

**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  
WORK SESSION & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
MONDAY, JUNE 28, 2021 at 5:30 / 7:00 PM  
COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN CITY HALL**

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**WORK SESSION**

A. Discussion of Tax Credits Focused on Community Beautification.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Jerald Brown; Doug Johnson; Mark Johnson; Adam Martinson; Jennifer Reader; Sigvanna Topkok

Members Absent:

Also Present: John K. Handeland, Mayor; Glenn Steckman, City Manager; Bryant Hammond, Clerk; Nickie Crowe, Finance Director (telephonic); Mike Heintzelman, NPD Chief; Bob Pruckner, NPD Deputy Chief; Ken Morton, Assistant Utility Manager; Joy Baker, Port Director (telephonic); Charles Cacciola, City Attorney; Marguerite LaRiviere, Library Director

In the audience: Diana Haecker, Nome Nugget; Sean Milligan, KNOM; John and Rhonda Schneider, Jessica and Chugie Farley, Judy Martinson; Jimmy Adams, Scot Henderson, Paul Kosto, Andrew Lee, Rolland Trowbridge, Charlie Lean

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Topkok to approve the agenda as presented.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to move new business to after Citizen's Comments and add another Citizen's Comments after New Business.

Discussion:

- Mayor Handeland explained that Dr. Zink would be dialing in and wanted to make sure the timing worked out.

- After discussion, the decided to take a slight break if the timing didn't work out, rather than amend the agenda.

The motion was withdrawn.

Returning to the main motion

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. June 14, 2021 Nome Common Council Regular Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to approve the June 14, 2021 minutes.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

Mayor Handeland noted three communications received by email:

- Rhonda Schneider conveyed that she was not in favor of extension and concerned about asking if vaccinated or not constituted a HIPAA violation.
- Sue Greenly expressed concern about camper a parked in the area of the Iditarod Dog Lot.
- Council Member Reader noted an email from Carol Hobbes
- Council Member Brown summarized Ms. Hobbes' and John Schneider's emails as being opposed to the ordinance extension.

**CITIZEN'S COMMENTS**

1. Jessica Farley spoke in opposition of the extension of travel restrictions. She described her experience with STR guests, focusing in on a recent guest who was told that City Staff at the airport would take his word for it if it was his card or not. She noted seeing the hospital moving their furniture out of their quarantine facility and opined the restrictions were just a power move on their part.
2. Judy Martinson asked about the current sales tax rate. She asked why the museum was closed. She expressed confusion about why asking about vaccines didn't violate HIPAA. She opined there wasn't a single flight that people don't ask about what's going on at the airport. She suggested it was time to open the town up, explaining that businesses were struggling. She explained it took 45 minutes for people to get into town from the airport, due to tax shortages. She said that despite her 47 years here, she felt differently about Nome now.
  - Manager Steckman explained the museum was opening on July 7<sup>th</sup> and noted COVID mitigation plans, explaining the challenge of meeting everyone's expectations of safety and openness.
3. Dr. Anne Zink thanked the Council for their time and commended Nome on its handling of the pandemic. She characterized the enemy as the virus not each other and described the uptick in virus cases in the Matsu and Anchorage. She noted testing was and still is one of the best means to control the spread of the virus. She stated she was open for questions. Dr. Zink fielded questions from the Council and then members of the audience.
4. Dr. Mark Peterson reiterated the NSHC letter explaining the argument for extending the travel restrictions, opining the vaccines for children seemed to be on track and that NSHC was only recommending extension until Fall. Dr. Peterson fielded questions from the Council and the audience.
5. Deanna Stang thanked the Council for inviting Dr. Zink to the Council meeting tonight. She wished everyone good luck in their decision. She noted that pre-travel testing was a good way of limiting the spread of COVID.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- A. O-21-05-03 An Ordinance Authorizing the Disposal of Municipal Property by Lease to GCI Communication Corporation, **SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING/FINAL PASSAGE.**

For the purpose of holding a public hearing, the Council recessed at 7:52 PM.

The Council reconvened at 7:52 PM.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. M. Johnson to adopt O-21-05-03.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- B. O-21-06-08 An Extension of a Local Emergency Authorizing the Nome Common Council to Direct the City Manager Take Necessary Actions to Reduce the Impact and Spread of COVID-19 Throughout the City of Nome, **SECOND READING/PUBLIC HEARING/FINAL PASSAGE**.

For the purpose of holding a public hearing, the Council recessed at 7:54 PM.

- Judy Martinson spoke in opposition of adopting the ordinance. She opined 10% was the statistical norm across the country. She asked people to believe the statistics as they did the science. She used the promo video the chamber produced as a goal the town should get back to.
- Dr. Mark Peterson noted that Bering Strait Region (BSR) saw a 4% COVID rate, the road system was 10% and Bethel was upwards of 15-18%. He noted the BSR had a much lower rate of COVID due to the testing at the Nome airport.
- Jessica Farley noted that although the YK region had a higher rate than BSR, she noted that they had similar testing rates. She opined that private industry would do the right thing if and when necessary.

The Council reconvened at 8:00 PM.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to adopt O-21-06-08.

Discussion:

- Manager Steckman thanked all those that have given time to pandemic related efforts and meetings. He recalled the beginning of the pandemic and citizen impetus for shutting the town down, the first case, and the low rate of infection. Manager Steckman noted a recent travel related case that caused a major outbreak. He took exception to reports of the staff being discourteous, explaining that more often it was the passengers that were out of control.
- Council Member Doug Johnson opined that staff had done an excellent job and advocated for keeping the testing tent in place.

