment offer with a local cab company. K. Griffiths stated that she communicated with two companies about her situation, both of which confirmed that they are always looking for drivers. She shared that she had discussed her record with one employer who indicated no concern, provided she was able to be insured and licensed.

Mr. Cleworth acknowledged K. Griffiths' valid CDL and asked if she had ever been mandated to complete rehab or other similar treatment programs. K. Griffiths stated that she had and that she had completed each required program, including going above and beyond certain requirements.

Ms. Therrien asked K. Griffiths if she was still attending Alcoholics or Narcotics Anonymous programs. K. Griffiths stated that she was not and that she does not care for the particular style of the programs. She indicated, however, that she would do so if the Council made it a condition of licensing. She shared that she has not drank alcohol since 2018, having learned a hard lesson of the negative effects. She added that she lives close to a liquor store but does not crave alcohol, especially given that she views her CDL as the key to her future. She stated that she recognizes there is no more room for mistakes in her life or it will all be over.

Ms. Sprinkle asked for clarification on the parameters of the new Chauffeur License. Clerk Snider explained that it is a two-year license, renewable upon expiration.

Ms. Sprinkle, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to GRANT the appeal of the denied new Chauffeur License for Kimberly M. Griffiths.

Mr. Ringstad declared that anyone willing to do the work and seek a second chance deserves to have that opportunity, pointing out that that is exactly what K. Griffiths has done. He praised the respect that she had shown through her honesty and humility in the public meeting.

Ms. Therrien asked if it was permissible for the Council to set conditions to the license approval, such as requiring participation in an Alcoholics Anonymous or similar program. City Attorney

Tom Chard cited the (FGC) which governs the process of Council appeals. He advised against setting the type of condition suggested.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if it would be appropriate to request a check-in from K. Griffiths in one year to review how things were going. Attorney Chard responded that he would advise against it. **Mr. Ringstad** pointed out that K. Griffiths is welcome to return and talk to Council if she chooses to.

Mr. Marney acknowledged that none are perfect and wished K. Griffiths continued success as she builds her life back up. He included his hope that she could reconnect with her daughter.

Mr. Cleworth indicated that Chauffeur License appeals used to be more common, but it had been years since the Council considered one. He shared that the Council tended to be more focused on sexual offenses when it came to Chauffeur License appeals, which was something the Council was not willing to overlook. He added that anytime the Council granted an appeal for other reasons, it was understood that if the individual messed up again, there would not be a second chance.

Ms. Sprinkle spoke to K. Griffiths' bravery, recognizing the sensitive nature of sharing such personal details in a public forum, and wished her success.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO GRANT THE APPEAL OF THE DENIED NEW CHAUFFEUR LICENSE FOR KIMBERLY M. GRIFFITHS AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Ringstad, Cleworth, Sprinkle, Therrien

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Tidwell

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and the appeal GRANTED.

Clerk Snider informed K. Griffiths that she could visit the City Clerk's Office as early as 8 a.m. the following morning to complete the license process. K. Griffith thanked the Council for considering her appeal and for the supportive comments.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

a) Special Reports

Mayor Pruhs invited Jim Matherly, Fairbanks Director of the Governor's Office, to give a report.

J. Matherly provided details on the Education for Excellence campaign that Governor Dunleavy will introduce to the State Legislature in January 2025. He discussed the campaign's priorities of empowering families and students through educational options, targeting investments for improved educational results, and ensuring educational rights and safeguards. He shared recent poll results where Alaskans asked about their support of various topics surrounding education across the state. J. Matherly cited additional components of the research and the upcoming campaign, confirming that the full report would be forwarded to the City Council. He invited the Council to review the materials and contact him for more information or with any questions. He

congratulated Ms. Therrien on her return to the City Council as well as Mr. Cleworth for his reelection. He concluded by commenting on the large early voting turnout at the State building across the street where his office is located.

b) 2024-2025 Councilmember Committee Assignments

Mayor Pruhs reviewed the list of committee assignments for the coming year and asked if each Councilmember accepted the assignments as presented. All Councilmembers accepted the assignments. **Ms. Sprinkle** expressed disappointment in no longer being assigned to the Finance Committee. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that he can only have two Councilmembers officially on the Committee, although Ms. Sprinkle is welcome to continue to attend the meetings.

