

Mayor
John K. Handeland

Manager
Glenn Steckman

Deputy Clerk
Brad Soske



Nome Common Council
Scot Henderson
Mark Johnson
Adam Martinson
Maggie Miller
Cameron Piscoya
M. Sigvanna Tapqaq

NOME COMMON COUNCIL
WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2024 AT 5:15PM/7:00PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN CITY HALL

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

WORK SESSION at 5:15PM

- A. Discussion of Personal Property Tax Commercial Aviation and Landing Tax
- B. Review of State Legislative Priorities

ROLL CALL at 7:12PM

Members Present: Scot Henderson; Mark Johnson; M. Sigvanna Tapqaq (telephonic); Maggie Miller; Cameron Piscoya

Members Absent: Adam Martinson (excused); Luke Hansen (excused)

Also Present: John K. Handeland, Mayor; Glenn Steckman, City Manager; Brad Soske, Deputy City Clerk; Thomas Simonsson, NJUS Plant Operations Manager; Angie Nguyen, Executive Assistant; Bryant Hammond, Project Manager; Joy Baker, Port Director (virtual); Nickie Crowe, Finance Director (virtual), Wade Harrison, Admin Sargent (virtual); Arne Erickson, City Assessor (teleconference)

In the Audience: Ken Hughes, Diana Haecker, Nome Nugget Newspaper

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by C. Henderson and seconded by C. Piscoya to approve the agenda.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Johnson; C. Piscoya; C. Tapqaq, C. Miller, C. Henderson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion to amend **CARRIED**.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- A. September 25, 2023 Nome Common Council Regular Meeting Minutes
- B. October 24, 2023 Nome Common Council Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was made C. Piscoya and seconded by C. Henderson to approve the September 25, 2023 Nome Common Council Regular

Meeting Minutes and October 24, 2023 Nome Common Council Regular Meeting Minutes.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Piscoya; C. Topqaq; C. Miller; C. Henderson; C. Johnson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. E-mail of January 7, 2024 from Mark Synnott to Nome Common Council re: Tax Bill on SV Polar Sun.
- B. Letter of January 16, 2024 from DCCED to Manager Steckman re: Population Determination for FY 2025 DCCED Financial Assistance Programs.
- C. Letter of January 22, 2024 from Village of Solomon to City of Nome Leadership re: Annual Event Raising Awareness for Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women & Girls Day.
- D. Arctic Business Journal Article of February 1, 2024 entitled *Red Sea Disruptions Could be Avoided in Future by Arctic Shipping, Which May Trouble Ecosystems*.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

- Ken Hughes shared his gratitude for council and acknowledged the difficulty of making decisions on the countless important subjects that are continuously presented to them. However, he expressed his concerns regarding Executive Session and the lack of transparency in the verbiage on the agenda and motion to enter Executive Session. He read aloud a section of the Open Meetings Act and requested that moving forward a more thorough and specific motion to enter into Executive Session is made; with a council vote and without going into details.
- Wade Harrison noted that he saw the Resolution to hire Will Crockett as Chief of Police and shared his enthusiasm for the appointment as both an employee of the Police Department and a citizen of Nome.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. R-24-02-02 A Resolution Designating Charles "Chip" Leeper as Acting City Manager for March 1st through 10th 2024.

A motion was made by C. Henderson and seconded by C. Piscoya to adopt R-24-02-02.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Topqaq; C. Miller; C. Henderson; C. Johnson; C. Piscoya

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- B. R-24-02-03 A Resolution Approving an Employment Agreement Between the City of Nome and William Crockett for the Position of Chief of Police.

A motion was made by C. Henderson and seconded by C. Piscoya to adopt R-24-02-03.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Miller; C. Henderson; C. Johnson; C. Piscoya; C. Topqaq

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- C. R-24-02-04 A Resolution Approving an Employment Agreement Between the City of Nome and Cynthia Gray for the Position of Human Resources Manager.

A motion was made by C. Henderson and seconded by C. Piscoya to adopt R-24-02-04.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Henderson; C. Johnson; C. Piscoya; C. Topqaq; C. Miller

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- D. R-24-02-05 A Resolution Endorsing Projects for the City of Nome's 2024 State Legislative Priorities.

A motion was made by C. Johnson and seconded by C. Henderson to adopt R-24-02-05.

A motion was made by C. Henderson and seconded by C. Johnson to amend R-24-02-05 with changes to Priority 5 to read instead "A Local Culturally Relevant In-Patient Treatment Facility for Alcoholic and Substance Abuse," and addition of Priority #2 (with license on verbiage) "Funding for Rural Public Safety Awareness of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Through Local Initiatives and Programs."

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Piscoya; C. Topqaq; C. Miller; C. Henderson; C. Johnson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion to amend **CARRIED**.

Returning to the main motion.

Discussion:

- C. Johnson sought clarity on Priority #8 Covered Multi-Use Recreational Structure. He inquired if the structure is a cover or an enclosed structure. Based on his conversation with local residents there is a concern regarding snow drift and winds in the area.
- C. Miller requested to replace the phrasing “substance abuse” to “substance misuse” as a descriptor and title to Priority #5.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Johnson; C. Piscoya; C. Topqaq; C. Miller; C. Henderson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

UTILITY MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Activity Report: January 30 - February 9, 2024.

