

**Regular City Council Meeting**  
**June 5, 2024 @ 7:00 pm**  
**Cordova Center Community Rooms A & B**  
**Minutes**

**A. Call to order** – **Mayor David Allison** called the Regular City Council Meeting to order at 7:00 pm on June 5, 2024, in the Cordova Center Community Rooms.

**B. Invocation and pledge of allegiance** – **Mayor Allison** led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**C. Roll call** – Present for roll call were **Mayor David Allison** and Council members **Tom Bailer, Wendy Ranney, Dave Zastrow,** and **Ken Jones**. Council members **Cathy Sherman** and **Kristin Carpenter** were present via zoom videoconference. Council member **Kasey Kinsman** was absent. Also present were City Manager **Samantha Greenwood** and City Clerk **Susan Bourgeois**.

**D. Approval of Regular Agenda**

Hearing no objection to approval of the agenda, **Mayor Allison** declared it approved.

**E. Disclosures of Conflicts of Interest and ex parte communications** - none

**F. Communications by and Petitions from Visitors**

1. Guest speakers - none

2. Audience comments regarding agenda items

**Marc Carrel** spoke representing CDFU's groundfish division, in support of Resolution 06-24-26. He said CDFU's **Jess Rude** sent Council a letter with more detail but in general, supporting this is in the best interest of the economy in Cordova.

**Ryan McManus** of 208 Boardwalk spoke about the mill rate and said Council has to stop raising taxes.

**Ardy Hanson** of 310 Railroad asked Council to keep the mill rate at a place where we'd be paying close to what we are paying now. Sales tax increase and other increases, he said it is getting really hard for families to make it. He said households are cutting back; City should too.

**Alex Russin** of 209 South Second St, speaking as Superintendent of Schools in support of Resolution 06-24-25 – School's FY25 budget and request for Council's contribution.

**Sarah Trumblee** of 130 Heney Creek Lane said she is in the minority but thinks the Council should consider increasing the mill rate to get some much-needed revenue for the City.

3. Chairpersons and Representatives of Boards and Commissions - none

4. Student Council Report – none

**G. Approval of Consent Calendar**

5. Minutes: a. May 15, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

6. Council concurrence of Mayor's appointment of City representative to PWSAC Board

7. Ordinance 1218 An ordinance of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, amending Cordova Municipal Code Section 2.18.040 - Determination of elected candidates and passage of propositions, and repealing Section 2.20.100 - Run-off elections, to prevent conflict with charter which was changed with voter approval of Proposition One at the March 5, 2024, Regular City Election – 1<sup>st</sup> reading

8. Council action to waive protest for renewal of Liquor License # 341, Northwest Company dba Alaska Commercial #235, Package Store License

Vote on the Consent Calendar: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent. Carpenter-yes; Sherman-yes; Bailer-yes; Ranney-yes; Zastrow-yes; Kinsman-absent; and Jones-yes. Consent Calendar was approved.

**H. Approval of Minutes** – in consent calendar

**I. Consideration of Bids/Proposals/Contracts** - none

**J. Reports of Officers**

9. Mayor's Report – **Mayor Allison** reported: the Copper River Nouveau is this weekend – he has a meeting scheduled with Alyeska representatives who are here for that. There may be others he meets up with also that are in town.

10. City Manager's Report – **Greenwood** reported: 1) an update on the Eyak Lake weir – State will not be taking ownership – they are willing to work with us on a maintenance agreement. There will be a lengthy process though, a couple of different public notice periods, **Kate** at Watershed is working through all the permitting, etc.; 2) Finance staff are down at Caselle training, learning a lot and getting up to speed on processes, very intensive training sessions.

a. South Harbor Rebuild, project update, **Collin Bronson** updated Council on the project to date, including funding, MARAD reimbursements, construction progress.

11. City Clerk's Report - **Bourgeois** reported: 1) City Attorney **Jes Spuhler** is on the zoom call to participate in Ordinance 1217 discussion.

