

# **UACC MINUTES**

## **November 2, 2022 Meeting**

1. **Opening:** The meeting was called to order via Zoom by Tyler Robinson at 7:05 pm. Tyler started the meeting and brought forward the October 6, 2022 Meeting minutes.
2. **Approval of Prior Months Minutes:** Al Milspaugh motioned to approve the minutes, with a second by Mike Grunst, moved to approve the October 6, 2022 Minutes. The motion to approve the Minutes was passed by unanimous consent.
3. **Approval of the Agenda:** Al motioned to approve tonight's agenda. Barbara Garner seconded. There were no objections or changes to the agenda for the November 2, 2022 meeting. The agenda was approved.
4. **Informational Reports, Introductions by Tyler Robinson:**
  - A. **Reports From Public Servants and Elected Officials**
    1. **State Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson:** The Senators and House Representatives do not have a lot of time when they are not in Juneau. Sentaor Elvi Gray-Jackson reported that during the 31<sup>st</sup> Legislature, HB 126 passed both the house and Senate, the bill was signed designating November as American Native History month. November is a time to celebrate the diverse and rich history histories of Alaska's Native cultures. The first Native American Day, according to census data, was declared by Governor of New York in 1916, but it wasn't recognized nationally until 1990 when President George H. W. Bush approved a joint resolution designated, designated the month of November as National American Indian Heritage Month. Please become educated about the cultures of our Native community. Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson's office is working towards priorities for 2023 and she would like to continue the work that she started during the 31<sup>st</sup> and 32<sup>nd</sup> legislatures. These priorities include public safety, women's rights, education, culture and healthcare subject matters. With the new redistricting boundaries, the UACC will no longer be in Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson's District. She will miss the UACC. Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson asked about answering any questions. Paul Stang thanked Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson for her service to our community. Tyler Robinson mentioned an update was sent via email and also thanked Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson for her service.
    2. **State Senator Bill Wielechowski: Dave Dunsmore reported for** Senator Bill Wielechowski. The Senator had another commitment.

Schools in Nunaka Valley, Wonder Park, and Abbott Loop will be closed and may affect the University Area. ASD is facing a 68-million-dollar budget deficit. The school closures will only save 4 million dollars. Schools are constitutionally obligated to fund schools. Gas prices have gone up and there is no justification for these gas prices to go up. There was an investigation and the prices have adjusted somewhat. One refinery in Nikiski is making gas for all of Alaska. Senator Bill Wielechowski has been monitoring the homeless situation. COVID money is drying up and more money is needed for schools and school boards. Al Milspaugh asked about reducing the State of Alaska gas tax. Dave mentioned the Alaska gas tax was not suspended. Every other state has a higher gas tax than Alaska.

3. **State Representative Ivy Spohnholz:** Ivy reported on some activities of the budget and audit committee. 10 million dollars was approved in COVID related funding for seafood processors, was omitted from earlier budget requests to the legislature. An additional remaining amount of 25 million dollars will be taken up in December. The total amount requested was 35 million dollars. Money was also approved for the State of Alaska Division of Geological and Geophysical Surveys and the Fairbanks Wellness Courts. There is a narrow amount of statutory authority to allow existing programs to accept Federal grant money in the interim between legislatures. There were discussions regarding sunset audits. Boards and commissions are short on people. These boards and commissions provide for the health, safety, and welfare of Alaskans. A lack of staffing and a high rate of vacancies within the State of Alaska departments is affecting the level of service for the boards and commissions to operate as well as the level of service to the public. The State is losing employees, and salaries have not kept up with the private sector to allow the State to attract employees. There are a lot of openings in the State of Alaska for potential employees. There is also a crisis with education within Alaska. The State has inadequately funded public education for many years. The base student allocation hasn't been increased since 2017, and during that time, inflation has increased 10 percent. This amounts to 10 percent lost in purchasing power. The Anchorage school district's experiences are very similar to what is being experienced across the state of Alaska. Fairbanks is going through its own budget problems. Unlike what our governor said recently at a debate, this is not a management issue at the local level and is just the inability of the current revenue to cover the costs and not keeping up with the actual cost of delivering those services. The base student allocation needs to be addressed.

