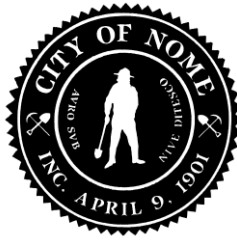


Mayor
John K. Handeland
Manager
Glenn Steckman
Clerk
Bryant Hammond



Nome City Council
Jerald Brown
Doug Johnson
Mark Johnson
Adam Martinson
Jennifer Reader
Meghan Sigvanna Topkok

**NOME COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, OCTOBER 25, 2021 at 7:00 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN CITY HALL**

102 Division St. • P.O. Box 281 • Nome, Alaska 99762 • Phone (907) 443-6663 • Fax (907) 443-5345

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jerald Brown; Doug Johnson; Mark Johnson; Sigvanna Topkok

Members Absent: Scot Henderson (excused); Adam Martinson

Also Present: John K. Handeland, Mayor; Paris Hebel, Youth Representative; Glenn Steckman, City Manager; Bryant Hammond, Clerk; Mike Heintzelman, NPD Chief; Ken Morton, Assistant Utility Manager;

In the audience: Diana Haecker, Nome Nugget; Sean Milligan, KNOM; Derek McLarty; Jennifer Reader; Darelene Trigg; Keith Morrison; Alisha Rose; Hannah Schmidt; Logan Hebel; Andrew James

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by C. D. Johnson and seconded by C. Brown to approve the agenda as presented.

At the roll call:

Aye: D. Johnson; M. Johnson; Topkok; Brown

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

OATH OF OFFICE

- A. Youth Representative Paris Hebel Oath of Office.
- Clerk Hammond administered the oath of office for Mr. Hebel.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. October 11, 2021 Nome Common Council Regular Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by C. D. Johnson and seconded by C. Topkok to approve the October 11, 2021 minutes.

At the roll call:

Aye: D. Johnson; M. Johnson; Topkok; Brown

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Letter of October 11, 2021 from Melissa Ford to Nome City Council re: Property Search & City Sales Tax Collection and Payment Process.
- B. Letter of October 15, 2021 from Nome Community Center to Manager Steckman re: Housing First Partnership.
 - Council Member Topkok asked where the conversation was at in terms of partnering with NCC.
 - Manager Steckman gave an update on NEST opening for the season as well as ongoing discussions with NCC on the status of their housing first project. Manager Steckman noted it was a priority among staff due to the target population's effect on City resources. He noted the limitation on liquor sales imposed by the AC Quickstop had decreased the calls on Front St by 50%.
 - Council Member Topkok voiced her support for the housing first model and the need to support the population who are dealing with addiction and trauma.
 - Manager Steckman noted that the type and degree of support would come up in long term planning discussions this winter.
- C. Letter of October 15, 2021 from AMCO to City of Nome re: Retail Marijuana Store License Renewal Application.
 - Chief Heintzelman noted no issues with the applicant to date.
 - Mayor Handeland summarized two additional communications, received after the packet was published, one from Justin Noffske and one from Pat Krier, both speaking against the proposed emergency ordinance, arguing it unfairly targets one group of businesses.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

1. Derek McLarty spoke against O-21-10-01, noting the ordinance targeted a single type of business, calling it ridiculous. He stated the difference between the current meeting and those currently in a bar was that at least those in the bar were drinking beer.

2. Jennifer Reader spoke against O-21-10-01, asking a number of questions such as what data was used, why notices were delivered by uniformed officer, and why they conveniently occurred between council meetings.
3. Darlene Trigg thanked the City Manager for doing what he could to keep the community safe. She noted it was a community effort and the City had the responsibility. She thanked the City for their efforts.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. O-21-10-01 An Emergency Ordinance Prohibiting the Sale of Alcohol in Nome Other than by Authorized Licensees Holding a Package Store License Until November 14, 2021 in Order to Reduce the Impact and Spread of COVID-19 Throughout the City of Nome, **EMERGENCY ORDINANCE/FIRST READING/PUBLIC HEARING/FINAL PASSAGE.**

For the purpose of holding a public hearing, the Council recessed at 7:21 PM.

The Council reconvened at 7:21 PM.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to adopt O-21-10-01.

Discussion:

- Manager Steckman noted 95 active Covid cases in Nome, more than when the Council shut down the bars and restaurants last time. He noted patrons not wearing masks in bars and characterized them as social places where people stay for longer periods than other places of congregation in town. He discussed the method of notice and the reasoning behind it. Manager Steckman discussed where the notices were posted and City staff's efforts to inform the public. He discussed current efforts to increase vaccinations and testing to curtail the spread of the virus.
- Council Member Brown surmised there could be support in the community to extend the closures beyond just the bar and discussed the process of protecting people who don't want to be protected.
- Council Member Topkok expressed the concern that a significant percentage of the cases were breakthrough and that those that were unprotected were beginning to affect those that are. She asked if the City should consider reinstating airport testing mandates.
- Manager Steckman explained the cases in Nome were community spread and that vaccines for ages 5 - 11 should be available within the next few weeks. He opined that Nome was lucky that the situation was not as bad as it was in Fairbanks and Anchorage.
- Council Member Mark Johnson asked if there was specific data showing spread in the bars.