## K. Correspondence - none

## L. Ordinances and Resolutions

12. Ordinance 1217 An ordinance of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska repealing Chapter 5.36 "Property Tax" and replacing same with a new Chapter 5.05 "Property Tax", Chapter 5.06 "Property Tax Exemptions and Deferrals", and Chapter 5.07 "Property Tax Exemption and Deferral Criteria" - 1<sup>st</sup> reading **M/Jones S/Bailer** to adopt Ordinance 1217 An ordinance of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska repealing Chapter 5.36 "Property Tax" and replacing same with a new Chapter 5.05 "Property Tax", Chapter 5.06 "Property Tax Exemptions and Deferrals", and Chapter 5.07 "Property Tax Exemption and Deferral Criteria"

**Jones** said he supports property tax exemptions for economic development, and this is a necessary step in order for us to enact those.

Attorney **Jes Spuhler** had a short presentation. This was begun last fall – a wholesale rewrite of Property Tax and Sales Tax, council conducted a few work sessions and then at the start of this year we decided to separate Sales Tax from Property Tax and Property Tax is coming first, in Ordinance 1217. The effective date is January 1, 2025. Overall, the ordinance allows the City Clerk and Assessor to manage all the types of exemption applications efficiently and there are also housekeeping edits to reflect current practice and administration of real property taxes in Cordova. We have added the non-profit exemption to code, it exists in Statute and Constitution in Alaska so it is required regardless, but it is helpful to have in code so the administration can efficiently administer it and it also provides clarity and transparency. As far as what Council wanted to focus on, the economic development exemptions, the legislature recently change that optional exemption language so that it is much more flexible for communities now to decide what they want to emphasize, what kinds of development they want to encourage. If Council adopts this ordinance, after public hearing, Council will then adopt application forms by ordinance – the parameters of the economic development exemption can be addressed in these application forms. We will schedule a work session or multiple work sessions to accomplish that work – to create those application forms.

**Carpenter** asked **Spuhler** if she had some examples of application forms from other communities. **Spuhler** said unfortunately, she has not found much out there. Seems like some communities aren't even aware that the new legislation had passed.

**M/Ranney S/Bailer** to amend the ordinance as follows: 1) add 5.06.090 – Appeals. An applicant for exemption or deferral under Chapters 5.06 and 5.07 may appeal a determination of the City directly to the superior court as provided by rules of court applicable to appeals from the decisions of administrative agencies or may first appeal to the Board of Equalization as provided by law. 2) amend 5.06.020 (A) by adding "Applications for exemptions and deferrals must be submitted by January 15 of the year in which they are sought, unless a different application deadline is specified in Chapter 5.07 of this code" as the first sentence in A. 3) amend 5.07.050 by changing the last sentence in B. to change the reference to Code from 5.05.130 to 5.06.090.

Vote on the motion to amend: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent (Kinsman). Motion was approved.

After the amendment was approved, no Council members had further comments on approval of the ordinance as amended.

Vote on the motion to approve the ordinance on first reading as amended: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent (Kinsman). Motion was approved.

**13.** Resolution 06-24-24 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska setting the property tax mill levy for the 2024 tax year at \_\_\_\_ mills for all properties in the City of Cordova

**M/Jones S/Ranney** to approve Resolution 06-24-24 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska setting the property tax mill levy for the 2024 tax year at **9.93** mills for all properties in the City of Cordova

**Jones** said this mill rate puts us at the \$3 million in revenue for property taxes. He said in his mind that is the deal we made with the citizens when we approved the budget in December. **Ranney** had nothing to add. **Bailer** said he could go along with that. **Sherman** said she could agree but would be ok with a small increase. **Carpenter** echoed **Sherman's** comments. **Zastrow** said he is good with this.

Vote on the motion: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent. Zastrow-yes; Sherman-yes; Jones-yes; Bailer-yes; Kinsman-absent; Ranney-yes; and Carpenter-yes. Motion was approved.

