

**Regular City Council Meeting
September 18, 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 September 18, 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, Cathy Sherman, Kasey Kinsman, Wendy Ranney, Kristin Carpenter,** and **Ken Jones**. Council member **Dave Zastrow** 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

John Stack of 311 Browning Ave, spoke to agenda item 14 in the memo on page 32, part IV background information he corrected a misrepresentation – he cited CMC 18.24.060 (A) which stated the required side yard of a corner lot and therefore, would make the usable width of the lot in question only 10 feet, not 15 feet as mentioned in the memo.

Paul Kelly of Jim Poor Avenue asked Council to reconsider the price of the impound lot.

Cathy Renfeldt of 308 Railroad Row spoke in support of Council negotiating a lease with the Chamber in agenda item 15. She spoke as a representative of the Cordova chamber of commerce at 404 First St.

Osa Schultz spoke as president of the Cordova chamber of commerce board of directors also in support of Council negotiating with the chamber for a lease on the building they currently occupy.

3. Chairpersons and Representatives of Boards and Commissions – **Barb Jewell** spoke for the Cordova School Board – she reported the following: 1) they had their annual board retreat and identified priorities such as reading, community engagement and also – what are we going to do with the High School? Understanding it is 5-7-10 years out, but the superintendent hopes to get with the City Manager to at least begin discussions; 2) Copper River Rally Volleyball Tournament is next weekend at home; 3) another priority they discussed was a community conversation about sustainable funding – a couple of funding sources that helped this year were one-time solutions, State extra funding, NVE's funding – the Board will host some community forums to explain the statistics and the data and assist community members who want to advocate for sustainable funding.

4. Student Council Report – none

G. Approval of Consent Calendar

5. Minutes: Sept 4, 2024, Regular City Council Meeting Minutes

5a. Per Charter Section 2-8 and Cordova Municipal Code 3.12.022, recordation of excused absences of Council members **Cathy Sherman** and **Dave Zastrow** from the Sept 4, 2024, Regular Meeting

6. Council action to waive protest for renewal of Liquor License # 5653 Baja Taco, Restaurant Eating Place License

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

H. Approval of Minutes – in consent calendar

I. Consideration of Bids/Proposals/Contracts - none

J. Reports of Officers

7. Mayor's Report – **Mayor Allison** reported: 1) he gave an introductory talk at NVE's domestic violence and sexual assault event, and he will speak also at the Pioneers Convention and the Alaska Historical Society Conference in October.

8. City Manager's Report – **Greenwood** reported: 1) she verified in Code that sales taxes must be remitted quarterly – that question had come up about some who were paying annually; 2) she presented the same info on budget that she gave to Council to the department heads this week, very eye opening for some of them – very productive meeting; 3) she and **Sheryl (Glaser)** have been working on budget – spreadsheets being sent out to departments and they have Oct 16 deadline to get them back in – Oct 2 work session will have budget revenues and the sales tax talk with City Attorney, she is shooting for Oct 16 to be budget expenses work session; 4) she has been attending the PWSEDD meetings but at this last meeting she was a full member – there is good stuff going on there; 5) draft audit is about ready will shoot for having them tentatively at the second October meeting.

9. City Clerk's Report - **Bourgeois** reported: 1) they are interviewing a candidate for Deputy Clerk tomorrow which is very promising.

K. Correspondence

10. 08-27-24 Letter from Kicker Room Blooms regarding support from Alaska Farmers Market Association support for winter flower CSA

11. 08-29-24 Public Notice of open comment period on private non-exclusive access easement for Paul & Linda Kelly

12. 08-29-24 Email from Mayor forwarding an email from Paul Kelly regarding land disposal of the impound lot

L. Ordinances and Resolutions

13. Substitute Ordinance 1219 An ordinance of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska amending Chapter 5.38, Biennial motor vehicle registration tax, to increase the motor vehicle registration tax levied on registered vehicles within the city and amending CMC section 5.05.030 to clarify that personal property is exempt from property tax except as otherwise stated – 2nd reading

M/Carpenter S/Sherman to adopt Substitute Ordinance 1219 An ordinance of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska amending Chapter 5.38, Biennial motor vehicle registration tax, to increase the motor vehicle registration tax levied on registered vehicles within the city and amending CMC section 5.05.030 to clarify that personal property is exempt from property tax except as otherwise stated

Carpenter said this will update our motor vehicle registration tax which has no been changed since 1999. These will be some modest fee increases and we just had a public hearing where we did not hear from anyone; she is in support. **Sherman** said she is in support and other communities in Alaska have exorbitant rates comparatively. **Jones** said he is not in support of this. **Bailer, Ranney** and **Kinsman** all said they support this.

Vote on the motion 5 yeas, 1 nay, 1 absent. Sherman-yes; Jones-no; Kinsman-yes; Carpenter-yes; Bailer-yes; Ranney-yes; and Zastrow-absent. Motion was approved.

M. Unfinished Business - none

N. New & Miscellaneous Business

14. Council action on disposal and method of disposal of Lot 17, Block 10 Original Townsite

M/Jones S/Carpenter to make Lot 17, Block 10, Original Townsite available and following the noticing procedures, dispose of Lot 17, Block 10, Original Townsite, as outlined in Cordova Municipal Code 5.22.060 B by negotiating an agreement with **John Stack** and **Barbara Solomon** to purchase the property. **Jones** said he doesn't like sealed proposals, prefers direct negotiation, he believes people who put it before us should be given the option first. **Carpenter** said this lot has very little value to anyone else except the adjacent landowner. **Bailer** asked for clarity from the Planner as to the setbacks per the public comment earlier. **Johnson** said that **John Stack** did catch that it is a corner lot, so the setbacks allow for only a 10-foot-wide structure. **Bailer** said that if this had been 5 feet wider allowable building space, a home could have been built here; with the new information, he will support the motion. **Sherman** said since they are the adjacent property owners it makes sense, she will support. **Kinsman** has a reservation because this was not available and now we'll put the 30-day posting on the lot, we seem to have missed that step, should have occurred first. **Kinsman** said he'd propose that as a code change. **Johnson** said he doesn't disagree, and we can do it that way as a policy until a code change can be completed. **Ranney** said she supports the motion.

