

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, MAY 10, 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

WORK SESSION - 5:30

A. City of Nome FY 2022 Budget Presentation.

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Brown; M. Johnson; D. Johnson; Reader; Topkok;

Members Absent: Martinson (excused)

Also Present: Glenn Steckman, City Manager; Bryant Hammond, Clerk; Nickie Crowe, Finance Director (telephonic); Susie Hite, Deputy Clerk; Joy Baker, Port Director; Amy Chan, Museum Director; Marguerite LaRiviere, Library Director

In the audience: Diana Haecker, Nome Nugget; Charles Lean; Molly Naaktgeboren; Danielle Slingsby; Anahma Shannon; Jeff Collins

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to adopt the agenda as presented.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to amend the agenda by postponing R-21-05-01 to the next meeting.

Discussion:

- Council Member Topkok suggested additional time to review such an important decision.
- Council Member Reader noted she was also contacted by community members concerning this.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion to amend **CARRIED**.

Returning to the main motion

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion, as amended, **CARRIED**.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. June 22, 2020 Nome Common Council Regular Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to approve the June 22, 2020 minutes.

Discussion:

- Council Member Reader noted a disturbing amount of grammatical errors in the minutes. She asked that Clerk Hammond correct them administratively.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

COMMUNICATIONS

A. Letter of April 5, 2021 from AK DOT&PF to City of Nome re: 2021 Construction Season.

- Mayor Handeland commented on the Nome Airport paving project, noting the main runway would be shut down for 60 days and the cross wind would be at half-width during the project

B. Letter of April 28, 2021 from Nome Preschool to Nome Common Council re: Request for Penalty & Interest Forgiveness.

A motion was made by C. Brown and seconded by C. Topkok to forgive penalty and Interest for Nome Preschool Association.

- Council Member Reader requested to abstain from the roll call vote due to the author being her daughter.
- Council Member Mark Johnson also requested to be allowed to abstain, saying he is the bookkeeper for Nome Preschool Association.
- Mayor Handeland thanked each for their disclosure and suggested each vote as there was no conflict of interest.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- C. Memorandum of May 6, 2021 from Finance Director Crowe to Nome Common Council re: NSEDC CBS funds.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Topkok to Re-allocate \$81,456.97 of prior year CBS awards to Youth Programs from the Hockey Rink Project.

- Mayor Handeland gave a brief update as to the status of NSEDC Funds.
- Council Member Reader asked about the status of the project, hoping it would move forward in a timely fashion.
- Manager Steckman discussed the process of working with the stakeholder group of the rink users.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Topkok to allocate \$81,456.97 of the 2020 CBS funds to the Hockey Rink Project from the Youth Programs.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- D. City of Nome FY 2022 Budget Calendar.

PLANNING & ZONING

- A. June 2, 2020 Nome Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.
- B. July 7, 2020 Nome Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.
- C. September 22, 2020 Nome Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.
- D. October 13, 2020 Nome Planning Commission Rescheduled Regular Meeting Minutes.
- E. November 10, 2020 Nome Planning Commission Rescheduled Regular Meeting Minutes.

F. April 6, 2021 Nome Planning Commission Regular Meeting Minutes.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

1. Charles Lean, resident of Nome for 47 years, shared concerns regarding the proposed mining permit in Moonlight Springs. He discussed the geology of the hills along the coast around Nome and the associated hydrology. He noted the greatest risk was exposing the top of the limestone slab and remediating it with tailings which could lace the water source with arsenic. He opined it would be a terrible idea to put tailings on top of the slab as remediation. He referred the Council his note.
2. Daniele Slingsby spoke her concerns regarding the proposed mining in the Moonlight Springs protection area. She requested environmental studies identifying a backup plan. She appreciated the Council postponing the resolution for more discussion. She stated she was strongly against risking the water source.
3. Jeff Collins discussed a past engineers report noting concerns about mining in the proposed upper and less about mining in the proposed lower cut. He noted a reindeer herd being in the area in the past requiring the water needing to be treated. He asked the Council what the protection area was and what the definition of protection area was.
4. Mary Naaktgeboren discussed R-21-05-01, noting concerns with high risk activities stated in the permit application. She explained she had spoke with several other residents. She spoke against the project saying it was not worth the risk.
5. Roxanne Thurman shared her concerns with mining in the water source, explaining it was the only water source for the town.
6. Shawn Pomrenke discussed his work with City Engineer John Blees, stating that Mr. Blees had reached out to the hydrologist that studied Moonlight Springs. Both were of the opinion there would be no damages to the aquifer. He noted as a long time resident, the last thing he'd want to do was to jeopardize the water source. He noted he took reclamation seriously and appreciated the public's concerns.
7. Rosa Wright spoke of her concerns with R-21-05-01 and shared her experience with arsenic growing up next to the basketball courts off Steadman. She asked the Council to take their time and not rush the decision as it was an important one.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. O-21-04-02 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 2.15 and Chapter 7.15 and Chapter 15.10 to Elect City Council Members School Board Members and Utility Board Members at Large, **SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING/FINAL PASSAGE.**

