

**Mid-Town Community Council (MTCC) General Meeting Minutes**  
**Meeting located at 3000 C Street –First Floor Conference Room**  
**Wednesday; November 8, 2023**  
**12:00 Noon to 1:30 PM**

**Sign in and Call to Order** – Kris Stoechner President – All MTCC businesses, residents, land owners and guests are welcome to participate and bring ideas forward to this meeting.

Kris Stoechner called the meeting to order at 12:00 pm.

MTCC Officers and Board Members in Attendance:

Kris Stoechner, President  
Ric Davidge, Vice President  
Megan Debenham, Secretary  
Mike Mason, Board Member  
Greg McDonald, Board Member  
Bill Borchardt, Board Member  
Brian Swartzentruber, Board Member  
Rosemary Borchardt, Board Member

**Approval of Minutes:** 1 Minute

Greg moved and Rosemary seconded that the minutes from October 11, 2023 be approved. The vote to approve was unanimous.

**Treasurer's Report** – Jason Bergerson - Treasurer – 1 Minute

Jason was unable to attend.

**Approval of Agenda:** 1 Minute

Greg moved and Ric seconded that the agenda be approved. The vote to approve was unanimous.

**Assembly – Felix Rivera, Meg Zaletel, Chris Constant, Daniel Volland** – Update on relevant subjects - 6 Minutes

Felix Rivera:

- a. Body worn cameras- APD received the order. Beginning use Nov 13. Assembly passed a resolution requesting the end date, more public education on camera use, and a policy change around automatic release of footage.
- b. Homelessness- SWS has 60 beds available as of two nights ago. 90 staying there. Administration looking to add 50 beds to SWS and warming facilities elsewhere. Administration to determine true need, create a plan, and present to Assembly.
- c. Housing Action Strategic Plan- Comments by December 4. Anchoragehousingaction.org  
Assembly to vote December 5. Copies of the strategic plan were provided at the meeting.

Al- How many homeless this week? What does it cost the city for each homeless individual?

Felix- Updated data on ACEH website. Can also ask Alexis when she arrives.

Al- How many police officers expected to retire this year?

Ric- helpful to see John Weddleton's solution. 60% of homeless receive paycheck every month.

Felix- A lot of housing work done through hotel conversions by Anchorage Affordable Housing and Land Trust. Using HUD rent, SRO is \$800/month.

Meg Zaletel:

- a. Budget vote Nov 21- continue public testimony about operating, capital, improvement, enterprise and utility budgets. 30 amendments to discuss. Amendments center on priorities- workforce retention and recruitment, snow removal, housing, Anchorage safety patrol rebid (cost escalation), mobile crisis and intervention teams. Anna Brawley and Meg Zaletel are chairs of budget committee. Possibly see mayor's version before November 21. CIP budget is partly from bonds, and doesn't have to be solidified until Jan.
- b. Enterprise and Utility oversight committee meeting a week from Thursday. Focus on costs of cargo docks at port. Put out RFP beginning of 2024, construction summer 2025.

Melinda Gant on Zoom- no ability to change name or send chat

Mike Mason- the Zoom security is intentional

#### **Committees:**

**AMATS** -Meg Zaletel and Jason Bergerson – 2 Minutes

Jason was unable to attend.

**Marijuana and Alcohol** – Aqua Vitae - Brian Swartzentruber & Rosemary Borchardt – 2 minutes

Rosemary- Company on 48<sup>th</sup> is expanding and changing ownership. Application is complete.

Comment period is starting. Hope they will be at our meeting in December. Establish MOU with them.

Aqua Vitae is transfer of package store license on Benson. Still in bureaucracy. Waiting for completion of application.

**Midtown District Plan & BID** – Greg McDonald & Mike Mason – 4 Minutes

Greg- Advisory committee is working with ACDA on the survey to be sent to the MTCC mailing list. BID survey needs to be completed before they can move forward with the district plan.

Mike- very preliminary stages. Survey would help determine which direction any proposed BID would take.

Bill- any estimate on cost?

Mike- proposal not made yet. What and how much would be determined by MT business owners.

**Transit Center Study Update** – Jason Bergerson – 3 minutes

Jason was unable to attend.

**Ordinance 2023-104- Police Substation & Executive Letter**- Kris Stoechner– 2 minutes

Kris wrote an executive letter to Assembly. The substation was approved last night. First step by MT to increase police presence. FNB providing location for \$10/year. Symbolic because of cooperation among business, CC, police, and Assembly.

**Other:**

**Vote on Resolution MTCC 2023-05 Zoning change** for National Archives Property – 5 Minutes

Ric moved and Greg seconded that Resolution 2023-05 be passed. The Resolution passed unanimously.

**Presenters:**

**Mayor's Office** – Trista Espe or Michelle Hodel - 5 Minutes

Michelle Hodel:

- a. Snow removal page on MOA website. Muni.org > street maintenance. Map of State vs. City roads, updated in real time. Worked with downtown business owners to snow blow their walks into the street prior to trucks coming through. Several new drivers this year.
- b. SWS shelter- opened last week. 90 people as of yesterday. Feedback is that homeless people don't really want to use congregate shelter. However, hotel rooms aren't sustainable. Expensive and incentivize being homeless. SF and Seattle examples.
- c. AHD reservation hotline for those seeking shelter.
- d. Housing Action Week- pleased with the efforts of the Assembly.
- e. Methane Gas Settlement Agreement between MOA and Eklutna will bring 1100 housing units to Eagle River. Military families have been living in hotel rooms because they can't find housing.
- f. Cook inlet energy- natural gas concerns. State may have to start importing. CI has enough NG, but we need companies to produce it. Administration will continue to collaborate with utilities.