Ms. Therrien asked if anyone is allowed to attend the Polaris Working Group meetings. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that with three Councilmembers already attending those meetings, there cannot be another due to the parameters of the Open Meetings Act (OMA). He affirmed that regular reports would continue to be provided and that at the moment, the group is waiting for an estimate on construction costs to be produced for the various ideas being considered.

Mayor Pruhs distributed copies of his 2025 Operating and Capital Budget. He reminded the Council to never be afraid of a budget, especially when reviewing it for the first time. He discussed major priorities for the coming year as well as current challenges the City is facing. He explained that his draft budget was intended to give the Council as large a reserve as possible as the Council considers many factors in the new fiscal year, including but not limited to staffing in key departments, labor contracts, major projects, and more. **Mayor Pruhs** declared that the City is ultimately a service company, with a job to provide the finest overall services to the citizens of Fairbanks as the budget allows. He stated that his job is now complete and that it is the Council's turn to review all line items and make any changes it finds necessary or appropriate. He encouraged the Council to have meaningful dialogue with department heads and the Chief Financial Officer as they ask questions and undertake the difficult task of finalizing a budget in the coming month.

COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth expressed appreciation for the snow clearing efforts of the Public Works crew during the recent storm. He acknowledged the challenges that such events create and commended the workers for their diligence. He inquired about the assignment of a Councilmember representative to the Chamber of Commerce Board. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that the seat is designated for him, but he is delegating it to Ms. Sprinkle as he does not have adequate time to devote to that role. **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the position had voting powers, indicating that he was under the impression that the Mayor's right to vote had been removed. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that he believes the seat still holds voting power and that he believes Ms. Sprinkle would do very well in representing the City's interests on the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Ms. Therrien also voiced support for the snow clearing efforts, sharing that she wore ice cleats many times in the previous week as she walked around town. She expressed hope that residents would be able to clear their driveways quickly as the weather shifts further into winter.

Ms. Sprinkle stated that she considers the Public Works Department to be heroes and that she has been saying as much to anyone who will listen to her.

Mr. Ringstad indicated that he had no comments.

Mr. Marney shared that he had been stuck in his house for three days until the City cleared a path down his street. He congratulated K. Griffiths for turning her life around and conveyed his support for her continued efforts.

Ms. Tidwell indicated that she had no comments.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- a) Ordinance No. 6292 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Sec. 14-167 and Sec. 14-214 to Require Written Notice to Licensees of Hearings for Alcohol and Marijuana License Applications. Introduced by Councilmembers Sprinkle, Marney, Rogers, and Therrien. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6292.

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

Ms. Sprinkle stated that if the ordinance had been in place previously, the recent situation with the Mecca Bar would have been able to be handled much better. She expressed hope that the ordinance will help situations from becoming more contentious than they ought to be.

Ms. Therrien addressed the challenge of timing, citing how the State of Alaska Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Board sometimes acts before the City's window to protest has closed. She asked if any further discussion had occurred on the matter. Clerk Snider indicated that her office would benefit from some additional time to review how to better navigate the challenge. She shared that it was a non-issue in the past as AMCO's processes were timelier. She explained that applicants used to turn in their applications and the City would receive notification shortly thereafter, with the applicant being aware that the matter was going to be taken up by the Council in the near future. She described that AMCO has suffered from staffing shortages, resulting in a backlog. Clerk Snider acknowledged that the current system is not a great practice, with the Council approving after-the-fact, as Mr. Cleworth had recently described. She expressed support for Mr. Cleworth's idea of putting forth a resolution to AMCO that made it clear that local governments view their role in the application process as more vital than just an afterthought.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if this was an issue the Council should raise to Yuri Morgan, the City's Lobbyist to the State Legislature. **Mayor Pruhs** confirmed that Y. Morgan, as well as the person involved with State licensing, need to understand the significance of the issue. He concurred that a resolution would be a prudent approach and asked Mr. Cleworth to pursue it. **Ms. Sprinkle** indicated that she would like to be involved as well. **Mr. Cleworth** agreed to work on the resolution, noting that input from the City Clerk and City Attorney would be important.

Mayor Pruhs thanked those who had put the ordinance together. He reviewed the challenges that arise when conflicts occur between the City's processes and those of other government agencies, citing the impact on local businesses.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6292 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6292 ADOPTED.

- b) Ordinance No. 6293 – An Ordinance Amending Fairbanks General Code Chapter 26, Article III, Emergency Medical Services, Adding Regulations Governing Private Ambulance Services and Amending the City Schedule of Fees and Charges for Services. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs. SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to ADOPT Ordinance No. 6293.

