

ASSEMBLY HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MINUTES

March 03, 2025, at 6:00 PM



Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar

<https://juneau.zoom.us/j/95241164899> or 1-253-215-8782 Webinar ID: 952 4116 4899

A. CALL TO ORDER - Chair Adkison called the Assembly Human Resources Committee meeting to order in the Assembly Chambers and via Zoom at 6:00 p.m.

B. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT – read by Assemblymember Hall

We would like to acknowledge that the City and Borough of Juneau is on Tlingit land and wish to honor the indigenous people of this land. For more than ten thousand years, Alaska Native people have been and continue to be integral to the well-being of our community. We are grateful to be in this place, a part of this community, and to honor the culture, traditions, and resilience of the Tlingit people. Gunalchéesh!

C. ROLL CALL

Present: Chair Ella Adkison, Wade Bryson, Neil Steininger, and Maureen Hall

Absent: None

Staff/Others Present: Deputy City Clerk Di Cathcart, City Attorney Emily Wright, Clerk Meeting Tech Kevin Allen, City Manager Katie Koester, Community Development Department Director Jill Lawhorne, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen (via Zoom)

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA – Agenda approved as presented.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – Minutes approved as presented.

1. February 3, 2025, Assembly HRC Meeting Minutes - Draft

F. AGENDA TOPICS

2. Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Appointments

Per [Resolution 2974](#), the LEPC serves as a community coalition advising staff on emergency management issues, reviews the emergency response plan for CBJ and functions, when necessary, as the Local Emergency Planning Committee under SARA Title III. The Assembly nominates applicants, and final appointments are made by the State Emergency Response Commission.

There are three seats up for action on this HRC agenda, with one applicant for each seat.

Local Emergency Planning Committee - [Current Roster](#)

MOTION: by Mr. Bryson that the Assembly Human Resources Committee forward to the full Assembly for approval, the recommendation to forward to the State of Alaska Emergency Response Commission the appointment of Jacob Thayer, Bartlett Regional Hospital Seat 5, and Kirsten Johnson, Bartlett Regional Hospital Seat 5a, to terms beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2026, and to appoint Michael Mazouch, Community Group Seat 9, for a term beginning immediately and ending December 31, 2027, and asked for unanimous consent. *Hearing no objection, motion passed.*

3. Personnel Board (PB) Appointments

Per [CBJ Code 44.05.060](#), the Personnel Board is composed of five members appointed by the Assembly. All appointments shall be for staggered three-year terms. Two seats shall be designated for members with a background in labor, two designated for members with a background in management, and one for a member of the general public.

Both incumbents have applied for reappointment to the Personnel Board.

Personnel Board [Roster](#)

MOTION: by Mr. Steininger that the Assembly Human Resources Committee recommend the Assembly reappoint Allison Radford and Kenneth Southerland both to the Personnel Board Management Representative Seats for terms beginning immediately and ending January 31, 2028, and asked for unanimous consent. **Hearing no objection, motion passed.**

4. Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) Appointment

Per [Ordinance 2022-64\(b\)\(am\)](#) the duties of the Jensen-Olson Arboretum Advisory Board, the Treadwell Arena Advisory Board, and the Aquatics Board were consolidated into the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee (PRAC) and those committees sunset as of March 27, 2023 with the previous PRAC sunsetting as of April 30, 2023. Due to a vacancy, there is one seat open for an unexpired term beginning immediately and ending April 30, 2026; and one applicant has applied.

PRAC [Roster](#)

MOTION: by Ms. Hall that the Assembly Human Resources Committee recommend the Assembly appoint Jennifer Gross to the Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee for an unexpired term beginning immediately and ending April 30, 2026, and asked for unanimous consent. **Hearing no objection, motion passed.**

5. Ordinance 2025-17 An Ordinance Amending the City and Borough Code Relating to Quasi-Judicial and Appeal Review Boards.

This ordinance transitions portions of CBJ code from appeals boards to a hearing officer for the intermediate appellate review.

City Attorney Wright outlined the two potential options before the Assembly HRC regarding this ordinance. The current plan would be to take the group of board members from the different quasi-judicial appeal boards and consolidate them into a larger pool. Allowing CBJ to have nine or ten people that we could call on when an appeal is brought forward. Originally we had looked at just selecting one hearing officer, but a good suggestion was made that sometimes it's nice to have two other people to bounce ideas from and then potentially have a vote; so, a panel of three instead of one hearing officer. The question before the HRC is which option would you prefer; would you like us to pick one hearing officer or start with a group of three from our current members?

Ms. Wright also noted that historically there had been discussion of hiring a hearing officer for CBJ or the option of using the State Office of Administrative Judges when needing a hearing officer, but those discussions haven't happened recently.

