ANCHORAGE, ALASKA
AR No. 2023-167

A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY EXPRESSING
A LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE LIBRARY
DEPARTMENT AND RECOMMENDING HER RESIGNATION.

WHEREAS, the Municipality of Anchorage has longstanding policies and objectives
to promote harmonious and cooperative relations between the Municipality and its
employees and to protect the public by ensuring orderly and effective operations of
government;' and

WHEREAS, the personnel rules of the Municipality have an express intent to,
among other things, "ensure fair treatment of applicants and employees in all
aspects of personnel administration without regard to political affiliation, race, color,
national origin, age, sex, religious creed, marital status or disability, and with proper
regard for their privacy and constitutional rights as citizens"; and

WHEREAS, the Municipality has enacted strong prohibitions against invidious
discrimination embodied in Charter §§ II(7) and 17.01, Anchorage Municipal Code
Title 5, Equal Rights, and AMC Chapter 7.50; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Assembly recognizes the importance and significance
of strong and reliable leadership and management of the Municipality’s workplaces
consistent with the duties to uphold the policies above and expects every official
holding public office to project the highest standards of ethics and integrity to
implement them; and

WHEREAS, in an official Municipality of Anchorage EEO/AA Policy Statement
issued January 11, 2023, by Mayor Bronson he reminds us that the MOA takes its
Equal Employment Opportunity obligations seriously, that all MOA employees are
obligated to comply with MOA’s Policies and Procedures and the EEO/AA Program
to ensure that MOA employees and customers are treated in a nondiscriminatory
manner, and that all MOA management and supervisory personnel have a
responsibility to ensure these are effectively implemented and that EEO matters
within their respective areas are promptly and appropriately addressed; and

WHEREAS, in addition, Mayor Bronson’s EEO/AA Policy Statement also says even
inappropriate or bullying behavior that may not rise to the level of illegality is equally

1 AMC section 3.70.020, Declaration of policy.
2 AMC section 3.30.011C.
3 Accessible at the web pages of the MOA Office of Equal Opportunity,
<https://www.muni.org/Departments/equal_opportunity/Pages/EEOAA.aspx> (accessed May 2, 2023), and
citing MOA Policy & Procedure 40-38, Unlawful Discrimination and Harassment, and 20-3, Affirmative
Action Program.
unacceptable and will not be tolerated, to create a workplace based on fairness,
dignity and respect for all MOA employees and customers; and

WHEREAS, the public confidence in good government requires the credibility of its
public officials in effectuating the foregoing policies; and

WHEREAS, Judy Norton Eledge was selected by Mayor Bronson in late August
2021 to be the MOA’s new Library Director, but months afterward transferred to the
Deputy Director position, a position she has held from November 2021 to the
present, rather than go through the Assembly’s confirmation process; and

WHEREAS, recent allegations have been reported of racist statements about
Alaska Natives made by Ms. Eledge in her role as current Deputy Director of Library
Services to library employees, in a recording from March 14, 2022; and

WHEREAS, the report referenced above describes how library employees were
unable to prompt action or an investigation by the Alaska State Commission for
Human Rights or the Anchorage Equal Rights Commission when the complaints
about Ms. Eledge were brought to those offices; and

WHEREAS, when at least five Library employees complained about Ms. Eledge
directly to the Human Resources Department, the then-director wore a t-shirt that
said “I’m with Judy” to a meeting of the Library Advisory Board, and no action was
taken on their complaints; and

WHEREAS, after the MOA’s Office of Equal Opportunity began to investigate
complaints against Ms. Eledge, the OEO Director was fired and has filed lawsuits in
state and federal court for wrongful termination; and

WHEREAS, several inflammatory, discriminatory and racist statements are
attributed to Ms. Eledge during her time as Deputy Director of the Library by
employees under her management and alleged in the court filings or media articles
referenced above, although the MOA has denied these allegations, such alleged
statements include:

- “I worked in an Alaska Native village. If it wasn’t for the white man and his oil
  money, they’d still be raping their daughters in caves.”
- “I don’t have the same views about Eskimos as other people at the library. I
  worked in Barrow; I know they diddle their kids. It’s a well-known secret,
  people just don’t talk about it. I knew a 2nd grader that had gonorrhea. They
  send their FAS [fetal alcohol syndrome] babies to Anchorage because they
don’t want to take care of them.”
- That Ms. Eledge told Library security they should “not enforce the policy
  against ‘mothers with diaper bags,’ but to enforce it strictly against individuals
  who appeared homeless, many of whom appeared to be Alaska Native.”
- “The atmosphere here has gone downhill with woke movements like Black
  Lives Matter … I’m telling you, the woke culture is killing libraries and this

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country. If I could get rid of those employees, I could turn this library around for the good.”