Mayor Pruhs called for Public Testimony.

David Ferris, Director of Ground Operations for LifeMed Alaska – D. Ferris reported that his company reviewed the ordinance and believes it will help make it as easy as possible for Fairbanks residents to receive important medical services. He shared that LifeMed Alaska has been operating in Alaska for 15 years, and in Fairbanks for 10 years. He stated that the ordinance provides a framework for operations such as theirs but noted one item, Sec. 26-102, that he would suggest striking. He explained that the language requires all dispatching services to be done through the City – even for non-emergency services – which he believes adds unnecessary strain to that department. D. Ferris asserted that private ambulance companies are capable of coordinating with facilities and individuals for non-emergency transports and that he would prefer to not see additional work on the Fairbanks Emergency Communications Center (FECC). He acknowledged that some redundancies exist within the ordinance but that it mirrors Anchorage's ordinance.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if LifeMed has an existing agreement with the Fairbanks North Star Borough. D. Ferris replied that they do not have any agreements with the Borough directly but that they are available and operate private ambulance services in other parts of Alaska where no such ordinance exists. He clarified that their work locally has thus far been solely for medevac services.

Mr. Ringstad pointed out that Sec. 26-102 has three subsections and asked D. Ferris if he was suggesting that all three subsections be stricken. D. Ferris reviewed each of the subsections and confirmed that all three could be considered unnecessary.

Mayor Pruhs asked if the FGC requires Council approval for an ambulance to operate in the city. Attorney Chard stated that it does not.

Ms. Sprinkle asked for clarification on what type of ambulances LifeMed currently has in Fairbanks. D. Ferris shared that their equipment is capable of providing anything from basic services up through critical care.

Ms. Tidwell referenced D. Ferris's comment that if the first subsection of Sec. 26-102 was removed, LifeMed would be able to coordinate calls for non-emergency transports. She asked if every other private ambulance company would have the same ability. D. Ferris confirmed that other companies would be able to have their contact information at facilities in the community.

Ms. Tidwell asked if that meant businesses would maintain their own relationships with facilities and those agencies would choose which company to call. D. Ferris replied affirmatively.

Mayor Pruhs outlined the potential parameters of non-emergency transports and how they would be neither performed nor dispatched by the City. He asked why the ordinance was necessary if the City would not be involved. Attorney Chard explained that there are no current rules or framework in place within FGC and that this effort is to establish standards and create an even playing field for all private ambulance services.

Ms. Sprinkle asked D. Ferris if he would still be supportive of the ordinance if Sec. 26-102 remained unchanged. D. Ferris affirmed that LifeMed would definitely still want to operate and that it would be similar to what already exists in Anchorage. He clarified that his suggestion was just an idea for reducing the strain on the City's dispatching center for non-emergencies.

Mr. Cleworth referenced the twelfth page of the ordinance which addresses quarterly reports. He discussed client confidentiality and excessive paperwork, asking D. Ferris if he saw a need for quarterly reports. D. Ferris stated that he would have to defer to a compliance officer regarding the concern but acknowledged a potential for HIPAA violations with any private ambulance company.

Mr. Marney asked if they had run into this particular concern in Anchorage. D. Ferris indicated that the Anchorage ordinance has allowed private ambulance services to work in tandem with the local government but that many aspects have proven unnecessary, reiterating that they have also been successful in areas with no rules in place.

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

Mayor Pruhs invited Fire Chief Andrew Cocco to respond to any Councilmember questions.

Mr. Cleworth spoke to the complicated nature of the topic, given the lack of official agreements with other entities within the Borough and that there is no definition of a "mutual aid partner" within the FGC, despite the term often being used in discussion over the years. He asked if the FECC is aware of the other agencies' capacities when mutual aid is being dispatched and if so, how much information they have if agreements are not on file. FECC Manager Kristi Merideth shared that a lot of the information is already set up in the background of their system, letting them know which agency to use and in what order. She stated that they can make changes in the system and that the agencies can update each other on their capabilities. She added that mutual aid is typically used for fire-related calls only – not ambulance services.