Al- recommend offering a one-year extension to police officers for \$10,000. More time to recruit.

Kris- negotiating going on between Admin and APD. SB 88 will affect retirement. Cathy Giessel coming next month. Police response time right now up to 8 hours.

Rosemary- how many police officers are retiring?

Michelle- can find out.

Rosemary- is there an academy right now? How many attending?

Felix- always an academy going on. Sometimes they're small. Graduation November 30. Don't know how many.

**School Board** – Kelly Lessens – 4 Minutes

Kelly Lessens via Zoom:

- a. Pay attention to weather tomorrow
- b. School board met yesterday and will meet November 21<sup>st</sup>
- c. April 2024 bond proposal (more than \$1 billion maintenance backlog)
- d. State hasn't increased BSA since 2016
- e. Estimated \$95 million structural deficit for next year's budget. Doesn't include rolling back PTR (pupil to teacher ratio), labor contracts that need to be settled, inflation, etc. Could close the gap by:
  - Spending \$42 million of fund balance (savings and vacancies)
  - All options on the table. PTR increases, cutting programs, cut 650 positions district-wide
  - Balanced budget by February 20 meeting

Rosemary- how does the school board track the number of kids reading at level?

Kelly- ASD maintains data dashboard online. State hasn't released the results of its assessments for 2023. 2022 Star data: ASD outperforms all other districts in state. 25% of 3<sup>rd</sup> graders are proficient. Cut scores may not be accurate.

**Legislators** - Senator Gray-Jackson, House Representative Alyse Galvin & Andy Josephson – 5 Minutes Each

Besse Odom, Chief of Staff- Senator in Sitka. Summarized notes that are included with handouts from the meeting.

Andy Josephson- Meeting on FERC appeal, Audit concerning public employees (JANUS), Chugach Electric about green energy and more natural gas, Airport Northlink site, GCI tour of base camp, Met with Dr. Wolf and API concerning commitment of people that are threat to themselves and others, Manh Choh Mine, UAA homecoming, AFN, Water quality in Cook Inlet, Pensions, Hilcorp oil fields tour, North Dakota carbon capture and storage, Vic Fischer memorial, Working on 10 bills and resolutions

Alyse Galvin- will send information in her newsletter: Alaska Miner's Association, Alaska National Guard could possibly do a project in MT for training, Women in Government in TX (health care, workforce development, innovations in energy), SNAP access issues, Her office is hiring.

Behavioral road map for youth: 5-year plan for working with providers to ensure that youth receive care. Post COVID high degree of youth with suicide ideation. More than 40%.

Ric- Federal Express effect on airport

Mike- BSA hasn't been increased since 2016. CPI increased 30% over that time. Governor and legislature need to act and increase BSA.

AG- minority caucus has written a letter to the governor asking for an increase in the BSA. Government is not doing its constitutional duty of funding education.

**Alexis Johnson** – Homeless Coordinator for Anchorage – 20 Minutes

a. Emailed Chief Kerle- only one APD retiree this year

b. ECWS

- 274 beds at Aviator filled (non-congregate)
- 100 beds at Alex filled (non-congregate)
- SWS- 150 capacity (congregate) 90 clients as of last night. Likely more people tonight. Slow to fill because location is far from downtown where services are. Clients prefer non-congregate. Hardcore clients refuse shelter.

c. Abatements

- 3<sup>rd</sup> and Ingra
- Chanshtnu
- Valley Street
- Williwaw
- Not abating Davis. Requesting move to north side starting Friday for snow storage
- No other pending abatements

Kris- Cuddy has no outhouses. Fencing not adequate to protect businesses in area.

Alexis- Porta-potty contractor cannot ensure quality and safety during the winter. Will bring a healthy spaces crew to look at fencing

Ric- Alexis is the best person working on the homeless issue.

Alexis- 907-343-9841 cell phone number

- **Ak Smoke and Vape** – Jeffrey Benkert – MOU - 4 Minutes  
Greg moved and Ric seconded to accept the AK Smoke and Vape MOU. MOU was accepted unanimously.

- **District 1 Call to Action** – Kris – Vote on Resolution – 5 minutes  
Kris- Asking that the Assembly and Mayor work together now to put together a plan for next spring. 11 community councils contributed to the Call to Action.

Ric moved and Greg seconded that the Call to Action be approved by the MTCC. Call to Action was approved unanimously.

- **MTCC Strategic Plan** – Kris Stoechner, Mike Mason and Greg McDonald– 7 minutes – Vote to endorse  
Kris- Situation (crime, destruction, theft, vandalism) not sustainable in MT. Group met to come up with action items to improve the situation.  
Mike Mason- brainstorming process and then priorities. Actionable steps.

The MTCC Strategic Plan was unanimously approved.

### **New Business**

Bill Popp- running for mayor

Downtown Partnership collects .1 mil property tax, \$11 million for their district

Melinda- thank you for participating in BID study. Going out in next couple of days. Advisory committee will meet again in December and January. Information can be found on ACDA.net projects page.

Rosemary- next meeting is December 13

Ric moved and Mike seconded that the meeting be adjourned. Motion to adjourn passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 1:18 pm.

### **On Zoom:**

Melinda Gant- ACDA

Elizabeth Nicolai- Library

Besse Odom (Sen EGJ)

Meg Zaletel

Kelly Lessens

Lindsey Hajduk

Kenny Petersen

Alyse Galvin

Jamieann Bell

Krista Dennison