



Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, February 27, 2024 – 9:00 A.M.
Assembly Chambers – Kotzebue, AK

CALL TO ORDER

President Hadley called the meeting to order at 9:00 A.M.

INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE

Member Swan provided an invocation.

SAFETY MOMENT

Member Armstrong mentioned weather cooling off, dress warmly; have appropriate gear when traveling with snow machine. Let someone know your plans. Thank you.

Member McConnell reminder of life safety, particularly fire safety; enlightened of devastating fire in Noorvik recently; encourage everyone make sure smoke detectors are operating. Borough just purchased ten-year batteries in them. Also, caution of boarded up windows is a death sentence; he calls on all the major organizations if we have windows in storage, please give to those that need.

ROLL CALL/MEMBER EXCUSAL

Assembly Members present at the time of roll call:

Austin Swan Sr.	Dood Lincoln Carr	Walter Sampson	Craig McConnell
Miles Cleveland Sr.	Derek Haviland-Lie	Delores Barr	Reid Magdanz
Elmer Armstrong Jr.	Nathan Hadley Jr.		

Excused

Raven Sheldon

Introduction of Staff and Guests

Dickie Moto Sr.	Clara Jones	Angie Sturm	Fritz Westlake
Noah Naylor	Matt Mead	Stella Snyder	Chris Hatch
Ingemar Mathiasson	Josephine Howarth	Margaret Hansen	Paulette Schuerch
Hiram Walker	Stella Atoruk		

A quorum is present to conduct business. Member Barr motion to excuse Member Sheldon, seconded by Member Lincoln Carr; motion passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda presented for approval for February 27, 2024. Member Armstrong requests to add Arctic Encounters under other business for discussion. Member McConnell requested to add update discussion on AHFC Housing Grant and Northern Contractors who is doing the Elder repair maintenance. Member Lincoln Carr stated she requested through Mayor this morning and update of Covid numbers.

Member Lincoln Carr motioned to approve as amended; Member Armstrong seconded; passed unanimously by roll call vote.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

January 23, 2024, minutes presented for approval.

Vice President Sampson motion to approve, seconded by Member Magdanz; passed unanimously by roll call vote.

COMMUNICATION AND APPEARANCE

None presented.

BOARDS, COMMISSIONS & COMMITTEES

Budget, Audit & Finance BAF Chair Magdanz provided a summary of the previous day. If any of the listening audience would like to hear a discussion, you're welcome to attend or call in on those meetings which are on Monday afternoon if you'd like to hear more. **Financial Report** Borough Treasurer Sturm sends condolences to Pt. Hope and Noorvik; been a touch month. She provided a summary of the financial ending January 31, 2024. Member McConnell thank Treasurer Sturm for her good meaningful report. Reminder to all, if the Mine closes tomorrow as it stands, we'd have enough in savings for two years of operations unless we make cuts; select the most important services and extend.

The Finance Treasurer mentioned VIF had their meeting, just learned that they will receive minimum amount per agreement this year. Borough is preparing the FY25 budget, top of discussion is how are we going to make cuts knowing our economic future.

Member Lincoln Carr request Administration when you have further discussion of another possible review of the budget; to send them an email so they can have an idea of their priorities that they would like to see. Member McConnell asked about VIF savings of \$41M, what do we typically spend in a year on that program. Possibly seven years of sustainability at the current level.

President Hadley mentioned we have some news from Energy Coordinator Mathiasson. *Mr. Mathiasson called in from the tribal conference in San Diego; happy to announce that OCED is allowing \$55M grant to build all the solar arrays and heat pumps in the region. Together with Tanana Chiefs they will be doing a similar project. This will fully build the solar arrays and heat pumps for all communities except Kotzebue, in kind with NANA. Hopefully get the agreement by the next meeting.*

Member Magdanz congratulates everyone involved, federal monies coming into the region. He mentioned that this award would fund a large battery for KEA, which can carry the whole town of Kotzebue for a period. Member Lincoln Carr echo comments, hope the listening audience understands that we are seeking grants. Greatly appreciated. President Hadley echo comments, good news.

