

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Assembly Committee Of The Whole Work Session

MinutesMeeting Minutes – August 31, 2020

Deputy Mayor Maria Gladziszewski called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Assembly Chambers.

I. ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers Present: Maria Gladziszewski, Loren Jones, Rob Edwardson, Wade Bryson, Carole Triem, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Michelle Bonnet Hale, and Greg Smith

Assemblymembers Absent: Mayor Beth Weldon.

Staff Present: City Manager Rorie Watt, Deputy City Manager/Incident Commander Mila Cosgrove, City Attorney Robert Palmer, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Deputy Clerk Di Cathcart.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 23, 2020 Committee of the Whole Minutes

MOTION by Ms. Gladziszewski to approve the corrected March 23, 2020 COW Minutes.
Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved as corrected.

IV. AGENDA TOPICS

A. JSD Back to School Update – Dr. Bridget Weiss, Superintendent

Juneau School District Superintendent Dr. Weiss provided a Back to School update for the Assembly. She shared that last week was the first week back with students, and prior to that JSD staff spent two weeks in training. She said that the first week went generally well, JSD has distributed over 2,200 devices in addition to the 1,000 devices distributed by Tlingit & Haida. Dr. Weiss said that their greatest concern is internet connectivity issues, they are currently working on a variety of solutions with GCI and ACS to help with internet access issues.

Dr. Weiss also reported that JSD has delivered meals to families, and this year they have added hot meals to that service. Any family that qualifies can receive meals either for free or for .40 cents.

JSD had partnered with CBJ to discuss childcare options, and acknowledged that there is an inherent risk to having in-person childcare, similar to having in-person school. She shared that

JSD has implemented several mitigation measures to ensure that staff are safe, such as face shields, air scrubbers, and reducing in-person student capacity.

Ms. Hale asked Dr. Weiss if JSD was approaching these issues on a quarterly basis. Dr. Weiss confirmed that they are approaching this quarterly. JSD will reexamine the risk factors and the progress made at the end of September. Any changes made would be implemented at the end of the quarter on November 5th.

Ms. Hale asked Dr. Weiss what the Rubric would look like to allow for schools to open up further. Dr. Weiss explained the determining factors are much more complex than just a low case number. JSD staff does participate in the weekly COVID-19 EOC update so they understand what can be done to keep the case count low.

Mr. Bryson asked about the projected student enrollment numbers, specifically if there had been a decrease in enrollment numbers, and the current student to teacher ratio. Dr. Weiss said that they are seeing a drop in enrollment by approximately 10%. They also noticed a large increase in the number of Homebridge enrollments, which is still funded but not at the full amount that is funded through the state funding formula. She believed there could be a strong possibility that there will be a return of students past the October count date.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked Dr. Weiss about mixing cohorts across grade levels. Dr. Weiss clarified that elementary instruction needs are vastly different due to developmental stages. With this difference in mind, JSD has been working with a collaborative team approach with teachers dividing up into smaller cohort groups. Moving forward, Dr. Weiss said that they will consider that in the future with mixing cohorts, while also being attentive to the different risk factors and learning needs of each cohort group. She added that JSD needs to be very responsible with their approach, due to the effect that their efforts may have on their students, and the ripple effect it may cause within the community.

Ms. Gladziszewski thanked Dr. Weiss for her time and providing insight to how the Juneau School District is handling students returning to school amidst COVID-19.

B. Update on trash enforcement and bears, Summer 2020

Community Service Officer Bob Dilley gave a recap on the history of this ordinance, and defined what can be deemed as a bear attractive nuisance is, as well as the exceptions. Bear attractions include more than one-half gallon of food waste, any material that has previously attracted a bear to the property, and soiled diapers.

Exceptions include the landfill, manure or sewage, garbage cans placed outside after 4:00a.m. on pickup days, indigenous plants to the property such as blueberry bushes, a garbage can stored in a shed or a structure that requires hands or tools to open, or dumpsters with metal fitted lids.

Enforcement of these regulations include monitoring calls for compliance and officer patrol. Officer Dilley said that he tries to work with people rather than giving tickets out right off the bat. He added that there are a lot of bears in town this year. There is a long waiting list of approximately 100 households waiting for bear resistant cans from the waste management company. There are also a couple of bears who have been known to try to physically enter dumpsters by moving them around and tipping them over.

Mr. Bryson said that Officer Dilley has described the dumpster at his rental complex. Mr. Bryson shared that he has a very persistent bear that is rolling his dumpster like a beach ball. He thanked Officer Dilley for giving him an opportunity to remedy the situation.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked about the JPD staffing level of CSOs and if there is one assigned to “trash duty.” Officer Dilley shared that they have just hired another employee, so they now have five CSOs.

