

CALL TO ORDER

The August 19, 2025, regular meeting of the Whittier City Council was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Blair.

OPENING CEREMONY

Mayor Blair led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

There were present:

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

Also Present:

Jackie C. Wilde, City Manager (virtual)
Adison Spafford, Assistant City Manager
Scott Korbe, Public Works Director
David Borg, Harbormaster
Kris Erchinger, Finance Director
Jason Cates, Fire Chief
Holly Wells, City Attorney
Richard Moses, City Attorney
Shelby Carlson, City Clerk

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

Linda Mankoff, representing the newly renamed Turnagain Community Clinic, spoke about the work of community health workers in addressing social determinants of health such as food insecurity and transportation. She noted ongoing efforts to establish a food pantry in partnership with the Food Bank of Alaska and highlighted transportation barriers for residents needing higher levels of care. Linda invited the Council and community to meet with Senator Cathy Giessel on August 29 during National Community Health Worker Awareness Week and shared information about the clinic's expanded services, including behavioral health and substance use treatment.

Mavis Boone of the Pacific Community of Alaska and **Neil Weare** of Rights to Democracy spoke regarding prosecutions of American Samoan residents for alleged voter fraud, noting community confusion over voting eligibility for U.S. nationals and ongoing legal proceedings. **Shen** asked why citizenship rights were not extended to American Samoans. **Wells** responded that the City's understanding was based on U.S. Supreme Court precedent. **Moses** stated that the Insular Cases remain binding law; that Congress has not extended the Fourteenth Amendment to American Samoa; and that under current law, non-citizen nationals from American Samoa do not have voting rights. **Blair** asked if a draft letter previously considered by the Council would be useful. **Weare** said a letter could be helpful if it focused on factual accounts of information provided to residents, but that the earlier draft was not effective.

APPROVAL OF THE REGULAR MEETING AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Motion (Wagner/Loan)

Approve Agenda and Consent Agenda

Blair removed Item 13, Commissioner Appointments, from the consent agenda.

Shen removed Item 14, Non-Objection to the Wild Catch Café Alcohol License Renewal, from the consent agenda.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Items Approved on Consent Agenda:

*Resolution 2025-031, Appointing the City Election Officials for the October 7, 2025, General Election, Setting the Date for Counting Absentee Ballots, and Establishing Election Official Compensation

*Approval of the July 15, 2025 Regular Meeting Minutes

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Shen declared a potential conflict of interest in Item 14, Non-Objection to the Wild Catch Café Alcohol License Renewal.

Motion

Does Mr. Shen have a substantial financial conflict of interest in Item 14?

Motion Failed

AYES: Pinquoch, Shen

NOES: Loan, Macal tao, Denmark, Wagner, Blair

The Council determined **Shen** did not have a substantial financial conflict of interest in Item 14.

PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

Manager's Monthly Wilde Recognition was presented by **Wilde** and **Borg** to Sili Tuili, Matthew Pese, Sam Taulealo, and Malcolm Afoa.

Years of Service Awards were presented by **Borg** to Sandra Matsumiya for her five years of service with the City of Whittier, Dave Dickason for his service as a Council member and Mayor, and Anna Dickason for her service as a Planning & Zoning Commissioner.

Mayor Report – None

Vice Mayor Report – None

City Manager Report – **Wilde** shared highlights from her written report and invited Council members to contact her to attend a staff meeting.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

ORDINANCE 2025-003 An Ordinance Amending WMC 2.10.038 “Definitions” and 2.16.010 “City Manager” and Adding WMC 2.26.060 “Finance Director” and WMC 2.26.070 “Duties of the Finance Director” to Update Position Titles and Align the Code With Title 29 of the Alaska Statutes and Current Organizational Practices and Repealing WMC 2.26.080 “Executive Assistant,” 2.26.090 “Duties of Executive Assistant,” and WMC Chapter 2.15 “Director of Administration” to Remove the Executive Assistant and Director of Administration Positions From the Code

Public Hearing Opened at 7:45 p.m.

No public comment was provided.

Public Hearing Closed at 7:46 p.m.

Motion (Wagner/Pinquoch)

Adopt **Ordinance 2025-003**.

General discussion given.

Motion to Postpone (Wagner/Pinquoch)

Postpone Ordinance 2025-003 to the November regular meeting.

General discussion given. **Blair** suggested a work session prior to the October regular meeting to discuss the ordinance and review an organizational chart.

Motion to Postpone Passed

Unanimous

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION – None

RESOLUTIONS

A member of the public requested the opportunity to provide citizen comments.

Motion (Wagner/Pinquoch)

Relax the rules to allow four minutes of citizen comment per person for a total of 12 minutes.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Kelly Bender commented on the proposal to place an advisory question on the upcoming ballot regarding sales tax and on simplifying fee reporting.

RESOLUTION 2025-027 A Resolution Approving a Letter of Support to the Alaska Department of Public Safety and the Alaska Department of Law Requesting That Any Penalties in Certain Pending Cases Not Preclude Participation in Local Elections or Attainment of Citizenship (Postponed from July 15, 2025 Meeting)

Motion (Wagner/Shen)

Approve **Resolution 2025-027**.

General discussion given. **Wells** recommended the Council postpone the resolution to allow Council time to edit the letter of support. She clarified that the City does not have evidence of a mistake of law at the local level and expressed concern about preparing a letter of support that states otherwise. **Blair** stated he had additional evidence to discuss with Wells and requested the letter be reworked and brought back to the Council in September.

Motion to Table (Pinguoch/Shen)

Table **Resolution 2025-027** indefinitely.

General discussion given.