Mr. Cleworth asked if, without official mutual aid agreements, the other fire departments in the Borough would also be subject to Ordinance No. 6293 unless expressly exempted. He added that if they are granting exemptions to some, criteria would need to be established. Chief Coccoaro acknowledged the complexity of the issue and reminded the Council that the ordinance initially came about as a result of the private sector expressing a desire to operate non-emergency services for patients being discharged from the hospital. He reiterated that the structure is mirrored in Anchorage as well as other larger municipalities in other states. He explained that the other EMS agencies meet the Borough's requirements through their submitted Response Plans. Chief Coccoaro confirmed that the ordinance levels the playing field for private ambulance companies and invites them to operate in Fairbanks through fair and transparent rules. He stated that it would not hinder any existing mutual aid relationships and clarified that EMS services are regulated differently because patients do not get to choose who transports them.

Ms. Sprinkle asked Chief Coccoaro his opinion on removing Sec. 26-102. Chief Coccoaro stated the second subsection is intended to serve as a check and balance for calls being taken and reported. He acknowledged the ability for companies to take calls directly but asserted that there are benefits to the City having data on call volumes, especially as more companies potentially seek to operate in Fairbanks. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked if private companies would have the ability to cherry-pick clients. Chief Coccoaro explained that, in the ordinance as written, the onus would be upon each company to take transports regardless of the patient's ability to pay, allowing the City to serve as a regulating and supervising entity, ensuring that the FGC was being followed. He added that it would also allow the City to collect data that will help guide future decisions.

Ms. Tidwell pointed out that the option to alleviate some burden from dispatchers was appealing and asked how much time the FECC spends on non-emergency transport calls. K. Merideth explained that private companies are not a part of their radio network and would have to be called on the phone. She added that the calls would be considered business calls, which come second to emergency calls, and have potential to create difficulties.

Ms. Therrien asked whether any or all parts of Sec. 26-102 should be removed. Chief Coccoaro recommended that all three subsections remain. **Ms. Therrien** asked if it would be a burden for FECC to take those calls, given the calls would be by phone versus radio. K. Merideth stated that the FECC is flexible and will figure out a way, even if it meant forwarding the calls. **Ms. Therrien** questioned whether the Council should hold off on voting on the ordinance until the issue of mutual aid agreements was resolved. Chief Coccoaro explained that there are two separate issues and that his conversations with other fire chiefs in the Borough confirmed that they will continue with the unofficial agreements that have been the status quo. He reiterated that 911 calls are separate from non-emergency medical transportation services and that the ordinance only speaks to the latter.

Ms. Sprinkle indicated that she is inclined to adopt the ordinance as-is and see how things go.

Mr. Ringstad noted that they have been kicking the issue around for about a year and that the core of the issue is that private companies want to do business with other private companies. He stated that his two years on the Council have shown him that the dispatchers at FECC are understaffed, overworked, and underpaid. He indicated support for removing the first and third subsections of Sec. 26-102 to alleviate a burden on the FECC and eliminate unnecessary reporting.

Mr. Ringstad, seconded by **Mr. Cleworth**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6293 by striking Sec. 26-102 and Sec. 26-109(c) and (d).

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to DIVIDE THE QUESTION by first considering whether to strike Sec. 26-102 and then whether to strike Sec. 26-109(c) and (d).

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO DIVIDE THE QUESTION BY FIRST CONSIDERING WHETHER TO STRIKE SEC. 26-102 AND THEN WHETHER TO STRIKE SEC. 26-109(c) AND (d) AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Marney, Sprinkle, Therrien, Tidwell

NAYS: Cleworth, Ringstad

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND the amendment to strike Sec. 26-102 by retaining item (b) and only striking items (a) and (c).

Ms. Tidwell indicated that she was not in favor of removing any of the three items, citing the comments from Chief Cocco about the benefit of having call data and oversight in the process as time progresses and more private ambulance companies get licensed to operate in the city.

Mr. Cleworth pointed out that language on the third page indicates that those with mutual aid agreements are exempt from the ordinance but that no official agreements exist, and there is no information on how private companies could pursue becoming a mutual aid partner. He discussed further complications from Sec. 26-107, Emergency and Disaster Operations, which addresses companies availing themselves during emergency situations and the impact on the Fire Chief coordinating non-mutual aid partners in such scenarios. **Mr. Cleworth** asserted that unless there is a clear definition of a mutual aid partner, there are double standards that convolute the issue.

Ms. Therrien asked Mr. Cleworth if he felt they should wait until the mutual aid question had been resolved before adopting the ordinance. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that he does, because a company like LifeMed Alaska may want to become a mutual aid partner, but there is nothing in place to address what that means or how an entity becomes one.