Ms. Triem asked Officer Dilley to describe the best way to report complaints to CSOs. Officer Dilley explained the best way to file a complaint would be to call into JPD Dispatch, or to email the CBJ Bears Email Group at bears@juneau.org.

Dr. Roy Churchwell from AK Department of Fish and Game – Area Biologist for Juneau Douglas Office joined the meeting to provide information regarding bear activity.

Mr. Churchwell addressed one of the most common topics in town, which was “Why do we have so many bears in Juneau this summer?” He explained that it was because there is so much food available to them to eat, and years that produce low natural foods like salmon and berries will attract bears towards human-produced foods. During individual years, bear activity can be determined by the abundance – or lack thereof – of natural foods. Mr. Churchwell stated that the only way to have fewer bears in Juneau is to make it more difficult for bears to get food from us.

Mr. Churchwell shared that Human/Bear conflicts take up the bulk of ADFG workload in the summertime. To date, there have been 687 calls made during this summer alone: 435 to ADFG and the rest to JPD. For comparison, there were only 255 calls made in the summer of 2019, and 619 calls in 2018. He noted that ADFG loaned 12 “critter getters” (noise making devices to deter bears) and 26 electric fences to residents. Mr. Churchwell and one other employee are on-call 24/7 all summer to respond to bears that are causing a conflict. They typically respond to the most egregious cases, such as property damage. This year, ADFG handled thirteen bears: they relocated four bears, but had to euthanize nine bears.

Mr. Churchwell said that to solve the bear situation in Juneau, we need to make it harder for bears to get human foods. He provided some suggestions: CBJ providing mandatory bear resistant containers, setting up electric fencing by the dump, and placing secure food storage containers at campsites. He added that euthanizing bears is not an effective long-term solution, as Juneau is an exceptional bear habitat and there is always another bear.

Ms. Hale asked Mr. Churchwell if ADFG considered installing bear proof dumpsters for neighborhoods and/or apartment complexes. Mr. Churchwell said that it would be great to find a way to provide bear resistant dumpsters for apartment complexes and neighborhoods, however ADFG does not have the means to implement that, it would be up to the CBJ.

Mr. Bryson asked about the bear population. He said that he recalled over a dozen bear cubs being born near the Mendenhall Valley about two or three summers ago. He noticed that many of the bears this year seem juvenile, and wondered if that might seem to contribute to Juneau's bear population. Mr. Churchwell said that ADFG does not count the number of bears in a local population. He said that the amount of natural food available to bears outside of town has a larger impact of bears inside town than the actual population number. He also mentioned that younger bears tend to get into more trouble, and tend to wander around neighborhoods in the daytime, while older bears tend to go out at night.

Mr. Loren Brown, Juneau's site manager for Alaska Waste, addressed some of the topics mentioned by previous speakers. He shared that the waiting list for bear resistant cans has approximately 100 people on the list due to the large amount bear issues this year. They continue to order more cans, and they will try to get as many cans here as residents who have issues. Regarding bear resistant dumpsters, they are trying to innovate ways to help prevent "bear break-ins" such as attaching bars to the outside of the dumpster can. Mr. Brown said that he has ordered another 350 carts, but they are not expected to arrive until October/November. Manufacturing and shipping causes a three or four month delay.

Ms. Triem asked Mr. Brown to describe what the bear proof can options are: different sizes, choices, etc. Mr. Brown said that none of the cans are bear "proof" but they are bear resistant. Currently, they are all just one size – 96 gallons – but they are looking at getting smaller sizes next year, such as 65 gallons. There are eight different styles of bear resistant cans in Juneau, which Mr. Brown is working on reducing.

Mr. Smith asked if they would consider no longer ordering bear cans with the red tab, as they are not bear resistant. Mr. Brown shared that those cans have very thin lids, and are not bear resistant. He said that he is considering going with a different manufacturing. He added that bear containers are those with heavier lids and they are an option, not a requirement.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Mr. Brown to provide clarification between what constituted bear resistant vs. bear proof. She noted that some of the bear resistant models are failing more than most. Mr. Brown said that they do not offer a lot of bear resistant models, however there have been some issues with those containers. He said that the manufacturer stopped production of that model, and that issue should be resolved.

