

**THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA**

**APPROVED**

Assembly Childcare Committee  
Meeting Minutes – November 26, 2018

**I. Call to Order**

Jones called the meeting, held in the Assembly Chambers, to order at 12:07 pm.

Members present: Loren Jones, Chair, Wade Bryson, Rob Edwardson, Eric Eriksen, Michelle Hale, Blue Shibler, Bridget Weiss

Other Assembly Members present: Beth Weldon, Mayor

Staff present: Robert Barr, Library Director, Mila Cosgrove, Deputy City Manager, Beth McEwen, City Clerk, Rorie Watt, City Manager

**II. Approval of Agenda**

Jones explained the contents of the provided documentation to committee members.

Jones reviewed the agenda and moved to agenda topics.

**III. Agenda Topics**

**a. Introductions of committee members**

Committee members provided brief introductions on their respective backgrounds.

**b. Selection of Vice-Chair**

Jones asked for volunteers for the Vice-Chair position.

Bryson volunteered.

Hale noted the issue of childcare often becomes a greater issue for the mother, while also being an issue for men as well, and inquired whether the committee would prefer a woman in the role.

Jones asked if Hale had a nominee.

Hale nominated Weiss, if interested.

Weiss affirmed interest and asked for additional detail on the responsibilities of the Vice-Chair.

Jones shared Vice-Chair responsibilities would include running the meeting in his absence and assisting with agenda development. Jones noted he does not intend to miss too many meetings. Jones added that there was a thought that someone from the Assembly shouldn't be the Vice-Chair because there are four assembly members already.

Weiss agreed with Jones on the point of balance between CBJ and non-CBJ committee members and noted her willingness to serve and acknowledged Bryson's willingness to serve.

Hale offered clarification of her appreciation for Bryson's willingness to serve.

Bryson agreed with Jones' comment about having a non-assembly member serve as Vice-Chair, and withdrew in favor of a non-assembly member.

Jones confirmed Weiss as Vice-Chair.

**c. Review of the Mayoral charges to the committee**

Jones reviewed and read the Mayoral charges to the committee and reviewed recent history of assembly action and considerations on the topic.

Jones asked if committee members had any questions on the Mayoral charges or for the Mayor. There were none at this point.

**d. Options for seeking public opinion**

Jones indicated a desire to have a conversation about public opinion seeking as it may influence setting the agenda for future meetings. Jones said the Mayor has indicated to him that some money for this may be available. Jones reviewed some methods for collecting public opinion, including public hearings during committee meetings, contracting with a business like McDowell Group to perform a public survey, SurveyMonkey, ThoughtExchange, and several other similar online tools to collect information – some of which deal with duplication while some don't.

Jones inquired after the thoughts of other committee members on this topic.

Hale noted the proposed date for the completion of this work is the end of February and finishing by then would require a survey going out quite soon.

Jones said in conversation with the Mayor the date was moved to the end of February from the end of January to give more time. Jones noted the Assembly had previously been through a lot of education on the topic and that there's not likely a lot of new information out there that hasn't already been found. Jones agreed that a more formal information

seeking method, like using McDowell, would require starting soon while a less formal method could be done later in the process.

Edwardson appreciated the timeline from a ballot proposition perspective in that it would give time for that process to get started. Edwardson referred to paragraph 1a in the charge being a simple yes/no answer and hoped the committee would have flexibility to seek innovative ideas that may involve CBJ, industry, the school system, and other organizations.

Schibler inquired what the public would be polled about – the questions in the charge?

Jones affirmed those questions in addition to any others the committee may be interested in. Jones offered questions he and the assembly had heard already on this topic, including, “Should it be the CBJ’s role?,” “How is it financed?,” “Why can’t we stop state regulations?,” and other questions. Jones referred to the options in the lower half of the charge that may lead the committee into a variety of discussions/opinion seeking, including related topics like zoning, siting, facilities, the level of CBJ involvement, planning commission involvement, and size of daycare facilities. Jones said he wanted to figure out how to get the opinion of the public on these and other questions in addition to the thoughts of the committee, school district, Best Starts group, and others who have been involved to date. Jones said if we decide how we want to get opinions, then the next task would be what questions we ask.