Mr. Ringstad pointed out that the focus was supposed to be on non-emergency services, which is not intended to be the City's business, versus emergency services which are the City's business.

Mayor Pruhs agreed that something that addresses mutual aid parameters would pertain to emergency services and would take a long time to work out. He concurred that the ordinance was intended to address non-emergency services only.

Mr. Cleworth stated that there is nothing preventing private ambulance companies from operating non-emergency services within the city other than their obligation to meet State standards, just like all other EMS entities in the region. He indicated that a previous discussion had identified possible issues regarding insurance requirements, of which the City should be mindful. He shared his

primary concern that the ordinance exempts a category of service providers from regulation without a clear definition of what puts an entity in that exempted category.

Mayor Pruhs reminded the Council of the current motion on the floor, which is to retain item (b) of Sec. 26-102 and only strike items (a) and (c).

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to POSTPONE Ordinance No. 6293 to the Regular Meeting of November 4, 2024.

Mr. Ringstad stated that in about a year's time they have made very little progress on the ordinance, that there are businesses wanting to proceed with plans, and that the Council was now becoming the obstacle. He stated he prefers to push through the ordinance and work on the topic of mutual aid partnerships as a separate effort. **Mayor Pruhs** noted that it had been nearly two years since the idea of the ordinance was first brought forward.

Ms. Sprinkle pointed out that nothing was preventing a company from operating non-emergency medical transportation within the city, so postponing should not harm the business's operations.

Chief Cocco explained that there is a difference between State and Borough standards and that all mutual aid partners have contracts with the Borough to provide EMS services within the borough according to Borough standards. He stated that, as far as he is aware, no private companies have that same kind of contract, which means they cannot pick up emergency calls within the city. He indicated that the business of emergency services is the job of the Fairbanks Fire Department and at the core of the associated collective bargaining agreement (CBA), so they must avoid muddying the waters when it comes to emergency services. He reiterated that the intention behind the ordinance was to provide a framework for those interested in non-emergency transports.

Mr. Ringstad stated that while there may not be any rules preventing non-emergency transports within the city, the fact that they have been discussing establishing parameters for a while now would certainly impact a business wanting to operate. He explained that companies want clear guidelines in place to prevent them from commencing operations only to see rules come into play after the fact that might require significant changes to their plans. He expressed displeasure in the idea of government getting in the way.

Mr. Cleworth asked if a company could establish a contract directly with the hospital to provide non-emergency transports as of right now. Chief Cocco stated that they can. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that negates Mr. Ringstad's concern about the Council getting in the way of such plans.

Chief of Staff Michael Sanders shared that representatives from both the hospital and LifeMed had met with the City in the last month to discuss their desire to have something in place that sets parameters and regulates non-emergency medical transports.

Mr. Ringstad stated that while businesses technically could operate without the ordinance, good business practices suggest to those owners that they should not.

Ms. Tidwell indicated that she supports the ordinance and would not like to see it postponed.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO POSTPONE ORDINANCE NO. 6293 TO THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 4, 2024 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth
NAYS: Sprinkle, Therrien, Marney, Ringstad, Tidwell
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION FAILED.

Mr. Ringstad requested clarity on the implications of keeping or removing item (b) of Sec. 26-102, which makes it unlawful for private companies to response to emergency calls except as outlined in Sec. 26-107. Attorney Chard confirmed that the primary issue is that the current CBA for the Fire Department requires that all emergency services go through the department.

Mr. Cleworth asked if the CBA also addresses the scenario presented in Sec. 26-107. Attorney Chard stated that the CBA allows for a declared emergency disaster to supersede the existing restrictions on emergency services. **Mr. Cleworth** asked where mutual aid agreements are identified. Attorney Chard indicated that he understands mutual aid partnerships to be limited to emergency services which is outside of the private ambulance service considerations. He confirmed that the CBA does not include a definition of a mutual aid partner.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE AMENDMENT TO STRIKE SEC. 26-102 BY RETAINING ITEM (b) AND ONLY STRIKING ITEMS (a) AND (c) AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Ringstad, Tidwell, Therrien, Sprinkle, Marney
NAYS: Cleworth
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Tidwell stated she would prefer to see all of Sec. 26-102 left intact in order to have checks and balances, especially as more companies become licensed.