Motion to Table Passed

Unanimous

RESOLUTION 2025-028 A Resolution Affirming Support for Ongoing City Efforts with State and Regional Partners to Plan and Implement Infrastructure Improvements to Address Increased Cruise Ship Traffic and Community Needs

Motion (Loan/Shen)

Approve **Resolution 2025-028**.

General discussion given.

Motion to Postpone (Pinguoch/Loan)

Postpone **Resolution 2025-028** to include it with the workshop on Ordinance 2025-003.

General discussion given.

Motion to Postpone Passed

Unanimous

RESOLUTION 2025-029 A Resolution Authorizing the Purchase of a 2025 CAT 160 Motor Grader Including Associated Equipment, Freight, Hydraulic Plow and Snow Wing, and Six-Year Extended Warranty, Financed via Capital Lease in the Amount of \$445,750 Plus Interest, as Approved in the 2025 Budget

General discussion given.

Motion (Wagner/Shen)

Substitute the laydown version of Resolution 2025-029, as distributed on August 18, 2025, for the version include in the Council packet.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Motion (Wagner/Loan)

Approve **Resolution 2025-029** as substituted.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

RESOLUTION 2025-030 A Resolution Submitting to the Qualified Voters at the Regular City Election on October 7, 2025, a Non-Binding Advisory Ballot Question Regarding Returning to a Six- Month Seasonal Sales Tax Period

Motion (Macal tao/Pinquoch)

Approve **Resolution 2025-030**.

General discussion given. **Erchinger** reported that most of the additional year-round sales tax revenue comes from harbor and private marina customers paying sales tax year-round on moorage instead of seasonally, as well as from fuel sales. She noted that reported local sales tax collections appear minimal, leading her to conclude that the majority of the revenue is generated by visitors. She also reminded Council that the code was amended to exempt local residents from sales tax on groceries, residential rent, and certain essential household items. General discussion continued. **Wells** highlighted the various complications of placing an advisory question on the ballot.

Motion Failed

AYES: Pinquoch, Macal tao, Blair
NOES: Wagner, Loan, Shen, Denmark

OTHER NEW BUSINESS

Commissioner Appointments
General discussion given.

Motion (Wagner/Shen)

Confirm the commissioner appointments of Heather Brazelton, Planning & Zoning Commission, Seat A and Aubrey Jurgerson, Planning & Zoning Commission, Seat C.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Non-Objection to the Wild Catch Café Alcohol License Renewal

Motion (Wagner/Loan)

Not object to the Wild Catch Café Alcohol License Renewal.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Motion (Denmark/Wagner)

Direct Administration to do a bulk mailing to all registered voters in Whittier with a question of, “do they support the year-round sales tax” to include a self-addressed stamped return envelope to make it as easy as possible for voters to respond.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Motion (Blair/Pinguoch)

Direct the contractor who developed the Whittier Waterfront and Economic Development Plan to appear before the Council at the September regular meeting.

General discussion given. **Wells** explained that comprehensive, community development, or strategic plans prepared through consultants have no legal effect until adopted by ordinance of the Council. General discussion continued.

Motion Passed

AYES: Pinguoch, Macal tao, Pinguoch, Denmark
NOES: Loan, Wagner, Shen

Blair proposed the Council cancel the September 10th public meeting regarding the Whittier Moves: Transportation Master Plan. **Spafford** responded it had already been moved at his request to September 12th. **Blair** stated this did not provide him the opportunity to interact and was not the date he requested., and further stated he wished the contractor would present to the Council before presenting to the public. **Blair** asked about the cost of the Safe Streets for All project and why it had not come before the Council; **Erchinger** referred to Resolution 2024-015, where the Council approved the expenditure. **Blair** asked how the advisory committee was chosen; **Spafford** stated this is an Alaska Department of Transportation project with the City as a project partner, that the list of potential members had been provided, and two community representative openings were advertised as per his request. **Blair** raised a concern with a spouse of a director running in the upcoming local election; **Wells** reminded the Council its role in elections is to pass ordinances and certify an election, and does not include determining a candidate’s eligibility. **Blair** spoke further about a specific candidate; **Wells** stated the discussion was outside the Council’s role and not a reflection of the body.

Denmark asked if a private party repaired the launch ramp at Smitty’s Cove and if they requested recompense. **Borg** responded that the private party did not follow proper procedures, and the City has no intention of reimbursing.

CITIZEN DISCUSSION – None

COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO CITIZEN COMMENTS – None

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Discuss the **Alaska Railroad Corporation Land Purchase** and the **Girdwood Policing Contract**, matters of which, if immediately disclosed, would tend to adversely affect the finances of the City (WMC 2.08.040(B)(1)) and to discuss **City Manager Performance**, as per Whittier Municipal Code 2.08.040(B)(2), matters that would tend to injure the reputation of a person; provided, however, that the person may request a public discussion.

The City Manager, Harbormaster, Public Works Director, Finance Director, City Contractors, and City Attorney for Items 20 and 21, the Police Chief for Item 21, and Finance Director for Item 22 were asked to stay for Executive Session.

Motion (Wagner/Denmark)

Enter into executive session to discuss the Alaska Railroad Corporation Land Purchase and Girdwood Policing Contract as per WMC 2.08.040(B)(1) and City Manager Performance as WMC 2.0.040(B)(2).

Motion Passed

Unanimous

The Council went into executive session at 10:02 p.m.

Motion (Wagner/Macal tao)

Motion to exit executive session.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

The Council exited executive session at 11:05 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Shelby Carlson
City Clerk

Daniel Blair
Mayor

(City Seal)