Member McConnell requested to clarify a few things; the heat pumps will offset how many gallons? This is great, a four-year project and we need to keep the monies in the area. The transmission line from Shungnak to Kobuk; will it include Shungnak to Ambler? This grant will pay for that? The Shungnak to Ambler?

PUBLIC HEARING, ENACTMENT OF ORDINANCES & EMERGENCY ORDINANCES

1. **Ordinance 24-01** *an ordinance of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a memorandum of agreement with the Alaska Municipal League to conduct the Alaska Energyshed Project, and for related purposes.*

Mayor Moto summarized Ordinance 24-01, recommend do pass. Member Magdanz encourages Administration as you work with the new organization, ensuring that we don't get too demonstratey and keep them going.

Member Armstrong motion to enact Ordinance 24-01, seconded by Member Cleveland; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

2. **Ordinance 24-02** *an ordinance of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a professional services agreement with Deerstone Consulting, LLC for support services for the Selawik Rural Energy Pilot Program, and for related purposes.*

Public Services Director Jones summarized Ordinance 24-02, recommend do pass.

Member Armstrong motion to enact Ordinance 24-02, seconded by Member Magdanz; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

3. **Ordinance 24-03** *an ordinance of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a professional services agreement with Deerstone Consulting, LLC for support services for the Regional Performance Optimization Program, and for related purposes.*

Community and Economic Development Director Westlake summarized Ordinance 24-03, recommend do pass.

Member Armstrong motion to enact Ordinance 24-03, seconded by Vice President Sampson; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

4. **Ordinance 24-04** *an ordinance of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a professional services agreement with KUNA Engineering to develop Climate Action Plans for Borough Tribes, and for related purposes.*

Community and Economic Development Director Westlake summarized Ordinance 24-04, recommend do pass.

Member Armstrong motion to enact Ordinance 24-04, seconded by Member Magdanz; motion passed by unanimously by roll call vote.

President Hadley reminded the Assembly of the APOC, turn in a timely manner. Member Lincoln Carr stated that Member Haviland Lie asked if the heat pumps are for all homes or just low income or elders. President Hadley reminds the Assembly to chime in if you have questions.

ASSEMBLY REPORTS

Member Magdanz mentioned he attends portions of the State Board of Game meeting here in Kotzebue at the end of January. They were considering changes to caribou hunting, regulations, state caribou hunting regulations in our region. For those who haven't heard they changed regulations for the coming years, 15 caribou per year and one of those a cow. Federal Subsistence Board is scheduled to meet this Spring to consider the same thing. Also, they put a cap on number of non-resident hunting permits for this region which is 300 at this time. Magdanz shared the budget retreat; we need to start making cuts now. Our consultants and advisors are clear, in best case scenario if you

support Upper Kobuk; we are looking at three to ten years where there is no significant mining revenue coming into Borough. Thank you, important stuff happening.

Mayor Moto asked when the regulations were going to affect. President Hadley asked how many hunters came before putting the cap. Member Armstrong asked if Unit 23 was the only one that got regulated with the changes.

Member Cleveland mentioned he attended the Retreat in Anchorage, along with ICC meeting. Also, AIDEA asked him to attend the No Road meeting; mentioned a rally opposing. He saw representatives stating they represent Ambler; he doesn't even know them. Still going forward, hopefully at the end something they desire to have, development is needed and he believes every community should support if Red Dog goes.

Member McConnell mentioned he was in Anchorage recently and ran into this group; had wondered why Borough wasn't involved in those discussions. Regarding water and sewer in the villages, heard there is \$120M infrastructure monies available from Congress. He contacted Mr. Cox to ensure applying although learned Buckland and Deering apparently work directly with Village Safe Water. Also, learned that the best practice criteria will no longer be used; if you score high then you score high on the grant application.