Ms. Sprinkle reminded the Council that it has often expressed a desire for the Fire Chief to have a greater capacity to manage his department and that he had indicated a preference to leave that section in place. She expressed her inclination to accept his recommendation.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6293 BY STRIKING ITEMS (a) AND (c) OF SEC. 26-102 AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Ringstad
NAYS: Tidwell, Marney, Sprinkle, Therrien
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION FAILED.

Mayor Pruhs explained that as a result of the earlier division of the question, the motion now on the floor was to strike Sec. 26-109 (c) and (d).

Mr. Ringstad expressed a desire to eliminate the additional work that would be created for Chief Coccaro through the required reports.

Ms. Tidwell asked for Chief Coccoaro's opinion, especially considering that Sec. 26-102 was not being stricken. Chief Coccoaro indicated that there would not necessarily be a negative repercussion if the items in Sec. 26-109 were removed but that it was a matter of data collection. He expressed great interest in having the type of data that would be available in the reports, noting that it would fill many gaps not recorded through regular call details via FECC's processes. He explained that the information would help them better understand trends or forecast needs to improve efforts in providing efficient oversight. Chief Coccoaro explained that should they ever want that data, it would be awkward to request it from companies ala carte, rather than just set the expectation at the beginning. He stated that given the similarity of the ordinance to that which exists in Anchorage and other cities, the information is already commonly collected by companies and easily produced for reports such as these, thus not creating much of a burden to produce.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6293 BY STRIKING SEC. 26-109 (c) and (d) AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Cleworth, Ringstad
NAYS: Marney, Tidwell, Therrien, Sprinkle
Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION FAILED.

Mr. Cleworth spoke to Sec. 26-92(b), which referenced mutual aid agreements and asked what it would mean, given that there is no definition of the term. Chief Coccoaro acknowledged the issue and stated that the existing arrangements in place, with the approved emergency response plans on file with FECC, would be sufficient while they work on better clarifying the term in question. **Mr. Cleworth** asked how an entity becomes a mutual aid partner. Chief Coccoaro stated that the question did not pertain to the ordinance. **Mr. Cleworth** asked Chief Coccoaro if he would want private ambulance companies to have the ability to become mutual aid partners. Chief Coccoaro stated that if they meet the requirements that the Borough has set and can work out a contract at that level, then the City should entertain having them as a mutual aid partner. He reiterated that the ordinance is meant to address non-emergency transports and that mutual aid partnerships are specifically for emergency services. **Mr. Cleworth** requested that the Council be provided with a copy of the existing mutual aid contract in order to review the requirements. Chief Coccoaro replied that he could get a copy of the current contract between the City and the Borough but that he could not guarantee that the Borough would share its contracts with the other agencies. **Mr. Cleworth** pointed out that the records would be considered public information, so they should be available.

Clerk Snider pointed out that the ordinance, as written, has the standard effective date of five days after adoption, which would be the coming weekend. She explained that the City Clerk's Office will need to set up the licensing process, which includes creating a physical application and coordinating with the City's software company for the electronic component. She indicated that the tasks could not be completed within that timeframe.

Mayor Pruhs stated that as the sponsor of the ordinance, he would like to see an effective date set for whenever the Clerk's Office would be ready to implement the program. Clerk Snider suggested that while they would be somewhat at the mercy of the software provider, they could get started on it right away and would likely be ready by the end of the year.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to AMEND Ordinance No. 6293 by changing the effective date to January 1, 2025.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND ORDINANCE NO. 6293 BY CHANGING THE EFFECTIVE DATE TO JANUARY 1, 2025 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ADOPT ORDINANCE NO. 6293, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

YEAS: Ringstad, Therrien, Marney, Sprinkle, Tidwell

NAYS: Cleworth

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Ordinance No. 6293, as Amended, ADOPTED.

NEW BUSINESS

- a) Resolution No. 5140 – A Resolution Authorizing the City of Fairbanks to Apply for Funds from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT & PF) for Emergency Medical Service Organizations. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5140.

Mr. Cleworth referenced the costs for the equipment listed under the projects section of the fiscal note and asked if there was not a better use for the grant funds. Chief Cocco shared that while attending various public events with his family, his observation was that access in crowds would be very difficult for first responders, especially with large apparatuses. He noted that in other places, departments use segways, bicycles, and other small-scale equipment in order to access areas of an event during an emergency. He explained that the grant is new, which inspired him to focus on being proactive instead of reactive and try something new, such as getting first responders to someone in need in a crowded setting and administering aid while waiting for an ambulance or EMT. Chief Cocco acknowledged the high cost of properly equipped e-bikes as well as that of the all-terrain vehicle that will allow them access to locations not reachable by regular trucks.

