THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Meeting Minutes – August 10, 2020

The Committee of the Whole meeting held virtually via Zoom Meetings, was called into order by Deputy Mayor Maria Gladziszewski at 6:00p.m.

I. ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers Present: Maria Gladziszewski, Loren Jones, Rob Edwardson, Wade Bryson, Carole Triem, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Michelle Bonnet Hale, and Mayor Beth Weldon.

Assemblymembers Absent: Greg Smith

Staff present: City Manager Rorie Watt, Deputy City Manager/Incident Commander Mila Cosgrove, City Attorney Robert Palmer, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Library Director Robert Barr, Deputy Clerk Diane Cathcart, Finance Director Jeff Rogers, Assistant City Attorney Emily Wright, Engineering/Public Works Director Katie Koester, CDD Planner Irene Gallion

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. March 9, 2020 Committee of the Whole Minutes

MOTION by Ms. Hughes-Skandijs to approve the minutes of the March 9, 2020 Committee of the Whole meeting and asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objections, the minutes were approved as presented.*

IV. AGENDA TOPICS

A. Ordinance 2020-32(b) Systemic Racism Review Committee

Mr. Edwardson provided the Committee with an update on Ordinance 2020-32(b). The Systemic Racism Review Committee was last discussed at the July 20, 2020 COW meeting where it was referred to the Human Resources Committee for their meeting on August 3, 2020. The Assembly shared several amendments to the ordinance, which Mr. Edwardson worked with Mr. Palmer to add and amend the ordinance before it was submitted.

Mr. Bryson asked for clarification regarding members being required to have had "experience with unlawful discrimination", to which he said that the committee seems to be concerned with lawful discrimination. Mr. Edwardson clarified that one of the reasons he wanted that phrase in the ordinance was because he would like to cast the net rather wide in who would qualify. He added that being able to recognize unlawful discrimination will aide candidates into understanding lawful discrimination.

Ms. Hale asked Mr. Edwardson to explain the definitive use of the term "systemic racism" and how it compares to overt or covert individual racism as written in the ordinance. Mr. Edwardson said that the term had been suggested by one of the organizations he had been working with. He explained that although systemic racism tends to be more covert and unintentional, it does not necessarily have to be, and it can be overt and intentional.

Mayor Weldon said it would be more fitting if the committee was staffed under City Manager's office, where the Human Resources and Human Rights committees are staffed, rather than the City Attorney's office. Mr. Edwardson said that he believed there was a direct connection between the committee that is reviewing statutes and the people that write the statutes.

Ms. Hale recommended changing the draft to have the committee work under the City Manager. She also proposed having the Assembly provide $50,000 to the City Manager's Office for the remainder of the fiscal year.

MOTION by Mayor Weldon to change the language of the ordinance to have the committee work under the City Manager.

Mr. Watt said that this committee will likely work with both the City Manager's Office and the City Attorney's Office, and his guess was that the committee will be a lot more time-intensive on the Manager's Office. Mr. Palmer shared the City Manager's perspective that the committee will require input from the both of them.

Hearing no objections, the motion was passed by unanimous consent.

MOTION by Ms. Hale for the Assembly to provide $50,000 to the City Manager's Office for the remainder of the fiscal year as the Manager's Office sees fit to use to assist in the implementation of this committee.

In speaking to her motion, Ms. Hale said that she would like to provide resources to the Manager's Office, considering their increased workload. Mayor Weldon noted that this did not seem like an amendment to this ordinance, but rather should be an appropriation ordinance.

Mr. Palmer agreed with the Mayor, and said that because this title has already been introduced it would be easier to introduce Ms. Hale's motion as a supplemental appropriation ordinance.

Ms. Hale amended her motion to request an appropriating ordinance be drafted for introduction. *Hearing no objection, the amendment was accepted.*

MOTION by Ms. Hale to modify the term dates from three years to December 30, 2021, at that point the Assembly could review the results of the committee.

Objection by Mr. Edwardson. Mr. Edwardson said that three year term limits are standard with Assembly committees, and there is nothing preventing the Assembly from making adjustments to the committee if needed.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs said she also appreciated where Ms. Hale was coming from, and agreed that this is a massive problem to solve which requires a lot of thoughtful work. She said that she agreed with Mr. Edwardson, and added that nothing would prevent the Assembly from taking action prior to the sunset date. Ms. Hughes-Skandijs said that she would speak against changing the sunset date to one year instead of the typical three years.