For the purpose of holding a public hearing, the Council recessed at 7:51 PM.

Public Hearing:

1. Scot Henderson opined on the importance of the proposed ordinance. He suggested that changing election law was a serious endeavor and summarized the reasons proponents reasons to adopt it. He contended that the ordinance would not better connect voters and candidates, the City shouldn't make the decision—rather, it should be left up to the voter—and suggested district voting might greater engage the electorate.

The Council reconvened at 7:55 PM.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to adopt O-21—04-02.

Discussion:

- Council Member Topkok expressed her appreciation for the public comments on the ordinance. She explained her intent as making the process less adversarial. She spoke on her experience working with Tribes and defended the Council's ability to take action by characterizing the action as expanding rights rather than taking any away. She noted the current electoral system wasn't working and something needed to happen to greater enfranchise people and facilitate participation.
- Council Member Brown opined he liked the proposed system of at large seats, despite having benefited from the current system. He described the electoral process for Bering Straits Native Corporation and opined the system would benefit the City of Nome. Council Member Brown discussed the previous change to election law was performed by the Council and the proposed ordinance could be passed by the Council. He noted he'd been thinking of something similar for years.
- Council Member Reader discussed some of her research into at-large voting, discussing NAACP research suggesting that such a system would overrule the minority vote. She expressed concern the City could do the opposite of its intent.
- Council Member Doug Johnson explained he agreed with the goals but opined the proposed ordinance wasn't the way to do it.
- Council Member Mark Johnson opined the voters should be those that decide election law.
- Council Member Topkok requested another work session to discuss and put something out to the voters.
- Council Member Brown suggested the NAACP report focused on cities that were larger and not analogous to a community the size of Nome. He explained his reasoning, arguing that the case in Nome would be different.

At the roll call:

Aye: Topkok; Brown

Nay: D. Johnson; M. Johnson; Reader

Abstain:

The motion **FAILED**.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. O-21-05-01 An Ordinance Authorizing the Sale of Surplus Real Property Owned by the City of Nome by Public Sealed Bid, **FIRST READING/DISCUSSION**.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. M. Johnson to advance O-21-05-01.

Discussion:

- Council Member Mark Johnson asked why the minimum bid was so small on the first one.
- Clerk Hammond explained the condition of the building and previous attempts to put the property out to bid.
- Manager Steckman drew the Council's attention to Elsa Bronson's house which was included in the ordinance without the lot and that the winning bidder would have to move it.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- B. O-21-05-02 An Ordinance of the Nome Common Council, Nome, Alaska, Providing for a Temporary Reduction of Sales Tax for the Months of July and August of 2021, **FIRST READING/DISCUSSION**.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. M. Johnson to advance O-21-05-02.

Discussion:

- Manager Steckman discussed potential complications through the ARPA, which states that changes in tax revenue could not be offset by ARPA funds.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- C. O-21-05-03 An Ordinance Authorizing the Disposal of Municipal Property by Lease to GCI Communication Corporation, **FIRST READING/DISCUSSION**.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to advance O-21-05-03.

Discussion:

- Council Member Reader asked why lease and not sell the property.
- Manager Steckman explained the history of the lot and GCI's plans. He discussed the terms of the lease and potential renegotiation thereof. He discussed practices in the lower-48.
- Council Member Reader stated there were concerns over cell towers.
- Council Member clarified the lease was a renewal and had been a lease for a long time.
- Mayor Handeland discussed an amendment increasing the footprint, saying the utility would like its space back if not being used. He noted the increased rent.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- D. R-21-05-01 A Resolution Issuing a Moonlight Wells Permit to Northwest Gold Diggers, LLC for the 2021 Mining Season.

Postponed to next meeting under adoption of agenda.

