

Regular City Council Meeting
December 16, 2020 @ 7:00 pm
Cordova Center Community Rooms A & B
Minutes

A. Call to order

Mayor Clay Koplín called the Council regular meeting to order at 7:25 pm on December 16, 2020, in the Cordova Center Community Rooms.

B. Invocation and pledge of allegiance

Mayor Koplín led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

C. Roll call

Present for roll call were **Mayor Clay Koplín** and Council members **Tom Bailer**, **David Allison**, and **David Glasen**. Council members **Cathy Sherman**, **Jeff Guard**, **Melina Meyer**, and **Anne Schaefer** were present via teleconference. Also present were City Manager **Helen Howarth** and City Clerk **Susan Bourgeois**.

D. Approval of Regular Agenda

M/Bailer S/Allison to approve the agenda.

Mayor Koplín asked for a small adjustment, he'd be adding Lobbyist **John Bitney** as a Guest Speaker to give Council a legislative update.

Hearing no objection, the motion was approved.

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

F. Communications by and Petitions from Visitors

1. Guest speaker

a. **Kristin Carpenter**, **Carol Hoover**, **Dune Lankard** presenting on EVOSTC Draft Resolution 20-D which is out for public comment - all three speakers spoke in support of the draft resolution and asked Council if they could comment in support before the comment period closed at midnight tonight.

b. Incident Management Team, Covid-19 update - CCMCA CEO, **Dr. Hannah Sanders** reported: 1) currently 4 Cordovans positive for Covid, they are all in a cluster; 2) Alaska has been vaccinating front line health care workers and Juneau actually had an allergic reaction - but the patient is fine now; 3) we are all now paying close attention and will follow the state guidance concerning vaccines and hopeful very many people will have the opportunity to get vaccinated in the next couple of months.

c. City Lobbyist **John Bitney** reported on the November election results and how the legislature is shaping up numbers/party wise. He expects it will be similar to how it has been of late with more moderate republicans teaming up with democrats especially around big policy issues such as budget. A big change though has been Governor Dunleavy and his administration's ideas about budget, he released a draft budget last week. He is still prioritizing PFD payments and budget reductions, but not on level as in the past - he has proposed 50% funding of school bond debt reimbursement. He has also supported Harbor Tier I grant - he has proposed a \$350 million bond package of transportation projects and he's left it up to the legislature to allocate that. **Bitney** said he is more optimistic going into this session than ever before that our Harbor project may get funded.

2. Audience comments regarding agenda items

Mike Hicks of Box 674 Cordova spoke in support of the Cordova Police Department.

Barb Jewell of mile 2.2 Whitshed Road said that since **Bitney** mentioned how school bond debt reimbursement is in the Governor's budget that Council could feel more confident in more fully funding some of the requests received in the budget, such as the school district and other departments.

3. Chairpersons and Representatives of Boards and Commissions

a. CCMC Authority 2021 Draft Budget

CCMCA Chair, **Greg Meyer** reported: 1) Covid has been hard but a good relationship between CCMC and NVE-Ilanka has come from it; 2) financially there is a glimmer of hope, good leadership in **Dr. Sanders** and **Eric Price**, CFO is digging into things; 3) with Covid funds the board has approved a couple of million dollars of much-needed improvements to the facility; 4) the financial request of council is minimal and not for operations, it's for the underground fuel tank removal project; 5) 2020 year-end shows about a \$175,000 loss, they have cleared about \$1 million in net receivables and about \$1 million in payables. **Eric Price**, CFO, presented the 2021 CCMC budget.

Alex Russin, Superintendent, reported for the Schools: 1) 1st semester coming to a close, we are one of few districts around the state to have in-person learning with such continuity, we have the community to thank for that; 2) after the holiday break we will start online for 2 weeks as a precaution for travel over the holidays; 3) substitute teachers have been extremely difficult to find; 4) HVAC system project is nearing completion at the HS.

Questions: **Howarth** asked **Alex** to mention the grant they received that would be shared with the hospital.

