

Session 24-16 a Special Meeting of the City Council of Homer, Alaska was called to order on July 2, 2024 by Mayor Castner at 4:00 p.m. at the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska, and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT: COUNCILMEMBERS ERICKSON, DAVIS, ADERHOLD, VENUTI, LORD, HANSEN

STAFF: ACTING CITY CLERK KRAUSE
FINANCE DIRECTOR FISCHER
PERSONNEL DIRECTOR BROWNING
PORT DIRECTOR HAWKINS
RECREATION MANAGER ILLG
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR ENGBRETSSEN
SPECIAL PROJECTS & COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR CARROLL
CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER JIRSA
FIRE CHIEF KIRKO

AGENDA APPROVAL (Only those matters on the noticed agenda may be considered, pursuant to City Council's Operating Manual)

ADERHOLD/LORD MOVED TO AMEND THE AGENDA TO ADD A COMMENT PERIOD AFTER THE INTERVIEW AND BEFORE NEW BUSINESS ITEM B AND A BRIEF RECESS TO ALLOW THE PUBLIC TO SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS.

There was a brief discussion providing clarification on adding the public comment opportunities.

VOTE. NON-OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

LORD/ADERHOLD MOVED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS AMENDED.

There was no further discussion.

VOTE. NON OBJECTION. UNANIMOUS CONSENT.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON MATTERS ALREADY ON THE AGENDA

There was no public comment.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. 4:00 p.m. Zoom Interview with Melissa Jacobsen

Mayor Castner welcomed Candidate Jacobsen and review the process. He requested Ms. Jacobsen to introduce herself and background.

Ms. Jacobsen provided a brief introduction giving her time as a resident in Homer and history.

Mayor Castner then facilitated the interview by acknowledging each member of Council, who took turns, asked a total of 11 questions of Ms. Jacobsen.

Mayor Castner then explained that they changed the format to allow public comment following with a short recess to allow the Council to receive written comment from the public and staff before considering adjourning into executive session.

Mayor Castner thanked her for her time and Ms. Jacobsen signed off from the meeting. He then addressed the public present stating that they had one last opportunity to weigh in on the candidates interviewed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Slone, city resident, commented on a candidates stating that Robertson had strong financial knowledge and can assist with the development of larger projects, Dubel was a dynamic innovator with a background of a more esoteric hobnobbing with people at a more advanced level such as generals, ambassadors and the President, it was interesting to see him not tout on his extensive background and Jacobsen was the master of administrative minutia and would keep the ball rolling.

Mayor Castner called for a 15 minute recess at 4:34 p.m. to allow for the public to submit written comments and Council to receive and review copies of them. He called the meeting back to order at 4:50 p.m.

NEW BUSINESS

- b. Memorandum CC-24-142 from Acting City Clerk re: Request for Executive Session Pursuant to AS 44.62.310 (A-C)(2) Matters, Subjects that Tend to Prejudice the Reputation and Character of Any Person, Provided the Person May Request a Public Discussion (City Manager Candidate Deliberations)

Mayor Castner introduced the item and requested a motion.

LORD/VENUTI MOVE TO REQUEST CITY COUNCIL ADJOURN FOR EXECUTIVE SESSION PURSUANT TO AS 44.62.310 (A-C)(2)MATTERS THAT TEND TO PREJUDICE THE REPUTATION AND CHARACTER OF ANY PERSON, PROVIDED THE PERSON MAY REQUEST A PUBLIC DISCUSSION (CITY MANAGER CANDIDATE DELIBERATIONS)

Discussion ensued on the value of performing their deliberations in view of the public or adjourning to executive session with points made that Council would be required to speak succinctly and cautiously and there was overwhelming support to adjourn to deliberate in private as it was a

personnel matter and as such that it would be preferred by the majority to hold the discussion in executive session to allow Council to speak candidly regarding the candidates.

VOTE. YES. LORD, VENUTI, HANSEN, ERICKSON, DAVIS, ADERHOLD

Motion carried

Mayor adjourned the meeting to executive session at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was reconvened at 6:19 p.m.

Mayor Castner inquired if Council had made a decision.

LORD/ADERHOLD MOVED TO OFFER THE POSITION OF CITY MANAGER TO MELISSA JACOBSEN.

Councilmember Lord stated that Council spoke at length on the strengths and weaknesses collectively the candidates and spoke how strongly Melissa Jacobsen has stepped into the role of City Manager during this time.

COMMENTS OF THE AUDIENCE

COMMENTS OF THE CITY CLERK

Acting City Clerk Krause expressed her pleasure of the decision by stating, "Way to Go!"

COMMENTS OF THE MAYOR

Mayor Castner expressed his appreciation for the Council's work that went into the decision and the contributions of the Hiring Committee

COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL MEMBERS

Council member Lord expressed that she was honored to serve with Council, stating that Council is like a many headed boss, similar to Fluffy from Harry Potter but to have so many people doing a single job she was very grateful for the candid conversation, back and forth and getting to understand everyone's perspectives. She is enthusiastic about working with Melissa Jacobsen as city manager and as it moves forward through negotiations. Ms. Lord expressed her appreciation for the participation of the citizenry and the staff as it was critical component to hiring a city manager.

Councilmember Venuti commented that always people to ask me, "How are you doing?" I was telling them, this job is really fun. But this was not a fun evening. Council did a lot of really hard discussion but we were in agreement, and we were good, active listeners. Everybody here gets an A+. We all talked, which I really appreciate it, working as one. And, as the Mayor said, this is municipal government at its very best when we can come to an agreement, and I, too, am looking forward to working with Melissa. I think it's a win for the city in many ways for staff and the community.

Councilmember Aderhold commented that the process went well and appreciated the conversation that was had by Council and deep consideration of each of the candidates that were interviewed. She expressed being very, very happy about their decision.

Councilmember Davis had no additional comments.

Councilmember Erickson commented it is always interesting to have discussions and to come out where we all feel comfortable with a decision, and I appreciate that. Sitting around this table is not the easiest thing to do to stand one or another but have good conversation and come out to a place where everyone is feeling good about the decision made is really good.

Councilmember Hansen commented that she was grateful that they went into executive session even though it may be questionable whether someone wanted to or not because Council was able to communicate with each other candidly in an appropriate way to make a healthy decision. She believed that the Council were amazing people and was really glad with their decision.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Council Mayor Castner adjourned the meeting at 6:25 p.m. The next Regular Meeting is Monday, July 22, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. with Committee of the Whole at 5:00 p.m. A Special Meeting on Wednesday, July 17, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. All meetings are scheduled to be held in the City Hall Cowles Council Chambers located at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue, Homer, Alaska and via Zoom webinar.

Renee Krause
Renee Krause, MMC, Acting City Clerk

Approved: July 22, 2024