- Manager Steckman noted anecdotal evidence and pointed to the lack of mask wearing in bars when spot checked. He noted that, after discussions, this route seemed the best to take.
- Council Member Mark Johnson asked if staff had heard from other bar owners about the potential affect on their business. He asked about the reasoning for the exemption for requiring masks at the schools.
- Manager Steckman explained the City Attorney recommended such because the schools already had their own process in place.
- Council Member Mark Johnson explained the Council was expected to make decisions based on community input and most input he has been hearing is against the ordinance.
- Council Member Doug Johnson opined that the City can only protect people against themselves to a certain point and that he hadn't heard any support for the ordinance yet. He noted the vaccination rate would probably not increase too much as those that wanted the vaccination have probably already got it.
- Council Member Brown expressed concern over the economic effect, asking if the City Manager intended to implement a similar assistance program to last year. He opined that if the City were to target a sector, then the bars would probably have the highest impact.
- Council Member Topkok asked if the program could be tailored to the employees.
- Manager Steckman described the process from the previous bar closures. He noted hope that this measure would have an impact. He discussed difficulties surrounding mandated testing at the airport and the desire to not subject City employees to such treatment again. He reiterated his characterization of bars as sources of spread due to the differences in mask use.
- Mayor Handeland noted a 10% jump over the weekend. He discussed mask use in a grocery store over the weekend, noting most people using masks, but one person walking around without, not caring about their neighbors.
- Youth Representative Hebel discussed the situation at the schools noting a reluctance for strict enforcement.
- Mayor Handeland noted that if people were a little more cooperative, the community wouldn't be at this point. He noted the bars were identified as likely spreading points and asked the Council to consider a reduction in capacity at restaurants as well.
- Council Member Brown drew differences between the interactions at bars and at restaurants or churches and opined that closing the bars would have an effect on the rates of transmission. He suggested support for the ordinance and asked that the City support the employees affected by the closure.
- Mayor Handeland opined the program should be put into place as soon as reasonably possible.
- Manager Steckman discussed the need for a means to verify employee income.
- Mayor Handeland that the capacity limitation wouldn't be effective as the later it gets in a bar, the closer people get together. He opined the measure should be 100% or not at all.
- Council Member Mark Johnson opined just talking about the issue was getting the issue out in the public eye.

- Mayor Handeland asked if the City should wait to see how the emergency order limiting capacity pans out.
- Council Member Brown spoke against the 25% capacity limitation. He discussed the measure would decrease revenue but keep the overhead the same for owners. He noted employees would have decreased pay, instead of being able to collect unemployment if the establishments were shut down completely.
- Council Member Doug Johnson suggested possibly closing down early, to address the “later it gets the closer people get” issue.
- Council Member Mark Johnson relayed a conversation with a friend who owned a bar, saying the capacity limitation wouldn't address the issue and that a closure would better suffice.
- Council Member Brown voiced opposition to closing bars earlier, comparing the action's effectiveness to the capacity limitation and pointing out the difficulties in identifying the wages lost due to the action.

At the roll call:

Aye: M. Johnson; Topkok; Brown; D. Johnson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **FAILED**.

- B. R-21-10-03 A Resolution Authorizing Application, Approval & Acceptance of a Loan from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Alaska Clean Water Fund to Provide Loan Financing for Improvements to the Community Wastewater System Infrastructure.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to adopt R-21-10-03.

Discussion:

- Assistant Utility Manager Morton explained that since there were funds left over from the recently completed Bering Street project, the Utility Board recommended modifying the current loans and adding additional funds to address similar issues in the Seppala Drive rehabilitation project.

At the roll call:

Aye: Topkok; Brown; D. Johnson; M. Johnson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- C. R-21-10-04 A Resolution Authorizing Application, Approval & Acceptance of a Loan from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Alaska Drinking Water Fund to Provide Loan Financing for Improvements to Community Water System Infrastructure.

A motion was made by C. D. Johnson and seconded by C. Brown to adopt R-21-10-04.

At the roll call:

Aye: Topkok; Brown; D. Johnson; M. Johnson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

UTILITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. Activity Report: October 12 - 22, 2021.
- Assistant Utility Manager Morton noted a spill drill planned for Wednesday that will be conducted via table top exercise. He explained that much activity at the Utility recently was preparing for winter.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. Activity Report: October 12 - 22, 2021.
- Steckman opined people in the community might think he's a teetotler. He noted he helped build and open a bar while in College. He noted Joe Horton resigned his position as public works supervisor and that the City would take this opportunity to restructure the department. He briefly discussed current public works projects. Manager Steckman noted he and the mayor would be traveling to Anchorage for the Harbormaster conference. He informed the Council of the policy that City employees were not allowed to travel for city business unless they are vaccinated. He gave an update the Council on the Rec Center boiler project. He discussed a snow advertisement going out with a central phone number and email address for better coordination at addressing snow removal needs. He referred the Council to Emergency Order 2021-04 in the packet and encouraged the Council to ratify the order.
 - Council Member Brown asked if Dr. Peterson had provided input.
 - Manager Steckman noted Dr. Peterson's approval of the measure.
 - Council Member Doug Johnson asked how the City was going to enforce the EO.
 - Manager Steckman discussed the messaging approach, noting mostly asking for compliance.
 - Council Member Doug Johnson suggested improved and clear signage for the businesses effected. He opined that basing a program on last year's sales tax numbers would not be adequate as in his opinion things were starting to look normal again around town, in contrast to 2020.

- Manager Steckman said the City could use the October 2021 numbers to be more fair to the businesses.
 - Mayor Handeland suggested using September 2021 numbers for expediency.
 - Council Member Mark Johnson asked the City Manager to encourage bar owners to keep their employees on staff and that the City would be coming up with a program to assist with lost revenue.
 - Council Member Brown reiterated the program needs to help the employees.

 - Manager Steckman referred the Council to the departmental quarterly reports. He gave an update on the Mayor's vehicle procurement. He gave an update on police statistics, including calls and sexual assault numbers.
 - He invited Youth Representative Hebel to tour the city facilities, as well as Council Member Topkok to accompany.
- B. Emergency Order 2021-04
- C. NPD Quarterly Report.
- D. Parks & Rec Quarterly Report.
- E. Kegoayah Kozga Library Quarterly Report.
- F. Harbormaster Quarterly Report.
- G. Visitor Center Quarterly Report.
- H. October Port Director / Capital Projects Update.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

1. Andrew James empathized with small businesses over the potential for lost revenue due to COVID closures. He suggested a fundraiser or other means of spreading the burden across other businesses. He noted that people who are immune-compromised were not as protected by the vaccine and that the elderly are still the most negatively affected by COVID. He also discussed the situation with hospitals in the state of AK being overwhelmed. He commended the Council for having a discussion rooted in reason.
2. Derek McLarty thanked Council Member Doug Johnson for listening to the community. He drew a comparison between the vote on O-21-10-01 and the lack participation in the local political process.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS

1. Council Member Brown appreciated the comments this evening and noted that he was frequently reminded that he was elected to serve the community at large and not just the

vocal residents. He noted recent Anchorage Assembly meetings where written comments were overwhelmingly in favor of mask mandates in terms of volume, despite the vocal ones that showed up. He noted the Council tries to represent the entire community and opined he wasn't terribly upset the ordinance failed.

2. Council Member Doug Johnson welcomed Paris Hebel to the Council, wishing him an eye-opening experience in learning how the unpleasant things are dealt with. He noted Ms. Ford's letter saying something should be done to about making sales tax collection easier. He stressed the need to make it easy to do business in the City of Nome.
 - Manager Steckman discussed potential solutions to sales tax collection, noting cash collection as an issue.
3. Council Member Mark Johnson welcomed Paris Hebel to the Council and thanked the people that do participate in Council Meetings and pay attention to Council actions. He noted the fluctuating sales tax rates is one way of making doing business difficult, saying that a single rate year-round would simplify things. He referenced a letter to the editor in the ADN concerning domestic violence, noting that by the time the officer is on the scene it's too late, as the violence has already happened and the damage inflicted. He asked that police officers complete their reports so the DA can prosecute; Council Member Mark Johnson contended Zoning downtown prohibits the establishment and expansion of business, noting 10 foot setbacks as one specific issue.
4. Council Member Topkok welcomed Paris Hebel and encouraged people to take the precautions to protect the community. She stated the need to prioritize the youth and to keep them in in-person instruction. She questioned if the "I can do what I what" mentality is what the community really wants for itself. She said we can do better.
5. Paris Hebel thanked everyone for the great opportunity and the school for electing him to the position. He said it felt good for the older generation asking for input from the younger generation, thanking them for the trust. He characterized not taking precautions against covid was irresponsible.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

- A. Activity Report: October 12 - 22, 2021.
 - Mayor Handeland opined there was good discussion around O-21-01-01 and hoped the issue wouldn't be on a future agenda, though if cases trended up it would likely come up again. He noted the vaccine trials for ages 5 - 11 as exciting. He encouraged Mayor Bronson of Anchorage to wear a mask once in a while, hoping he doesn't come down with COVID.
 - He reiterated his plans to travel with Manager Steckman to Anchorage for the Harbormaster Conference to support Joy.
 - He discussed the Bering Sea Women's Group phone number of 443-5444, saying there is a safe home representative in every community around the region and to call if needed.

- He wished everyone a happy halloween.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, the Council adjourned at 9:14 PM.

APPROVED and **SIGNED** this 8th day of November, 2021

JOHN K. HANDELAND
Mayor

ATTEST:

BRYANT HAMMOND
Clerk