Ms. Abby McAllister – Wildlife Education & Outreach Specialist with Alaska Department of Fish & Game (ADF&G). Ms. McAllister provided information and messages about bear and wildlife safety. She shared that she works closely with local biologists and community partners

to provide bear education for all ages. ADF&G has annual objectives for them to reach each year, with the common theme of meeting an educational goal. One goal was to reinvigorate the Juneau Bear Committee – they met for the first time in a number of years in June 2020. The Bear Committee includes representatives from ADF&G, US Forest Service, JPD, AK Waste Connections, CBJ, and volunteers and members of the Alaska Wildlife Alliance.

The committee has moved forward on the following outreach goals:

- Education on Social Media, including a bear terminology series
- Updated radio PSAs
- Stickers for the tops of roll carts to inform residents that the cans are not bear resistant, and to remind them of the CBJ Ordinance.
- Bear safety and how to secure attractants
- Graphics on how to select and install electric fences.

Ms. McAllister described these efforts as costly, but also diverse and effective. With additional support from partners, she said that they can continue to deliver the education and outreach.

Ms. Gladziszewski suggested putting this issue into their budget considerations. She mentioned that CBJ used to have money put aside in the budget for outreach, but that has been cut over the years. Ms. Gladziszewski thanked all of the speakers for their time and the information they shared with the Assembly.

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 7:04 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 7:15p.m.

C. K-5 School Age Care Framework

Ms. Cosgrove gave a presentation on the direction given to the Economic Stabilization Task Force (ESTF) Subcommittee by the Assembly. Included in this update are recommendations from the ESTF and the Raising Our Children with Kindness (ROCK) group.

The staff had been tasked with creating a framework to care for K-5 children in the community in response to operational constraints at the Juneau School District.

The staff created objectives that would develop a successful program that met the following criteria:

- Ability to flex with changing school conditions
- Allow students to engage with learning initiatives
- Minimize disease risk
- Sustainable until school begins operating normally
- Acceptable to families, safe for children
- Fiscally prudent
- Provide support to low income families

Ms. Cosgrove shared the Potential Framework Options discussed by ESTF and ROCK, which included:

- Providing support for small family groupings for cooperative learning environments
- Expanding RALLY services
- Providing monetary support for employer based childcare
- Providing monetary support for families who are learning at home

In regards to **Providing Support to Family Cooperatives**, ESTF defined this as parents and families working collaboratively to provide learning cooperatives in their homes for small groups of students. This allows for other parents to be able to return to work while their children are participating in learning “pods”. Ms. Cosgrove shared that they are not yet aware of how many children would take advantage of this, although they are aware that this is already occurring somewhat organically. The cost of supporting this option is variable, if it is based from home, then there are no facility costs; but if there is a desire for an option not based in someone’s home, a space would need to be provided, which could result in additional costs. Overall, Ms. Cosgrove describes this option as relatively low cost with the potential for high impact, and would provide some structure to a collaborative effort amongst families.

In regards to **Expanding RALLY Services**, Ms. Cosgrove said that JSD will standup RALLY full-time on August 31 at three schools to serve 126 children. The program will operate Monday through Friday, between 7:30a.m. to 5:30p.m. JSD has set the cost of full-time RALLY at \$310 per week.

Mr. Jones mentioned that JSD has a budget request for CARES Act funding for \$560,000 for RALLY. He also said that it appeared to him that JSD had considered offering RALLY to teachers and staff. Mr. Jones said that he had many questions about funding for RALLY, particularly through CARES Act funding.

Ms. Cosgrove explained that the current proposal by JSD is to fund RALLY entirely with CARES Act funding through end of this calendar year for their planned current enrollment of 126 students. JSD has also requested to prioritize their employees for RALLY spaces with 100% CARES Act funding, so that their teachers and staff can be available to deliver education services to the rest of the community. Mr. Jones appreciated Ms. Cosgrove’s explanation, and said he hopes the discussion at the next AFC meeting will be as detailed as the information she just provided.

In regards to **Providing Support for Employer Childcare Options**, this option was suggested by ESTF and ROCK, and encourages employers to set up childcare spaces at work locations. Ms. Cosgrove suggested CBJ could offer an incentive to employers to provide childcare options. She said she had a very preliminary discussion with State of Alaska, where they discussed the space on the 8th floor atrium as a possible location. Possible considerations include the facility space needing to have appropriate social distancing space and internet connectivity for online learning.

In regards to **Providing Support for At Home Care**, this option would provide a monetary supplement for families who meet income qualifications to receive a stipend to help offset the

cost of at-home learning. Ms. Cosgrove said that there is a strong recommendation to make this a needs-based program, or potentially prioritize families that qualify for free or reduced-price lunches offered by JSD.

