# ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE
# COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

February 4, 2019, 6:00 PM.
Assembly Chambers - Municipal Building

## MINUTES

## I. ROLL CALL

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

Assemblymembers present: Mayor Beth Weldon, Maria Gladziszewski, Mary Becker, Loren Jones, Rob Edwardson, Carole Triem, Wade Bryson, Michelle Hale, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs

Assemblymembers absent: None

Staff present: City Manager Rorie Watt, Deputy Manager Mila Cosgrove, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Chief Housing Officer Scott Ciambor; Community Development Director Jill Maclean, Housing and Homelessness Coordinator Irene Gallion

## II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

*The agenda was approved as presented.*

## III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

### A. January 14, 2019 Assembly Committee of the Whole Minutes

**MOTION** by Ms. Becker to approve the minutes with corrections. *Hearing no objection, the minutes of the January 14, 2019 Committee of the Whole meeting were approved with corrections.*

## IV. AGENDA TOPICS

### A. Census 2020 Presentation

Ms. Cosgrove introduced Census 2020 coordinator Barbara Miranda.

Ms. Miranda gave a presentation on the upcoming Census 2020, including the history of how the census has evolved over the decades, how it will be conducted in 2020 and the importance of getting as high a count return as possible. She explained the steps they hope to take, with the help of CBJ, on encouraging people to participate and respond to the census. She explained that approximately $2.1 billion in federal funds provided each year is allocated to Alaska which comes out to approximately $3,000 per Alaskan counted. Those funds go towards programs that include, but are not limited to, transportation infrastructure and services, job training centers, school funds such as Title 1 grants, national school lunch programs, Section 8 housing vouchers, medical assistance, and senior and foster care programs.

The goal is to have a Complete Count Committee working during the year leading up to the census for public awareness and to help increase actual census return rates once it does take place. There are two partnership specialists located in Juneau, Ms. Miranda and Ms. Myrna Gardner. They are hoping to create a Complete Count Committee with the United Way as a partner and part of their efforts will include recruitment of census workers that will bring jobs to Juneau and Alaska. Census Day is April 8, 2020. Alaska is unique in that there will be an early start in January 2020 in some remote Interior areas of Alaska during which the Census will be hiring local Alaskans to be enumerators. The main focus period everywhere else will run March 23-April 8, 2020.

Ms. Miranda answered a number of questions from Assemblymembers including those pertaining to the citizenship question (which is still going through the court process) and the impact that under counts has on Alaska; in particular, the under counting by 43-55% in rural areas.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked what, if anything, the census workers were requesting of CBJ at this time. Ms. Miranda explained that, historically CBJ has taken somewhat of an organizational role to pull together a group of people. She noted that traditionally the Deputy City Manager has been organizing the Complete Count Committee by invitation and the Assembly has been very supportive of the committee's work.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked if any of the members had any objections to the formation of the Complete Count Committee and support from the Deputy City Manager. Hearing no objection, CBJ staff will work with the Census staff and the Complete Count Committee.

**B. Request to Rename Willoughby District**

Mr. Watt explained the packet contained a cover memo from him and a letter from Fran Houston requesting the Willoughby District be renamed Auk Village. This is currently being worked on in the Blueprint Downtown Committee and Mr. Watt didn't know if the Assembly wanted to refer this to that committee or keep it at the Assembly level.

During Assembly discussion, they were generally in favor of renaming it to something traditional and wanted additional information on the history of that area to be brought back to the Committee of the Whole for additional review and work. Assemblymembers also expressed a desire for an opportunity at which public comment could be taken on the matter whether that might be in the COW before going to the full Assembly or at another venue.

Mr. Watt said he will try to bring some historical information along with maps back to the committee that might help everyone understand the land of the Aak w Kwaan people in the area.

**C. Subport Update (MHT Property)**

Mr. Watt said he was happy to report that the Mental Health Trust "Trust" will be selling Lot C1 which is considered the "construction yard" area on the subport property. He explained that this is a great opportunity for Juneau and is 3 acres with about 2 of those acres being filled uplands.

