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**City Council Minutes**  
**March 3, 2015 ~ 5:00PM**

**Regular Meeting**  
**City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**  
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The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on Tuesday, March 3, 2015 at City Hall. Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

City Council members present: Mayor Pete Hallgren (telephonically), Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith
JW Musgrove, Sherman Stebbins, Corey Vanden Boom, Audrey Brown

City Council member excused: Lonny Meeks

City employees present: Finance Officer Stephanie Prestwich, Library Director Joyce McCombs, City Clerk Pat White

Four members from the community were present and the meeting was broadcast over the local High School radio, KDHS 95.5 FM.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Musgrove moved to approve the March 3, 2015 agenda as presented; Vanden Boom seconded. Motion carried.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Musgrove moved to approve the minutes from the February 17, 2015 regular meeting; Brown seconded. Motion carried.

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Al Edgren, Delta Area Forester, distributed three handouts that were generated from a series of meetings held by the Alaska Division of Forestry of which resulted in proposed changes to Delta Forestry. He was given a termination notice, effective December 15, 2014, due to his multiple sclerosis, but was able to renegotiate it by offering his resignation, effective April 30, 2015. Thereafter his position will not be filled because of current oil prices and State of Alaska budget cuts. The Forest Resource position was removed about a year ago and now his position will be removed, leaving no resource or management staff at the Delta Forestry office. Referring to a document that he drafted, Edgren explained his attempt to educate area residents about services the Delta Forestry provides for an area that encompasses 4.5 million acres. Without resource management, all work has been assigned to Fairbanks. The only full time staff to remain in Delta will be Joanne Singer and, along with her administrative duties, she will provide support for the timber program and be tasked with EFF payroll and other responsibilities that come with the summer season. Edgren said the Delta office will not be closed, but it will be managed out of Fairbanks. He reported the timber industry in Delta generates huge numbers. The three largest businesses generate \$100,000 to \$1.5 million in revenue annually (Dry Creek - \$1.5 million, Joe Chapman - \$200,000-\$300,000, Adam McNabb - \$100,000). Once management is gone, support for timber resources will slowly fade away. Edgren encouraged the City Council to voice concerns to legislators, Representative Jim Colver and Senator Mike Dunleavy, to support continuation of timber resource and fire programs in Delta.

Discussion followed regarding opportunity to remove the Area Forester position because of the timing of Edgren's termination/resignation and the drop in oil prices, only three employees in the Fairbanks office left to run the entire Tanana Valley Timber Sale Program, a 7 1/2-month position open for a Fire Management Officer, but only one applicant in the past six months, hiring a forest technician from Fairbanks (Trevor Fulton) if the position is not filled by fire season, and recruiting firefighters from the Lower 48.

Leith asked about potential threat to the Delta community from U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) training.

Edgren said military training has a history of ignitions, but fire suppression on military land is the responsibility of the Bureau of Land Management / Alaska Fire Service. Delta Forestry provides support to Fort Greely on all wild land fires because they do not own fire engines.

Musgrove said the State has spent itself into an invisible hole in the ground. He asked if the Division of Forestry offered any suggestions to the State to reduce its deficit.

Edgren said local personnel suggested furloughs and cutting helicopters as cost saving measures instead of cutting jobs. He said it is easy to locate a helicopter, which costs half a million dollars for a 90-day contract, but it is hard to find trained, experienced firefighters. Last year was a great example of being able to gamble (and save) because of the rain.

However the State is not resisting the proposals to combine offices (Delta with Fairbanks, Tok with Copper River, and McGrath with Mat-Su and Kenai).

Stebbins asked if the military can provide firefighting assistance (helicopters with water buckets).

Edgren said Air Guard, based in Anchorage, was a huge asset to the Mat-Su and Kenai fires last year. They will travel to the Interior, but they do not transport people. They only provide buckets and they may transport a small amount of gear.

Hallgren questioned whether local crews would be available to provide support to the volunteer fire departments, if there will be firefighter training for this year's fire season, and whether the new changes will affect the price of firewood.

Edgren said McGrath has had the most significant personnel cuts, but the Delta office has not received any more cuts at the firefighter level. The Walker administration projects another 8% cut next year if oil prices remain the same and 8% thereafter, and because of that, he suspects it will be similar to what happened in McGrath (no fire suppression capabilities). This year a temporary employee will run the Delta operation and it is extremely important that he take ownership and responsibility to protect the entire community. If Forestry is unable to sell timber, commercial operators will not be able to stay in business because there will not be any firewood to sell.

Joanne Singer said Delta Forestry will still conduct firefighter training, issue wood cutting permits, bring in revenue, provide support to the community, etc. The biggest change will be that Delta's leadership and direction will come from Fairbanks, and effective March 16, her new boss will be Fairbanks Area Forester Paul Maki.

Musgrove thanked Edgren for his years of service to the Interior communities of Alaska and wished him well on his future endeavors.

Edgren said he appreciated working with the Council on all sorts of different issues.

