



ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MINUTES

January 26, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

A. CALL TO ORDER

Deputy Mayor Smith called the Assembly Committee of the Whole to order at 6:01pm on Monday, January 26, 2026.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. *Gunalchéesh!*

C. ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers present: Mayor Beth Weldon (via Zoom), Deputy Mayor Smith, Assemblymembers: Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Christine Woll, Paul R. Kelly, Ella Adkison, Neil Steininger, Maureen Hall, and Nathaniel "Nano" Brooks.

Assemblymembers absent: None

Staff Present: City Manager Katie Koester, City Attorney Emily Wright, Deputy Municipal Clerk Andi Hirsh, and Meeting Clerk Kevin Allen.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA - *Approved by Unanimous Consent*

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - *Approved by Unanimous Consent*

1. 2024-11-04_Assembly-COW_Minutes - Draft
2. 2024-12-02_Assembly-COW_Minutes - Draft
3. 2025-01-27_Assembly-COW_Minutes - Draft
4. 2025-02-24_Assembly-COW_Minutes-Draft
5. 2025-03-05_Special Assembly-COW Joint Meeting with Eaglecrest Board_Minutes-Draft
6. 2025-09-08_Assembly-COW_Minutes-Draft(V2)
7. 2025-11-03_Assembly-COW_Minutes - Draft

F. AGENDA TOPICS

Mr. Steinger declared a potential conflict of interest due to his employment with the Alaska Political Report, noting a sister publication could fall under the ordinance. Deputy Mayor Smith determined Mr. Steinger could participate, with no objection from the Assembly, after consulting with Attorney Wright who advised that the matter did not present a conflict at this stage and Mr. Steinger who confirmed that he could remain objective.

1. Ordinance 2026-10 An Ordinance Amending Title 1, General Provisions, to Add a Definition of Newspaper of General Circulation.

Manager Koester introduced an ordinance to modernize the City's public notice requirements by defining "newspaper of general circulation" to include publicly accessible print or online sources without a required subscription or paywall. She reviewed current legal notice requirements and publication in the Juneau Empire at an annual cost of approximately \$60,000, noting logistical challenges with print deadlines. She emphasized that official notice must be broadly accessible, secure, searchable, verifiable, and preserved as part of the public record. She stated the City's website did not currently meet those documentation standards and that, if adopted, implementation would occur through an RFP process to identify a compliant provider.

In response to questions, Manager Koester explained to Mr. Kelly that the Juneau Empire currently qualifies due to its print edition and that any future respondent would need to address paywall concerns through the RFP process. In response to Mr. Brooks, she stated she would not intend to exceed the current \$60,000 annual cost and anticipated competitive proposals. Responding to Ms. Hughes-Skandijis, Manager Koester said she was unsure whether local media outlets currently meet the necessary technical standards but noted specialized vendors exist and that an RFP would favor local outlets where possible. She confirmed to Mayor Weldon that the intent was not to rely solely on the City's website. In response to Deputy Mayor Smith's questions, she stated that other municipalities' approaches have met legal muster, as confirmed by Attorney Wright, and explained the RFP would ensure documentation compliance and maximize transparency and public accessibility.

MOTION by Mr. Kelly to forward Ordinance 2026-10 to the Full Assembly and asked for unanimous consent. Deputy Mayor Smith objected for a brief comment regarding continued discussion of the RFP process and associated spending, then withdrew his objection. Mr. Brooks asked about total public notice expenditures across all communication platforms. Manager Koester stated those costs were absorbed within the Communications budget and would provide an estimate. Objections were withdrawn. ***Hearing no further objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

2. An Ordinance Establishing the City and Borough Eaglecrest Recreation Area Department and Recreation and Ski Area Advisory Board.

Mayor Weldon introduced the draft ordinance to convert the Eaglecrest Ski Area Board to an advisory board. She explained she brought the proposal forward due to ongoing operational instability, deferred maintenance, and financial challenges at Eaglecrest. She stated the City has invested and may continue to invest significant funds, and believed greater Assembly

January 26, 2026 Assembly Committee of the Whole

oversight was necessary to address structural governance issues and ensure accountability for large capital investments.

Assemblymembers raised questions regarding board structure, staffing impacts, hiring authority, financial recovery, maintenance standards, risk management, and alternatives to disempowerment.

Ms. Adkison asked about designated seats on the proposed advisory board; Attorney Wright explained the intent was to ensure expertise in ski operations and year-round recreation, though such requirements can be difficult to fill.

