

Mayor
John K. Handeland
Manager
Glenn Steckman
Clerk
Bryant Hammond



Nome City Council
Jerald Brown
Doug Johnson
Mark Johnson
Adam Martinson
Jennifer Reader
Meghan Sigvanna Topkok

**NOME COMMON COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2022 at 7:15 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBERS IN CITY HALL**

102 Division St. • P.O. Box 281 • Nome, Alaska 99762 • Phone (907) 443-6663 • Fax (907) 443-5345

ROLL CALL

Members Present: Jerald Brown; Scot Henderson; Mark Johnson; Sigvanna Topkok

Members Absent: Doug Johnson (excused); Adam Martinson (excused)

Also Present: John K. Handeland, Mayor; Paris Hebel, Youth Representative; Glenn Steckman, City Manager; Bryant Hammond, Clerk (telephonic); Joy Baker, Port Director (telephonic); Nickie Crowe, Finance Director (telephonic)

In the audience: Diana Haecker, Nome Nugget; Peter Loewi, Nome Nugget; Rhonda Schneider, Nome Community Center; Chuck Fagerstrom; Cole Cushman

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by C. Henderson and seconded by C. Brown to approve the agenda.

At the roll call:

Aye: Henderson; M. Johnson; Topkok; Brown

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

1. Rhonda NCC gave an update on the housing first project, noting that they'd signed an agreement with the developer, created an LLC to run the project through, are nearly complete with a funding request through AFHC. She noted that the 1.5 million award

from Murkowski's Office was very helpful in keeping the momentum going. She noted the NCC has put forward \$100,000 to the project. She let the Council know that she had plans, that were recently finalized, if anyone wanted to review them. She discussed community partners and letters of support that had already been gathered. She discussed the housing shortage in Nome and opened herself for questions.

2. Chuck Fagerstrom spoke against the housing first project, opining that Nome couldn't afford it financially or socially. He thought the new building would become a modern slum that helps individuals that don't appreciate it. He thought that it wasn't Nome's place to be a cure all. He suggested units that would fit a single mother with two children would be more appropriate. He went on to also suggest a safe place for teenagers might be better for Nome.
3. Cole Cushman, speaking as a resident, discussed the housing first project, opining that the model worked for individuals but not for communities. He noted cities up and down the west coast have actually increased homelessness through their housing first projects. He noted moving the population to another place would just bring the issues to the other place as well.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. O-22-01-01 An Extension of a Local Emergency Authorizing the Nome Common Council to Direct the City Manager Take Necessary Actions to Reduce the Impact and Spread of COVID-19 Throughout the City of Nome, **FIRST READING/DISCUSSION.**

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to advance O-22-01-01.

Discussion:

- Manager Steckman discussed the presence of the omicron variant in Nome and the recommendation of the leadership team and NSHC to approve the ordinance. He discussed the contagiousness of the variant and asked the Council to advance the ordinance so that the City would have the tools to address the emergency should it arise. He discussed the at-home test kits, saying they were available at City Hall and through the Chamber of Commerce.
- Council Member Mark Johnson asked how the home test kits worked.
- Manager Steckman discussed how they worked and how results should be reported as well as the Chamber and City's outreach. He discussed the availability of facemasks at City Hall as well.
- Council Member Mark Johnson clarified the City had no current mandates and was currently only encouraging safe practices. The ordinance would be a tool used if there was another spike in cases.
- Council Members Henderson and Mark Johnson discussed logistics in determining when mandates might be enacted. He expressed concern that Nome had been under

emergency order for two years and suggested he might be more likely to support a 90 day extension over a 6 month extension.

At the roll call:

Aye: M. Johnson; Topkok; Brown; Henderson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

B. R-22-01-01 A Resolution Allocating \$200,000 to the Nome Community Center Housing First Project.

A motion was made by C. Topkok and seconded by C. Brown to adopt R-22-01-01.

Discussion:

- Council Member Mark Johnson expressed concern over \$200,000 coming out of City general fund without a majority of the community knowing about the vote. He opined that he didn't feel confident the community support was there.
- Council Member Topkok opined that people probably supported the project, thinking that people who support things don't necessarily come down to discuss. She noted the Community Center needed an answer by tomorrow, as they were submitting the funding request either way.
- Ms. Schneider said that it was important that the City supported it, even if it wasn't financial support. She discussed a market study that NCC paid for that documented the housing shortage she discussed earlier. She discussed the letters of support garnered thus far, as well as the ongoing discussion with the AK Mental Health Trust about housing first since 2009. She discussed maintenance requirements, arguing it wouldn't be a slum and gave more history on the project.
- Manager Steckman explained the project was discussed at the December 6, 2021 Public Safety Advisory Commission meeting and garnered their full support. He discussed different aspects of the project, opining the project would provide an opportunity to get 15 individuals off the street and transitioned out of that lifestyle.
- Council Member Henderson discussed the numbers behind the project, noting that the City only had to put up 2 percent of a \$10 million project building 15 small units. Moreover, the model was theoretically self sustaining. He asked if the finished project would be paying taxes or contributing PILOT.
- Manager Steckman said he hasn't discussed the PILOT issue yet with Ms. Schneider.
- Council Member Henderson opined the City should be providing incentives for projects that address community issues such as this one. He praised NCC's track record in regards to Munaqsri.
- Ms. Schneider discussed design considerations with regards to ADA, size, the funding model, and definitions of homelessness and vulnerability.

At the roll call:

Aye: M. Johnson; Topkok; Brown; Henderson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

UTILITY MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Activity Report: December 11, 2021 - January 7, 2022.

- Assistant Manager Morton gave his verbal report highlighting testing, fuel pricing contracts, and energy production .
- He discussed the recent storm and icing it caused on the lines resulting in the worst power outage in years. He praised the line crew's adept handling of the issues.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

A. Activity Report: December 11, 2021 - January 7, 2022.

- Manager Steckman thanked the snow removal crews for their efforts over the holidays. He thanked the Mayor for sitting in for him over his vacation. He discussed upcoming events that will be bringing visitors to town and opined the City would be ready when the events began.
- He discussed the 12/13 meeting where a hold was placed on the approval of package store licenses. He noted there might be a meeting on January 18th regarding the issue if the Council wished.
- Council Member Topkok noted that she teaches during evenings, but would be available beforehand.
- Council Member Henderson discussed the rules and opined that the community should weigh in on the subject. He appreciated Manager Steckman's scheduling of a meeting. He discussed the Bethel City Council's activity surrounding alcohol issues there.
- Council Member Topkok suggested a number of other organizations that should be involved.
- The Council discussed the logistics of getting other relevant organizations involved.

CITIZEN'S COMMENTS

1. Chuck Fagerstrom noted that after hearing Rhonda Schneider's presentation, he had changed his mind and felt the Council made the right decision in approving the resolution of support for the NCC housing first project.

COUNCIL MEMBER'S COMMENTS

1. Council Member Topkok opined she was glad the Council was having a conversation about alcohol.

2. Council Member Brown noted more precipitation in December than at any other time on record. He gave kudos to the City crew for handling the snow, as well as the private contractors who assisted. He discussed garbage collection and the new ownership, staffing, and management and asked if the City had any control over the extra bag fee. Council Member Brown suggested the City discuss it with the management of Alaska Waste. He noted people were upset with being hit with extra bag fees after the company missed picking up their trash the week before.
3. Council Member Henderson recognized NPD for national law enforcement day on January 9th. He expressed appreciation for Rhonda Schneider, Chuck Fagerstrom and Cole Cushman for coming in and giving suggestions. He praised the NJUS line crew for their amazing job and admitted he depended so much on the line crew that he didn't even know if his generator had gas in it.
4. Council Member Mark Johnson thanked Rhonda Schneider, Chuck Fagerstrom and Cole Cushman for their participation in the meeting. He thanked the road crew, suggesting they were heading in the right direction. He acknowledged the request for a staff mechanic and suggested it be discussed in the budget process.

MAYOR'S COMMENTS AND REPORT

- A. Activity Report: December 11, 2021 - January 7, 2022.
 - Mayor Handeland thanked the fire crew for assisting with the fireworks on New Year's Eve, opining it lifted people's spirits.
 - He discussed the housing first project, noting it was a bite out of the apple, finally. He hoped it will work in Nome, opining it would be a good investment regardless.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- A. Discussion of Matters the Immediate Knowledge of Which Could Have Adverse Effects on City of Nome Finances.

A motion was made by C. M. Johnson and seconded by C. Henderson to enter into executive session to discuss matters the immediate knowledge of which could have adverse effects on City of Nome finances.

At the roll call:

Aye: Topkok; Brown; Henderson; M. Johnson

Nay:

Abstain:

The motion **CARRIED**.

The Council entered into executive session at 8:46 PM.

The Council came out of executive session at 9:00 PM.

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no objections, the Council adjourned at 9:00 PM.

APPROVED and **SIGNED** this 24th day of January, 2022



JERALD BROWN
Presiding Council Member

ATTEST:



BRYANT HAMMOND
Clerk