- Council Member Mark Johnson characterized the Common Council as not political, but had the community's best interests at heart. He felt the staff had done a good job and reiterated his suggestion that Nome should be a welcoming town.
- Council Member Reader opined the Council and the ordinance had done their job and that it was time to let the ordinance sunset.
- Council Member Topkok argued letting the ordinance sunset would take away the tools to respond quickly. She expressed issues with getting quorum over summer and asked for another 90 days.
- Council Member Brown suggested leaving the ordinance in place, but allow the emergency orders to sunset.
- The Council discussed the mechanics of this suggestion.

At the roll call:

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

Nay: Martinson

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. R-21-06-03 A Resolution Approving the City of Nome's FY 2022 Schedule of Rental and Use Fees and Fines.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Topkok to adopt R-21-06-03.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- B. R-21-06-04 A Resolution Approving a Contract with Windward Strategies for Federal Lobbying Services for the Fiscal Year 2022.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to adopt R-21-06-04.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- C. R-21-06-05 A Resolution Approving a Contract Between the Nome Chamber of Commerce and the City of Nome for Operation of the Nome Convention and Visitors Bureau.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Topkok to adopt R-21-06-05.

Discussion:

- Council Member Mark Johnson declared a conflict of interest as he was financially remunerated for keeping the Chamber's books.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain: M. Johnson

The motion **CARRIED**.

- D. R-21-06-06 A Resolution Authorizing the City of Nome to Apply for and Participate in the USDOT RAISE Discretionary Grant Program for the Funding of the Port of Nome Local Service Facilities Design & Engineering.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Martinson to adopt R-21-06-06.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

- E. R-21-06-07 A Resolution of the Nome Common Council Accepting American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funds in the Amount of \$934,187.09.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. M. Johnson to adopt R-21-06-07.

Discussion:

- Finance Director Crowe asked that the specific amount be struck, as the exact dollar amount was not yet known.

A motion was made by C. Reader and seconded by C. Brown to strike “in the amount of \$934,187.09” from the title and the Now therefore be it resolved line.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion to amend **CARRIED.**

Returning to the main motion

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED.**

### **UTILITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### A. Activity Report: June 15 - 25, 2021.

- Assistant Utility Manager Morton discussed plans for a Utility Maintenance Response Facility, the current public review of the Utility's oil discharge prevention and contingency plan, the retirement and disposal of the 50kW wind turbines to TelAlaska later in the summer, the completion of the Starlink install on Port Rd, and the Bering St project.
- Council Member Mark Johnson asked about plans to expand water and sewer lines through low cost loans.
- Manager Morton noted the Utility was looking for more grant funds as installing water and sewer was quite expensive.

### **CITY MANAGER'S REPORT**

#### A. Activity Report: June 15 - 25, 2021.

- Manager Steckman noted that the saunas in the Rec Center would be open as of June 30<sup>th</sup>. He noted electrical issues and rot were in the process of being addressed. He discussed work the FAA was doing on the Beam Rd cleaning up towers and a building.

**CITIZEN'S COMMENTS**

1. Jim Adams shared his appreciation of the good news over the sauna and hoped it came to pass.
2. Judy Martinson thanked the Council for the compromise on the emergency ordinance. She commended the Council on discussing beautification and explained her own efforts to do so. She opined it wasn't so great seeing the taxes go up. She suggested it was difficult to be in the hospitality business when the town was a trainwreck. She suggested the City pitching in and buying the paint or imposing a fine to incentivize people to take care of their properties. She felt the improvements she had made spiffed up her neighborhood.

**COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS**

1. Council Member Brown noted he was glad the Council decided to keep the ordinance in place for another 90 days. He noted the rest of the world was not yet completely open, using Australia and New Zealand as examples analogous to Nome and citing their regulations during the pandemic as reasons for their success.
2. Council Member Doug Johnson thanked manager Steckman and his crew for doing an outstanding job, noting the City should still keep an eye on what's going on.
3. Council Member Mark Johnson suggested possibly painting the old junk vehicles around town to make them look better.
4. Council Member Martinson – no comments.
5. Council Member Reader thanked the community for supporting Lemonade Day, noting a \$500 donation to Animal House from the children she worked with.
6. Council Member Topkok notified the Council would be leaving for July and unable to call into at least one meeting. She discussed the Conference of Young Alaskans occurring in Fairbanks in August and expressed pride at the number of Nome youth participating. She hoped more young people would get involved, AK Natives especially. She expressed gratitude for the extension of the emergency ordinance, saying that at least the City will have the ability to act quickly. She ended by saying she couldn't thank Manager Steckman enough for his efforts to keep the town safe through the pandemic.

**MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT**

- A. Activity Report: June 15 - 25, 2021.
  - Mayor Handeland thanked Drew McCann and Briday Green for their efforts in organizing the Midnight Sun Festival, saying it was gorgeous weather and good to see people out

enjoying the day. He noted fourth of July would start at noon to avoid a conflict between church and the street games. He noted Monday would be the observed holiday. He reiterated Council Member Reader's gratitude for Lemonade Day support. He solicited community involvement.

He concluded by extending the City of Nome's condolences to the Luce family on the passing of Peggy Sherman-Luce.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- A. Discussion of Legal Strategies the Immediate Knowledge of Which May Adversely Impact City Finances.

A motion was made by C. M. Johnson and seconded by C. Martinson to enter into executive session to discuss legal strategies the immediate knowledge of which may adversely impact City finances.

At the roll call:

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

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

The Council entered into executive session at 9:08 PM.

The Council came out of executive session at 10:25 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

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

Hearing no objections, the Nome Common Council adjourned at 10:25 PM.

**APPROVED** and **SIGNED** this 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2021

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**JOHN K. HANDELAND**  
**Mayor**

**ATTEST:**

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**BRYANT HAMMOND**  
**Clerk**