

**CITY OF CRAIG
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
MARCH 6, 2024**

ROLL CALL

Mayor Kasey Smith called the meeting to order at 1:04 pm. Present were Shauna Thomas, Josh Bennett, Michael Kampnich, and Millie Schoonover. Excused were Hannah Bazinet and Chanel McKinley.

Staff Present: Brian Templin, Administrator; Mary Salazar, City Clerk.

Audience Present: Venessa Ritcher-Russell, Island Daycare Operator.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Open Discussion with Island Daycare regarding status of daycare licensing process and expected start of operations.

Shauna Thomas raised questions regarding the daycare's licensing progress with the state and the status of building maintenance handled by Public Works. Venessa Ritcher-Russell provided updates, mentioning the appointment of a daycare facility Administrator and ongoing paperwork submission to the state. She highlighted the state's requirement of 12 credits in Early Childhood Development for administrators and the appointment of a backup Administrator. Delays were attributed to background checks, which cannot be conducted locally. Venessa noted the receipt of updated paperwork from the state due to a previous application being returned. Venessa stated they have a playground that will be paid for and delivered soon.

Josh Bennett inquired about the installation of the playground, to which Venessa confirmed that Public Works will handle it. Josh further asked about the education requirements for Administrators, with Venessa explaining that they must obtain education through an accredited college, noting that state does not have courses available for free. Lastly, Josh sought confirmation on the projected opening date in August, which Venessa affirmed.

Brian Templin highlighted the state's 90-day processing timeline for completed applications, excluding assessments by DEC or the Fire Marshal. He noted the necessity of a site visit by state authorities and mentioned that all state applications are now routed through Anchorage, as there is no longer a licensing facility in Juneau. Brian also addressed confusion surrounding Administrator qualifications, noting that Venessa did not meet the requirements. Venessa mentioned that Maggie Gore meets the qualifications, although the state's confirmation is pending. Furthermore, she explained the need for a backup Administrator and the potential requirement for a variance due to a shortage of qualified individuals on the island, with the expectation of demonstrating progress toward meeting qualifications to the state.

Josh inquired about the completion of maintenance by Public Works on the building, prompting Venessa to confirm she would seek clarification from Oliver. Josh then asked about outreach to the Fire Marshal, to which Venessa clarified that she wouldn't handle it personally, but rather, the state would facilitate that process. Additionally, Josh sought information on Venessa's winter hours, to which she responded 7:30 am to 5:00 pm. She also noted that her backup Administrator, based in Craig, would be readily available to address emergencies at the daycare facility.

Kasey Smith inquired about the possibility of advertising job positions for the daycare. Venessa responded that they would not proceed with advertising until the facility is licensed and they have determined the number of children/infants who will be attending.

Josh inquired whether the playground installation would impede the opening process. Venessa clarified that the playground will be installed well in advance of the application approval, indicating that it would not pose a hindrance to the opening timeline.

Mike Kampnich expressed frustration with the state, highlighting significant delays in various matters..

Venessa clarified to the council that there has been public confusion regarding the rapid operation of A to Z Childcare in Klawock. She explained that since A to Z Childcare operates as a home daycare provider, they are subject to different regulatory requirements compared to a facility.

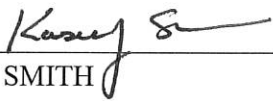
Millie Schoonover raised a question regarding the toilets. Venessa clarified that since the building is city-owned, the responsibility for ordering new toilets and managing plumbing falls under the city's jurisdiction.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn the meeting at 1:30 pm.

SCHOONOVER/KAMPNICH

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY



KASEY SMITH
MAYOR, CITY OF CRAIG



MARY SALAZAR
CITY CLERK