

**CITY OF CRAIG  
CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
FEBRUARY 1, 2024**

**ROLL CALL**

Mayor Kasey Smith called the meeting to order at 6:31 pm. Present were Hannah Bazinet, Shauna Thomas, Josh Bennett, Millie Schoonover and Michael Kampnich (telephonically). Chanel McKinley was excused.

Staff present: Brian Templin, Administrator; Mary Salazar, City Clerk; Kimber Mikulecky, Finance Director; Samantha Wilson, Planner; Oliver Lewis, Public Works/Parks and Public Facilities; Gretchen Klein, Recreation; Stephanie Merritt, Library; Hans Hjort, Harbormaster, and RJ Ely, Police (telephonically).

**MEMO TO COUNCIL- CONFLICT OF INTEREST DISCUSSION**

Brian Templin presented a memo to the council containing research findings from state statutes and the city's municipal code book on conflicts of interest. Mayor Smith stated he has been approached by members of the community about the CTA land purchase application and they expressed concern about possible conflicts of interest in the council. Mayor Smith clarified that he had no intention of removing Ordinance 768 from the consent agenda.

Millie Schoonover expressed discontent with the memo and stated that conflicts of interest only occur when there is personal gain involved. She emphasized that the council's priority is the best interest of the city. Mayor Smith reassured that he was not asking any councilmember to abstain from voting and highlighted that there would be further discussions regarding any land purchase. He clarified that the ordinance under consideration does not guarantee the land purchase sale but facilitates discussions with the CTA.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Meeting Minutes January 18, 2024

Ordinance 767, Adoption of the FY 2023 Supplemental Operating Budget

Ordinance 768, CTA Land Purchase Application

SCHOONOVER/BAZINET

Motion to adopt the consent agenda

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

**HEARING FROM THE PUBLIC**

Barbara Stanley, who stated she has been involved in planning efforts for the Ward Cove Cannery property for 18 years, highlighted the recent removal of the Harbor Expansion Project from consideration. She emphasized the need to restart planning efforts for the Ward Cove Cannery, urging the city to conduct public meetings and solicit input from the community. Stanley expressed concerns about the timing of the proposed land disposal in light of the changes in potential site uses, emphasizing the importance of avoiding hasty decisions. While acknowledging the potential benefits of the CTA land proposal, she stressed the necessity of addressing perceived conflicts of interest and obtaining current public input before making any decisions regarding the site. Stanley recommended that the city pause and restart the planning process to ensure informed decision-making based on current community feedback.

Loni Bennett expressed concerns regarding the memorandum's implication that being a Craig Tribal Member could be a conflict of interest. Bennett found this insulting and emphasized that being a tribal member and voting for the land sale does not imply self-serving intentions, as it would benefit the entire community. Additionally, Bennett raised questions about the transparency of city council meetings, advocating for measures such as Zoom or live broadcasts to enhance accessibility. Furthermore, Bennett raised a concern about the lack of recreational opportunities for older kids in the community, referencing in the past where trusted adults could open the city gym for kids. She proposed reinstating this program, suggesting that trusted individuals could be listed at the police department and issued a key to access to the gym for supervised open gym.

Tobias Frieb, a kindergarten teacher at Craig Elementary, expressed grave concerns about the state of public education funding. Frieb highlighted the financial struggles faced by almost every school district in Alaska, including Craig. He advocated for increased school funding from both the city and the state, noting that without additional resources, CCSD would be forced to make cuts impacting student education. Frieb urged council members to attend the next CCSD budget advisory committee meeting on February 13<sup>th</sup> to witness the challenges faced by the district. He noted the current contribution from the city to the school district and proposed exploring dedicated revenue streams beyond timber receipts to increase funding. Frieb requested the city council to discuss a potential increase in funding for the school district.