Schibler noted a prior quote the Best Starts group had received for professional polling of \$14,000 for a 300 person phone-based poll with 10 questions.

Bryson asked Jones, given his past experience, if public testimony has historically been sufficient in getting the public input or if only the very-for or very-against individuals show up. Bryson inquired how the public testimony would provide information that the committee doesn’t already have.

Jones reviewed the general practice of public testimony as well as structured testimony where the assembly or committee invites specific individuals or groups they wish to hear. Jones noted a past experience where there is a risk of the public not showing up, particularly when the invite is general rather than specific. Jones noted some people are intimidated by public testimony, some are not shy at all, and some prefer sending an email.

Weiss said once the committee has a narrower perspective of what input is sought, multiple modalities for that input will be important. Weiss noted it probably would not be wise to rely on a single strategy and that it would require multiple options to get the public’s input.

Weiss said questions early in the charge – such as 1a – felt impeding and that it may be more appropriate to consider that later in the process after the committee has defined the problem, identified some strategies, and received some input. Weiss noted the committee may read those questions differently at such a stage.

Eriksen agreed and said it felt a little premature to answer those questions and noted that there may be answers between yes and no to those questions that include joint solutions. Eriksen said it would help to define the problem more with what information we have and then determine what we are missing to fill in the blanks with public testimony/surveys via multiple methods of input seeking.

Hale pointed out the Mayoral charge of 3b is an option of proposing an advisory ballot initiative which had been before the Assembly recently and that it may be a path forward again, which might be informed by the ways in which the committee seeks public input.

Jones indicated this discussion will assist in developing the next meeting agenda.

Jones introduced Robert Barr, Library Director and staff to the committee. Jones indicated tentative meeting dates have been set for 12/7 and 12/14 and inquired of the committee's availability then and then pausing until after January. Jones also indicated meetings would be scheduled for 12:15 instead of 12:00 and then proceed until 1:30.

Jones asked committee members, between 11/26 and 12/7, to read through the materials and continue thinking about what questions we want answered, what we would ask of the public, and what kinds of information we would like to collect. Jones requested committee members email these thoughts to Barr and refrain from sending to him or the whole committee to avoid Open Meetings Act violations. Jones noted from this input, he and Barr will develop the next meeting's agenda and provide a list of questions received from each committee member to the whole committee.

Weiss noted she has a work trip in Anchorage on 12/7.

Jones asked if she could participate telephonically.

Weiss affirmed she can.

Jones indicated meetings for 12/7 and 12/14 then starting in January meet every other week.

Jones invited the Mayor to address the committee.

Mayor Weldon expressed thanks to each committee member for serving.

Weldon noted each member was selected specifically because each wears two to three hats and will broadly represent the community.

Weldon noted ultimately, to the Assembly, the two questions in the charge need to be answered but that how the committee gets there is up to the committee. Weldon said Jones

had the advantage of going over the memo with her and that the hardest part of it was where to put question 1 – whether to start with it or put it at the bottom. Weldon expressed a desire for lots of creative ideas from the committee and said that the “do nothing” approach would be the City does nothing, but that doesn’t mean there aren’t other avenues the committee comes up with. Weldon noted Shibley’s survey cost estimate and said that she wants the most information as possible on the topic as it is potentially a big-ticket item and that the committee does have some spending ability to seek information.

Weldon said her memo was intended to be as neutral as possible as she does not wish to influence the committee’s decisions and that she has complete faith in the committee.

Jones asked if the committee had questions for the Mayor. There were none.

Jones said he would get together with Barr and get an agenda out fairly quickly. Jones asked committee members to review the material provided, consider what we talked about, what questions we have, what questions we want to ask, and to email these thoughts to Barr to help structure the agendas for 12/7 and 12/14.

Jones noted emails from the public to the Assembly on this topic continue and that those will be collected and distributed to committee members.

Jones asked if the committee had any other questions/comments.

Hale offered, for the benefit of non-assembly members, if committee members receive emails from the public, not to “reply all” to avoid Open Meetings Act violations.

Jones noted Barr would be kept in the loop and he can distribute documentation to the committee as a whole.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.