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

15. Council action on disposal and method of disposal of Lots 3 & 4, Block 8 Original Townsite

M/Jones S/Carpenter to dispose of Lots 3 & 4, Block 8 Original Townsite as outlined in Cordova Municipal Code 5.22.060 B by negotiating an agreement with the Cordova Chamber of Commerce to lease or purchase the property.

Jones said he thinks the chamber brings a lot to the community; he would like to hear more details about what they have done as far as number of conferences they brought in, etc. **Ranney** said the chamber does a great job but looking at the deficit we'll be looking at she can't support the City giving this much, the building and in-kind and direct financial support to one non-profit. **Kinsman** feels similarly to **Ranney**. He is curious as to the terms of the lease, what is Council's role in the negotiations. **Mayor Allison** said it will come back to us for approval, but we can give the manager parameters for the negotiation. **Bailer** remembers that the building was built when we were getting cruise ships so there would be public bathrooms accessible on Main Street. **Bailer** said he'd support the chamber position, but he'd prefer it move into the City Hall building. There was further lengthy discussion as to the merits of the chamber and the city contribution to the chamber.

Vote on the motion 3 yeas, 3 nays, 1 absent. Kinsman-no; Zastrow-absent; Jones-yes; Ranney-no; Bailer-no; Carpenter-yes; and Sherman-yes. Motion failed.

M/Jones S/Bailer to refer this to staff to be brought back to Council after the budget process.

Vote on the motion: 5 yeas, 1 nay (Sherman), 1 absent (Zastrow). Motion was approved.

16. Council action on disposal and method of disposal of a portion of the Public Safety Building

M/Carpenter S/Bailer to dispose of a portion of the Public Safety Building as outlined in Cordova Municipal Code 5.22.060 B by negotiating an agreement with the Alaska State Troopers to lease the property.

Carpenter said this is a City building with tenants that share a similar mission and the proximity is important to coordinate law enforcement activities. She supports it based on Planning Commission's review. **Bailer** said he supports this; he'd suggest yearly bumps for inflation. **Jones** will support but he is curious if it is a market rental rate; he'd prefer it be a market rate or higher as it is a good space. **Ranney** said their rent probably covers the utilities in the whole building, she thinks we should keep it going until we know what we are doing with that building. **Kinsman** wondered if there is a clause in the lease about increasing rent using the CPI annually. **Johnson** said there is. **Sherman** said she supports; this just makes sense.

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

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

Jones asked for an agenda item for the next meeting regarding the price of the impound lot. **Carpenter** seconded that. **Mayor Allison** said that would be smart to have that as an executive session. **Kinsman** asked we add the code change we talked about regarding land disposal maps and status changes to the pending agenda for a future ordinance. **Bailer** discussed number 5 on "future agenda items" he'd like that at an upcoming meeting. Item 10 on "future agenda items", was revisited, remote staff members – a discussion item before a ballot prop for charter change.

O. Audience Participation

Barb Jewell of 2.2-mile Whished Rd. appreciated Council’s discussions tonight, emphasis on transparency, depth, and quality of conversations. She complimented the chamber and said they have done great work. She commented that quality of life is so important here and she thinks 2 such urgent topics re childcare and housing. She’d like to see a small dedicated working group put together about affordable housing.

Kevin Johnson of 710 Third St. not as City employee but just as a member of the public. Since we are talking about a new high school and maybe a new pool, he’d like something included in the conversations about better cooperation between the school district and the city to share use of these spaces. He understands that it was a huge topic when the elementary school gym was built, and he thinks it has not materialized in that way. He is speaking from the perspective of a City volleyball player, drop-in at Bidarki is often very crowded in summer and the Parks and Rec Director has had no luck in discussing use of Elementary School gym with School administration.

Paul Kelly of Jim Poor Ave. wanted Council to know he isn’t asking for a handout; he wants to work cooperatively with the City.

P. Council Comments

Sherman said she is happy to be here.

Carpenter wanted to let **Barb Jewell** know that the EDD has been doing work on housing, planning a roundtable on October 15.

Jones said he doesn’t want to discuss making City jobs remote at all, that is a big problem, declining revenues because people are leaving town. We need remote workers to move here. We need to recruit at college job fairs and get people to move here. We need to attract and develop talent.

Kinsman said a lot of what **Jones** said comes right back to the housing conversation. DoT has 2 operators – their priority will be to get the airport open – 2 of them will not be sufficient come winter. He thanked the chamber, they do great work – nothing personal against the chamber, we just need to be very smart and careful with all of our contracts and leases.

Ranney there will be hard conversations coming with budget; we cannot tax our way out of the deficits we may be looking at; that’ll mean looking for other avenues, ways to save money. She’d love to see the chamber self-sustaining. She knows they do great work – but does that great work hinge on being in that building? We’ll be having hard conversations.

Bailer housing is an issue all over – there are houses being built, at about the same pace as they’ve been built for years. If we want to talk about affordable housing that’s a different story. The 25-foot City lots are affordable – an 1100 or 1200 square foot house can be built there.

Mayor Allison thanked the audience members and staff for being here tonight.

Q. Executive Session - none

R. Adjournment

Hearing no objection **Mayor Allison** adjourned the meeting at 8:53 pm.

Approved: October 23, 2024

Attest: 

Susan Bourgeois, CMC, City Clerk