Ms. Woll asked about Manager's Office capacity and what decisions would shift to the Assembly and administration. Manager Koester responded that while involvement would increase, the office already spent significant time on Eaglecrest and would continue working with the board on major policy matters such as summer operations, business planning, and capital improvement.

Mr. Kelly asked who would hire the Eaglecrest Manager under the proposed structure; Manager Koester stated the Manager's Office would make the hire, with advisory board involvement, consistent with executive recruitment practices.

Mr. Brooks asked about cost recovery, hiring trade-offs, maintenance standards, and risk management. Manager Koester stated cost recovery direction would come from the Assembly; executive hiring would benefit from the Manager's Office experience; and maintenance would follow Citywide condition assessments and prioritization practices. She noted risk oversight would remain shared, with operational expertise informing decisions.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked about governance history and risk tolerance; Attorney Wright reviewed the Charter origins of empowered boards and clarified the Assembly retains authority to define or modify board powers.

Discussion also addressed whether alternatives existed short of full disempowerment. Manager Koester and Attorney Wright stated the Assembly could redefine or limit board powers while maintaining an empowered board structure. A joint meeting with the Eaglecrest Board was noted as scheduled for March 4, 2026.

Ms. Woll stated she would oppose advancing the ordinance at this time and expressed concern that governance changes should follow broader policy decisions about Eaglecrest's future. Mr. Steininger, Assembly liaison to the Eaglecrest Board, supported exploring structural changes to ensure financial accountability and alignment with City budget realities, while recommending a joint public discussion before final action. Ms. Hughes-Skandijs expressed openness to modified governance options and emphasized the need to reconcile Eaglecrest's future with current fiscal constraints, but said she would not support immediate advancement without further discussion.

MOTION by Mayor Weldon to hold Ordinance 2026-XX (Eaglecrest governance ordinance serial

January 26, 2026 Assembly Committee of the Whole

number TBD) in the Committee of the Whole until after the March 4 Assembly and Eaglecrest Joint Meeting, with the intent that it return to the Committee of the Whole on March 16. She noted her original timeline would have advanced the ordinance sooner, but acknowledged the Assembly's desire for additional discussion.

Deputy Mayor Smith and members sought clarification regarding the scope of the March 4 joint meeting and the procedural effect of holding the ordinance in committee. Attorney Wright confirmed that holding the ordinance would leave it in Committee of the Whole and bring it back on March 16.

OBJECTION by Ms. Woll, who stated she would prefer to pause the discussion rather than continue it in the near term. She expressed concern that proceeding with governance changes while recruiting a new General Manager could create uncertainty regarding reporting structure and oversight, and suggested it may be clearer either to move forward decisively or to set the issue aside for a longer period while leadership was hired and broader direction for Eaglecrest was determined.

[Brief at Ease: 7:42 PM – 7:44 PM]

AMENDMENT #1 by Ms. Woll to postpone consideration until the first Committee of the Whole meeting in January 2027, citing concerns about hiring a new General Manager without governance clarity and preferring to pause the discussion.

OBJECTIONS by Mayor Weldon, Ms. Hughes-Skandijs, and Deputy Mayor Smith who expressed concern that a year-long delay would be too long given financial and governance considerations.

ROLL CALL VOTE ON AMENDMENT #1

Yeas: Woll, Brooks

Nays: Weldon, Hughes-Skandijs, Kelly, Hall, Steininger, Adkison, Smith

Motion Failed: 2 Yeas to 7 Nays

The Assembly then returned to the Mayor's original motion to hold the ordinance in Committee of the Whole until after the March 4 joint meeting (to return March 16). ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

3. Douglas / West Juneau Area Plan — Ordinance 2025-42 (Amending the Comprehensive Plan by Adopting the Downtown Douglas / West Juneau Area Plan)

[Break: 7:49 PM – 8:01 PM, returned to open session]

Manager Koester provided background, noting the multi-year process, extensive public engagement, and Planning Commission amendments. She emphasized that the area plan, as part of the Comprehensive Plan, was aspirational and non-binding and that ordinances adopted by the Assembly take precedence over plan policies. Manager Koester highlighted the

January 26, 2026 Assembly Committee of the Whole

steering committee recommendation regarding 17 acres on Douglas behind 5th and 6th Streets, which the Planning Commission removed from park designation due to prior identification for potential development.

