

TO: The Mayor and Common Council

From: Glenn Steckman

RE: City Manager's Report

August 4, 2022

EMT Services:

At your Common Council meeting of July 11, a member of audience made some comments about the Nome Volunteer Ambulance Department. While the comments were negative, the city staff had already determined that there were needed changes to be made to NVAD to encourage more responsive calls by the volunteers.

As you may recall, the Common Council approved a significant increase in stipends for our first responders. While the amount of an increased stipend was not discussed at budget time, it was recognized that the stipend for turning out for fire and ambulance calls had not increased for well over ten years while volunteer personal costs had risen.

The main area of concern was the turnout by EMTs. During the COVID pandemic, enough EMTs were not turning out due to family concerns about these volunteers responding to calls and being infected with COVID. The other concern centered around the amount of time these volunteers were giving to this volunteer work instead of being with family. This also happened in conjunction with a turnover of volunteers

At this meeting on July 11, there was a mention of NSHC's offer of a plan to the City of Nome back in 2019. Ironically, this NSHC plan is very similar to city staff recommendation to you as part of 2022/2023 budget preparation. Both the NSHC plan and the city budget reference two fulltime EMTs and the use of volunteers supplemented with stipends. This is like the manpower plan approved by you in the recent budget.

The NVAD plan that will be implemented calls for two volunteer EMTs available on either 12- or 24-hour shifts being paid an "on-call shift stipend" and a "on-call response stipend". The on-call shift stipend would be paid just to maintain the volunteer's availability and then the same volunteer would receive a stipend for responding to a call. The plan is to insure adequate coverage every weekend of the year.

The two full-time EMTs (city employees) would work on morning or night shift. It would be a normal eight-hour shift Monday thru Friday. They would then be on call after hours on a rotating schedule. Volunteer EMTs would still be called out and would still be eligible for an on-call response stipend.

Unfortunately, the environment of medical response to those needing substance abuse and mental health issues has created a burden on city staff, city volunteers and medical staff. If we have a call of a child in distress, we receive a strong turnout. If someone is labeled non-responsive, the turnout is less so.

I will be following closely these changes to see if there is a significant improvement to the ambulance service to citizens of Nome and our visitors. This evaluation matrix will include the number of calls, the filling of volunteer slots and response times.

New Gold House Site:

At your work session on Monday night, there will be a presentation to you and the public on working to bring closure to the former New Gold House site. A portion of this site is also owned by the city and another portion is owned by Bering Straits Native Corporation. ADEC will be participating by Zoom.

Polar Pools:

Bob Walker owner of Polar Pools will be attending your meeting on Monday night to discuss proposed pool improvements. One major change will be moving from salt water system back to a chlorine system. I believe the proposed changes will make for a better pool experience with better control systems to monitor the pool water. There will be a Scada system, an onsite management system to allow for offsite management to quickly address the water quality in the pool. A resolution for approval is on the agenda.

Visitor Center:

The exterior of the building has been walnut blasted and stained. The window trim and the door has been painted kelly green to match the visitor center sign. Corroded metal that was broken or loose has also been removed from outside the building. The roof of the center was power washed.

The additional trash cans around the building are being heavy use and require at least once a day dumping.

Anvil Mountain Park:

The composite material fence around the playground at Anvil Mountain Park has been replaced with a new wooden fence. A bench will be installed in the park. Many mothers are requesting a bench to watch their children playing on the equipment.

Recreation Center:

The sauna equipment has finally arrived to Nome. It will be installed over weekend to avoid disruptions at the Rec Center. Unless something unforeseen happens, the saunas will open Monday.

Quick Stop:

An electrician from AC's has been installing new wiring and replacing the electric box at the building. Quick Stop may be open as early as this weekend.

Public Safety Advisory Commission:

Unfortunately, the Commission could not muster a quorum this past Monday. Part of the problem may have been related to a GCI outage of phones and internet. Their next meeting will be on Wednesday, September 13th. The normal meeting date falls on Labor Day.

The Planning Commission:

The Commission met this past week to discuss a list for properties to be abated. A list of properties has been submitted to the council for approval. We are still waiting for approval from one party.

Bounty Increase:

I am requesting your approval of a \$100 bounty for cars and trucks. The goal is to get older and non-operating vehicles off lots around town. I hope this will also help in getting vehicles out of the city right away.