COVID money was used as a stopgap measure in ASD and a few other communities. Adam had a question regarding ASD and Fairbanks, stemming the loss and the possibility of the State legislature plugging the 674 million dollars hole.

Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson spoke up and mentioned the Assembly approves the ASD budget in March, hopefully the State legislature will make some changes early in the legislative session that will help the assembly in making your decision and helping the schools deal with this budget shortfall.

Back to Representative Ivy Spohnholz, schools state-wide are overburdened, large class sizes, schools have exceed capacity and resources. The six school closures amounted to only 4 million dollars in cost savings. Potential changes include larger class sizes which will lead to poor student outcomes. Public input through letter writing campaigns, etc. will be needed to make changes to the school funding process. Representative Andi Story had a couple of bills supporting school funding. It's going to take community activism across the State of Alaska, Anchorage and Fairbanks will have to band together. Tyler chimed in and moved to the next report from Representative Josephson's office.

4. **State Representative Andy Josephson:** Anneliese Roberts reported for Andy Josephson, voice was raspy. Representative Josephson has been campaigning hard, trying to get reelected to make it back to Juneau for the next session. Representative Josephson attended the standard reform health policy where he discussed the competency bill, specifically reform competency process and addressing problems with API and reducing the probability that a violent offenders released into the community in the same mental state in which they entered the system. Also eliminating a wait list for intellectually and developmentally disabled individuals waiting for home and community-based service services. The \$5,000 lease Federal Authority was approved to support veterans in Pioneer Homes in Palmer. A few of the bills Andy is working on include the discovery bill for construction, the competency bill, a red flag law, and peer-to-peer counseling for public safety. The public safety bill is near and dear to Representative Josephson's heart, and he is hoping this gets through. Hopefully Representative Josephson makes it back to Juneau. If he does, then some of these bills can gain traction and be pushed through. Andy will be attending next month's meeting to say final farewell and give any additional updates. Andy thanks us for our time and for being a good community council.

Tyler Robinson thanked Annelise for the report, Representative Andy

Josephson's service and the kind words.

5. **Mayor's office---**No representative in attendance in-person or via phone, and no written report was provided.
6. **Assembly Member Felix Rivera:** Felix first reported on homelessness. Shelters are holding at around 75% capacity. The emergency shelters are funded through the end of the year. Need money from January to April. Three different housing projects are in the works, two are partnerships with Rasmussen, and one project is the Golden Lion. Hopefully the Golden Lion project moves forward. A Use Determination was recently completed, time to move ahead with the next steps for the Golden Lion, possibly two to three months. Two hotels in Spenard are being looked at to convert to housing. The 4.9-million-dollar contract change order for the Homeless Navigation Center was voted down by the assembly.  
The MOA may go into arbitration regarding APD body cameras and the related policy. Software and hardware should be ready to go for the body cameras as soon as an agreement is reached with APD. Possible 6–9-month delay if this goes through arbitration.
7. **Assembly Member Forrest Dunbar:** Forrest mentioned the budget was moving along, and several work sessions for the Anchorage Budget were going to happen. Possibly pass the budget November 22, or the first meeting in December. There will be amendments to the budget. This is potentially the largest budget in history, 20 million larger than last year and it is a Continuation budget. Increases to deal with inflationary costs. The largest change will involve the mobile crisis team. Some good news. The fire department was reimbursed from the State of Alaska for ambulance services, 19 million dollars, colorless money, can be used for anything. May purchase APD headquarters in downtown Anchorage. A funding measure was passed, moved funds from ARPA to general fund for doubling the spruce bark beetle remediation program. Funds were also approved for repairing earthquake damage to the Sullivan Arena. Funding was allocated for increased fuel costs and for a long-range transportation plan. The LRTP was last updated in 2005. Tyler Robinson introduced Assembly Member Meg Zalatel as the next speaker.
8. **Assembly Member Meg Zalatel:** Meg reported that a million dollars was put towards long range transportation planning. Seems to be different priorities for transportation. MTP diverged from community plans and values. LRTP will be very comprehensive, will consider other plans, multi-modal transportation systems, align with community values. Land use and transportation will be looked at. Corridor studies will also be considered in the LRTP.