Member Armstrong also attended the retreat, good discussions. Attended AML winter conference in Juneau, good reports. On the way home he learned school districts wanted 1400 for BSA, legislative approve 680, good conference.

Member Lincoln Carr also attended the retreat, good interaction with Jonathan King much needed to tighten belts. Although when Assembly share about attending AML or Arctic Encounter or lobbying she believes they do a great job lobbying, makes a difference. Thankful for the VPSO program, with staff and administration making strides. Thank you, President, and Mayor.

President Hadley also attended AML; at one point they asked about school funding; appreciates Member McConnell's input on school funding. Described some of the issues and Selawik fire panel is down.

Break observed at 10:04 A.M., reconvened at 10:19 A.M.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Moto mentioned staff been busy, number of resolutions and ordinances. With Selawik School having no working fire alarm system there are affects 30 staff and 270 students. Working hard to fund \$750,000.00 through grant funds, the school applied although with no guarantee. The Finance Treasurer mentioned the School Board informed Borough they hired a fire monitor. The monies will be used from a \$3M grant which was set aside for other things.

Northwest Arctic Borough School Board President Margaret Hansen mentioned that they have monies set aside for emergencies but depleting. If they had to pay for the alarm system, then they wouldn't be able to move forward with Deering School design which is five on the list for funding. They understand Senate Bill 140 is moving along, Governor

has 15 days to veto or cut out of budget; statements made he wasn't happy with final bill. NWABSD President stated they are working on \$14M cuts, seeking grants currently.

Mayor Moto provided numbers for Covid, five cases (2 Kotzebue, 1 Deering, 1 Kobuk and 1 Ambler) in the area; be safe. Community and Economic Development Director Westlake provided an update of recent activities. Next deadline for summer semester will be June 15th. Next VIF meeting is scheduled for April 15-16, 2024, here in Kotzebue. He thanks all the partners for matching requirements for the grant Mr. Mathiasson mentioned.

Thankful for the Mayor's support, we've come a long way after lobbying in DC. Once we have an inter-tie between Ambler and Shungnak then we'd be able to go for hydroponics which would be a big plus. Member Armstrong asked if been in contact with the villages on the mechanics of becoming an IPP.

Member McConnell raised concern of the heat pumps when installed and reducing fuel consumption; what is that going to do to the electricity bill. What is the plan? Also, Sulianich is under Economic Development, learned at the retreat that we subsidize them at \$178,000.00 a year but have \$1.2M in reserves which don't make sense to him. He is advocating for them to become independent since facing budget cuts.

Public Services Director Jones provided a summary of recent activities. Just got an update on Northern Contractors; they had a couple weeks to resolve due to legal issues. Northern Contractors have subcontracted with Buck Wild Service and Construction; the first village will be Noatak as they have forty homes.

Member McConnell mentioned he got an update from Maniilaq this morning regarding the homeless shelter. A payment request for insurance has been submitted for review, once cut then should open soon. On the agenda is an update discussion for Elder boiler maintenance project, Director Jones just reported on it; do we discuss separately or does this suffice? Glad the program is moving again and looks like Noatak is the first village.

Member Lincoln Carr echo comments, glad great to work with a subcontractor. Thankful for moving forward on the homeless, appreciate volunteers and participating organizations.

Public Safety Director Hatch provided some updates on recent activities. Currently have five VPSO, been in Kiana, Shungnak, Ambler and Deering over the last month. Five people on background checks, three of whom are getting a start date soon. Member Lincoln Carr thankful for continuously working on public safety. Member Haviland Lie recommend to list where the VPSO are stationed in the written report.

Planning Director Naylor mentioned that this is a fun dynamic, can debate issues with veracity, celebrate our victories and laugh about it. He summarized his written report. Currently soliciting letters of interest for the commission. Member Magdanz asked about big commercial fisheries moving north, heard concerns from the community about impacts on our marine mammals. Is that being tracked?

