

City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.
Valdez, AK 99686



DRAFT Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 3, 2026

7:00 PM

Regular Meeting

Council Chambers

City Council

REGULAR AGENDA - 7:00 PM

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

III. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Mayor Dennis Fleming
Council Member Austin Love
Council Member Jimmy Devens
Council Member Olivia Foster
Council Member Joseph Lally
Council Member Joy Witte
Council Member Lester Greene

Also Present: Manager Nathan Duval
Deputy City Clerk Elise Sorum-Birk
City Attorney Jack Wakeland
Administrative Assistant Katie Carr

IV. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

V. CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Proclamation: Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month**
- 2. Appointment to the Valdez Consortium Library Board, Applicant: Libby Connor**
- 3. Approval of Liquor License Renewal: Stampmill LLC (License #4532)**
- 4. Approval To Go Into Executive Session: City Manager Annual Evaluation**
- 5. Approval To Go Into Executive Session Re: 1) Discussion of Implications for City Revenues and Litigation Strategy Regarding Trans Alaska Pipeline System Ad Valorem Tax Issues; 2) Discussion of Ongoing Escaped Property Legal Issues; 3) Discussion of Local Regulation and Assessment of Oil Spill Prevention and Response Property**

MOTION: Council Member Lally moved, seconded by Council Member Witte to approve the consent agenda.

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

Representatives from Advocates for Victims of Violence and Alaska Teens Against Abuse accepted the proclamation and spoke on the importance of the topic of teen dating violence awareness.

V. PUBLIC APPEARANCES

1. Public Appearance - State Representative Garrett Nelson

Newly Appointed State Representative Garrett Nelson joined the meeting virtually to introduce himself and give a brief update on happenings in Juneau.

Mayor Fleming noted that members traveling to Juneau would be meeting with him in person and wished him luck with the legislative session.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion Item: 2026 Assessment Process and Trends Update

City Assessor Martins Onskulis with Appraisal Company of Alaska presented on the trends for 2026 property tax assessments and fielded questions from Council.

2. Appointment to the Planning & Zoning Commission, Applicants: Kristian Fagerberg and Jessica McKay

Mayor Fleming announced that he had received notice from the City Clerk that Jessica McKay's application had been withdrawn and that Kristian Fagerberg was the remaining applicant.

MOTION: Council Member Love moved, seconded by Council Member Greene, to appoint Kristian Fagerberg to a three-year term on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

VOTE ON MOTION

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

3. Approval of 2026 City of Valdez State Government Priorities

MOTION: Council Member Love moved, seconded by Council Member Witte, to approve the 2026 City of Valdez State Government Priorities.

Mayor Fleming thanked city administration for putting the document together and making it more concise.

Council Member Love highlighted the key action priority of increasing local control of property tax exemptions.

City Manager Duval noted that the governor's proposed sales tax was not included in the priorities and gauged whether Council was interested in adopting an official stance on the topic. Council Member Love indicated support for an overall look at state revenue options but voiced opposition to a statewide sales tax noting its regressive nature. Council Member Devens agreed and added details on how a tax may negatively impact lower income

residents.

MOTION TO AMEND: Council Member Devens moved, seconded by Council Member Love, to add opposition to the governor's proposed statewide sales tax to the state government priorities in the "sustainability of state government" section.

VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

4. Approval of 2026 City of Valdez Federal Government Priorities

MOTION: Council Member Lally moved, seconded by Council Member Witte, to approve 2026 City of Valdez Federal Government Priorities.

Council Member Love thanked the City Manager for shortening the list but expressed concerns about reduction or elimination of federal loan forgiveness programs for healthcare providers. Love gauged the interest of other members on including specific language on the topic, several members were amenable.

MOTION TO AMEND: Council Member Love moved, seconded by Council Member Devens, to add language supporting federal loan forgiveness programs for medical professionals to the "healthcare" section.

Council Member Witte voiced opposition to inclusion of the language, noting that there were other groups better suited to advocate for the issue and highlighting the benefits of a more concise document.

VOTE ON MOTION TO AMEND

Yays: 6 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally and Greene

Nays: 1 - Witte

MOTION CARRIED.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

5. Discussion: Short-Term Rental Permit Update

City Manager Duval and Community Development Director Kate Huber provided an update on the newly established process for permitting of short-term rentals.

Director Huber highlighted the similarity between prior safety requirements for bed and breakfast businesses and current requirements for all short-term rentals. She noted that, in addition to safety considerations, the intent of the permit was to gather information about statistics related to short term rentals in Valdez and reminded Council of existing requirements under Title 17 of the Municipal Code. A status update on the new permitting software was also provided.

Council discussion focused on:

- The amount of remaining work required and timeline for implementation of the permit.
- Timeline for annual renewal of permit and situations requiring a reinspection during renewal.
- Smoke detector requirements.
- Relationship of the permit to Public Accommodation Tax collection.
- Safety requirements for motels and hotels and State Fire Marshall jurisdiction and inspection of commercial buildings.
- Differences between allowable land uses in commercial and residential districts under the zoning code.

VII. ORDINANCES

1. #26-01 - Amending Title 3 Property Taxes, Chapter 3.12, Section 3.12.040 Titled Additional Exemptions. Second Reading. Adoption.

MOTION: Council Member Devens moved, seconded by Council Member Love, to adopt Ordinance 26-01 in second reading.