Mr. Bryson asked what CBJ's current standard practice for the appeal boards has been. Has it been one hearing officer or a group of three, similar to the Board of Equalization?

Ms. Wright responded that the Board of Equalization is a good example, its board consisting of up to nine members, which sit in panels of three to hear property appeals. The Bidding Review Board recently met. That is a five-member board but was they were able to sit in a panel of three for quorum purposes since there is one vacant seat and one member was unable to participate in the bid protest appeal hearing.

Mr. Steininger spoke in favor of option 2 and appreciated the rationale behind a panel of three instead of putting a single person in a position of having to make a hard decision on CBJ's behalf since these are often challenging decisions.

Ms. Adkison appreciated Mr. Steininger's and Ms. Wright's thoughts and her only concern with option 2 was that currently we have a pool of applicants that could be potential free hearing officers. Are there any concerns or roadblocks in the future if the Assembly goes with option 2.

Ms. Wright said she didn't see any roadblocks for option number 2. Hiring a hearing officer or a sole designated hearing office is more expensive in general. Option 2 would utilize volunteers that typically have some type of experience in the field or the topic coming before them and so far it's been very successful to have a group and maximize the people that have conscientiously volunteered and been a great asset to the city.

MOTION: by Mr. Bryson that the Assembly Human Resources Committee move Ordinance 2025-17 Option 2 to the full Assembly for action and asked for unanimous consent. ***Hearing no objection, motion passed.***

6. Ordinance 2025-16 An Ordinance Amending the City and Borough Code Relating to the Historic Resources Advisory Committee.

As part of the review of all CBJ Boards, Committees and Commissions by the Assembly Human Resources Committee, the HRC discussed the Historic Resources Advisory Committee at its February 3, 2025, meeting and requested staff draft an ordinance updating its charge and membership.

Mr. Steininger discussed shrinking the size of the committee, which was also noted in the letter from the Historic Resources Advisory Committee, the make-up of committee members and asked Ms. Lawhorne for the rationale behind those changes.

Community Development Director Lawhorne stated that first she wanted to apologize for the unintended confusion she may have caused about this ordinance. She had overlooked that on packet page 46 line 7 it still said "repealed" and it should have been changed to "amended." Ms. Lawhorne said that she had checked in with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) on the ordinance in general as well as her staff that had been the liaison to HRAC. Per state statute, the membership must be at least seven. She said that they discussed this with the City Museum and made changes related to their section based on their recommendations.

Mr. Bryson asked, if they go down to a seven-member board, how many public seats and how many professional seats there would be.

Ms. Lawhorne said the only two seats that we are required to have per the State statute are the archaeologist and a representative or person knowledgeable in the customs and language of the Tlingit and Haida people. She said she believes the State statute language is much broader, but there is a seat specific to the tribes.

Ms. Adkison was glad to hear that CDD had worked through the questions regarding SHPO and the concern that changes to HRAC would change CBJ's Certified Local Government (CLG) status specifically on the modification of the duties of the committee. Ms. Adkison asked Ms. Lawhorne to elaborate on what specifically those changes do, and the rationale behind them.

Ms. Lawhorne stated that while it would have been acceptable for HRAC to meet as needed, it was instead discussed for them to meet quarterly, while CDD works through the Comprehensive Plan updates and changes over the next couple of years and revisit HRAC meetings once that process is completed. One of the main objectives of the committee is reviewing and making recommendations on local projects, that's a critical one.

Ms. Lawhorne moved through the ordinance and pointed out the changes are underlined; however, some of them are ones the committee probably should have been doing or one's that were passed back and forth between staff and the committee in the past. For instance, making clear that the annual report is the responsibility of the committee and not staff. To engage more with the property owners in the district, noting that from experience the best way to bring people along with historic preservation and make them see the use of it, especially as an economic development tool, is to really bring the property owners and the businesses to the table and engage with them. So, this seemed like the perfect opportunity to start those discussions, especially as the Comprehensive Plan dialogue continues over the next two years. She said they took off the City Museum information after speaking with them. In regard to number 4 on the first page, the various long-range plans, they involve those committees regardless so there wasn't a need to include that in this ordinance. Through HRAC's annual report they are already cooperating and consulting with the Assembly.

Ms. Adkison said there had been specific concerns that the recommended changes made it so HRAC was no longer an Advisory Committee and asked Ms. Wright to speak to that.

Ms. Wright responded that HRAC is still fully an Advisory Committee, they are reporting out to the Assembly and that is reflective of what the Assembly needs at this time.

Ms. Hall asked if the changes to membership limits, who can serve, and asked if they should use more general language to maintain the ability to draw from a larger pool of applicants. Ms. Wright noted that it will not limit membership from the general public interested in serving on HRAC.

