

**KENAI CITY COUNCIL – REGULAR MEETING  
JANUARY 17, 2024 – 6:00 P.M.  
KENAI CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
210 FIDALGO AVE., KENAI, AK 99611  
MAYOR BRIAN GABRIEL, PRESIDING**

**MINUTES**

**A. CALL TO ORDER**

A Regular Meeting of the Kenai City Council was held on January 17, 2024, in City Hall Council Chambers, Kenai, AK. Mayor Gabriel called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

**1. Pledge of Allegiance**

Mayor Gabriel led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. Roll Call**

There were present:

Brian Gabriel, Mayor	Henry Knackstedt, Vice Mayor
Phil Daniel	Deborah Sounart
Alex Douthit	Victoria Askin
James Baisden	

A quorum was present.

Also in attendance were:

Terry Eubank, City Manager  
Scott Bloom, City Attorney  
David Swarner, Finance Director  
Linda Mitchell, Planning Director  
Katja Wolf, Library Director  
Tyler Best, Parks and Recreation Director  
Scott Curtin, Public Works Director  
Derek Ables, Airport Manager  
Dave Ross, Police Chief  
Shellie Saner, City Clerk

**3. Agenda Approval**

Mayor Gabriel noted the following additions to the Packet:

Add to item E.5.           **Public Hearing** - Resolution No. 2024-04  
• Public Comments

Add to item H.7.           **Discussion - Public Meetings Remote Participation Update**  
• Public Comments

Introduction of Ordinance 3391-2024 and Ordinance 3392-2024 were removed by the sponsor from the consent agenda to be heard at their regular place on the agenda.

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to approve the agenda and consent agenda with the requested revisions. Council Member Askin **SECONDED** the motion.

The items on the Consent Agenda were read into the record.

Mayor Gabriel opened the floor for public comment on consent agenda items; there being no one wishing to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT** was requested on the agenda and consent agenda as amended.

**VOTE:** There being no objection; **SO ORDERED.**

\*All items listed with an asterisk (\*) are considered to be routine and non-controversial by the council and will be approved by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a council member so requests, in which case the item will be removed from the consent agenda and considered in its normal sequence on the agenda as part of the General Orders.

**B. SCHEDULED ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS** - None.

**C. SCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENTS** - None.

**D. UNSCHEDULED PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Marion Nelson, Kenai Fine Art Center Board President addressed the Council regarding a future glass show; and reported that next year fund raising would include selling decorated Christmas Trees.

Samantha Springer, Executive Director of the Kenai Chamber of Commerce and Visitor Center addressed the Council regarding the success of the first community business lecture series; upcoming activities at the Visitor Center; and that she would be attending the Alaska Chamber Legislative Fly-In in Juneau to meet with the Legislature on issues affecting Alaska business.

**E. PUBLIC HEARINGS**

- 1. Ordinance No. 3385-2024** - Accepting and Appropriating a Donation to the Kenai Community Library for the Purchase of Library Materials and Software for Room and Event Scheduling. (Administration)

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to enact Ordinance No. 3385-2024. Council Member Sounart **SECONDED** the motion.

Mayor Gabriel opened the floor for public comment. There being no one wishing to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

Appreciation was stated for the donations.

**VOTE:**

YEA: Askin, Gabriel, Daniel, Sounart, Knackstedt, Douthit, Baisden

NAY: None

**MOTION PASSED.**

- 2. Ordinance No. 3386-2024** - Increasing Estimated Revenues and Appropriations in the General Fund and Municipal Roadway Improvements Capital Fund to Conduct an Assessment of City Street Lighting. (Administration)

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to enact Ordinance No. 3386-2024. Council Member Askin **SECONDED** the motion.

Mayor Gabriel opened the floor for public comment. There being no one wishing to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

It was reported that this funding would be used to examine the issues and establish a plan for repairs; funding for the repairs would be included in the capital improvement funding.

**VOTE:**

YEA: Gabriel, Daniel, Sounart, Knackstedt, Douthit, Baisden, Askin

NAY: None

**MOTION PASSED.**

3. **Ordinance No. 3387-2024** - Increasing Estimated Revenues and Appropriations in the General Fund and Public Works Department's Street Division's Professional Services Budget to Review and Update the City's Roadway Improvements Standards. (Administration)

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to enact Ordinance No. 3387-2024. Council Member Douthit **SECONDED** the motion.

Mayor Gabriel opened the floor for public comment. There being no one wishing to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

It was reported that this would assess our current standards against the standards of other competing local government agencies; the goal would be to removed the standards from Kenai Municipal Code and establish a standards manual that would be approved by the City Council.