Ms. Gladziszewski referenced her experience with the Juneau Commission of Sustainability and how they worked towards their charge. She believes the duty belongs to the Assembly to set the charge of the committee and that they should be the ones having this conversation. She acknowledged that the Assembly has not had a long discussion on this topic, nor have they had the opportunity to hear what experts in the field have to say on the matter. Ms. Gladziszewski said that this could bring out a forced review of this issue, which she believes is not a bad idea. She said she would be supportive of this.

Mr. Edwardson responded to Ms. Gladziszewski's comments, he said having this committee sunset in a year would potentially disinterest prospective applicants from applying to it. He said he did not understand why the Assembly would not simply make any changes to the committee as needed while the committee completes its three year term.

Ms. Hale asked Mr. Edwardson to explain why he felt that people would be discouraged from applying to a committee with a one year term, and asked if he was concerned that one year would not be enough time. Mr. Edwardson responded that he was thinking of regular business stages of group development. He mentioned that this would be a new group in its developmental stages, and a dynamic will have to be created with time, and giving them only one year to do so would be risky. Mr. Edwardson added that there is a difference between signing on for one year and signing on for three years, signing up for three years would be a commitment towards building something.

Ms. Hale thanked Mr. Edwardson for his response, and expressed her concern that this committee may be charged with a large workload, and said she was trying to find a balance. Ms. Hale withdrew her motion.

Ms. Gladziszewski called for a two minute at-ease so Ms. Hale could confer with Mr. Palmer about possible amendment language.

MOTION by Ms. Hale to add a provision to Ordinance 2020-32(b) which called for a review of the ordinance with the joint bodies before December 31, 2021 and asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.*

Ms. Triem asked Mr. Palmer to clarify if the Assembly has the choice to interview applicants for empowered boards, or if that is a requirement written in an ordinance.

Mr. Palmer answered that if this ordinance were to pass at the August 24 meeting, there would be a 30 day delay as it would not go into effect until September 24. During that interim period, Mr. Palmer said the Clerk's Office could work on advertising the vacancies for these positions. He added that sometime around September/October would be when the full HRC would conduct interviews to appoint members to the committee.

Mayor Weldon believed that Ms. Triem was trying to make sure that the full Assembly would also be able to review the appointments made to the committee, that it would not only be up to the four member HRC.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Mr. Edwardson to explain how this committee would do its work. She said if members of this committee were not present at the Assembly and committee meetings, such as budget meetings, she is concerned about how they will understand what had occurred at those meetings. She suggested adding into the ordinance that make members attend those meetings. Ms. Gladziszewski said she is trying to understand how the committee could opine on the systemic racism that may or may not be present in the budget without fully understanding how the budget works.

Mr. Edwardson answered that he would begin by paying attention to the outcomes presented by the committee. He believes that a budget is a planning document, not a financial document. He said that if he were on the committee, he would primarily focus on the Assembly's intended outcome, rather than the intricacies of the budget. He added that his concern would be if a particular department was doing what it is supposed to be doing, how effectively it was doing it, and if there were any unintended outcomes.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked Mr. Watt to clarify a comment he made about the committee's implementation of their charge needing to go through the Manager's office. She said she wanted to be sure that the committee itself would be charged with coming up with solutions.

Mr. Watt said we do not know what this committee will be interested in, they would need to work with the Manager's staff. He said that if the committee was aggressive in trying to implement their charge, it might require a lot of work and time from the Manager's Office. Mr. Watt said he does not know how the committee would go about their work, or how much staff they would require to assist them in working through those issues.

Mr. Edwardson said he anticipates the product from this committee to be a recommendation for the Assembly, not for them to push a specific agenda or specific changes. It would be up to the Assembly's discretion to decide what they would do next.

