WHEREAS, the Alaska Legislature, in 2001, though official action, commemorates the third Saturday in June each year as Juneteenth to celebrate the abolition of slavery; and

WHEREAS, Designating June 19, 2021, as 'Juneteenth Independence Day' in recognition of June 19, 1865, the day on which slavery legally came to an end in the United States; and

WHEREAS, African Americans from the Southwest, for nearly 150 years, have continued the tradition of observing Juneteenth Independence Day; Whereas, 'Juneteenth Independence Day' celebrations have been held to honor African American freedom while encouraging self-development and respect for all cultures; and

WHEREAS, the faith and strength of character demonstrated by former slaves and their descendants remain an example for all people of the United States, regardless of background, religion, or race; and

WHEREAS, slavery was not officially abolished until the ratification of the 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution in January 1865; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass, born in the State of Maryland in 1818, escaped from slavery and became a leading writer, orator, publisher, and one of the United States' most influential advocates for abolitionism and the equality of all people; and

WHEREAS, Frederick Douglass was recognized for his accomplishments with a statue that was unveiled during a ceremony on June 19, 2013, in Emancipation Hall of the United States Capitol; and

WHEREAS, 2021 marks the 57th anniversary of the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, signed into law on July 2, 1964, providing equal protections for African Americans, including former slaves and their descendants; and

WHEREAS, this commemoration dates to June 19, 1865 when Union Soldiers, led by Major General Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas with news that the civil war had ended and that all slaves were now free; and

WHEREAS, Juneteenth Day is also an opportunity for all of us to join together to promote the values of respect, tolerance, and acceptance in our communities, as well as reaffirm our commitment to upholding the inalienable rights outlined in our nation's constitution – the rights of liberty, dignity, and equality for all citizens.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, Bryce Ward, Mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Jim Matherly, Mayor of the City of Fairbanks, and Michael Welch, Mayor of the City of North Pole, do hereby proclaim:

June 19, 2021
As Juneteenth Day

in the Borough and encourage all residents to reflect on the principles of freedom and equality which our nation and state are built upon and how we live these principles every day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, we have hereunto set our hands this 2nd day of June 2021.

Bryce Ward, Mayor
Fairbanks North Star Borough

Jim Matherly, Mayor
City of Fairbanks

Michael Welch, Mayor
City of North Pole

Attest:

April Trickey, CMC
Borough Clerk