Mr. Ringstad stated that he is unsure of any location within the City where he would not be able to access with his own pickup truck and questioned the need for an ATV. Chief Cocco clarified that a standard emergency response vehicle is not nearly as versatile off-road as a truck. He explained that the ATV would not be a standard unit but rather a utility vehicle with a heated enclosure that would allow them to reach areas otherwise not accessible, such as along riverbanks.

Ms. Sprinkle asked if the Council could see examples of the equipment referenced and if the equipment would require additional personnel. Chief Cocco explained that the equipment would roll into the plans for additional crews in the following year when they anticipate reduced overtime,

similarly to how they currently provide coverage at hockey games. He cited the benefit of staff interacting with the community in a different way. He stated that while he could not guarantee that it would not contribute to overtime, the equipment could be driven by anyone in the department and that there is a gap in coverage for these types of response vehicles. **Ms. Sprinkle** asked about future hidden costs of the units. Chief Cocco reported having spoken to multiple companies that make e-bikes specifically for first responders and learned that the units have excellent track records, with almost no equipment failures or long-term costs. He clarified that the cost in the fiscal note would cover several bikes.

Ms. Therrien asked what “Upfits for Bikes” meant in the fiscal note. Chief Cocco explained that there are EMS-specific saddle bags and other accessories that they would look to purchase to outfit the units for maximum use. He described the emergency ATV as miniature ambulance, outfitted with items such as a stretcher, cardiac monitor, and other ambulance supplies. He added that the e-bike and ATV models considered are models not available on the open market and are specifically designed for government agencies.

Mr. Marney asked if the ATV is considered street legal. Chief Cocco confirmed that it is.

Mr. Cleworth asked how many e-bikes the funding would cover. Chief Cocco indicated that the proposal would cover five bikes, the cost to upfit them, and the racks to transport them. **Mr. Cleworth** admitted that he was not excited about the bikes but considered the ATV a useful tool.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE RESOLUTION NO. 5140 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED and Resolution No. 5140 APPROVED.

- b) Resolution No. 5141 – A Resolution Awarding a Contract to Design Alaska, Inc. in the Amount of \$316,686.00 to Design the City Hall Heating Upgrade Project. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE Resolution No. 5141.

Mr. Cleworth asked if the City planned to proceed with a hot water heating system. **Mayor Pruhs** reported that he had spoken with the City Engineer who indicated that he was unsure of the final plan. **Mr. Cleworth** stated that he recalled the Council discussing the project a year or two prior and that the Council had settled on using hot water or steam. He asked why that direction had not been followed. Chief of Staff Sanders indicated that there had been a lot of decision paralysis on the project and that it was outside of the Engineering Department’s regular wheelhouse. He stated that they had been taking things slowly which is what led them to put out a request for proposals (RFP). **Mr. Cleworth** asked if the RFP had specified looking at alternative energy or if it had included a preference to use hot water or steam. **Mayor Pruhs** explained that the impression he was given by the City Engineer was that they were leaning towards using hot water but that they

were going to lean on Design Alaska's work for the best option to choose. **Mr. Cleworth** clarified that his concern was that Design Alaska would be spending money to consider alternative energy sources when the decision had already been made to use hot water or steam based on the nature of the building. **Mayor Pruhs** indicated that if more clarity was needed, the Council could postpone the resolution and seek additional details from the City Engineer.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to POSTPONE Resolution No. 5141 to the Regular Meeting of November 4, 2024.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO POSTPONE RESOLUTION NO. 5141 TO THE REGULAR MEETING OF NOVEMBER 4, 2024 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- c) Ordinance No. 6294 – An Ordinance Amending the 2024 Operating and Capital Budgets for the Fourth Time. Introduced by Mayor Pruhs.

ADVANCED on the CONSENT AGENDA

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS TO THE CITY COUNCIL

- a) Permanent Fund Review Board Meeting Minutes of July 24, 2024

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Therrien**, moved to ACCEPT the Permanent Fund Review Board Meeting Minutes of July 24, 2024.