<u>MOTION</u> by Ms. Hughes-Skandijs to forward this ordinance, as amended, to the full Assembly at the next Regular Assembly meeting for Public Hearing and asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objection, the motion passed by unanimous consent.*

B. COVID Risk Metrics

Mr. Barr gave an overview of the new CBJ COVID-19 Dashboard and its features. The first feature was the 14-Day Active Case Trend, which documented how many active cases are in Juneau, how many cases have recovered, and the number of deceased patients. These numbers combined nonresidents and residents, as they are all still considered Juneau cases. The dashboard also featured data specific to Bartlett Regional Hospital. This documented the current number of COVID-19 patients at BRH, patients at BRH with pending COVID-19 test results, patients in isolation at BRH (for any reason, not just COVID-related), the total number of beds, and the number of available CCU beds. Mr. Barr explained that the dashboard did not include data regarding the ventilators at BRH was because there was a shortage in staffing to operate the ventilators, and generally patients who need ventilators would be medivacced elsewhere.

Mr. Barr shared that the pie graph was a new feature of the dashboard and it documented the type of case acquisition over the past 14 days. This was split into four categories: Community Spread, Secondary Transmission, Travel, and Under Investigation. He shared that this will be a useful tool in measuring the risk level in Juneau as we move forward. Following the pie chart, there is a graph representing the number of tests that have been conducted. This included Airport Testing, Symptomatic Testing, and Medical Tests. The final part of the dashboard was a chart that showed how many airport travelers Juneau has received each day over the past several weeks. The graph compared the amount of in-state travelers to out-of-state travelers, and also provided data on how many travelers have tested positive for COVID-19 since June 1, 2020.

Mayor Weldon shared that people can be tested through CCFR testing in advance of a medical procedure.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Mr. Barr if they could add the test positivity rate in the dashboard display. Mr. Barr said that he could add that, and it is also displayed in the Risk Metrics page that he would share later in the meeting.

Ms. Hale mentioned that communication can be difficult in times like these, and there is so much information being shared that people may become overwhelmed. She asked if the data represented on the dashboard was reflective of what has been happening in Juneau over the past two weeks. Mr. Barr confirmed that the information being shared through the dashboard was accurate and reflects data collected over the past 14 days.

Ms. Gladziszewski suggested with respect to the colors used in the dashboard that they correspond to the same colors used by the state in their dashboard. Ms. Triem mentioned that it would be helpful to include labels on their graphs, so that those who experience color blindness can understand them as well.

Mr. Barr shared the Risk Metrics page with the Assembly, which was split into three categories: Disease Situation, BRH Capacity, and Public Health Capacity. Each category has a series of questions and indicators that are derived from the Department of Health and Social Services.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Mr. Barr if the EOC metrics match what the State recommends in terms of risk, and mentioned the difference between the States measures (Low, Medium, High) and the City's measures (Minimal, Moderate, High, Very High).

Mr. Barr said that the EOC's Minimal/Moderate/High categories match with the State's Low/Medium/High categories. He shared that the EOC has added a fourth "Very High" level which would be the "Hunker Down" level.

Ms. Cosgrove provided information on the Risk Metrics featured on the dashboard. One of the features the EOC planned to add to the dashboard was an Overall Community Risk Assessment, a brief narrative that describes what is happening in three risk metric categories: Disease Situation, Hospital Capacity, and Public Healthy Capacity. Ms. Cosgrove shared that currently the Disease Situation was in Level 2/Moderate, and Hospital Capacity and Public Health Capacity were both in Level 1/Minimal. She said that this assessment looks at both the qualitative and quantitative pieces of the overall community risk.

Ms. Cosgrove shared the Community Mitigation Measures from the dashboard. She explained that a reason why the EOC decided to go with four Incident Risk levels (compared to the three levels used by the State) was to have a better ability to read the local situation. She said the EOC wanted to be as precise as possible about what they are asking the community to do in response to the risk level. If Juneau were to reach Level 4/Very High, the EOC suggested that masks and face covering be required whenever anyone is outside the home, regardless of being indoors or outside. Social distancing is featured in varying degrees in the Minimal, Moderate, and High levels, but Level 4/Very High is when the community would be advised to "Hunker Down" and maintain as little interaction as possible.

Ms. Cosgrove said that the EOC reflected the large gathering numbers recommended by the State, but added that those numbers are a little too high for comfort. She explained that the majority of current local cases have been attributed to large family gatherings. She noted that the EOC modelled their bars and restaurant mitigation strategies closely after the model used in Ketchikan. They also separated Personal Services and Gyms into its own separate category, whereas the State model combined them with Bars and Restaurants.

The Travel mitigation strategies reflect what is required under Health Mandate 10, and has specific protocols on each level for both inter- and intrastate travel.