Russin said they received a \$600,000 grant from the USDA, Rural Utility Services Grant - distance delivery and telemedicine, they will be upgrading technology equipment in the HS as well as all the devices the students use, and they are brainstorming with Ilanka and CCMC to share mobile telemedicine equipment - also working to share some with PWSC on the CNA program they have.

b. Link to *PWSRCAC Year in Review 2019-2020*

4. Student Council representative - written report in the packet.

G. Approval of Consent Calendar

5. Resolution 12-20-44 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, supporting Points North Heli-Adventures Inc., commercial access on the Chugach National Forest

6. Minutes of the 11-18-2020 Council Regular Meeting

7. Per Charter Section 2-8 and Cordova Municipal Code 3.12.022, recordation of excused absence of the following: Mayor Clay Koplín from the November 18, 2020 Regular Meeting

Vote on the consent calendar: 7 yeas, 0 nays. Sherman-yes; Schaefer-yes; Guard-yes; Meyer-yes; Allison-yes; Glasen-yes and Bailer-yes. Consent calendar was approved.

H. Approval of Minutes - in Consent Calendar

I. Consideration of Bids - none

J. Reports of Officers

8. Mayor's Report - **Mayor Koplín** reported: 1) Cordova air museum - an original Cordova air plane was restored by the owner and they'd like to donate it to us if there was an air museum, also the original Cordova Air hangar is on Eyak Lake; 2) call with the Governor and discussed his budget - we're thankful for being included especially in some of the reimbursements, support through the pandemic, thanks for fisheries; 3) Second Street upgrade project will commence next year - between a \$10 million harbor project and an \$8 million road project those both help the economy out in town, with lodging, groceries, restaurants, etc. 4) thanked the board and commission applicants, more than seats available, which is nice and he appreciates people's interest.

9. Manager's Report - City Manager **Helen Howarth** reported: 1) mentioned the devastating landslides in Haines that killed three people which led her to ask **Leif Stavig** to investigate that for Cordova - he spoke to someone at the state and they will be bringing resources to Cordova to investigate our community - to assess the risk; 2) she offered to be chair of PWSEDD - she'll be in the position of helping set agendas, so she hopes community members will reach out to her if they want something brought up there - **Kristen Carpenter** is the ED with a Cordova office and she just hired a second staff member also Cordova-based ; 3) she thanked everyone who has worked on Covid these last 9 months, CCMC, Ilanka staff, the dynamic team we have here at City Hall; 4) she thanked **Cindy Appleton** for her service, she will be retiring at the end of this month after 15 years with the City; 5) Harbor grant opportunities have been identified, EDA, NOAA and others; 6) she ended with a recap of where we've been through these budget discussions: \$1.5 million problem when we began, raw fish tax down, sales tax down, bond debt reimbursement was eliminated (has now been put back in, but we didn't know that to start), Covid CARES relief from the federal government is unknown for next year, we wanted to keep existing services and not layoff any staff, no tax increases - how to do that while ensuring a balanced 2021 and also ensure sustainability into 2022 and beyond - not an easy task, we looked at a hiring freeze, not filling vacant positions including HR, a police officer (which hasn't been filled for a number of years), and someone in parks and rec. - we were hopeful to revisit the budget at end of first quarter after analyses could be completed and more certainty about some of the revenues might be known. She said it is a community effort, she appreciates all the comments that have come in, it will be council's task tonight to solve this.

Mayor Koplín reverted to the Mayor's report and asked for Council concurrence regarding the EVOSTC resolutions that we were asked to weigh in on, the deadline for that is tonight at midnight. There was Council concurrence to have the Mayor comment on all four resolutions on the online platform to suggest that more time be given for this important topic and more ability for public comment and for the Council to hear from EVOSTC directly on their plans.

10. City Clerk's Report - **Bourgeois** reported that in her written report she had an error - declaration of candidacy is in fact opening Friday December 18, 2020 and will close on Monday February 1, 2021.

K. Correspondence

10. Alaska Municipal League award to City for distinguished Municipal Leadership
11. 11-22-20 Letter from K. Hayden re Police Department funding
12. 11-24-20 Letter from C. Hayden re Police Department funding
13. 11-27-20 Letter from M. Hicks re Police Department funding
14. 12-02-20 Mayor Koplin letter to Governor Dunleavy re Municipal Harbor Matching grant program
15. 12-07-20 Email from B. Shipman re Police Department funding
16. 12-07-20 Letter from Winters re Police Department funding
17. 12-07-20 Letter from M. Hicks re Police Department funding

L. Ordinances and Resolutions

18. Resolution 12-20-42 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, adopting an operating and capital budget for fiscal year 2021

M/Allison S/Bailer to approve resolution 12-20-42 a resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, adopting an operating and capital budget for fiscal year 2021

Allison said he has 5 things he would like to propose as 1 amendment to the resolution and budget.