Ms. Triem expressed concern that those people who would qualify based on a needs-based approach may not be able to work from home. She was worried that these families might not have the kind of job where they could work from home, and have to leave the house to go to work. Ms. Cosgrove agreed with Ms. Triem's concerns, and suggested that if they considered prioritizing RALLY services on a needs basis, that could possibly help take care of those families as well.

Ms. Cosgrove shared a draft version of the cost comparisons of each option with the Assembly.

Mr. Jones noted that all of these options except for RALLY have an accountability criteria, with variation on how to administer that. He said that cannot all be done by one administrator in addition to someone else doing policy. Mr. Jones asked if Ms. Cosgrove had given any thought on what the administrative costs might be, adding that sometimes the cost of auditing is more expensive than the program itself. Ms. Cosgrove said that she had not yet considered the staffing costs for these programs, and agreed that if CBJ were to write direct checks to families then they would be considering a much more operationally complex program and may increase administrative costs.

Ms. Gladziszewski expressed appreciation for Ms. Cosgrove's efforts in creating this cost analysis, especially considering the various unknowns for this situation. She said her biggest question would be if anyone will be using any of these options, saying it could be an "If you build it, how many will come" situation. She thanked Ms. Cosgrove for all of her hard work on this difficult task.

Mr. Edwardson also thanked Ms. Cosgrove, and appreciated everyone who worked on this. He asked Ms. Cosgrove if there was anything she needed from the Assembly at this moment in time. Ms. Cosgrove shared that a lot of people worked on this and explained that she used recommendations from ESTF and ROCK and gave a shout out to everyone who helped with this.

If the Assembly would like to move forward with this project, Ms. Cosgrove recommended hiring a temporary K-5 Childcare Coordinator who could primarily focus on this issue. She believes that CBJ could start supporting family community learning pods right away, as they are aware that it is already happening in the community. Ms. Cosgrove also suggested crafting a survey and reach out to large and smaller employers to find out what the needs are, as well as what the next steps are. She added if enrollment for RALLY fills up, they should look at expanding it, and they should get a sense of that within the next three to four weeks. There will be an Assembly Finance Committee meeting this Wednesday, September 2, where there will be a request from JSD for support for RALLY for JSD employees.

Ms. Cosgrove also expressed concern regarding children who may not benefit at all from at-home learning – whether it be due to their parents being away from home, an unsafe home environment, etc. – and considered exploring alternative options that could help those children within our community.

Mr. Edwardson asked how quick the hiring process could be for hiring a temporary Childcare Coordinator. Ms. Cosgrove said that a quick hire could be operational within two to four weeks.

Ms. Triem asked for Ms. Cosgrove to clarify the capacity of RALLY. Ms. Cosgrove explained that the current COVID-19 mitigation strategies allow for cohorts of 14 students with 2 adults. Each school site can take up to three groups of students, which would be 42 kids for each of the three school sites. There may be room for expansion to other schools, but there might be space constraints with some students doing learning on site.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Ms. Cosgrove to describe the steps needed to hire a temporary K-12 Childcare Coordinator. Ms. Cosgrove said that they would just need Assembly approval to move forward with the hiring process, and eventually a supplemental budget request will come forward to the Assembly.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked for clarification regarding the duration of the position, if they would be initially hired for September to December, and what would happen past December 2020.

Ms. Cosgrove clarified that an emergency hire is created without a necessary guarantee of employment, and that would be made very clear up front that although the position is full-time, the longevity is not entirely guaranteed.

MOTION by Ms. Hale for the Assembly to approve the City Manager's office to move forward with the hiring of a childcare coordinator with a commitment through December 2020 but an intent through May 2021 if the Assembly deems necessary and she asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objections, the motion passed by unanimous consent.*

The Committee of the Whole recessed at 8:03 p.m. and the meeting resumed at 8:08 p.m.

D. Community Mitigation Strategies

Ms. Cosgrove shared an advanced, updated version of the Community Risk Matrix page. The EOC made modifications in response to the Assembly's suggestions on gathering numbers as well as looking at restaurants and bars. The main changes were to large gatherings. Initially, Level 3/High allowed 50 people to gather and Level 2/Moderate allowed 100 people. Those numbers were both reduced to Level 3/High allowing 25 people, and Level 2/Moderate allowing 50 people.

The EOC has also allowed for individual organization to file exemption requests, such as movie theatres and faith communities to approach the EOC with their mitigation strategies and a mutual underlying interest of safety.