Mr. Cleworth requested clarification on the rate of the annualized account return reported near the bottom of the first page. CFO Bell explained that although the amount since inception was 5.66%, the changes that have been implemented since March 2017 have resulted in a higher estimated return. She noted that the 6.46% has increased more as of October, with an updated estimate of 7.12%. **Mr. Cleworth** acknowledged that this is based on the market remaining up.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE PERMANENT FUND REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES OF JULY 24, 2024 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

- b) 2025 City Council Meeting Calendar

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Ms. Sprinkle**, moved to APPROVE the 2025 City Council Meeting Calendar.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND the 2025 City Council Meeting Calendar by moving the Regular Meeting of March 24 to March 31.

Ms. Therrien shared that she will be out of the country on March 24 and would be grateful if they could move the meeting so she could attend.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALENDAR BY MOVING THE REGULAR MEETING OF MARCH 24 TO MARCH 31 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Therrien noted that she would also be traveling during the first meeting in May. **Mayor Pruhs** stated that he would be travelling the previous and following week if the date was moved in either direction. **Ms. Therrien** acknowledged that the meeting date should remain and stated that she will request having an excused absence when the time comes.

Ms. Therrien, seconded by **Mr. Ringstad**, moved to AMEND the 2025 City Council Meeting Calendar by moving the Regular Meeting of September 22 to September 29.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO AMEND THE 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALENDAR BY MOVING THE REGULAR MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 22 TO SEPTEMBER 29 AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

A ROLL CALL VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION TO APPROVE THE 2025 CITY COUNCIL MEETING CALENDAR, AS AMENDED, AS FOLLOWS:

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

NAYS: None

Mayor Pruhs declared the MOTION CARRIED.

COMMITTEE REPORTS AND COUNCILMEMBERS' COMMENTS

Mr. Cleworth asked for and received confirmation on the schedule for upcoming budget meetings.

Ms. Therrien shared that the Permanent Fund Review Board recently met, and it was a great quarter for the Fund. She provided specific data to illustrate the positive growth but reminded the Council that the amount that supplements the budget is based on a five-year average, so it would be a couple years before some of the significant increases would be seen. She reported that the group would have a strategic planning meeting in July but would meet in January to prepare for

the annual report to the Council. **Ms. Therrien** offered to share her notes with anyone interested. She concluded by encouraging everyone who had not already done so to exercise their right to vote in the general election the following week.

Ms. Sprinkle reported that the Chena Riverfront Commission had met and that the body currently has two vacancies. She stated that volunteers had pulled a record amount of debris from the slough this year and that they had discussed the boat launch renovation project at Pioneer Park. She shared that a lot of the group's time was spent discussing the riverwalk project that involves a land lease issue with Alaska Railroad; she indicated it was not going well. **Ms. Sprinkle** reported on representing the Council at the recent Borough Assembly meeting where those leaving office were recognized and newly elected officials were sworn in. She indicated that she had shared details with the Assembly about the Council's budgeting process and abatements and celebrated the passing of the updated ordinance regarding parking regulations in the downtown area.

Ms. Tidwell shared that the recent storm had occurred when the Economic Development Commission was slated to meet, resulting in a rescheduling of that meeting.

Mr. Marney and **Mr. Ringstad** each indicated that they had no reports or comments.

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.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cleworth, seconded by **Ms. Tidwell**, moved to ENTER into an Executive Session to discuss PSEA Labor Negotiations and FFU Labor Negotiations to receive guidance from Council.

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

Mayor Pruhs called for a brief recess. The Council reconvened in Executive Session following the brief recess.

- a) PSEA Labor Negotiations: Guidance from Council [permissible under State law, including the provision at AS 44.62.310(c)(1)] (*entered at 9:02 p.m.*)
- b) FFU Labor Negotiations: Guidance from Council [permissible under State law, including the provision at AS 44.62.310(c)(1)] (*entered at 9:37 p.m.*)

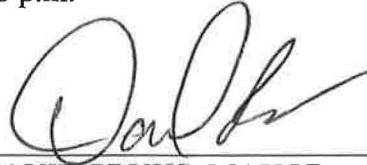
Mr. Cleworth brought the City Council out of the Executive Session, noting that the Council discussed PSEA and FFU Labor Negotiations. He affirmed that no action was taken.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Tidwell, 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 10:28 p.m.



DAVID PRUHS, MAYOR

ATTEST:



D. DANYELLE SNIDER, MMC, CITY CLERK

Transcribed by: CC