Thomas Simonsson, NJUS Plant Operations Manager

- Line crew is working on sound systems around town to prepare for upcoming events such as Iron Dog and Iditarod.
- Wilson Bourdon is retiring after many years of service to NJUS. His dedication and skills have been instrumental in the operations of NJUS. Currently looking to fill the position so the new person can shadow and learn from Wilson.
- Public Meeting at the Mini Convention tomorrow (Wednesday February 13, 2024) to discuss the water and sewer master plan from 4-7pm. Anyone and everyone is invited to come and share their insight and experience.
- Note that the two lower utility lines on the streets do not belong to NJUS. If there is an issue and anyone calls in, please advise them that those lines belong to GCI.
- C. Piscoya inquired about adding NJUS projects into the Sanitation Deficiency System.
- C. Piscoya inquired about NJUS Meeting Packets and Minutes as it was not posted on NJUS website.
 - o Thomas clarified that they are not posted online however, a copy can easily be sent via email or printed if a call is made to the NJUS office.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Activity Report: January 30 - February 9, 2024.

- Thomas Simonsson has been assisting City Hall with updating the sound system inside Council Chambers in preparations for upcoming events.
- The siren has arrived in Nome. The new one is stronger and will be installed by the snow dump.
- Bering View Housing has 9 vacant units but lack the staff to bring units back online.
- Iron Dog will be on the 19th, 20th, and 21st of this month. Ramps are being installed near Subways in preparation. The parking lot across from City Hall will also be prepped by Public Works for snow machine parking and display.
- Currently interviewing City Clerks and anticipates presentation to Council by next meeting.
- Historic Preservation Plan has been modified after meeting with different Local Native Organization for input and will be presented to Council in the near future.
 - o C. Henderson inquired if the plan will be submitted to the Planning Committee first or directly to Council. Shared his concerns about bypassing policy.

- Manager Steckman stated this was up to Council. If Council wishes to present it to Planning Committee first then it will be.
 - C. Johnson suggested having a joint meeting with the Planning Committee.
 - C. Henderson requested to have the \$500,000 personal property tax be broken down by industry for the next work session.
 - Manager Steckman informed Council that Meeting Minutes are currently being worked on and four will be provided in the next meeting.
 - C. Johnson acknowledged Mr. Hughes' comments regarding transparency for Executive Session.
 - As of now the City of Nome is and will continue to run the Ambulance Department for the City due to lack of contract agreement with Norton Sound Health Corporation. NSHC is requesting an on-call fire fighter and police officer be available to assist on calls should the ambulance team need assistance. We do not have an on-call fire fighter nor has police ever been guaranteed to be readily available for medical calls even in the current operations. We are currently also in communication with the State to acquire a Medical Director. If we are unable to attain one then NSHC offered their Medical Director for \$15,000 a month. City lawyer will be on teleconference to provide further details in Executive Session.
 - C. Piscoya inquired if the lack a Medical Director would affect future revenue from Medicaid.
 - Nickie Crowe addressed concerns regarding vacancies within the Finance Department. She updated Council on new hires and advised of a hold on hiring to conduct a needs assessment within Finance.
- B. Finance Department - FY24 2Q
- C. Johnson inquired why some funds have encumbered numbers and some don't.
 - C. Henderson inquired if there is any anticipation for any major differences in budget.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

- None given.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS

- Council Member Henderson praised Nickie on the new hires, the needs assessment within the department, and the mid-year report. He thanked Glenn for filling the important positions of Police Chief and HR Manager, two vital rolls within the organization. C. Henderson also thanked Mayor Handeland on his appointment of the two Advisory Board Members, however he agreed with C. Piscoya's concerns regarding long term vacancies.
- Council Member Johnson inquired on the City's status of an outdoor basketball court. He also thanked Nickie's update on the staffing within finance. He expressed reassurance in knowing the vacant positions within City Hall are being filled and potential new hires down the line.
- Council Member Piscoya expressed concerns for the vacant seats in city committees and inquired if it is possible to amend our ordinance to have Council appoint someone to a vacant seat after a certain time frame.
- Council Member Tapqaq: No comments.
- Council Member Miller inquired about the City's status on getting a strategic plan and if there is an economic plan for the port.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

- A. Activity Report: January 30 - February 9, 2024.
- Mayor Handeland shared his gratitude to Rose Reale-Gray for her service to the city. During her time with the Ambulance Department she helped save many lives and impacted the lives of many more here in Nome.
 - Mayor Handeland advised he met with the Nugget Inn Owners along with Manager Steckman and Building Inspector Cliff McHenry to review and discuss processes. The owners are hopeful they will be open by Iditarod.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- Discussion of Contractual and Personnel Matters the Immediate Knowledge of Which Could Have Adverse Effects on City of Nome Finances

A motion was made by C. Johnson and seconded by C. Henderson to enter into Executive Session to discuss contractual and personnel matters the immediate knowledge of which could have adverse effects on City of Nome finances and specifically to discuss the ambulance contract with the hospital.

Discussion:

- C. Piscoya inquired if he should stay for Executive Session since he had previously declared a conflict of interest in previous discussions and votes.

At the roll call:

Aye: C. Henderson; C. Johnson; C. Piscoya; C. Topqag; C. Miller

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

The Council entered executive session at 7:22pm.

The Council came out of executive session 9:06pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, the Council adjourned at 9:07pm.

APPROVED and **SIGNED** this 26th day of February 2024.

JOHN K. HANDELAND
Mayor

ATTEST:

Brad Soske
Deputy Clerk