- “There are too many ‘liberals’ working in libraries.”;

and

WHEREAS, several long-time senior level employees at the Loussac Library have reportedly resigned their positions because of the hostile work environment created by Ms. Eledge; and

WHEREAS, Caitlin Shortell of Shortell Law LLC sent a letter on March 14, 2023 addressed to the Anchorage Assembly Members regarding the AERC’s handling of complaints by municipal employees and LGBTQ+ complainants and, stating she represents five library employees, asserted that

- one was constructively discharged after being subjected to pervasive discriminatory speech and unfair treatment by the Deputy Director, who was her supervisor;
- within the past two years, seven library employees have left due to discrimination, harassment, bullying, and unfair treatment
- the Municipality has lost many employees due to unlawful employment practices and a failure to investigate and remedy these employee complaints;

and

WHEREAS, while it is common to decline to comment on matters that are the subject of pending litigation, as Ms. Eledge and the Mayor did for the April 22, 2023 Daily News and ProPublica article, the Mayor’s response was to send a statement: “The Mayor has no comment on these matters due to pending litigation. The Mayor denounces all hateful, racist, and derogatory remarks made by any Municipal employee, and expects those who work for the city to uphold the law and protect the rights of all,” which reportedly was revised and resent a few hours later, that did not include the sentence denouncing “hateful, racist and derogatory remarks,” a concerning action that calls into question the Administration’s remedy to address such allegations; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Assembly respects and understands the importance of due process and for the adjudication of claims and grievances to be heard by an impartial decision-maker, and does not by this resolution intend to interfere with those legal proceedings; and

WHEREAS, at the same time the Anchorage Assembly recognizes the existence of friction, hostility and discontent at the Library Department demonstrably due in large part to Ms. Eledge’s reported role and conduct, and is committed to cultivating an inclusive, harmonious, and welcoming workplace across all departments of the Municipality; and

WHEREAS, the Anchorage Assembly recognizes that maintaining Ms. Eledge in this position, who serves at the pleasure of Mayor Bronson, has an appreciable risk of financial liability and lawsuits against the Municipality on the grounds of alleged harassment and unlawful employment practices; and

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5 Id., see footnote 4.
WHEREAS, the sense of the Assembly is the Mayor is more likely to retain executive appointees he personally favors and pay out municipal funds to settle employment related complaints resulting from those executives’ management and conduct rather than commanding them to address and resolve hostile work environment claims in departments within his Administration; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Eledge’s inflammatory and discriminatory perspectives and statements are known and consistent, reported during her candidacy for public office prior to her employment at the Anchorage Library, and are unlikely to change or improve even if directed by the Mayor; now, therefore,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED BY THE ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY THAT:

Section 1. There exists a lack of confidence in the Deputy Director’s performance and conduct at the Anchorage Library and in her capability to operate and direct the Library and its staff in a manner consistent with the Municipal policies described in this Resolution.

Section 2. The Anchorage Assembly recommends the Mayor ask for, and accept when tendered, the resignation of the Deputy Director of Library Services.

PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Assembly this 9th day of May, 2023.

ATTEST:

Chair

Municipal Clerk

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From: ASSEMBLY VICE CHAIR ZALETEL

Subject: RESIGNATION OF ANCHORAGE PUBLIC LIBRARY DEPUTY DIRECTOR

For the Assembly’s consideration, please see the attached press release from the Mayor’s Office, accepting the resignation of Anchorage Public Library Deputy Director, Judy Eledge.

Prepared by: Assembly Counsel’s Office

Respectfully submitted: Meg Zaletel, Assembly Vice Chair
District 4, Midtown
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 9, 2023

Mayor Bronson Accepts Resignation of Anchorage Public Library Deputy Director Judy Eledge

Anchorage, AK – Anchorage Mayor Dave Bronson today accepted the resignation of Anchorage Public Library Deputy Director Judy Eledge.

Mrs. Eledge’s last day will be May 15, 2023.

Media Contact: Corey Allen Young, Communications Director, Mayor’s Office, corey.young@anchorageak.gov, 907-229-4150

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