Ms. Triem asked Ms. Cosgrove if the Assembly should consider the impact of a nearby outbreak (in a place such as Anchorage or Seattle) when making policy decisions. Ms. Cosgrove mentioned that Health Mandate 10 was going into effect starting tomorrow. In-state travelers have the option, but are not required, to receive tests. She suggested that we strongly encourage travelers to maintain social distancing until they receive their test results.

Ms. Hale asked Ms. Cosgrove if the EOC would recommend the Assembly mandate testing for travelers if Juneau were to rise to Level 3/High. Ms. Cosgrove said that if Juneau were to rise to Level 3, all travelers would be treated as if they were traveling from out of state.

Mayor Weldon suggested having the Assembly address the "large gathering" numbers, they could stick with the numbers recommended by the state, or they could go with the lower numbers that were used by Ketchikan Gateway Borough. Ms. Hale agreed and suggested they use the lower numbers used by Ketchikan. Ms. Hale also asked that it explicitly address the wearing masks while attending large gatherings. *Hearing no objection, those changes will be made to the Risk Metrics form.*

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs made a comment in response to concerns about Juneau moving away from the state's measures, she believes it makes sense to customize measures specifically for Juneau. She also noted that the EOC table used the term "recommend" all the way up until Level 4/Very High, and said there is no mid-step in which bars would reduce capacity. She suggested the EOC reduce the capacity of the bars for Level 3.

Ms. Cosgrove mentioned that the model for bars and restaurants was closely modelled after the model used in Ketchikan, and that the EOC could put in a capacity number. She also said the EOC had staff go into bars and restaurants to observe, and reported back that restaurants have been largely compliant: wearing masks, spreading out furniture, etc. The report also found that bars were across the board, and Ms. Cosgrove recommended speaking with local bar owners to ensure they understand the safety protocols in place.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked if there were any objections from the Assembly to adjust the bars and restaurant Level 3/Very High protocols to be similar to the State's. Ms. Gladziszewski asked if Ms. Cosgrove could review the community mitigation strategies and bring them to the next meeting. Ms. Cosgrove said she would review the current measures with the EOC, and bring revisions back to the Assembly at its next COW meeting on August 31.

C. ESTF Recommendations on Childcare

Ms. Martinson provided the ESTF recommendations regarding childcare to the Assembly. She said the 4,700 students of the Juneau School District will begin the 2020-2021 school year entirely online through distance learning. The ESTF wanting to gain a thorough understanding on what this means for working parents, as well as the impacts this could have on Juneau's economy. The ESTF worked with several stakeholders across the community to examine the economic impacts of the school schedule.

She said that they decided to prioritize the youngest students, kindergarten through fifth grade, which make up about 2,001 students in the JSD. The ESTF worked with the JSD to send out a survey to parents to conduct a needs assessment, and they received responses back from 1,300 students. The results found that 45% of parents said they would need to continue working to support their families. She calculated that approximately 740 students would be in need of childcare services.

The ESTF recommended the Assembly to direct city staff to come up with a strategy to approach this issue. Ms. Martinson said that this would need to be a full time coordinated position, rather than a couple of groups of volunteers from the community.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked the Assembly what they would like to do about this, and encouraged them to ask ESTF any questions they may have.

Ms. Hale recalled a recent meeting in which the City Manager suggested a possible joint meeting with the JSD. She said the actions of the Assembly and the School Board intersect. She acknowledged that August 24 is coming quickly, and they need to address the critical needs of community, kids, and parents. She suggested having the ESTF, JSD, School Board and Assembly all meet together to discuss a direction forward.

Ms. Triem suggested having representatives from different childcare providers across the community also included in any discussion. Mayor Weldon mentioned that the recommendations that Ms. Martinson provided were suggested by childcare providers, and they are already involved in this process.

Ms. Martinson clarified that this recommendations came from the ESTF, but were compiled from information gathered from several conversations with the School Board, JSD, Tlingit & Haida, AEYCC, and various childcare providers. She explained that she is only representing the ESTF, and through the conversations she had, it became evident that those organizations would like to provide a variety of childcare options for families to choose from. Mr. Botelho said he would like to clarify that the ESTF had not voted on or endorsed these recommendations, but agree that this information should be made available to the Assembly.