In regards to restaurants and bars, Level 3/High results in the closure of bars and reducing restaurants to 50% capacity; Level 2/Moderate requires bars not to exceed 50% capacity. The EOC implemented restrictions which came into effect at 12:00p.m. August 21 for Level 2/Moderate. They have done some education and outreach with affected businesses, and Ms. Cosgrove said that most businesses have complied with them.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs had a question regarding the exemptions and mitigation plans. Using the movie theater as an example, she asked how far off could businesses deter from the metric numbers. Ms. Cosgrove explained that the EOC discusses mitigation plan strategies with each applicant who requests an exemption. For example, the movie theater mitigation plan requires masking, social distancing, online reservations services, and a reduced capacity for theater seats.

Ms. Hale had a question regarding family events such as weddings or funerals, and asked how they could encourage families to reach out to the EOC. Ms. Cosgrove shared that no individuals have reached out to her yet in regards to a family event, and suggested that they could provide more messaging around that.

Ms. Cosgrove asked if the Assembly would want to adopt this matrix via ordinance, or if they would prefer for it to continue to be under the City Manager's emergency powers authority.

Mr. Palmer explained that if the Assembly wanted to minimize attacks on authority, it might be best to adopt this matrix as an emergency ordinance. The City Manager's office would then invoke the different sections, likely with input from the Assembly.

Mr. Jones mentioned that the EOC has the power to implement this regardless of Assembly action, and asked the City Attorney if that was correct. Mr. Palmer confirmed that the EOC, specifically the City Manager, has the authority to issue rules, and that option is available if need be.

MOTION by Ms. Hale for the Assembly to direct the City Attorney to draft an emergency ordinance to implement the matrix provided by the EOC, and give the City Manager's Office the authority to make that decision. She also requested that they discuss this at their next scheduled Assembly meeting, and asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objection, that motion passed by unanimous consent.*

E. Juneau Human Rights Commission (JHRC) Resolution 2899

Mr. Bryson reported that the JHRC gave the Assembly Human Resources Committee (HRC) a resolution that was discussed at a joint meeting with HRC. After the joint meeting, Mr. Bryson

worked with Mr. Palmer on including this resolution in tonight's packet as an informational item, then to bring it back to the next Committee of the Whole meeting. Mr. Bryson described this resolution as CBJ saying that the Assembly is going to hold themselves accountable with respect to honoring Human Rights. He spoke highly of the resolution and the effort put into drafting it, and asked the Assembly to give their input on it.

Mr. Edwardson thanked Mr. Bryson and the JHRC. He referenced Section 1-A of the Resolution, which stated the Assembly's intent to "Proclaim its Commitment to Social Justice, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Discrimination Measures". He mentioned that the Assembly does not do any of the things listed, and that the Assembly has two employees: the City Attorney and the City Manager. Mr. Edwardson said that accountability may come to the Assembly, but operationalizing these goals would directly involve the City Attorney and the City Manager. He wanted to hear if there were any ideas on how to operationalize this.

Mr. Palmer said that the Assembly made it pretty clear when it passed the Systemic Racism Review Committee that they would want legal support from the Law Department on that committee. He mentioned that other departments can be directly involved as well, and the Assembly has the authority to provide input on that.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Mr. Bryson if the JHRC would be available to come to the next COW meeting to answer questions and discuss this resolution further with the Assembly.

Ms. Hale asked Mr. Bryson to clarify what the Assembly is taking responsibility for, and what is CBJ Administration responsible for. She said that the resolution appears to commit the Assembly to these tasks, and she would like understand exactly what tasks they are committing to.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs shared that she looks for concrete action within a resolution of this nature, rather than just proclaiming what they are against and what they are for. She recalled testimony that was given during the discussion of the SRRC, the representative from First Alaskans Institute mentioned she provides training to institutions. Ms. Hughes-Skandijs suggested that the Assembly consider discussing that during their next scheduled meeting.

Mr. Bryson said he wanted to mention that when JHRC was drafting this resolution, they were aware of the SRRC ordinance. He explained that this resolution was drafted to work in conjunction with the SRRC, not to compete with the SRRC. He added that this is another action that the Assembly could take to help make progress towards eliminating racism as best they can.

Ms. Hale said she would like for this resolution to look at what can be accomplished through Assembly action, not just directing staff on what to do.

Mr. Edwardson said that the Assembly can proclaim their intent, and then carry that out through the City Manager and/or City Attorney, which directs CBJ Administration. While Mr.

Edwardson understood Ms. Hale's point, he believes that the Assembly can effectively implement change through CBJ staff.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 8:47p.m.

Minutes drafted by Administrative Assistant Lacey Davis and respectfully submitted by Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen this 12th day of April, 2021.