Over time, there have been many ideas floated on possible uses for that land and the Trust is charged with managing their land in the best interest of the beneficiaries of the Trust. Mr. Watt said that the Trust is actually two separate entities: 1) Land Office and 2) the Mental Health Trust "The Trust" office. He went on to explain that the Trust has been very generous to CBJ for things such as Housing First, grant funding for Housing/homelessness, etc... Whereas, the Land Office, which is tasked with making the most of the land for sale to benefit the trustees, had been difficult to work with but that is now in the past.

He said that the Land Office is looking at offering this property for sale using some type of auction to the highest bidder after they review the appraisal which is estimated to be around $3 Million. They have put out an RFP for a broker to manage the sale and although it is a slower process than CBJ might wish, it is moving and they anticipate that will be done by this summer.

Additional discussion took place and Mr. Watt answered a number of questions from

Assemblymembers about the tidelands vs. uplands ownership and how it may or may not eventually affect the seawalk. He also answered questions about the process that occurred with the Trust's Lands Office up to this point. When Mr. Bryson asked about whether CBJ had ever expressed an interest in owning the parcel, Mr. Watt explained while CBJ is always invited to the table when waterfront land discussions are taking place, he would be hesitant for CBJ to step into a land purchase when private sector entities have already expressed an interest in purchasing it. He did note that in respect to the seawalk, it is rather flexible and they eventually want a complete walkway for pedestrian access between the rock dump and the Juneau-Douglas Bridge. He said that he hopes to encourage and work with any private property owners to negotiate keeping the seawalk pathways open to pedestrians while meeting all parties needs.

## D. Housing Action Plan Strategy Prioritization (Assembly Goal)

Ms. Gladziszewski noted that at the Assembly retreat they wanted to receive an update on the priorities of the Housing Action Plan (HAP). Chief Housing Officer Scott Ciambor gave an status update on the areas identified by the Assembly at its retreat related to the prioritization from the Housing Action Plan. The next steps identified were to improve downtown housing, examine the status of the Affordable Housing Commission, and to identify the next CBJ owned parcels for residential development.

Mr. Ciambor provided an overview of the Housing Action Plan along with a spreadsheet outlining the strategies, the status, and the metrics of those items requested above by the Assembly. He noted that he will be providing the housing data indicators that are tied to the metrics as a quarterly report in the future.

Mr. Ciambor said that most recently, the Assembly has been working on the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) and most currently the discussion of the program guidelines. They had requested that an additional piece be added to that but in order to move forward with the Affordable Housing Fund, the role of the Affordable Housing Commission needs to be finalized> Currently, the governing legislation for that commission gives them the authority to monitor the Affordable Housing Fund. He said the status of the commission is currently under review at the Assembly Human Resources Committee so he will be interested to see the direction the Assembly takes on that.

With respect to making land available to the public for residential development, he updated them on the status of the Pederson Hill project and also noted that Renninger Subdivision also has some lots still available for purchase. The Lands Division is working on those parcels for sale.

Mr. Ciambor then referred to the last portion of his memo that speaks to engagement with developers on project development. That is ongoing. He, as well as Lands and other departments, are often asked about how the city can play a role in potential big projects, whether those are senior assisted living projects, or working on some of the big properties downtown. He noted the current work being done by the Blueprint Downtown Committee project and that there is an entire section of the Housing Action Plan that is devoted to downtown. He said the Assembly will be hearing soon about the progress on that through CDD's report from the Blueprint Downtown Committee work.

He said with respect to the medium horizon goal around the tax abatement program, he recently sent an email to the Assembly about a tax abatement program that is being launched in Anchorage following a recent bill passed by the Alaska Legislature. He said that topic has been discussed before at the Assembly Finance Committee and will likely come before them again soon and especially as the work of the Blueprint Downtown Committee moves forward.

Mr. Ciambor reported that various CBJ departments including JPD, CDD, Law, and Admin have been in discussions about coming up with some solutions to the blighted property issue and will be bringing something to the Assembly in the future for its consideration. He said that the good news is that more than half the strategies identified by the Assembly's goals on housing are either in place or in process.

