

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA

Meeting Minutes – March 19, 2020

MEETING NO. 2020-09: The Special Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly held in the Assembly Chambers of the Municipal Building, was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Beth Weldon.

I. FLAG SALUTE

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly Members Present: Mayor Beth Weldon, Maria Gladziszewski, Loren Jones, Rob Edwardson, Wade Bryson, Carole Triem, Michelle Hale (telephonic), Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, and Greg Smith

Assembly Absent: None.

Staff Present: City Manager Rorie Watt, City Attorney Robert Palmer, Deputy City Manager Mila Cosgrove, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Robert Barr, Matt Scranton

III. AGENDA TOPICS

A. COVID-19 Update and Actions

City Manager Rorie Watt described process for calling up the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Incident Commander Mila Cosgrove. Ms. Cosgrove gave briefing of the ICS 201, which was the incident report for the first operational period. She answered questions from Assemblymembers regarding packet materials and the response by CBJ so far. She also went over the EOC organizational chart, the current and planned objectives, the rubric, the current and planned actions, strategies, and tactics. She then answered questions regarding the roll of public health and the communications channels including Mr. Watt's role as the liaison between the EOC and the Assembly as well as the public as well as Emergency Programs Manager Tom Mattice also having a liaison role with the EOC and the State Public Health.

Members then discussed the local response to the COVID-19 as well as regional impacts it may have on neighboring communities that use Juneau as a hub for medical purposes. They discussed voluntary vs. mandatory screening per the Governor's mandates.

Ms. Cosgrove reported on the Homeless Decompression Task Force that is working through the EOC. They have commandeered the JACC for use as the Cold Weather Shelter, which is being run by St. Vincent DePaul. She explained it is an interim step and they are having ongoing

conversations to try to work through issues related to space, staffing, and appropriately addressing quarantine and isolation.

Ms. Cosgrove then reported on the Communications Strike Unit, which was stood up last week. Beth Weigel has been assigned to the Public Information Officer (PIO) position in the EOC. Lisa Phu has also been moved to working full time now. As they have closed certain public facilities, they have pulled in some of those staff resources to work with the EOC. The Communications unit will be posting the FAQs online. Some of the messaging includes outreach to the community urging members if they have already put up their two weeks supply of groceries to allow other community members to do so to allow the supply chain to keep up with the demand.

Assemblymembers and Ms. Cosgrove then discussed supply chain issues, especially in light of the bulk of Juneau's supply chain coming from Seattle, which is currently a hot zone for the virus.

Ms. Cosgrove then gave a report about CBJ Operations. Starting March 20, Capital Transit will start offering free service. They are asking the community to use Capital Transit for critical needs only. They have given drivers the ability to refuse service to those individuals who are clearly symptomatic. So far, those staff from facilities that have been shut down are being reallocated to EOC roles. They have not required employees to work from home but they are allowing employees to telework if they have the need to do so. They are working with individual staff members on a case-by-case basis. They have also cancelled all work related trips and they are encouraging staff not to travel out of town while on personal leave. If they do chose to travel out of town on personal leave, they have been notified that they may be subject to a 14-day quarantine upon returning to town.

Assemblymembers and staff then discussed how to convey those messages as well as what could be done to delay or prevent the virus from coming into Juneau through the airport. The Governor can restrict non-essential travel and the Assembly asked what authority they may have to do that and how do they get a message to the governor that they want to do that. They also discussed what staff is doing if they have family members who are coming back to town after traveling.

Mr. Palmer then gave information about the state travel mandate requiring people traveling from high areas of concern to quarantine upon arrival. He then referenced the state press briefing which the Governor and Alaska Chief Medical Officer Anne Zink appeared earlier in the evening. During that briefing, Dr. Zink said they are discouraging non-essential/non-urgent travel. Mr. Palmer said this would be an opportunity for the Assembly to give some direction to the residents and visitors in Juneau that they are recommended to stay put if they are a traveler.

The Assemblymembers then discussed imposing travel restrictions and/or asking the Governor to limit unnecessary travel. Ms. Gladziszewski asked Mr. Palmer if they could ask for mandatory screening for everyone coming through the airport, especially from Seattle. Mr. Palmer then

explained that starting at the lowest extreme working his way up to the most restrictive extreme, potential steps the Assembly could take would be to do the following:

- Send out a press release tomorrow strongly urging the public to follow Dr. Zink's recommendations about travel as mentioned in the press briefing earlier.
- Next, would be to pass a motion to encourage the Governor to restrict travel to essential travel only. (Mr. Palmer said that is not something that Incident Command could do but it is in the Assembly's wheelhouse if they chose to take that action.)

Mr. Palmer said that in addition to the above, the next steps get complicated. What has been stood up is a voluntary screening option at the airport. That was stood up for a lot of reasons, including the fact that people tend to comply with voluntary efforts rather than being told they have to do something. If the Assembly wanted to step that up further, he said they would need guidance from Public Health to identify whether those medium risk travelers are significant risk enough that they have to go into mandatory quarantine or isolation. It has been a request that was routed through the Airport Task Force at the EOC. They have routed that question through the State EOC and they are awaiting guidance from Public Health on that issue. He said that Public Health was at the Airport Task Force meeting so they did hear it.

Mr. Palmer said that as they ramp it up to the extreme levels, is there an option to require forced testing and screening at the airports – is that something that could be done. Academically, yes it could be done but practically, it would the National Guard to come in to do that due to the massive workload that would require and it would likely require a large-scale isolation/quarantine unit to be stood up at the airport.

Assemblymembers then discussed the issue at length.

MOTION by Ms. Gladziszewski to request the Governor restrict, through a method identified by Public Health, non-essential travel into communities such as ours.

Additional discussion then took place regarding what the definition of non-essential travel would be and asked for public health guidance on if/where/how quarantine would be imposed. Members asked that non-essential be identified and that those people trying to return home to Juneau would be considered essential travel.

Mayor Weldon asked Ms. Gladziszewski for clarification on her motion as to whether those individuals who are flying into Juneau to go to work such as at the mines or fishing and/or Juneau residents returning home would be considered essential for purposes of the motion.

Ms. Gladziszewski said in her opinion and the intent of her motion was that non-essential travel does not include those residents coming back home or individuals coming to Juneau to go to work.

Assemblymembers then discussed other areas of concern related to this such as the economic and mental health issues we will be facing later on and also the need to try to slow the spread of the disease as much as possible using the opportunities that we have.

They took a brief 5-minute recess to allow Ms. Gladyszewski time to consult with the City Attorney on clarifying the language of her motion. Ms. Gladyszewski said she wished to withdraw her first motion and substitute it with the following motion:

MOTION by Ms. Gladyszewski to request the Governor to restrict non-essential travel into communities such as Juneau. Essential travel includes travel to come to work or to come home. Hearing no objection, the motion passed.

Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked the Attorney about whether or not the state had a mandate limiting gatherings to a certain number. If not, she asked if the Assembly could limit gatherings no more than 10 persons/room. Mr. Palmer said the state does have guidelines to that affect but he did not recall if that was a hard mandate. Ms. Hughes-Skandijs asked staff could research that and bring back additional information to the Assembly at the meeting on Monday, March 23.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Assembly, the meeting was adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Signed: _____
Elizabeth J. McEwen
Municipal Clerk

Signed: _____
Beth A. Weldon
Mayor