M/Allison S/Bailer to amend the budget by adding a fourth officer at \$120,000, add \$450,000 in revenue under school bond debt reimbursement from the state, increase the raw fish tax revenue by \$250,000 up to \$900,000, increase the sales tax revenue goal to \$3.1 million (up by \$170,000) and increase public accommodations tax by \$23,452, and zero out the transfer from the permanent fund (which had been \$773,452).

Allison's main points were that he feels we need another officer, and he didn't want to take money from the permanent fund. He sees these revenue increases as reasonable and we can get what we need without having to draw from the permanent fund. He also opined this could be revisited once more information is known about school bond debt reimbursement, Covid funding, raw fish tax and sales tax, then we could draw from the permanent fund at that time if necessary. *Bailer* said he supports a fourth officer and agreed with *Allison's* amendment and appreciated the work done to get there. *Schaefer* agreed with all parts of the amendment but was still uncertain about the police position. *Glaser* said he is in favor of all of that except for the way we pay for the police position – he'd prefer the alcohol, tobacco, marijuana tax pay for that and then the extra revenue that *Allison* found could give more to the school district. *Sherman* is in favor of the fourth officer, but she also has different ideas on how to fund it. All of the other items, she is ok with. Her ideas were to fund it from a few different things (increase the airport contract, remove some overtime, allocate some from alcohol, tobacco, marijuana tax), therefore, making it more sustainable as a position in the budget long term. *Meyer* is in favor of not drawing from the permanent fund, she is in favor of the added officer position but is also concerned that this budget has no human resources position funded and is missing a parks and rec employee and chip sealing is missing; she is ok with most of the revenue increases. *Guard* not opposed to some revenue increases; he would like to revisit this after the first of the year though – maybe more like structural changes to the police department instead of just another officer.

Vote on the motion to amend: 5 yeas, 2 nays. Meyer-no; Allison-yes; Bailer-yes; Sherman-yes; Glaser-yes; Guard-no and Schaefer-yes. Motion was approved.

Meyer asked how much the fee increases impact the general fund – the answer was about \$40 thousand if we started those later in the year. *Sherman* said even though she will support this, she still wants to revisit this in first quarter, and she wants to see council support the manager in evaluating all departments staffing levels and services provided.

Vote on the main motion as amended: 7 yeas, 0 nays. Bailer-yes; Sherman-yes; Guard-yes; Meyer-yes; Schaefer-yes; Allison-yes and Glaser-yes. Motion was approved.

19. Resolution 12-20-43 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, adopting City service fees, rates, and charges for the 2021 calendar budget

M/Schaefer S/Allison to approve resolution 12-20-43 a resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, adopting City service fees, rates, and charges for the 2021 calendar budget

Schaefer said it was hard to understand these without some history. She asked the City Manager if she could speak to this resolution. *Howarth* said the only changes were the 5% increases as asked for by Council to water, sewer, refuse. *Meyer* said she isn't comfortable with the 5% increases, but she will vote in favor as part of the process. *Sherman* agreed with *Schaefer* and said as a staff member it was always hard to look at these at year end along with budget, she suggested maybe in June or July we could look at graphs/charts over the years on some of these. *Bailer* said we need to look at Parks and Rec – he thinks there are inefficiencies there – he thinks rates need to be higher.

Vote on the motion: 7 yeas, 0 nays. Schaefer-yes; Sherman-yes; Bailer-yes; Meyer-yes; Allison-yes; Guard-yes and Glaser-yes. Motion was approved.

20. Resolution 12-20-45 A resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, requesting the State of Alaska adopt specific quarantine and isolation procedures for individuals testing positive for Covid-19, to enforce such mandate(s), and to establish uniform mandates that the City may rely upon in enforcing compliance with the State's quarantine and isolation mandate(s)

M/Guard S/Sherman to approve resolution 12-20-45 a resolution of the Council of the City of Cordova, Alaska, requesting the State of Alaska adopt specific quarantine and isolation procedures for individuals testing positive for Covid-19, to enforce such mandate(s), and to establish uniform mandates that the City may rely upon in enforcing compliance with the State's quarantine and isolation mandate(s)

Guard said he'd prefer Council discuss this later - this resolution was done at his request as part of a broader conversation.