Meg mentioned a few details regarding the mobile crisis unit. The plan is to run the Mobile Crisis 24-7, field calls to appropriate response unit, police, fire dept. etc. Funding was shifted to APD and supported by personnel from the fire and police departments. Fairbanks has an excellent Mobile Crisis Team and hopefully Anchorage can be set up similarly with different levels of response appropriate to the crisis. Currently there is policy agreement among the different departments with a probable start date in January for offering 24-7 mobile crisis services.

Tyler Robinson mentioned the Homeless Shelter status and introduced Assembly Member Pete Peterson as the next speaker.

- 9. Assembly Member Pete Peterson:** Pete Peterson participated in the site visit to the Navigation Center, there was some work done. Someone gave them the go ahead without 95% plans or Assembly authorization. Spoke about the navigation center. Perhaps purchase a few more hotels so the new navigation center is not needed. There is a new library director, Virginia McClure, finally hit a homerun with this new director! Anchorage is contributing the maximum amount for the matching funds from the state for education. The State of Ak has statutory limits on local funding for education.

Tyler Robinson introduced UAA Member Kim Mahoney as the next speaker.

- 10. School Board Representative:** Not present

- 11. UAA Representative Kim Mahoney:** Kim reported that there will be volleyball this weekend at UAA! Three CIP priorities: Promotions and growth for health and workforce demand; Alaska Leaders Archive, reinvestment in Consortium library highlights leaders in history and policy makers growing Alaska Leaders collection, possible federal funding available. Also Growing the Seawolf hockey program. Another project, not exactly high priority, Adjacent to UAA. Urban forest idea or Conservation project, Situated between UAA drive, near King Tech. The land is mostly owned by the MOA Parks Department, small portion owned by UAA. One idea is an urban forest with trails, in the process of seeking other ideas. Looking for volunteers. Paul Stang, commented on sending a volunteer from UACC for this project.

Tyler Robinson introduced George Martinez.

- 12. George Martinez, Northeast Community Council reported.**

George is the President of the Northeast Community Council. He is very appreciative of all the work the Community Councils do. George also mentioned that he will be running for East Anchorage Assembly District Five this coming spring. Pete Petersen is term limited.

Northeast Community Council is meeting in person at Centennial Village with a hybrid aspect.

## **5. New Business:**

- A. **Elections:** Tyler Robinson mentioned Steve Zemsky is stepping down as secretary from the University Area Community Council. A new secretary will be needed. Plan is to have December meeting nominations and elections at the January UACC meeting. Looking for Board Members to help run the elections. Board member, Annie Collie did this in the past. Annie offered to help again. Looking for anyone that might be interested in participating on the executive board.
- B. **Girdwood Cemetery:** Julie Raymond-Yakoubian lives in Girdwood and is part of the Girdwood Cemetery Committee. Plan is to bond in the next election for the creation of a new cemetery in Girdwood, a new cemetery in Eagle River, and improvements to the existing Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery. This will be a citywide bond. Julie is asking for a letter of support/resolution for this bond. This would be an areawide bond as opposed to just Girdwood. A lot of planning has been completed for this project. Eagle River has been working on a cemetery as well. A Park bond had failed years ago that was specific to cemetery improvements. The new cemeteries will accommodate a variety of types of burial, traditional, columbarium, etc. Locations have been identified on HLB land.
- C. Russian Jack Bike trail project. Tyler worked on this. If this is built, people will show up. There is a definite need for more single-track trails. When trails were being developed, NE anchorage was not included. The Russian Jack master will need to be amended for bike trails to be designed, funded, and built. The master plan of the trail and aerial photo of area was shown on screen via Zoom. Representative Ivy Spohnholz is supportive of the trails at Russian Jack park. Mike Grunst mentioned something about South Anchorage bike park not being built. Mike volunteered to help build the trail at Russian Jack Park. Tyler followed up and moved to the next item on the agenda.
- D. Website stuff...Tyler talked about this for a while. Nominated Susan Klein to be the UACC webmaster. There was a committee at one time, Susan is willing to work with this committee. Susan should be the lead person on this.