Member Lincoln Carr mentioned she been following Axel Moses' posts on trollers, how damaging it is on the villages. Glad to hear administration being involved, disappointed an organization didn't help him. Member Armstrong believes there is an invisible moratorium line we need to hold, if they fish, they will devastate our lifestyle that live off the fish.

On another note, President Hadley suggest that we follow North Slope Borough's fine policy for hunters. He had wondered why the outside hunters go through this area.

Member McConnell asked Legal Mead about CDQ Program in Bering Straits and further south; if the fisheries move North then would that move too and benefit the region? Member Armstrong believes that we should lobby with DC, we should be able to take advantage of.

Mayor Moto suggested having a fishing or subsistence committee, our needs are coming, food jeopardy. Possibly form a committee through the Assembly to support our people. Member Lincoln Carr asked Legal Mead if we can have subsistence/taxation so don't have to create a whole new one. He stated that Lands/Resources addresses subsistence and food security issues. President Hadley mentioned he took off subsistence when they weren't meeting.

TIME & PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

March 25, 2024, budget, audit and finance/work session and regular meetings on March 26, 2024. President Hadley stated he will call in for that from Nome, he will be attending Reindeer Herders Association. Hopefully Vice President Sampson will be back, although he stated he may be on crutches.

INTRODUCTION OF ORDINANCES

1. **Ordinance 24-05** *an ordinance of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly amending Chapter 12.08 of the Borough Code to update the Public Safety Commission Code, and for related purposes.*

Public Services Director Jones summarized Ordinance 24-05, recommend do pass.

Member Lincoln Carr motion to approve Ordinance 24-05, seconded by Member Armstrong; motion passed by unanimously by roll call vote.

RESOLUTIONS

1. **Resolution 24-01** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving and adopting updated policies and procedures for the Village Improvement Commission.*

Village Improvement Fund Coordinator Josephine Howarth summarized Resolution 24-01, recommend do pass.

Member Armstrong motioned to approve Resolution 24-01, seconded by Member Swan; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

2. **Resolution 24-02** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a Village Improvement application from the City of Shungnak for a Heat Recovery Project, and for related purposes.*

VIF Coordinator Howarth summarized Resolution 24-02, recommend do pass.

Member Lincoln Carr motion to approve Resolution 24-02, seconded by Member Armstrong; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

3. **Resolution 24-03** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a Village Improvement Fund application from Ipnatchiaq Electric Company for a Riser Pole Upgrade Project, and for related purposes.*

VIF Coordinator Howarth summarized Resolution 24-03, recommend do pass.

Member Swan motioned to approve Resolution 24-03, seconded by Member Armstrong; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

4. **Resolution 24-04** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a Village Improvement Fund application from the Native Village of Kotzebue for the Nikaitchuat Ilisavgvait Immersion School.*

VIF Coordinator Howarth summarized Resolution 24-04, recommend do pass. Member Lincoln Carr requested to abstain from this due to sitting on Tribal Council. Member McConnell also requested due to preliminary discussions with IRA about property acquisition.

Member Magdanz requested an update from Native Village of Kotzebue if any information may have changed since presented through the packet. Where do we stand? Treasurer Margaret Hansen stated they are seeking other options, not changed to find a new school for the kids. Still moving forward.

Ms. Schuerch thanked the Assembly for approving this and can't wait to invite you to the grand opening.

Member Magdanz motioned to approve Resolution 24-04, seconded by Member Armstrong; motion passed by majority with Lincoln Carr and McConnell abstaining.

5. **Resolution 24-05** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a Village Improvement Fund application from OTZ Telephone Cooperative, Inc., for grave digging equipment.*

VIF Coordinator Howarth summarized Resolution 24-05, recommend do pass. Member Armstrong mentioned each of us should reach out to the tribal or city government to get same benefit as this.

Member Lincoln Carr motioned to approve Resolution 24-05, seconded by Vice President Sampson; motion passed unanimously by roll call vote.