M/Guard S/Bailer to refer this to staff.

Vote on the motion to refer: 7 yeas, 0 nays. Motion was approved.

M. Unfinished Business - none

N. New & Miscellaneous Business

21. Mayor's appointment and Council concurrence to City Boards and Commissions

M/Allison S/Bailer to concur with Mayor Koplín's appointments of the following:

Trae Lohse and *Sarah Trumblee* to the Planning Commission for terms through November 2023;

Dave Zastrow to the Parks & Rec Commission for a term through November 2023;

Mike Babic and *Max Wiese*, to the Harbor Commission for terms through November 2023;

Jim Casement, to the Historic Preservation Commission for a term through November 2023; and

Krysta Williams and *Arissa Pearson* to the Library Board for terms through November 2023.

Allison reminded the citizens that we are still looking for one for the Planning Commission. *Meyer* mentioned that Harbor Commission is only 5 so with projects coming down the line, she'd like to change Harbor to 7 members so we can add in these other strong applicants. *Bourgeois* said procedurally that is not possible to do tonight as it would require a change to City Code, but it could be done in the future. *Mayor Koplín* said that was a difficult decision for him for the Harbor Commission seats because he agrees it is nice to have a new perspective and some turnover, at the same time, he said the projects have been a long time coming and he appreciates continuity for that. *Bailer* also commented that these other applicants are certainly able to attend and participate in these meetings. *Meyer* said she does think that bringing new blood, new ideas in with big projects pending is a good practice.

Vote on the motion: 7 yeas, 0 nays. Glasen-yes; Bailer-yes; Meyer-yes; Guard-yes; Allison-yes; Schaefer-yes and Sherman-yes. Motion was approved.

22. Discussion of COVID-19 Emergency Response

Glasen said he heard from some local citizens that are not in favor of the City mask rule and he would like to hear from more people to get all perspectives heard.

23. Pending Agenda, Calendar and Elected & Appointed Officials lists

Discussions of boards and commissions and Harbor Commission specifically are to be added to the Pending Agenda - possibly expanding Harbor Commission to seven members and the ability to have lower quorums for a board or commission and even to have a range for membership (at least x and not more than y).

O. Audience Participation

Barb Jewell said she is grateful for deep conversations had tonight, she's grateful for everything the Council has done to keep the community safe over the last nine months. She thinks its very responsible to know the budget is missing some things and that they are willing to keep looking at it. Certainly, come May you will be hearing from the school board.

Mike Hicks thanked council for crunching numbers and getting creative, for looking at all the options.

Kelsey Hayden thanked Council for the hard work and time - agrees that detailed look at all the departments is smart.

Alex Russin superintendent - is hopeful that in the new year he can work with the City administration and get on the same page and be supportive of each other. He encourages Council to approve an ordinance to have the board and council meet formally twice a year.

James Burton thanked Council - these are hard things to deal with, he agrees with the budget amendment and the way it was passed tonight.

Cameron Hayden thanked Council for their solution tonight. He appreciates it.

P. Council Comments

Glasen thanked staff, *Helen* - she's in the worst seat at the table. Also thanked *Allison* for coming up with the amendment.

Schaefer thanked *Helen* for getting them through the process, thanks to those stepped up to serve on boards and commissions, thanks to *Cindy* for her years of service and congrats on retirement.

Bailer he doesn't understand the resistance to the fourth officer, everything he reads, those he talks to, there is no way to operate the police force without a fourth officer.

Sherman thanked *Helen* and staff; budget was a really difficult one. She'd like to continue discussions she'd like other positions filled too.

Guard thanked staff for helping them get this done. He has no issue with police or policing, he thinks all of our services need to be evaluated.

Allison appreciates all the comments, in writing and in person tonight. He thanked *Helen* and department heads and all the staff that worked on the budget.

Meyer it was a long evening, glad we got a budget passed, she's glad to have the fourth officer budgeted, she worries about the sustainability of our budget moving forward. School bond debt reimbursement news really saved us tonight. She really does want to revisit it.

Q. Executive Session - none

R. Adjournment

Hearing no objection *Mayor Koplín* adjourned the meeting at 11:01 pm.

Approved: January 20, 2021

Attest:



Susan Bourgeois, CMC, City Clerk