**VOTE:**

YEA: Daniel, Sounart, Knackstedt, Douthit, Baisden, Askin, Gabriel

NAY: None

**MOTION PASSED.**

4. **Resolution No. 2024-03** - Adopting Goals to Guide the Preparation of the Fiscal Year 2025 Annual Budget. (Administration)

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to adopt Resolution No. 2024-03. Council Member Sounart **SECONDED** the motion.

Mayor Gabriel opened the floor for public comment. There being no one wishing to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT** was requested.

**VOTE:** There being no objection; **SO ORDERED.**

5. **Resolution No. 2024-04** - Requesting the State of Alaska Make a Meaningful Increase to the Base Student Allocation for Public Schools. (Douthit, Daniel)

**MOTION:**

Council Member Douthit **MOVED** to adopt Resolution No. 2024-04. Council Member Daniel **SECONDED** the motion.

Mayor Gabriel opened the floor for public comment.

Duane Bannock addressed the Council in opposition to Resolution No. 2024-04 noting that although allowed, this subject was outside of the Council's official duties; the term meaningful was undefined in the resolution; this did not propose a solution for the problem; and funding was not the problem.

Additional questions and comments took place regarding the flaws in the Base Student Allocation (BSA) formula; questions regarding if the BSA was just for education or did it cover other items; the six qualifying factors of the BSA; and the complexity of the formula.

There being no one else wishing to be heard, the public comment period was closed.

There was Council discussion regarding this being brought forward in response to the Kenai Peninsula Borough BSA resolution, specifics numbers and details were left out intentionally; the resolutions lack for identifying specifically what the funding would do to benefit education; the current State of Alaska budget deficit; where the funding would come from; current teaching positions that are open and no applicants for those positions; the inability to attract a larger pool of teacher applicants due to pay and benefits currently available; the need for competitive salaries and benefits to attract quality teachers; and the challenges associated with using a one time funding process for education.

**MOTION TO AMEND:**

Council Member Sounart **MOVED** to amend Resolution No. 2024-04 as follows:

Insert a new final whereas clause to read, "the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly voted unanimously by resolution to support a BSA increase, and we hereby support their request for a BSA increase."

Delete Section 1 in its entirety, "[THAT KENAI CITY COUNCIL REQUESTS THE STATE OF ALASKA MAKE A MEANINGFUL INCREASE TO THE BASE STUDENT ALLOCATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.]

Insert a new Section 1 to read, "That Kenai City Council supports the Kenai Peninsula Borough's request for the Alaska Legislature to increase the BSA."

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **SECONDED** the motion.

**VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND:**

YEA: Sounart, Knackstedt, Douthit, Gabriel, Daniel

NAY: Baisden, Askin

**MOTION TO AMEND PASSED.**

**VOTE ON MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED:**

YEA: Knackstedt, Douthit, Gabriel, Daniel, Sounart

NAY: Baisden, Askin

**MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED PASSED.**

**F. MINUTES**

1. \*Regular Meeting of January 3, 2024. (City Clerk)

**G. UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None.**

**H. NEW BUSINESS**

1. \*Action/Approval - Bills to be Ratified. (Administration)

Approved by the consent agenda.

2. \*Ordinance No. 3388-2024 - Increasing Estimated Revenues and Appropriations in the General Fund for the City's Joint Participation in the Kenai Peninsula Borough's Safe Streets and Roads for All Action Plan Grant Through the United States Department of Transportation. (Administration)

Introduced by the consent agenda and Public Hearing set for February 7, 2024.

3. \*Ordinance No. 3389-2024 - Accepting and Appropriating Donations from Kenai Senior Connection, Inc., to the Kenai Senior Center. (Administration)

Introduced by the consent agenda and Public Hearing set for February 7, 2024.

4. **\*Ordinance No. 3390-2024** - Increasing Estimated Revenues and Appropriations in the Airport Fund to Purchase Air Service Development Professional Services at the Kenai Municipal Airport for Costs in Excess of Budgeted Amounts. (Administration)

Introduced by the consent agenda and Public Hearing set for February 7, 2024.

5. **Ordinance No. 3391-2024** - Amending the Imagine Kenai 2030 Comprehensive Plan Land Use Plan Map for Certain Parcels from Industrial to Mixed-Use. (Knackstedt)

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to introduce Ordinance No. 3391-2024; refer the ordinance to the February 12, 2024 Harbor Commission meeting for their recommendation; refer the ordinance to the February 14, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for their recommendation; and to schedule the City Council public hearing on the ordinance for February 21, 2024.