Mr. Watt said meeting with the School Board would be important, but added that this will be an ongoing issue. He said that part of this issue is that they do not know how long they will need to try to provide childcare, which is directly linked to the school’s reopening plan and to the spread of the disease.

MOTION by Mayor Weldon for the Assembly to direct CBJ staff to coordinate a comprehensive childcare strategy for Juneau in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and asked for unanimous consent.

Objection by Mr. Jones. He spoke to his objection by referencing the last AFC meeting in which the Assembly chose not work on more hefty items due to staff constraints. He mentioned that the beginning of this COW meeting, the Assembly moved an ordinance that would be a big burden for staff. Mr. Jones said this would put another burden on staff, and he said he did not see any value in having CBJ staff come up with more work for something he hoped would be a short term problem.

Ms. Triem appreciated the all of the work that was put in by the ESTF, but the recommendation for the Assembly to figure out a solution is not a very helpful recommendation. Ms. Triem said that the City should take this issue on and try to figure it out, but does not think that telling the City to simply figure it out for themselves is the best way to solve this issue.

Mr. Bryson agreed with Ms. Triem's comments. He said that the JSD told the Assembly that they cannot safely bring large groups of students together, but now the recommendation is to find ways to put large groups of children together in childcare. He added that childcare providers have already searched to try to find a facility to safely have children in, and there are none available.

Mr. Watt mentioned that this process was going to be difficult all the way through, and discussing the use of facility space may be one of the reasons as to why the Assembly should meet with the School Board and childcare providers.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs said she would like to figure out how and where to focus resources, and brought up that parents may not be ready to send their children back to childcare facilities in groups with other children yet.

Ms. Martinson clarified the ESTF did not want to try to solve this problem without receiving direction from the Assembly. She said that they do not wish to dump the responsibility onto the Assembly, but instead would like from the Assembly to share its input: should the ESTF pursue this or not and if so, which organizations should they work with, etc.

Mr. Botelho echoed Ms. Martinson's comments, and acknowledged that they might not be able to provide services to everyone in the community. He mentioned that they may want to direct resources to provide for those in our community who are the most disadvantaged. He added that identifying who those people are, and matching them with the resources, time, and facilities that best suit their needs would require someone devoted full-time for some period of time; which is what the ESTF is recommending the Assembly to assign staff to.

Mr. Edwardson said he thinks it is too much to ask city staff to come up with a comprehensive plan, but he does think that the City has to do something, and could possibly come up with a comprehensive framework. He said that he is in favor of having city staff come up with something for the Assembly to react to.

Ms. Gladziszewski objected to the comprehensive childcare strategy language, but agreed with Mr. Edwardson's comments. She said she thinks that city staff should look into the childcare needs of our community, and sketch out alternatives.

Mayor Weldon amended her motion to replace the word "coordinate" with the language "look into", making the motion state: "…*for the Assembly to direct CBJ staff to* ***look into*** *a comprehensive childcare strategy for Juneau in light of the COVID-19 pandemic."*

Objection by Mr. Jones. He said that he has not heard anything that spoke to the ability to come up with a comprehensive framework, and spoke to the personal risk at stake for the teachers and childcare providers.

Objection by Mr. Bryson. He agreed with Mr. Jones, and said that just because we want something to happen in Juneau does not necessarily mean that it should happen. He mentioned his time on the Childcare Committee, in which they searched for childcare solutions for a small segment of the young population. He compared that to the current situation that involves several times the amount of children, and said it is an unrealistic expectation from a business perspective.

Roll Call Vote on the Motion to direct City staff to look into a comprehensive childcare strategy:
Ayes: Mayor Weldon, Triem, Hughes-Skandijs, Hale, Edwardson, Gladziszewski.
Nays: Jones, Bryson.
Motion passed. Six (6) Ayes, Two (2) Nays.

V. OTHER ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mr. Palmer said the Assembly passed the nonprofit ordinance last Monday, after which the Juneau Community Foundation started implementing it and realized there was a typo in the ordinance regarding eligibility for nonprofits. Specifically, for nonprofits that received PPP, EIDL, or CARES grant funding. Mr. Palmer said he did not believe that this was the intent of the Assembly, and will be bringing an ordinance that slightly amends the nonprofit ordinance to the August 24 meeting.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at: 9:01 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Beth McEwen, MMC
Municipal Clerk