Assemblymembers asked questions regarding slope, drainage, infrastructure permitting, and aspirational elements such as the Mount Jumbo Gym/Community Center. Manager Koester explained that development permitting, including drainage and other impacts, would be addressed through the General Engineering Division, and that aspirational items did not constitute immediate funding or implementation.

MOTION by Ms. Woll to forward Ordinance 2025-42 to the full Assembly for public hearing.

OBJECTION by Mayor Weldon. She said that much of the plan was aspirational and would require resources beyond current priorities; she suggested consideration as a resolution instead of an ordinance.

OBJECTION by Mr. Kelly for the purpose of a question. Mr. Kelly asked Mayor Weldon what her intention would be if the ordinance were not forwarded, specifically if she would like to see it sent back out for additional public process. Mayor Weldon responded that she did not believe further public process was necessary, given the time already invested.

Attorney Wright clarified that Comprehensive Plans are traditionally adopted via ordinance, which is permanent, whereas resolutions are policy-oriented and temporary.

Ms. Woll spoke in support of forwarding the ordinance and acknowledged the aspirational nature of the plan, but emphasized that the plans reflect community values and long-term vision, even if implementation occurs over time as funding and priorities evolve.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs supported moving forward, acknowledging the aspirational nature of the plan and the Assembly's discretion in implementation.

ROLL CALL VOTE:

Yeas: Woll, Brooks, Hall, Steininger, Adkison, Kelly, Hughes-Skandijs, Smith

Nays: Weldon

Motion Passed : 8 Yeas to 1 Nay

4. Assembly Goals

Deputy Mayor Smith introduced the discussion of Assembly goals, noting that they were initially developed during the retreat and revised for consideration. Manager Koester explained that most goals had been finalized, with only a few requiring minor tweaks.

Assemblymembers reviewed proposed goals and implementing actions, including housing objectives, public engagement in budget development, and access to CBJ financial information.

January 26, 2026 Assembly Committee of the Whole

MOTION by Mr. Brooks to add an implementing action under Housing to Continue to pursue zoning amendments that support an increase in property ownership and incremental infill development opportunities (1.F.). ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

MOTION by Ms. Hall to add an implementing action under Housing to Evaluate support of existing community land trusts (1.G.). ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

MOTION by Mr. Steininger to correct wording from Assure to Ensure. ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

MOTION by Mr. Kelly to add an implementing action under Sustainable Budget to Increase public engagement and outreach in developing a sustainable operating budget that balances community priorities with reduced sales and property tax revenue (3.F.). ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

MOTION by Mr. Brooks to add an implementing action under Sustainable Budget to Investigate and implement methods to improve public access to CBJ financial information (3.G.).

OBJECTIONS by Ms. Woll, Ms. Hughes-Skandijs, and Mayor Weldon who raised concerns about staff capacity and resources.

AMENDMENT #1 by Mr. Smith to strike “and implement” from that motion.

OBJECTION by Ms. Adkison, stating she would not support the amendment, noting that staff time and city funds could be wasted on initiatives unlikely to receive full support.

ROLL CALL VOTE AMENDMENT #1

Yeas: Smith, Woll, Hall, Steininger

Nays: Adkison, Brooks, Hughes-Skandijs, Kelly, Weldon

Amendment Failed: 4 Yeas to 5 Nays

ROLL CALL VOTE (Mr. Brooks – Implementing Action – Public Access to CBJ Fin. Info.):

Yeas: Brooks, Kelly, Steininger, Hall, Smith

Nays: Woll, Adkison, Hughes-Skandijs, Weldon

Motion Passed: 5 Yeas to 4 Nays

MOTION by Ms. Hall to add an implementing action under Community, Wellness, and Public Safety to Reassess policy on dispersed camping while continuing to identify/support sanctioned camping or shelter locations where adequate facilities exist (4.C.). ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

Deputy Mayor Smith emphasized that these goals were aspirational, providing guidance for staff and transparency for the public.

January 26, 2026 Assembly Committee of the Whole

MOTION by Mayor Weldon to forward the goals, as amended, to the full Assembly and asked for unanimous consent. ***Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.***

G STAFF REPORTS – None

H. NEXT MEETING DATE February 23, 2026 at 6:00pm

I. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

- 1. November 3, 2025 Assembly COW Minutes - Draft**
- 2. 2026 Assembly Goals - Final Draft vCOW**

J. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the Assembly Committee of the Whole, the meeting adjourned at 8:38 p.m.