



Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly
Special Meeting Minutes - Teleconference
Friday, January 17, 2020 – 9:00 A.M.
Assembly Chambers – Kotzebue, AK

CALL TO ORDER

Vice President Lincoln Carr called meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Member Cleveland provided invocation.

SAFETY MOMENT

Mayor Nelson mentioned there is water surrounding Kotzebue and possibly area that have running streams; be cautious. Still working on trail stalking, difficult to recruit; regular stalking people have been sick.

ROLL CALL/MEMBER EXCUSAL

Assembly Members present at the time of roll call:

Elmer Armstrong Jr.	Kirk Oviok Jr.	Delore Barr	Austin Swan Sr.
Sandy Shroyer Beaver	Hannah Loon (9:20)	Reggie Joule III	Miles Cleveland Sr.
Dood Lincoln Carr	Nathan Hadley Jr.		

Introduction of Staff and Guests

Lucy Nelson	Aucha Kameroff	Siikauraq Whiting	Nathan Kotch
Paula Octuck	Jaime Schaeffer	Helena Hildreth	Charlie Gregg
Matt Mead	Angie Sturm	Casey	Stella Atoruk

Excused Walter Sampson

A quorum was present to conduct business. Member Swan motion to excuse Member Sampson, seconded by Member Armstrong; motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda presented for approval with no changes. Mayor Nelson had no changes although have emailed an update from Legislative Affairs. Member Armstrong request to add NACO under other business.

Member Shroyer Beaver motioned to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Member Armstrong. Motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

OTHER BUSINESS

Borough Insurance Options Review, Mayor Nelson provided a presentation of insurance options along with timeline correspondence. Vice President Carr asked if School District is subject to same increase as Borough? Is that legal? Even if we join or not, they pay that rate? Mrs. Sturm mentioned when reference employees that it encompasses Assembly as well.

Mayor Nelson mentioned we are unique organization which covers employee, spouse and children without any deductions. Vice President Lincoln Carr asked if the families that don't have children although tallied towards them. Member Loon asked about Alaska Municipal League covering insurance for Borough?

Mayor Nelson asked Casey with Risk Management about picking different health providers; would we be able to pick options. Vice President Carr asked Legal Mead if it's legal to change the health insurance once hired, if they must pay now compared to when hired. Would School District have to cover the difference if we pull out? Member Armstrong asked what if Borough gets our own Meritain?

Mr. Casey suggest Administration talk with Craig and Diana regarding Meritain representative who is Jennifer Lind; possibly talk about benefits and plans to breakdown the admin take. Mayor Nelson stated Borough will pay the increased rate until this body decides.

Member Shroyer Beaver asked about employee input, very rare organization pay hundred percent; possibly pay a minimal deductible although an incentive to work for Borough. Member Swan asked if it's budgeted and what is the timeframe. Member Loon reminded everyone that BIA helps a lot; cautious because that rate is expensive although need to watch budget closely.

Member Cleveland asked if this can wait until the Retreat next month to discuss? Member Armstrong suggests gathering information to be in a self-insured plan. Vice President Carr asked what about Public Safety? Are they under our umbrella? Would affect them? Member Armstrong recommending employees submitting their input before deciding.

Mrs. Sturm summarized insurance analysis and comparison to FY20 established budget. Mayor Nelson mentioned the meeting fee have been ACH deposited, if not then you've received a check.

Siikauraq mentioned her whole adult life she had to pay as an employee to cover, and willing to pay. Families are different by size and needs.

Mr. Kotch provided a different perspective; think it may have been mentioned earlier that Borough is unique. Only organization he has worked that pays 100% although other organizations have other benefits. Hard decisions of having employees deduct or not; out of pocket deductible is the question. Think about your employees, thank you.

Vice President Carr reminded everyone of making attractive benefits to recruit possibly five to ten years ago. When she ran for office she learned of the insurance although feel abused by Maniilaq. Member Shroyer Beaver remind all to get best health care for your families; rare to have full coverage at no cost and never know when it is needed. For herself she sees a deductible, think long term of what our employees seek.