**14.** Resolution 06-24-25 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska acknowledging the proposed budget of the Cordova Public School District for fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and determining the amount of local sources available for school purposes subject to modification before City Council final approval of the City's FY25 budget in December 2024

**M/Sherman S/Bailer** to approve Resolution 06-24-25 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska acknowledging the proposed budget of the Cordova Public School District for fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and determining the amount of local sources available for school purposes subject to modification before City Council final approval of the City's FY25 budget in December 2024

**Sherman** said this resolution clearly states our support for the Cordova School District and things can still change such as the Governor may change parts of the state budget and we may make a change when we consider our budget. **Bailer** had questions for the superintendent. He asked where the NVE contributions of \$200K for the National Guard being housed in the schools and the \$700K for the food services and activities shows up in this budget. **Russin** said that initially there was a \$1.5M deficit if all programs were funded, all positions were filled. The \$900K meant that only \$600K had to be cut out instead of \$1.5M. Then as long as the governor does not veto the one-time increase to the BSA that was put into the capital budget, the School district should be able to have a balanced budget because that one-time funding would net them about that \$600k.

**Bailer** said that is a pretty dire situation we'd be in without NVE's contribution.

Vote on the motion: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent. Sherman-yes; Jones-yes; Kinsman-absent; Carpenter-yes; Bailer-yes; Ranney-yes; and Zastrow-yes. Motion was approved.

**15.** Resolution 06-24-26 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska in support of amendment 123 to the fishery management plan (FMP) for groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) management area which amends regulations governing limits on the Pacific Halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) and links the halibut PSC limit for the amendment 80 commercial groundfish trawl fleet in the BSAI groundfish fisheries to halibut abundance

**M/Bailer S/Jones** to approve Resolution 06-24-26 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska in support of amendment 123 to the fishery management plan (FMP) for groundfish of the Bering Sea and Aleutian Islands (BSAI) management area which amends regulations governing limits on the Pacific Halibut Prohibited Species Catch (PSC) and links the halibut PSC limit for the amendment 80 commercial groundfish trawl fleet in the BSAI groundfish fisheries to halibut abundance

**Bailer** said it is important for us to do this, he will support. **Jones, Ranney, Sherman** all agreed they would support this. **Carpenter** also said she would support and gave a statistic: in 2023 the bycatch of halibut in the Bering Sea was 2.66 million pounds and the commercial catch of halibut in the Bering Sea that same year was 2.06 million pounds. She said the bycatch being more than the commercial catch is what makes this issue so compelling.

Vote on the motion: 6 yeas, 0 nays, 1 absent (Kinsman). Motion was approved.

**M. Unfinished Business** - none

**N. New & Miscellaneous Business**

**16.** Pending Agenda, CIP List, Calendar, Elected & Appointed Officials lists

Council decided to cancel the June 19 meeting as it falls on a City holiday. They directed staff to call a special meeting if necessary before the July 3, 2024, regular meeting. Clerk would get with **Attorney Jes Spuhler** to possibly schedule the first work session on July 3 as needed to create the exemption application forms as mentioned in Ordinance 1217 discussion.

**O. Audience Participation** - none

**P. Council Comments**

**Sherman** thanked **Jes** for the work on the ordinance tonight, the team that worked on that – a long time coming. She also thanked **Superintendent Russin** for his input tonight. She said it was nice to have audience comments tonight also.

**Carpenter** echoed what **Sherman** said and she thanked the City Manager on the work to move the Eyak Lake Weir project forward.

**Ranney** echoed comments before her and was glad to see we didn't jump the mill rate up a bunch. Also, she appreciated our action on the bycatch issue tonight.

**Jones** clarified that what he said earlier – the mill rate is down a bit (.9 mills), but taxes might be slightly increased for everyone based on the assessed value increase.

**Q. Executive Session** - none

**R. Adjournment**

Hearing no objection **Mayor Allison** adjourned the meeting at 7:58 pm.

Approved: July 3, 2024

Attest:



Susan Bourgeois, CMC, City Clerk