Mr. Watt said that with respect to the Assembly's goal "To prioritize Housing Action Plan strategies" staff would like the Assembly to give them some direction. He said that if they have higher priority/shorter term things that the Assembly wants staff to work on, he would like to hear those.

Assemblymembers and Mr. Watt discussed the processes involved in implementing the Housing Action Plan and the timings of the different priorities. They had discussions regarding the type of the direction the Assembly has given to staff regarding the role of the city, how best to approach the HAP strategies. Mr. Edwardson asked whether staff felt the Assembly had given them enough direction and if a change in direction was in order, if that would jeopardize the work already in progress. Mr. Watt said that in hindsight, it may have been a better approach to do something similar to a model currently being used by the Child Care Committee. He and Mr. Ciambor shared the great amount of work that has been accomplished since the HAP was adopted and that they are two years into a 30-year plan. They talked about the big picture approach vs. the granular approach and trying to find the best fit for the Assembly in those two approaches. Mr. Watt explained that if they did need to change direction, they could and would.

Ms. Gladziszewski noted that one of the things they continue to hear about is the need to change their development standards, zoning, and over regulation by the city. She also noted that an overall message from the plan writers indicated that if the city wanted to intervene and assist with development, it would cost quite a bit of money to the tune of approximately $40,000 per unit. Ms. Gladziszewski asked where we were with respect to standards, zoning, and regulatory changes.

Mr. Ciambor noted that Chapter 7 of the Housing Action Plan is the area that speaks to those issues and that CDD staff along with the Planning Commission through the work of the Title 49 Committee have begun work on those pieces of the plan. Recent work was done with the alternative residential subdivisions and more work will be coming in the future.

Some of the key priorities members identified that they wished to hear more about included the downtown quality housing and getting more people living in the downtown area year round and the concerns surrounding blighted properties and the role of the city in addressing those. Members also expressed their appreciation for the information provided and look forward to seeing the quarterly housing indicator/metric reports.

## E. Future of Sleep Off/Homeless Services

Mr. Watt said that the packet has a memo from him about the future of the sleep off facilities currently provided at the Rainforest Recovery Center (RRC) at Bartlett Regional Hospital (BRH). He said that staff has been puzzling over how best to provide the sleep off services while making the best use of taxpayer money. He explained that BRH receives $1.5 Million annually from liquor and tobacco taxes that are used for the purposes of providing addiction recovery and sleep off services. The sleep off piece is housed in the RRC and is just for that purpose - to allow those who are too inebriated or incapacitated to be able to care for themselves, a place to sleep it off until they can care for themselves. Mr. Watt said that out of the $1.5 Million that is given to BRH, approximately $850,000 of those dollars are used for the staffing and transportation of the sleep off program. He said he didn't know when the sleep off program began and that Mr. Jones may know more about that but with the opening of housing first phase I, the night utilization at sleep off is down substantially and that essentially half the nights in a month, no one sleeps at sleep off. In terms of bed utilization per night, calculations come out to approximately 20-25% usage. That is a good thing with fewer people needing that service but it has triggered them to look at better ways to deliver the same service more efficiently.

The main expense relating to sleep off is the cost for staffing, checking on people, transporting them and monitoring them during the period they are using the sleep off facility. Mr. Watt said that in light of that, they have looked at the possibility of transitioning this service to CCFR since their staff is already providing a large portion of those response calls. He said this may be a good program fit for

CCFR to provide for a career ladder opportunity for CCFR staff. He said they are not looking for any decisions at this time from the Assembly but wanted to inform them as to the discussions they have been having as well as the possible solutions they are exploring.

Ms. Gladziszewski asked Assemblymembers if they had any questions for staff.

