

TO: The Mayor and Common Council

FROM: Glenn Steckman

RE: City Manager's report

December 8, 2023

Professional Housing Grant:

The city has been awarded a grant opportunity for \$5,000,000 to build six professional housing units and three affordable housing units through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. AHFC will work with city staff to develop means to leverage funds to possibly build even more professional housing such as for teachers and public safety.

The Mayor and I participated in a zoom meeting with AHFC and met in person with AHFC at AML to discover what opportunities are available to the city. A briefing is planned for your January 8, 2024 meeting

The lack of professional housing is creating a bleeding of employees and revenues for the State of Alaska. More importantly, it has created an unstable workforce.

Siren System:

As many of you know, the March fire impacted the Public Works Building. It destroyed supplies, it destroyed the downtown siren. This siren is being replaced with insurance funds. Our siren system is old and will ultimately need to be replaced. The first phase will be the downtown siren. The Icy View siren has had an enhanced level of protection added due to vandalism. In meetings with various community organizations this issue has been discussed.

The Port:

The port RFP is now scheduled to be issued in January by the Army Corps of Engineers. The ceremonial signing of the PPA is scheduled for the second week of January.

Polar Pools:

Bob Walker and his staff will arrive in Nome from 12/18-12/22 to continue the replacement of the pool operating systems and perform additional testing. Once this process is completed and the mechanicals tested, the water levels will need to be brought up to operational levels and the pool water warmed. Finally, manufacturer reps will need to sign off.

City pool staff will then need to be trained on the new operating systems. Lifeguards will also need to be accredited again.

Hockey Rink:

The hockey rink is now open and the lights for the rink are being installed as time allows for NJUS. There is also a camera that will view the rink to record any incidents and vandalism at the rink. Congratulations to NWSA volunteers, Chip Leeper, Blake Bogart, Cole Cushman and his staff, Ken Morton and NJUS for their efforts.

Christmas Extravaganza:

It was a standing room only crowd for Christmas Extravaganza. Grandparents, aunts and uncles and sisters and brothers and cousins came to witness their family members performing in choral groups, the Covenant Bell Choir, the Nome Beltz High Schools students, the Live Nativity.

I want to thank Cheryl Thompson, Angie Nguyen, Marguerite La Riviere, Cole Cushman and his staff. For their production efforts. I also want to thank the groups and individuals performing. Mayor Handeland as the MC. And, Santa Claus for taking time to come when he is so busy at this time of year.

Recycling Grant:

The entire region of the Nome Census District will benefit from properly recycling materials that are being deposited in our landfills and regional landfills. Kawerak led the effort for this grant, specifically Anahma Shannon.

The proposed project will see the City of Nome to work with Kawerak in an effort to begin diverting items away from the City landfill to areas outside of Nome for recycling.

The grant project award and what it covers will be presented at council workshop in late January or February. The City's involvement may be providing a building at the Mono-fill that is underused for baling and separation of recycled items.

Second Meeting December:

This meeting will be canceled as practice.

Alaska Municipal League Conference:

Two areas of discussion interested me. One area was a discussion of civility that is plaguing all levels of government. The other area is AI/Chatgpt.

With civility it is how words are used, differing generational values and expectations are creating challenges in public discourse. The solution is more listening and better communication to our constituency.

With AI/Chatgpt, this computer program may allow city staff in helping with this dialogue. For instance, it could help prepare newsletters, letters and public documents faster. Obviously, Chatgpt has its pros and cons. It is not a solution to reducing staff but a tool for staff to perform their jobs better.

Radio System RFP:

The RFP is being developed to get into the market place by the first of the year. I am requesting the NSEDC funds of \$150,000 be allocated for this project. Grant funding is also being looked into.