

## PRESS RELEASE



### **Assembly Leadership Seeks Extension of Service for Acting Chief Equity Officer to Allow Mayor’s Lawsuit Against Assembly to Resolve**

**Tuesday, March 15, 2022**

At today’s Regular Assembly Meeting, Assembly Leadership will ask Assembly members to approve a resolution that would let the Municipality of Anchorage’s Acting Chief Equity Officer, Uluao “Junior” Aumavae, continue in the position while Mayor Dave Bronson’s lawsuit against the Assembly proceeds.

Assembly Resolution 2022-91 seeks an exemption to Anchorage Municipal Code (AMC) 3.20.020A.5, which prohibits individuals from serving longer than 60 days in a role that requires Assembly confirmation, unless the Assembly deems by resolution “that it is not in the best interest of the municipality to enforce the limit.”

Aumavae has served as Acting Chief Equity Officer since October 8, 2021, one day after the Mayor fired the then-serving Chief Equity Officer, Clifford Armstrong, without Assembly concurrence, which is required by law per AMC 3.20.140. Armstrong later sued the Municipality for unlawful termination and was paid \$125,000 to resolve the suit. On December 12, 2021, Mayor Bronson sued the Assembly, asserting that parts of AMC 3.20.140 are unlawful.

Assembly Chair Suzanne LaFrance stated, “It’s unfortunate that Mr. Aumavae is caught in the middle of this lawsuit. This resolution is intended to allow him to continue in his role while the courts settle this important legal question, which is in the best interests of all parties and the community to resolve. Mr. Aumavae’s continued service to the Municipality is appreciated.”

“When the Assembly created the position of Chief Equity Officer, it was intended to serve all residents of the Municipality and be free from political pressure, consistent with the Internal Auditor and Administrative Hearing Officer positions,” said Christopher Constant, Assembly Vice Chair. “It would be unfair to confirm another Chief Equity Officer before we have legal clarity about this position. It would also put the Municipality at risk of another lawsuit, as it cost the taxpayers \$125,000 for Mayor Bronson to settle the wrongful termination suit brought by Mr. Armstrong.”

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