6. **Resolution 24-06** *a resolution of the Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly approving a memorandum of understanding with the City of Kotzebue for reimbursement of emergency response service costs for the Swan Lake Loop water main failure and attendant water and sewer residential service line failure/freeze-ups, and for related purposes.*

Legal Mead summarized Resolution 24-06, after yesterday's meeting the changes have been made. The State of Alaska has declared a disaster, and these funds will be reimbursed. Member Haviland Lie asked Legal Mead since he sits on City Council do he abstain?

Member Swan mentioned he is anxious to go forward, concerns health of children.
Member Swan motioned to approve Resolution 24-06, seconded by Member Lincoln Carr; motion passed by majority with Haviland Lie abstaining.

OTHER BUSINESS

Member Armstrong mentioned Arctic Encounters is April 10-12, 2024; leave up to President Hadley on whom would like to attend. Member Lincoln Carr asked if contact both President and Clerk?

Member McConnell mentioned AHFC Grant, we were meeting frequently although there was an emergency, and this got dropped. He would like to ensure it moves forward even if City isn't active in discussion.

Member McConnell mentioned for the Northern Contractors all his questions were answered during the Mayor's report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

No executive session was held.

AUDIENCE COMMENTS

Stella Snyder stated with the basketball tournament coming up, there have been reports of open water all over. People traveling with snow machines are safe when she worked at KOTZ she advocates for safety.

ASSEMBLY COMMENTS

Member Haviland Lie thank you for all your hard work. He was able to attend AML last week through Borough, back in Juneau again this week.

Member Cleveland mentioned good meeting again. Let's continue praying for Pt, Hope and the North Slope Region.

Member Sampson thank you for good meeting. Thank you to BAF Chair Magdanz and President Hadley for running the meeting the past couple days. To OTZ Telephone, Harold Lambert, Mr. Smith, and Jade Greene will look forward to new equipment. Thank you for making time to help with the burial.

Member McConnell mentioned Stella reminds him; specifically for the State tournament, last year there were so many complaints about the concession prices. He would encourage others to buy at Walmart and put them on your body; they won't body search.

Member Magdanz mentioned tough month for people, condolences to Noorvik and Pt. Hope. Reminder to everyone, have respect and kindness when times are tough.

Member Lincoln Carr thanked Mayor and staff for the good two days of meetings. Thankful for administration being part of the disaster in Kotzebue; thank everyone involved of the Swan Lake Loop freeze up. Grateful for funds that were sought. Thankful for village initiative funds that are granted. About school activities and ballgames coming up.

We learned vape pens were being flushed down the school toilets that burned up the pumps. Parents, those of you that know your kids use them, we need to stop selling them to kids. Another thing, be careful traveling when coming for tournament. Also, it's time we all know who is selling drugs and alcohol to minor and whomever; report them. Thank Borough for the work we are doing, let's continue to support each other.

Member Armstrong mentioned good meetings, good discussions. Condolences to those that lost loved ones. Thank you to Administration and Assembly, let's keep moving forward.

Member Swan provided an update of Kivalina. Teck Project has been working on the water issue; in preparation for upgrading the water treatment plant. Getting ready for replenishment of the water tank Springtime. Thank you.

Member Barr echoes everyone's comments, been good two days of meetings. Express sincere condolences to those that lost loved ones. Thank administration for work being done. Hope to continue prioritizing so can move forward.

President Hadley thank Mayor Moto for work, good news for Selawik fire system. Thank you to staff, good news today with the grant.

MAYORS COMMENTS

Mayor Moto is thankful to be here and working with the Assembly, good two-day meeting. He expressed his gratitude to the staff for their work. Reminder of APOC deadline coming up. Condolences to those that lost loved ones in Noorvik, Pt. Hope and Kotzeube. Thankful for people helping out the families.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Lincoln Carr motion to adjourn, seconded by Member Swan at 11:59 A.M.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Stella Atwood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Stella" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Atwood".