## **6. UACC Board Reports**

- A. **P&Z Committee:** Mark Fink. Nothing significant to report.
- B. **P&R Committee:** Steven Callaghan. Nothing significant to report
- C. **FCC:** Al Milspaugh reported nothing significant this month.

**D. Safety:** Al Milspaugh reported on cold weather. Make sure children are wearing heavy jackets when in a cold car. Prepare by having extra heavy coats in the car in the event of a breakdown.

## **7. Old Business:**

**A. Navigation Center Advisory Committee:** Tyler mentioned the resolution regarding the advisory committee on the navigation center. No information has been forthcoming from the Mayor's Office or other people involved in the project. Ian Blake mentioned the project is stalled. A conversation has been started primarily via email.

## **8. Public comments-Open Dialog**

A. New members were to the UACC Meeting.

B. Al Milspaugh mentioned library book sale, November 4-6.

C. Barbara Garner mentioned her diesel fume project and she is planning to continue working on this project. Barbara has been in contact with the Anchorage School District representative.

Mike Grunst mentioned the electric buses would not work. ASD uses the school buses all day. Batteries will not last. The number of buses would have to be doubled. Trying to figure out a way to make it work. Hydrogen may be a feasible alternative.

Tyler mentioned the possibility of relocating the bus barn and brought up the new mushing facility on MLK Boulevard as an example of a new use of land. Perhaps it is time to re-imagine the plan for this area of town.

Assembly Member Forrest Dunbar mentioned the land swap deal with mushers. No set plan for Tudor Elmore area. It is possible to electrify buses. The technology is available. Not aware of any plans for that area, aside from the land swap with mushers. Forrest mentioned the Chanshtnu Park in Muldoon was the result of a community reimagining project.

D. Ian Blake mentioned the November 20, book sale/fundraiser at Barnes and Noble Bookstore with 10 percent of the proceeds going to the Collegegate Elementary School. There will be a way to participate in the fundraiser online as well.

E. Steven Callaghan inquired about the navigation center site. Felix Rivera and Pete Petersen mentioned the site visit and described his observations.

F. George Martinez mentioned a school that might be closed or possibly repurposed. Mike Grunst responded. All about opportunities. Barbara mentioned something about past teaching experience. She is discouraged about schools closing and programs disappearing. Tyler spoke positively about the possible re-purposing of a school that he was involved with.

8. **Adjournment:** Tyler Robinson called for a motion to adjourn. Paul Stang motioned for a meeting adjournment. The motion was seconded by Al Milspaugh. The next meeting will be held via Zoom or in-person, to be determined, on *Wednesday, December 7, 2022.*

***Signed***

Tyler Robinson, UACC President

Atch: UACC Attendance Roster



<b>Attendance Roster</b>	
<i><b>Name</b></i>	<i><b>Affiliation</b></i>
Al Milspaugh	Member, Host, Vice President
Barbara Garner	Member
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson	Visitor, Presenter
Adam Lees	Member
Assembly Member Pete Petersen	Visitor, Presenter
Tyler Robinson	Member, President
Paul Stang	Member, Past President
David Dunsmore for Sen Wielichowski	Visitor, Presenter
Mark Fink	Member, FCC Alternate Delegate
Susan Klein	Member
Mike Grunst	Member
Susan Share	Member
Representative Ivy Spohnholz	Member, Presenter
Mariah Seater	Member
Kim Mahoney	Member, Presenter
Andrew Gray	Visitor
Anneliese Roberts for Rep. Josephson	Visitor, Presenter
Ian Blake	Member
Assembly Member Felix Rivera	Visitor, Presenter
Mary LuHarle	Member
George Martinez	Visitor, Presenter
Assembly Member Forrest Dunbar	Visitor, Presenter
Assembly Member Meg Zalatel	Visitor, Presenter
Maya Narang, Staff for Rep Spohnholz	Visitor
Besse Odom-Virgil	Member
Annie Collie	Member, At-Large Board Member
Bryan Silva	Visitor
Julie Raymond-Yakoubian	Visitor, Presenter
Representative Geran Tarr	Visitor