Courtney Frieb, a teacher at Craig Middle School for the past nine years, requested the city council increase funding to CCSD. Frieb highlighted the financial challenges facing the district and emphasized the critical role of adequate funding in ensuring quality education for students in the community. She expressed concern over the lack of prioritization of education at the state level, noting flat funding and budget cuts. Without help, the district's ability to provide comprehensive educational experiences, including travel and extracurricular activities, will be affected. Frieb emphasized the importance of additional support from the city to maintain the level of education expected by the community and urged council members to consider increasing funding to assist the school district in serving its students effectively.

Clinton Cook Sr, Craig Tribal Association President, also spoke about concerns regarding the need for increasing funding for CCSD. President Cook highlighted the valuable contributions made by the CTA through the ASIS grant from the Department of Education over the past three years, totaling approximately \$600,000 distributed among three school districts on Prince of Wales Island: Craig, Klawock, and Hydaburg. President Cook expressed disappointment upon learning that the superintendent, with whom he had discussed the possibility of funding a new ASIS grant, would not be present next year, leaving the grant's future uncertain. He emphasized the importance of pursuing such grants to benefit the schools and the community. President Cook noted that the CTA's contributions have supported various educational initiatives, including funding aides, teacher salaries, and special education directors, and emphasized the importance of community awareness regarding such collaborations. President Cook stressed the significance of collaboration in improving the town and ensuring the best possible education for children, underlining the importance of transparency and community involvement in such initiatives.

President Cook also commented on the development of Cannery Point. He expressed disappointment of the Planning Commission's lack of progress over the past 18 years. He noted that during this time, the Craig Tribe was not consulted about potential development plans for the area, despite being bearers of the land. President Cook emphasized the tribe's desire to reintegrate its culture into the community and stated that a healthy tribe makes for a healthy community. He pointed out the tribe's commitment to contributing to the betterment of Craig, citing investments in infrastructure and economic development. Cook challenged notions of conflicts of interest in a small town context, pointing out instances where such concerns were not raised, such as the approval of a gas station ordinance and land sales to a fish buyer. He urged the council to prioritize decisions that align with the community's needs and emphasized the cultural impact of any development on Cannery Point.

## **REPORTS FROM CITY OFFICIAL**

Mayor Smith reported that he had inspected the kiln and wood chip dryer alongside Oliver and other members of the Public Works crew. Additionally, Mayor Smith informed the council that he had been meeting with the Finance Director on matters concerning delinquent taxes.

Brian Templin, City Administrator, submitted a written report. Josh Bennett inquired about the timeline for presenting information about a memorandum of understanding with the tribe. Brian responded that he is currently drafting MOU's and intends it to be on the next meeting's agenda.

Kimber Mikulecky, Finance Director, submitted a written report. Millie Schoonover inquired about scheduling for the budgeting process. Kimber responded that it will be at the end of the month and the budget committee meetings will be scheduled for some time mid-March.

Mary Salazar, City Clerk, submitted a written report. Mary reported that the next meetings for February will be on the 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 pm and the 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:30 pm.

Samantha Wilson, City Planner, submitted a written report. Josh Bennett inquired about the \$200,000 Denali Commission application. Samantha responded that the application has been submitted and she is expecting to hear back mid-March. Josh Bennett also asked about the status of POWER and Samantha responded that the city of Klawock is preparing a spot in their landfill for storing contaminated materials.

Venessa Richter-Russell, EMS Coordinator, submitted a written report. Shauna Thomas raised a question regarding the absence of the EMS Coordinator, despite the council's previous request for her attendance. Mayor Smith responded that inclement weather may have caused challenges with attendance and suggested arranging a meeting with a few council members and Venessa at the daycare facility. Brian Templin reported that he spoke with Venessa earlier in the week and there is now a physician sponsor committed to the city and more information will be brought to the council at the next meeting.