Mr. Jones said he has thousands of questions. He commented that in December of 1975, he started driving the van as a city employee picking up the inebriates downtown. He said he'd like to remind the Manager that state law requires that a person who is incapacitated is required to be taken to a health care facility or approved treatment facility. He also reminded the Manager that CBJ paid a wrongful death suit because JPD took someone to corrections, corrections sent them back to the hospital in an ambulance, they were seen by a nurse in the ambulance and were sent back to the jail and they died at the jail. He said this is serious business and not just having a nice warm place for someone to sleep off inebriation. He said that BRH has been trying to get rid of RRC for quite some time and that BRH needs to meet its responsibility to provide health care to the community and shouldn't be pawning this off on CCFR. He said he thinks the Manager is going in the wrong direction with this and should be working with the hospital and not move this over to CCFR and that he would never support such a proposal.

Ms. Hale said it is hard to compare Juneau to other areas of the state in that there are not a large number of communities of the same size and isolation that Juneau has for comparison purposes. That said, she would like to know more about how other communities in Alaska address this, especially in light of Mr. Jones' comments about the statutory requirements.

Mr. Watt said that he has had some conversations with Alaska Mental Health Trust staff about this and was told that it is different from community to community. He said that it is not necessarily consistent or stable. He said that in Anchorage they tried for a while to have a contractor and that fell through due to insurance and liability issues. Some of the Native Health Consortiums have different solutions.

Mr. Watt said in response to Mr. Jones' comments that he would object to some of what Mr. Jones said. Mr. Watt stated that no one is trying to pawn anything off, but they are trying to look at all possible solutions. He also noted that he in no way directs BRH Board or BRH staff and that this may be a topic of discussion the Assembly may wish to have with the BRH Board when they meet together for their joint meeting. Mr. Watt said that his main thought in working on this issue was what would be the best use of the $1000/night funds currently being spent on this program and whether they could find more efficient ways to deliver the services needed while potentially lowering the cost to provide those services.

Mr. Edwardson said his concerns are that when the sleep off center is needed, it is needed and compared it to a fire extinguisher that is not needed for 98% of its life but does exactly what it is needed for in that small percentage of time that it was desperately needed. Same thing with the sleep off center. He felt that the Housing First is still quite new and they don't know what the trends will be so he felt it may be too soon to begin making drastic changes.

Mayor Weldon said that she agreed with Mr. Jones that this program remain with BRH. She went on to ask about the costs associated with the BLS crew when they added that to CCFR. She also asked about the staffing hours at Housing First's clinic. Mr. Watt responded that the staffing hours of the Housing First clinic are just during regular business hours. He said in looking at every non-profit in town and particularly the social service dollars and those non-profits are stressed and don't have very much funds. He said they felt that $850,000 was a lot of money to provide these services and they were just looking for a better way to spend public dollars. He's not closed to any ideas but he is also open to options.

Ms. Cosgrove looked up the BLS numbers Mayor Weldon asked about. She said that in looking at the budget submission just the seasonal BLS from May through September personal services cost approximately $227,000 for a 12 hour shift. If they were to extrapolate that, it would come out to approximately $500,000/year for a 12 hour shift.

Mr. Bryson said he has had a few firefighters address him about this topic and they are not in favor of it. Mr. Bryson asked if this is something that might be able to be combined with the the cold weather shelter and possibly have volunteers providing some of the staffing.

Ms. Gladziszewski said she appreciates staff looking at how we spend our money and looking for creative solutions for problem solving. Mr. Watt said that BRH does not see the sleep off center as a medical service through the current administration. He said the way they presented it to him was "this is what they are going to do." He suggested this may be an appropriate topic for the joint Assembly/BRH Board meeting. He also suggested that there is a wealth of expertise currently on the Assembly about this topic and may be a possibility for a Special Assembly Subcommittee to be created if they had the appetite to do so to look at it. Ms. Triem said she would like them to explore this further with more analysis.

Ms. Hale said that she would also appreciate additional analysis on this and noted that BRH discussed this topic at its planning meeting. She also noted that there are medical issues that BRH are required to do and do provide in certain circumstances. She said that as the Assembly liaison to the BRH Board, she would be willing to serve on a subcommittee if the Mayor chose to form one.

## V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the body, the meeting adjourned at 7:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth McEwen, MMC
Municipal Clerk