It was reported that introduction of this ordinance and the next were removed from the consent agenda so that they could be referred to the Harbor Commission and Planning and Zoning Commission.

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT** was requested.

**VOTE:** There being no objection; **SO ORDERED.**

6. **Ordinance No. 3392-2024** - Amending the Kenai Zoning Code to Add a New Zoning District, Working Waterfront (WW) and Amending the Official Zoning Map for Certain Parcels from Heavy Industrial (IH) to Working Waterfront (WW) or Conservation (C) Zoning District. (Knackstedt)

**MOTION:**

Vice Mayor Knackstedt **MOVED** to introduce Ordinance No. 3392-2024; refer the ordinance to the February 12, 2024 Harbor Commission meeting for their recommendation; refer the ordinance to the February 14, 2024 Planning and Zoning Commission meeting for their recommendation; and to schedule the City Council public hearing on the ordinance for February 21, 2024.

**UNANIMOUS CONSENT** was requested.

**VOTE:** There being no objection; **SO ORDERED.**

7. **Discussion** - Public Meetings Remote Participation Update. (City Clerk)

It was reported that the transition to webinars addressed concerns regarding potential zoom bombings; since links for remote participation would be available for members of the body and staff, the link would also be made available for the public to attend and comment; a new process would be implemented and rather than disrupting the flow of the meeting by asking if there were remote participants wanting to speak, the staff administering the remote meeting would notify the presiding officer when a person wished to speak.

There was discussion regarding with the transition to webinars and continued use of remote participation as it had been over the last few years a written policy would not be needed; the added benefit when the public participate in person or by providing written comments; and the potential of increased public participation by allowing remote participation by the public.

**I. COMMISSION / COMMITTEE REPORTS**

1. Council on Aging

Council Member Knackstedt reported on the February 16, 2024 Work Session and Meeting, next meeting February 8, 2024.

2. Airport Commission

Vice Mayor Knackstedt reported on the January 11, 2024 Work Session and Meeting, next meeting February 8, 2024.

3. Harbor Commission

Council Member Askin reported on the January 8, 2024 Work Session and Special Meeting, next meeting February 12, 2024.

4. Parks and Recreation Commission

Council Member Sounart reported on the January 4, 2024 Work Session and Meeting, next meeting February 1, 2024.

5. Planning and Zoning Commission

No report, next meeting January 24, 2024.

6. Beautification Committee

Council Member Daniel reported on the January 9, 2024 Work Session and Meeting, Special Meeting scheduled for February 6, 2024.

**J. REPORT OF THE MAYOR**

Mayor Gabriel thanked Vice Mayor Knackstedt for filling in for him at the last meeting.

**K. ADMINISTRATION REPORTS**

1. City Manager – City Manager Eubank reported on the following:

- Bluff Stabilization Project bids closed, and the Army Corp of Engineers was now reviewing them.
- Trevor Miller was selected Officer of the Year; Co-Dispatchers of the Year were Gabe Boyle and Jennifer Savely.
- The new Kenai Police Department Officer would be attending the Public Safety Training Academy in Sitka, AK and Sergeant Coleman was accepted into the Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Academy.

2. City Attorney - No report.

3. City Clerk - No report.

**L. ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

1. Citizen Comments (*Public comments limited to (5) minutes per speaker*)

2. Council Comments

Council Member Douthit reported that the remodel on the Chamber Museum was set for a soft opening in April; noted his appreciation for the 2-hour parking signs on Kenai Ave; and reminded everyone to be careful on snow machines as there is not a lot of snow out there.

Council Member Sounart thanked the administration for the Work Session and the Public Works Department for plowing the Lawton extension.

Council Member Askin congratulated the Officer and Dispatchers of the Year.

Council Member Daniel thanked the Police Department for their work and City staff for keeping things going.

**M. EXECUTIVE SESSION - None.**

**N. PENDING ITEMS - None.**

O. ADJOURNMENT

P. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS - None.

There being no further business before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

I certify the above represents accurate minutes of the Kenai City Council meeting of January 17, 2024.



Michelle M. Saner, MMC  
City Clerk

*\*\* The student representative may cast advisory votes on all matters except those subject to executive session discussion. Advisory votes shall be cast in the rotation of the official council vote and shall not affect the outcome of the official council vote. Advisory votes shall be recorded in the minutes. A student representative may not move or second items during a council meeting.*