Hans Hjort, Harbormaster, submitted a written report. Hans provided updates from the harbor department, noting that lights were installed on the seaplane float and new breakers for the power

pistols would be ordered. He mentioned that the ice bin was empty and undergoing maintenance, which is expected to take 3 to 4 days once a technician arrives. In response to Josh Bennett's inquiry about the timeline for boardwalk replacement, Hans stated that the timber for the project would take approximately 4 to 5 weeks before it ships.

RJ Ely, Chief of Police, submitted a written report. Chief Ely reported that the Police Department recently received a donation of 14 body cameras. He expressed intentions to implement their use within the year. He also reported that Addam Parsons sustained an injury at the Police Academy and is being sent home.

Stephanie Merritt, Librarian, submitted a written report. Stephanie reported on a successful book talk event held at the library featuring local author Mary Dinon. She expressed satisfaction with the turnout, as 40 people attended the event.

Gretchen Klein, Recreation Director, submitted a written report.

Oliver Lewis, Public Works, submitted a written report and provided several updates. He confirmed that the kiln would be operational by the following week, responding to Mayor Smith's inquiry. In regard to the purchase of SCADA, Oliver mentioned that advertisements would be placed in various publications and on the City of Craig's website starting Monday. He also noted that due to federal regulations, the bid would run for 21 consecutive days, with contractor selection targeted for February 27th. Additionally, Oliver mentioned that assistance had been hired to manage the grant writing process for wastewater projects, addressing a question from Josh Bennett. Concerning work orders for the daycare facility, Oliver reported that flooring, counters, and the dishwasher had been addressed, with ongoing support available for any additional issues.

For Parks and Facilities, Oliver mentioned several completed tasks: concrete pouring for columbariums at the cemetery, relocation of machinery to the sewer plant for maintenance and future projects, and the transfer of nine cars from impound to the Klawock dump. Furthermore, he stated that the cemetery had been cleaned and mowed, a retaining wall had been constructed for the columbariums, and a headstone had been installed for Rhonda Whitmore.

## **READING OF CORRESPONDENCE**

Generations Southeast Community Learning Center, Prince of Wales Campus Letter  
Tlingit and Haida Letter of Support for the CTA  
MV Prince of Wales Upgrades and Overhaul  
CWSC Update  
Restoring Indigenous Safety and Empowerment (RISE) Shelter Campus- Craig, AK

## **NEW BUSINESS**

Request For Approval to Negotiate Contract for Bid on Auditing Services

BAZINET/SCHOONOVER

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Reappointment of Jeremy Crews, Craig Planning Commission  
BAZINET/THOMAS

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

PSN Annual Maintenance Report

Shauna Thomas inquired about the percentage of PSN residents who pay the road maintenance fee. Brian indicated that approximately 50% of residents do so. Shauna further questioned whether the city takes action against those who do not pay. Brian explained that the city has the authority to place liens on properties of non-paying residents but noted that this approach has generated significant community backlash. Consequently, staff members are hesitant to pursue this option. Brian mentioned that while there are alternative methods of penalization available, they tend to be costly, particularly in comparison to the relatively low original fee.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Josh Bennett raised the question of reinstating Zoom or implementing another form of streaming for council meetings. Mayor Smith mentioned that Johnny Rice has been aiding the city in addressing technical challenges for live streaming. Brian informed the group that Mary Salazar has been working on setting up an iPad and acquiring a Bluetooth microphone for broadcasting on YouTube. However, Brian noted a setback regarding YouTube's policy update, which now requires 50 subscribers to enable live streaming, whereas the city's YouTube page only has 18 subscribers.

Millie Schoonover stated she is looking forward with working with the school board and their budget process. Brian mentioned that the school board has requested a meeting with the council, which is a routine process each year. This involves the school board presenting their funding requirements, followed by council deliberations on the allocation of funds. Additionally, Josh proposed implementing a seasonal sales tax increase during the summer to coincide with the tourist season.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 8:07 pm.

SCHOONOVER/BAZINET

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

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KASEY SMITH, MAYOR

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MARY SALAZAR, CITY CLERK