

May 21, 2020

## NECC General Meeting Minutes

In attendance via Zoom: 23 participants

Meeting called to order at 7:05pm

Board members in attendance: Liz, Rachel, Charles, Donna, T'Shalla, Bob

1. Motion to approve the agenda
  - a. Charles move; Liz seconds; agenda approved
2. Clean Up Day is Saturday, June 13
  - a. Additional details forthcoming
3. FCC meeting
  - a. Met on 5/20 by Zoom; Mayor, Assemblyperson Rivera in attendance
  - b. Margo Bellamy said there will be some form of school opening in the fall
  - c. FCC can provide a Zoom account to community councils
4. Community concerns/activities
  - a. Jim (library)
    - i. Moving towards getting staff back in
    - ii. Will be doing curbside book service
    - iii. Youth services employee beginning there
5. Legislative reports (minutes reflect, but do not confirm, comments made)
  - a. Senator Wielechowski
    - i. Constitution requires that the legislature appropriate funds. When they previously recessed, the CARES funding had not been released, and thus they did not have the opportunity to appropriate it. Via Revised Programs Legislative, the Governor submitted his plan for spending to the funding to committee. But, there were significant constitutional questions whether this was permitted. The Legislative Budget and Audit Committee expressed concerns about constitutionality. Nevertheless, the committee approved the funds, and then two days later got sued. Then, the Legislature returned to Juneau to appropriate the funds.
    - ii. \$500 million went to local communities; \$290 million for Alaska small businesses. These are grants, not loans. The Muldoon Farmers Market and/or the FCC could apply as non-profits.
    - iii. The PFD will be paid early on July 1.
    - iv. Some legislators, including himself, felt differently about how the CARES money should be spent. Meant to be spent on COVID-19 related expenses. There is a lot of money going to the business community, as opposed to businesses. He proposed to the Governor that some of the money be applied to a larger PFD, but this was rejected.

- v. Questions:
  - 1. The price of oil is going up. Do you have any predictions regarding this?  
Answer: No. Have seen some high predictions, but wary. Think \$60-70 is the likely long-term range.
- b. Representative LeDoux
  - i. Agrees with Wielechowski's description of the RPL process. As soon as the Governor came out with his proposed methods of spending the money, most folks agreed that it needed to go back to the Legislature for approval. And the Chair of the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee (Tuck) wanted to make sure the money was distributed in a constitutional manner.
  - ii. \$157 million will go to Anchorage. There is \$100 million for fisheries. Some goes to the University. But none going to individual people.
  - iii. She has been getting calls from folks worried that they won't get the early PFD due to the fact that they are on unemployment.
- c. Rep. Spohnholz
  - i. Agrees with previous descriptions this evening about the RPL process. Typically, the RPL process is pretty routine, but it was not appropriate in this context. And in a compromise, the Legislature came together to approve the funds.
  - ii. Ensured that people can't be evicted or have utilities cut off, but people are still responsible for paying their bills down the road. This raises concerns for future housing challenges. And it costs more to get people rehoused, as opposed to keeping them housed.
  - iii. The AK CARES program for small businesses is being launched May 26. DCCED and AIDEA are partnering with Credit Union 1 to run this program.
  - iv. \$50 million will also be administered by the Alaska Community Foundation to local non-profits.
  - v. They worked really hard to make it easier for people to apply for unemployment benefits. We now have 65,000+ Alaskans on unemployment (i.e., 25% unemployment of our workforce). These benefits are not a handout; it's something that people have been paying into; this money has been earned.
  - vi. Important to balance the protection of public health, and the ability of Alaskans to provide for their families.
    - 1. Question: How can small businesses who are trying to survive compete with employees are receiving \$600/week on unemployment? Answer: You make a really good point. The \$600/week comes directly from the Federal CARES act, and perhaps wasn't planned out as well as it should have been – it's not equal to wage replacement (some are getting more in unemployment than when they worked). However, this coverage only lasts through July, and if folks are offered a job and they turn it down, then it's unemployment fraud. Lining up a job for after July is important.
  - vii. Rep. Pruitt
    - 1. Most of the previous legislators have covered the key points.