- E. R-21-05-02 A Resolution in Support of Kawerak, Inc's Effort to Develop a Feasibility Study for a Regional Recycling Center that Would Serve Residents and Visitors of the Bering Strait Region.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Reader to adopt R-21-05-02.

Discussion:

- Anahma Shannon presented a powerpoint presentation.
- Mayor Handeland associated Ms. Shannon's idea with Council Member Brown's idea for a community garden. He noted the need for identifying an adequate location, explaining the current location is committed to another purpose a few years down the road.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- F. R-21-05-03 A Resolution Setting the City of Nome Contribution for the FY 2022 Nome School District Budget.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Topkok to adopt R-21-05-03.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

UTILITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. Activity Report: April 27 - May 7, 2021.

- Assistant Utility Manager Morton presented his report. He discussed recent correspondence with Alaska Air on runway closures. He discussed efforts to train new employees to pass their CDL in town. He noted recruitment for a lineman position. Assistant Manager Morton explained NSHC OEH was now qualified to take e coli and total chlorine testing, which would save some money due to not having to ship samples out. He discussed the anticipation of Bering St materials on the barge and hoped to be in construction this time next month.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

- A. Activity Report: April 27 - May 7, 2021.
- Manager Steckman discussed Spring Clean Up, happening June 1 - June 5, including the monofill being opened for drop offs, the hot dog cook out and bicycle give aways. He noted pfizer's announcement of children 12 and above being able to get vaccinated and discussed the current vaccination status of town and immigration trends. He noted the tire shredder worked and staff were looking to ensure the safety of operators before running the machine normally. He discussed Old St. Joe's and anticipated its being open to the public beginning June 1.
 - Council Member Reader appreciated the dust control efforts early and strong.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS

1. Council Member Doug Johnson – no comments.
2. Council Member Mark Johnson suggested the town needs a facelift and asked the City to encourage people to paint their buildings. He suggested a dollar for dollar tax break to incentivize it. He asked if there was going to be another session for the moonlight springs resolution.
 - Council Member Brown asked for additional input from Blees at the special meeting. Glenn asked to be able to call Blees and to shoot for the 17th. Council Member Brown asked for information on arsenic from Blees and from the Utility as well as a better map of what's being discussed.
 - Handeland suggested the Council needed to review the tool that was adopted by the Planning Commission
3. Council Member Reader asked about upcoming work sessions and requested work sessions on different days than regular meetings to avoid super long days. She noted an email from Superintendent Burgess about broadband assistance.
4. Council Member Topkok seconded Council Member Reader's work session request explaining Kodiak's practice of having a work session several days prior to meetings for informal discussion on the agenda. She requested a work session on work sessions and opined Council Member Mark Johnson's paint idea was a good one. She requested more work sessions on civic engagement to promote inclusion, diversity, and equity. She noted disappointment in the election ordinance not passing. She plugged CoYA again and noted that herd immunity was just around the corner.
5. Council Member Brown noted Thursday at 7pm was the commencement for NW Campus, explaining that in-person attendance was graduates only, but there would be a chance after commencement to meet the graduates outside and the event would be livestreamed. He suggested possibly putting the election ordinance to the voters, asking for a work session sometime in July or August. He hoped the community could get to a point where everyone feels

comfortable about the permit and the mining activity there. He stated he was a vocal opponent of the MMPA in the first place and opined that responsible mining with the appropriate safeguards should be able proceed.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

A. Activity Report: April 27 - May 7, 2021.

- Mayor Handeland discussed the visit of Mr Emerson and his port tour. He thanked Marguerite's efforts for making Dana's retirement party a success. He discussed spring clean up and gave a status update on A/V issue troubleshooting. He discussed his visit with the Lt Governor, discussing cruise ships. He noted a conversation with Colleen Deighton on housing assistance. He hoped that everyone signed up for the NSHC \$100 covid assistance grant. NJUS got a list of 430 people that directed their grants to the Utility. He concluded by discussing two potential candidates for the public safety commission.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Discussion of Union Negotiations the Immediate Knowledge of Which May Have an Adverse Impact on City Finances.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. M. Johnson to go into executive session.

The Council went into executive session at 9:22 PM.

The Council came out of executive session at 10:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by C. Brown and seconded by C. M. Johnson to adjourn.

Hearing no objections, the Nome Common Council adjourned at 10:00 PM.

APPROVED and SIGNED this 25th day of May, 2021

JOHN K. HANDELAND
Mayor

ATTEST:

BRYANT HAMMOND
Clerk