

CALL TO ORDER

The December 16, 2025, regular meeting of the Whittier City Council was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Mayor Shen.

OPENING CEREMONY

Mayor Shen led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

There were present:

Victor Shen, presiding, and
Peter Denmark (virtual), David Pinguoch (virtual), Renner Macal tao, Jamie Loan (virtual), Tom Wagner, and Lorianne Borg, comprising a quorum of the Board.

Also Present:

Jackie C. Wilde, City Manager
Kris Erchinger, Finance Director
Scott Korbe, Public Works Director
Andre Achee, Public Safety Director
Jason Cates, Fire/EMS Chief
David Borg, Harbormaster
Shelby Carlson, Assistant City Manager/Acting City Clerk
Richard Moses, City Attorney

CITIZEN COMMENTS ON ANY SUBJECT EXCEPT THOSE ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING

Lonnie Young spoke in favor of Resolution 2025-047.

Mike Bender shared the upcoming Prince William Sound Regional Citizens Advisory Council on September 17 – 18, 2026 and noted they will be looking for housing for about 80 individuals.

Ky Holland spoke in favor of Resolution 2025-051.

Kelly Bender spoke against the Ground Transportation Fee set to go in effect January 1, 2026.

Meghan Clemens spoke in support of Resolution 2025-049.

APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Wagner/Macal tao)

Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Items Approved on Consent Agenda:

6. *Resolution 2025-044 Adopting an Alternative Allocation Method for the FY26 Shared Fisheries Business Tax Program and Certifying That This Allocation Method Fairly Represents the Distribution of Significant Effects of Fisheries Business Activity in Fisheries Management Area 15 – Prince William Sound

13. *Resolution 2025-051 Supporting House Bill 229, “An Act Exempting the State From Daylight Saving Time”

14. *Approval of the November 18, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Shen declared a potential conflict of interest in Items 7 and 9, Resolution 2025-045 and Resolution 2025-047, respectively. General discussion given.

Motion

Does Mr. Shen have a substantial financial conflict of interest in Items 7 and 9?

Motion Failed

NOES: Loan, Pinguoch, Macal tao, Wagner, Borg, Shen

ABSENT: Denmark

The Council determined **Shen** did not have a substantial financial conflict of interest in Items 7 and 9.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

Presentations – None

Mayor Report – **Shen** shared highlights from his attendance at the Alaska Municipal League Annual Conference.

Vice Mayor Report – Gave kudos to the Harbor staff for finishing the last stage of the Harbor Rebuild project.

City Manager Report – **Wilde** shared highlights from her written report and invited Representative Ky Holland and City Lobbyist Dianne Blumer to provide a legislative update. **Borg** provided an update on the Harbor Rebuild project, **Achee** provided an update on the police department, and **Korbe** reported on boiler issues.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE 2025-004 An Ordinance Adopting a New Chapter 13.12.025 of the Whittier Municipal Code Entitled "Water and Sewer Utility Service Deposit"

Public Hearing Opened at 7:58 p.m.

No public comment was provided.

Public Hearing Closed at 7:58 p.m.

Motion (Wagner/Borg)

Adopt **Ordinance 2025-003**.

Erchinger provided a staff report. General discussion given. **Moses** recommended the Council adopt an amendment to require that deposits earn interest to be in compliance with Alaska State Statutes Title 29.

Motion to Amend (Wagner/Loan)

Amend Ordinance 2025-004, line 112, to strike “may” and insert “will”.

General discussion given.

Motion to Amend Passed

Unanimous

Motion Passed as Amended

Unanimous

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION – None

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 2025-045 A Resolution Extending the Contract With CRW Engineering for an Additional Three Years, Through December 31, 2028, for Projects for Which Task Orders or Authorizations to Proceed Have Been Previously Let

Motion (Borg/Wagner)

Approve **Resolution 2025-045**.

Erchinger provided a staff report.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Resolution 2025-046 A Resolution Consenting to the Assignment of the Lease Agreement for Lot 1 of the Whittier Harborview Business Area From MiKelly Whittier Enterprises, Inc., F/K/A Lazy Otter Charters, Inc. to Three Helms, LLC, and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute Consent Documents

Motion (Wagner/Loan)

Approve **Resolution 2025-046**.

Carlson provided a staff report. General discussion given.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Resolution 2025-047 A Resolution Approving Continued Technical Review Assistance for City Land Use Permit Applications in the Amount of \$18,000 and Approving the Mountain Goat Court Feasibility Evaluation in the Amount of \$23,902, for a Total Appropriation of \$41,902, and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute All Necessary Documents Under the Existing Term Contract With CRW Engineering Group, Inc.

Motion (Borg/Wagner)

Approve **Resolution 2025-047**.

Wilde provided a staff report. General discussion given.

Motion Passed

AYES: Borg, Wagner, Macal tao, Pinguoch, Loan, Shen
ABSENT: Denmark

Resolution 2025-048 A Resolution Approving Amendments to the City Manager Employment Agreement Between the City of Whittier and Jackie C. Wilde

Motion (Denmark/Borg) Approve **Resolution 2025-043**.