Council Member Devens summarized the history of why adjusting the residential property tax exemption was done annually by ordinance.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

VIII. RESOLUTIONS

1. #26-10- Establishing the Valdez Tourism Task Force and Appointing the Members Thereof

MOTION: Council Member Love moved, seconded by Council Member Lally, to approve Resolution 26-10.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

2. #26-11- Expressing Concerns on Proposed Mining Activities at Gold Creek and Requesting Additional Review by the United States Army Corp of Engineers

MOTION: Council Member Love moved, seconded by Council Member Lally, to approve Resolution 26-11.

City Manager Duval shared updated information about how the initial permit application had been withdrawn but that future exploration activities might be permissible under a nationwide permit that would not require additional approvals. He spoke to how city administration's conversations with the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers had influenced resolution language.

Council Member Lally asked about the nationwide permit and what environmental reviews might be triggered at the federal level under a nationwide permit. Duval noted the streamlined process of a nationwide permit and lower threshold of review.

VOTE ON MOTION

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene
MOTION CARRIED.

3. #26-12 - Amending the Valdez Convention and Civic Center Facility Rates and Fees and Repealing Resolution 23-25 Formerly Setting Rates and Fees

MOTION: Council Member Foster moved, seconded by Council Member Love, to approve Resolution 26-12.

Council Member Love asked about the process for developing the new structure for rates and fees.

City Manager Duval described analysis of other similar facilities and balancing increases with past practices, noting that Valdez was substantially lower in cost compared to similar facilities statewide and that labor cost for daily operations still would be higher than the daily rental amount under the new fee schedule. He highlighted the goal of making rates more streamlined, noting that cost increases were significant but that there was a desire to maintain discounts for community and non-profit uses.

Council Member Devens expressed concerns about the increase in fees. He suggested that facility use may be reduced if fees were increased.

Duval noted that current bookings through 2027 would remain at the prior rate and highlighted the goal of maximizing facility use.

Council Member Foster spoke to the structural differences of the new fee schedule and suggested that it may align better with actual facility use. She thanked staff for their work.

Devens drew on personal experience, noting that non-profits may not be able to afford the new fees and may seek other more affordable local venues. He expressed his view that

use of the Civic Center should be a public service.

Council Member Witte voiced support for the resolution and noted the benefits of analyzing cost versus income.

VOTE ON MOTION

Yays: 6 - Fleming, Love, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

Nays: 1 - Devens

MOTION CARRIED.

4. #26-13 - Amending The 2026 Budget by Reallocating Previously Appropriated Funds to the Child Care Facility Design and Renovation Project

MOTION: Council Member Devens moved, seconded by Council Member Greene, to approve Resolution 26-13.

Council Member Love asked for and received information about the status of the Green Room project.

VOTE ON MOTION

Yays: 7 - Fleming, Love, Devens, Foster, Lally, Witte and Greene

MOTION CARRIED.

IX. REPORTS

- 1. Report: Auction Results of Surplus Lincoln Arc Welder - Weld Pak 155 with Rolling Cart**
- 2. Report: Issuance of Temporary Land Use Permit #26-02 for Alyeska Pipeline Service Company, Agent for TAPS Owners, for Six Months, for a .57 acre Portion of Tract C Section 34 ASCS 98-30 (Brown's Creek) Per Plat 2016-7 Owned by the City of Valdez**
- 3. Monthly Treasury Report: November 2025**
- 4. Monthly Treasury Report: December 2025**

X. CITY MANAGER / CITY CLERK / CITY ATTORNEY / MAYOR REPORTS

1. City Manager Report

City Manager Duval expounded on the following topics not included in his written report:

- Public questions on roof snow loads and need for shoveling.
- Snow lot purchase negotiations and status update.
- Juneau legislative fly-in plans.
- Chugachmiut Head Start program staffing needs.

2. City Clerk Report

Deputy City Clerk Elise Sorum-Birk discussed:

- Upcoming Juneau travel.
- Proposed adjustments to the regular meeting schedule to accommodate planned Council and Clerk's Office travel.
- Election related updates, including nominating petition timeline and the "I Voted" Sticker Challenge.
- Dates in June for Valdez's 125th Anniversary Celebration.
- Vacancies on boards and commissions.

3. City Attorney Report

City Attorney Jack Wakeland stood for questions on the written report and noted most discussion would take place in executive session.

4. City Mayor Report

Mayor Fleming expressed gratitude to city staff for organization of the newly established Tourism Task Force and highlighted local sporting events at the schools.

XI. COUNCIL BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR

Council Members thanked Community Development staff and contractors for the Housing Needs Assessment overview and voiced their anticipation of next steps.

Council Members Greene and Foster added thanks to the City Assessor for his presentation on the assessment process. Greene also complimented the "I Voted" sticker program.

Council Member Witte encouraged members of the public to run for local office.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Fleming noted that he would participate in the first portion of executive session related to the annual evaluation of the City Manager but would excuse himself from the second section related to oil tax issues.

City Attorney Robin Brena joined the meeting for executive session.

XIII. RETURN FROM EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mayor Pro Tempore Love announced that City Council had provided City Attorneys with direction on how to proceed with legal matters discussed.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Pro Tempore Love adjourned the meeting at 10:37 p.m.