Member Cleveland is grateful for insurance, notice with it gets treated well. Thank you to Borough to have coverage. Member Oviok is thankful for insurance for glasses and for dental. Legal Mead mentioned that AML does a survey of whom all is covered throughout

the State. Member Armstrong is thankful to have insurance, when his son gotten sick it had covered a lot; don't want to sell anyone short.

Member Swan asked about his dependent on his coverage, what is the age limit because he just turned 21. Also, some of them are on fixed income and need to think of that. Vice President Carr echo comments, with insurance you receive good coverage.

Member Cleveland asked if temporary hires; suggest Search & Rescue could be hired to have them covered while transporting the vehicles. Are they insured under the policy? He asked because his Son came to pick up a snow machine although got injured on the way up picking up a snow machine for Search & Rescue.

Member Oviok mentioned he had the same question, if the Search & Rescue Presidents are covered under the insurance too?

Mayor Nelson remind the Assembly that there are big ticket items for the FY21 budget which will be discussed at the Retreat. Really appreciate coverage currently have and the Assembly's consideration to continue as is. In February will submit a budget amendment to reflect this amount.

Vice President Carr asked Mayor Nelson if there will be any deductions that start or just as is; that is everyone's question. *President Hadley suggest having recess until Meritain representative is available for questions or comments. Member Oviok asked what he would need to do to enroll his family.*

Member Joule asked how much of an increase is Borough looking at? As an Assembly member he doesn't mind, have been paying out of pocket the past for family. Looking forward to help offset cost of insurance.

Mrs. Sturm encourage hiring an independent consultant to analyze our coverage and compare to like organization in Alaska; in the climate we are in and seventeen percent is a lot going to insurance. Reminder of public funds. Legal Mead echo comments, incredible increase the past two years, something to consider.

Member Loon stated this is public monies, there are other needs to consider as a body for less fortunate; public safety and public services as State have budget cuts. We are charged. *Member Cleveland suggest a good hire package for VPSO to retain.*

Mayor Nelson stated the insurance will remain the same until Meritain answer on rate and consultant to compare to other peers in Region; evaluate rate with options. *Look forward to deciding next month, will be submitting a budget amendment to reflect the increase.*

Vice President Carr asked Mayor Nelson about the discussion with School District as stated during the joint meeting. *Member Barr asked if there are any restrictions to pull out of the plan.*

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Mrs. Kameroff mentioned each village fire chief have a chimney brush that the residence can obtain to clean their chimney.

ASSEMBLY COMMENTS

Member Loon thank Mayor and Assembly for insurance, thank staff for work. Look forward to cost analysis to make decisions.

Member Joule no comment.

Member Shroyer Beaver mentioned she had requested through Administration to help residents with woodstove cleaning. Residence need to be educated and they should know who to contact.

Member Cleveland thank you, good meeting.

President Hadley look forward to February for regular meeting, Retreat after. Also, AML Committee to Juneau and possibly lobby trip which is being discussed with Wendy.

Member Barr echo Member Loon's comments appreciate staff's work. Look forward to results to make an informed decision moving forward, good meeting.

Member Swan good meeting, something to look forward to work on; think of our people too.

Member Oviok thank Mayor and Madam Chair, luckily looked at email could have missed the meeting. Possibly text and let him know.

Mrs. Sturm thank Assembly for listening, know it's overwhelming along with emotional to impact everyone. Appreciate looking at the whole picture as public officials.

Vice President Lincoln Carr sends condolences to President Hadley, thinking of you all. And to Village of Selawik; pray for the families that lost loved ones. Acknowledge those that are grieving, reach out. She likes the next step and glad didn't stop suddenly. Asked Mayor if results will be emailed or next meeting?

MAYORS COMMENTS

Mayor Nelson thank Legal Mead and Mrs. Sturm for working on this presentation, tough decisions to make. Always ensure we are protecting public service and how monies are spent. Looking at other organizations the spouse and dependents are not covered, another thing to keep in mind. Every budget needs to be thought through, tough decisions ahead of us. Thank you for attending. Thank you, staff.

Vice President Carr thank Mayor and staff for meeting, thank Assembly and those that called in. Will hear at next meeting regarding insurance. Those of you attending AML in Juneau contact the Clerk's office. Member Armstrong wanted to discuss NACO although he stepped away.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Shroyer Beaver motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Loon to adjourn at 11:04 A.M.