Wilde provided a staff report. General discussion given.

Motion to Amend (Denmark/Pinguoch) Amend **Resolution 2025-043**, line 18, to strike “as a housing benefit” and insert “at current cost” and line 19, to strike “five-year term” and insert “3 year term with one option to renew for an additional 3 year term”.

General discussion given.

Motion to Amend Passed **Unanimous**

General discussion continued.

Motion Passed as Amended **Unanimous**

Resolution 2025-049 A Resolution Approving a Conditional Letter of Intent Between the City of Whittier and the Alaska Railroad Corporation for the Purchase and Sale of Three Non-Contiguous Parcels Totaling Approximately 47 Acres, and Authorizing the City Manager to Execute the Conditional Letter of Intent and All Necessary Supporting Documents, Including Leases, Permits, and Related Transaction Documents, and to Negotiate a Final Purchase and Sale Agreement

Motion (Loan/Wagner) Approve **Resolution 2025-049**.

Wilde provided a staff report. General discussion given.

Motion Passed **AYES:** Loan, Wagner, Macal tao, Pinguoch, Borg, Shen
NOES: Denmark

Resolution 2025-050 A Resolution Authorizing the City Manager to Execute an Agreement With the Municipality of Anchorage for the Whittier Police Department to Provide Police Services to the Girdwood Valley Service Area January 1, 2026, Through December 31, 2027

Motion (Wagner/Macal tao) Approve **Resolution 2025-050**.

Achee provided a staff report. General discussion given.

Motion Passed **Unanimous**

OTHER NEW BUSINESS – None

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Denmark said he was concerned about reported opposition to the Ground Passenger Fee and asked whether support has changed and if more discussion with affected parties is needed before moving forward, given its importance to the 2026 budget. **Erchinger** said the fee has been discussed and vetted for several years and delaying it again would leave a roughly \$1.3 million gap in the 2026 general fund budget, with no viable alternative revenue identified. General discussion continued.

Wagner requested an additional public meeting to discuss the Ground Passenger Fee.

Shen added the Ground Passenger Fee is needed to address long-term infrastructure and service costs, noting declining reserves, restricted CPV funds, inflation impacts, limited future grant funding, and the need for more self-sustaining local revenue to avoid future fiscal shortfalls.

Wagner requested the Ground Passenger Fee implementation date be postponed for 30 days. **Wilde** said the administration has repeatedly invited industry input over the past 2½ years, received little response, and remains available to discuss the fee, but expects stakeholders to initiate contact if they have concerns. **Borg**, **Macal tao**, and **Loan** agreed the stakeholders have had ample opportunity to share their concerns.

Pinquoch said discussions can continue without delaying the fee, noted the revised fee is fairer than past versions, helps offset costs created by cruise activity, and opposed further delay given its budget impacts and intended benefits to the transportation industry.

Borg thanked the Finance Director and Acting City Clerk for preparing and traveling back to Whittier for the budget work session last week, which was cancelled due to lack of quorum. She hoped the Council could be more mindful moving forward.

Wagner said timing matters for industry planning and announced his intent to move to delay the fee for 30 days so the issue could be reconsidered at the next meeting. **Carlson** advised that delaying the fee would require amending an ordinance, which takes two readings, making a short delay impractical without scheduling special meetings.

CITIZEN DISCUSSION

Mike Bender expressed concern that the transportation fee could discourage tour operators who use state roads and private facilities, harm Whittier's competitiveness with other ports, and negatively affect long-term tourism and local business activity.

Tor Wallen requested that the issue be placed on the January agenda so additional industry representatives can attend and discuss the impacts of the fee.

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO CITIZEN COMMENTS

Wilde thanked the Council for its leadership and support, acknowledging the difficulty of balancing constituent concerns with decisions made in the long-term interest of the community.

Borg said that even operators using private docks still rely on City services, such as restrooms and EMS, and therefore contribute to impacts on the community.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Alaska Railroad Corporation Land Purchase, as per WMC 2.08.040(B)(1), matters that, if immediately disclosed, would tend to adversely affect the finances of the city and **Leases**, as per WMC 2.08.040(B)(2), matters that would tend to injure the reputation of a person.

Motion (Macal tao/Borg)

Motion to enter into executive session.

The City Manager, Assistant City Manager, Public Works Director, Harbormaster, and Finance Director were asked to stay for both executive sessions, and the City Consultants, City Lobbyist, and District Representative were asked to stay for the first executive session.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

The Council went into executive session at 9:59 p.m.

Motion (Wagner/Macal tao)

Motion to exit executive session.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

The Council came out of executive session at 11:22 p.m.

Motion (Wagner/Borg)

Direct Administration to request a construction and business plan or a lease amendment in time for the February Council meeting from the leaseholder of Lot 13A, Triangle Business Area.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:23 p.m.

Shelby Carlson
Acting City Clerk

Victor Shen
Mayor

(City Seal)