MOTION: by Mr. Steininger that the Assembly Human Resources Committee move Ordinance 2025-16 to the Assembly Committee of the Whole for action and objected for purposes of an amendment.

AMENDMENT #1: Motion by Mr. Steininger to amend **Section 3 B. Membership** to add back in the words [and the general public] to the end of the sentence and asked for unanimous consent. ***Hearing no objection, the amendment passed by unanimous consent. Hearing no further objection, the motion to move Ordinance 2025-16, as amended, to the Assembly Committee of the Whole also passed by unanimous consent.***

7. Ordinance 2025-13 Election Code Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)

Ms. Adkison opened this topic for discussion and questions and asked Ms. Wright if she had anything to add prior to questions.

Ms. Wright wanted the committee to know that because block voting affects the School Board, she has reached out and sent them the draft ordinance but has not received any feedback yet. She said they will keep the School Board apprised as this ordinance moves forward.

Mr. Bryson asked how many races this would have impacted in the last five years.

Ms. Cathcart said that CBJ has not had a typical election since 2015, perhaps 2017, and to answer Mr. Bryson's question, it depended but it hasn't really been an issue. She said incumbents often ran unopposed but if someone has termed out or was not running for reelection then there may be 6-10 candidates running for a seat. She also shared that what they often see was confusion on the ballot for District 2 and voters overvoting that race, perhaps because they just register the '2' and since with the School Board race, depending on the year, voters can vote for two or three School Board candidates.

Mr. Kelly requested seeing a sample ballot of what RCV may look like on a ballot and how it would get decided which is a two-year seat and which is a three-year seat when we run into those situations.

Ms. Wright said that the Assembly needed to decide, should they move forward with this, if all races went to Ranked Choice Voting, or if only Assembly seats went to RCV and the School Board seats used block voting. She said if all seats went to RCV, then the seats would have to be designated as Seat A, B, C, etc... and people would need to decide which seat to run for. She said this would be a change from our current practice. She said in a situation where seats had a different length of time, such as filling a vacant seat for the remainder of a term, each seat would have its own designation, and people would decide upfront which seat they wanted to file for as a candidate.

Ms. Adkison asked how partial term seats were noted on the ballot. Ms. McEwen said they are not designated on the current ballot design; she said the ballot would say, for example, "vote for no more than 2" and the person with the top number of votes receives the longest term and person who receives the second highest vote total receives the shorter term.

Mr. Kelly asked about other jurisdictions. Ms. McEwen said that other jurisdictions often have specifically designated every seat on their Assembly; in our case it would mean having a Mayoral seat, then Seats 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. She said she believed that making this happen would require a charter change. Ms. Wright concurred, saying CBJ Charter 6.7 designates districts, but they could stay within that and the boundaries.

Mr. Bryson said he supported RCV but was hesitant about requiring designated seats and charter changes.

Ms. Hall said she was a fan of RCV but questioned the timing of implementing it, with City Clerk Beth McEwen's upcoming retirement and ongoing petition challenges to the State's RCV.

Ms. Adkison noted that, if passed, RCV would not be implemented in Juneau elections until the 2026 municipal election. She said that even if RCV was repealed for State elections, it would not affect municipal elections. She asked how the ordinance would need to change to get rid of block voting. Ms. Wright said minimal changes would be needed.

MOTION: by Mr. Bryson to move **Ordinance 2025-13 Election Code Ranked Choice Voting** to the Committee of the Whole and asked for unanimous consent. ***Hearing no objection, motion passed by unanimous consent.***

G. STAFF REPORTS

Request from Clerk Staff to work with Chair Adkison and Mr. Bryson on outlining and coming up with dates for future CBJ Board Chair and Board member training/refreshers for both Advisory and Empowered Board members.

H. STANDING COMMITTEE TOPICS - *for discussion as meeting time allows*

CBJ Boards, Committees, Commissions

8. Letter from Juneau Human Rights Commission Regarding Membership Numbers

The Juneau Human Rights Commission requested that a reduction in their membership number happen through attrition. Mr. Steininger asked how reduction through attrition would be implemented. Ms. Wright said this committee has had trouble getting quorum; she said that the rules could be set up at the Assembly's discretion.

MOTION by Mr. Bryson to draft a resolution to bring the Juneau Human Rights Commission membership to six people, and to further reduce it to five people when the next terms are up and asked for unanimous consent. ***Hearing no objection, motion passed by unanimous consent.***

I. COMMITTEE MEMBER COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

J. NEXT MEETING DATE

April 7, 2025, at 6pm in the Assembly Chambers/Zoom Webinar.

K. SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

L. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee meeting adjourned at 6:48 p.m.