2. If you know anyone who should be applying for business grants through CARES, please advise them to begin applying now. Credit Union 1 can assist, and additional banks will be able to help as well. It can be confusing, but begin now and ask for help. Documents are available online now.
  3. 50% of businesses are planning to close/have closed, so this funding is important.
  4. He reminded the Governor that the PFD could go out before October. This could provide some additional support for folks who will be ineligible for unemployment at the end of July.
  5. Would not be surprised if some PFD funding will also be distributed in October, depending upon the economic reality when the legislature reconvenes.
  6. The previous question about the price of oil is a good one, and there is a lot of uncertainty. And we may not be able to afford the reopening precautions recommended by the CDC (e.g., social distancing in schools).
  7. Please reach out if you need any assistance.
    - a. Question: How much is left in the Constitutional Budget Reserve? Answer: It was \$500 million before the pandemic and the drop in oil price. But not counting on any particular rebounds in the price of oil to tackle the challenges ahead.
- d. Assemblyperson Kennedy
- i. Driving, so defers to Dunbar and Peterson
- e. Assemblyperson Peterson
- i. \$100 million dollars are available in rental assistance; plus additional funding for local businesses (this is not from the CARES Act)
  - ii. They also put additional money to remove homeless camps along 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and Campbell Creek; although some camps are moving back in already
  - iii. They maintained the bag fee on paper bags; and did not change the ban on thin plastic bags
  - iv. East Northern Lights from Muldoon to Augustine will be closed June 4-18, with intermittent closures after that for AWWU work
- f. Assemblyperson Dunbar
- i. Additional info on the rental assistance and local business loans; the rental assistance was immediately oversubscribed, and the requests for business loans were many
  - ii. As the Muni starts to receive the state funds through CARES, the success of these early rental assistance and local business loan programs will be evaluated as a way to also distribute the state funding
  - iii. Expressed NECC's concerns about the Boundary Road construction planning, and the council will be engaged before additional work moves forward. The fire department is in support of the road work, as it could improve access.

- iv. There will be three upcoming town halls to collect additional feedback on the budget resulting from the passing of the alcohol tax
  - v. Question: As we're looking for relief for individuals and small businesses, how will we ensure that those who are eligible actually have access to the funds (those with the fewest resources have the greatest needs, but may be least likely to be able to access)?
- 6. Indigenous Placemaking Project presentation
  - a. A collaboration between several organizations
  - b. The advisory group developed six critical success factors, and engaged artists
  - c. The installation will include two Chanshtnu signs
    - i. A cedar post, and other designs consistent with park wayfinding
  - d. Will likely be placed along the creek behind the turf at the park
  - e. Have been working closely with Parks and Steve Rafuse
  - f. This project is part of a larger wayfinding initiative throughout Anchorage
  - g. Open for questions and feedback
    - i. Question: Is the sign location above the top of the embankment or down where it slopes to the creek? Answer: At the top
    - ii. Question: Can you email the presentation? Answer: Yes. Will send to Rachel.
  - h. Melissa Shaginoff (artist): These signs are important for recognizing the cultural history of Alaska. They share the names and Indigenous histories.
- 7. New business
  - a. Farmers Market (Carla)
    - i. They've put out a call for volunteers, but response has been low. They will be hosting a volunteer meeting soon, and if you want to volunteer please reach out.
    - ii. They've been researching the necessary social distancing measures, and hand sanitizer and hand washing will be onsite; likely will not have sit-down eating
    - iii. But, yes! The market is going to happen.
  - b. Parks update
    - i. Liz reported updates from Steve Rafuse
      - 1. Chanshtnu construction starts next week. AWWU construction on Boston will wrap up 3<sup>rd</sup> week of June. Apologies for the disruption.
      - 2. Optimistic that the community garden will go in this August.
      - 3. Construction and updates are occurring at playgrounds across the Municipality. You can visit the Parks and Rec page for updates; click on Project.
      - 4. Work continues on the master plan for Russian Jack; need to write it up and share with the advisory board.
      - 5. Be mindful of bears and cows this season.
  - c. CIP update (Donna)
    - i. Several people have come to the NECC with concerns
    - ii. The top priorities include: traffic calming around elementary schools, Peck Avenue pedestrian safety upgrades; road resurfacing in NE Muldoon area; trail

connectivity (Cheney Lake to Chanshtnu Muldoon park); Eastside bike trail repair

- iii. Suggestion: create a list in committee, and then send it out to the council to vote on it. Donna's concern: We need to submit prior to the next council meeting.
  - iv. Path forward: CIP meeting will be held ASAP, and the committee's recommendations will move forward (noting that this issue has been on the NECC agendas since February)
  - v. Concern to be aware of: sometimes we put items on our CIP list, not knowing that some of our recs are already funded (if we'd known, we would have spent our focus elsewhere). Can we look into what is already happening, so we can be best targeting projects?
- d. Alcohol renewals
    - i. Any objections to the Ronnie 2 application? (None)
8. Motion to approve April minutes, motioned and seconded, no objections; minutes approved
9. Committee Updates
- a. CIP: Next CIP meeting this Tuesday at 7pm (5/26)
  - b. Picnic: Postponed indefinitely
  - c. Bylaws: Committee met earlier this week, and focused on how to handle limitations created in emergencies (e.g., meetings, elections). Anyone with input, please reach out to T'Shalla. Next meeting TBA.
10. Motion to adjourn; meeting adjourned at 8:36pm