REPORTS

Airport – JW Musgrove reported:

- Members of the airport community removed drifts, so the taxiway is open. Snow is forecast for the upcoming weekend.
- Revenue collections are finished and area pilots are able to contribute to the annual airport insurance premium.

City Administrator – Pat White reported on Mike Tvenge's behalf:

- Mike Tvenge is attending Floodplain Management training in Anchorage, March 2/6.
- Representative Jim Colver will be available for public concerns on March 5, 4:00 to 6:00pm, at City Hall.
- RFPs for fuel and lawn bids were advertised. Sealed bids will be accepted until 4:00pm, March 12 for the fuel contract and 3:00pm, April 15 for the lawn maintenance contract. The existing three-year fuel contract ends March 31 and the lawn contract is a one-year contract that "can be extended on an annual basis for up to two additional years at an annual 3% cost increase without bidding, if both the City and the contractor are in agreement." J&D Yard Care was awarded the contract in 2014. Mike Tvenge reported at the January 20 meeting that he would like to rebid the contract because of the current (lower) gas prices and changes to fertilizing, mowing, and watering schedules. The only change to the fuel contract was to increase liability limits.

School District – Corey Vanden Boom reported all students will be in Delta next year because the School Board decided to close the Middle School at Fort Greely.

Stebbins explained the School Board's need for a larger room to conduct their meetings because of the consolidation of facilities. He questioned holding School Board meetings at City Hall in the Council Chambers (old library).

Leith agreed with the concept of sharing space.

Library – Mary Leith reported:

- The February 20 "Science Night" was very well attended. The big hit was smelling 30,000-year old air that was released from permafrost that was thawed on the spot.

McCombs said the UAF Permafrost team will return in late April when they hold another event at the Elementary School.

- Angie Barnard's popular "Chocolate for Grownups" will be held at the library on March 6, 7:00pm. The 20-adult class limit has already been filled, but interested people can sign up on a waiting list for possible cancellations.
- The "African Guitar Summit" concert will be held at the Fort Greely Aurora Community Activity Center (CAC), 7:00pm, March 14, 2105.
- The Library Association is preparing for the annual open house and fund raising event at the library on April 25.
- Online with Libraries (OWL) and other library programs are in jeopardy.

McCombs explained the proposed budget cuts that would eliminate the OWL (Online with Libraries) program that provides high speed Internet and video broadcasting capabilities to 103 libraries across Alaska, and also eliminate the Best Beginnings Imagination Library program, which serves more than 200 local children, the Head Start program, and Online Homework Help from Tutor.com. McCombs explained a request last week from Representative Jim Colver's office to apply for a smaller budget item in the \$10,000 to \$15,000 range. She explained the need to upgrade computers; that they

are still using Windows XP and have not been able to upgrade since April 2014, but she declined applying for the Capital Improvement Project because the City Council opted out of requesting State of Alaska CIP funds during the December 2, 2014 meeting.

Discussion followed regarding experiencing problems with downloading upgrades on aged computers, purchasing new computers with a possible budget surplus this year or adding to New Equipment in the FY2016 budget, and the Destiny system that keeps track of patron records, catalogs books, and operates the Interlibrary Loan system between the public library and local schools.

McCombs said public computers, equipment, and accessories were either donated by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation or granted to the library through the OWL project. Staff computers were purchased with grant funding from the Rasmuson Foundation and the Alaska State Library when the library was built and furnished in 2004/2005. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation provide support and online education, but they no longer grant equipment.

David Zimmerman reported Microsoft support for the Windows XP software was discontinued in 2014 and he agreed that the library needs to replace existing computers.

Public Works – Sherman Stebbins reminded the public about the change in landfill hours, effective March 1 through October 31 (9:00am to 3:00pm on Saturdays) and new landfill rates, effective March 16 (8¢ per pound or \$160 per ton).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

Park Outhouse Designs

Leith referenced a memo from Mike Tvenge, dated February 27, 2015, and handouts about two-vault outhouse designs; the Double Rocky Mountain model, which is a dry outhouse and would be located near the playground on the southeast corner of the park, and the Denali Flush, which would be located near the Little League fields on the west end of the park near Aurora Avenue. Leith asked to approve Tvenge's recommendation of the two outhouse designs and that his decision is based on available legislative grant funds received in 2014 (\$250,000).

Discussion followed regarding pricing that is available for the Double Rocky Mountain outhouse (\$60,420.52), but not the Denali Flush, making a decision about the design, and possibly running a 40 or 50-foot pipe from the existing well (installed on the Little League end of the park in 1977 by Fred Cook and paid by the City).

Stebbins said constructing new, cleaner outhouses has been a topic for many years and more recently Little League organizers requested user-friendly outhouses to serve larger crowds. He expressed concerns about vandalism, additional maintenance, who will take responsibility for it, how often, and when it would be available to the public. He suggested installing running water in one vault, but not both, and installing a urinal if funding permitted it.

Stebbins moved to accept Tvenge's recommendation to purchase the CXT outhouses as presented and to accept his color choices and other specifics that would complement the City Park; Brown seconded.

Hallgren said the two models of outhouses will use half of the available legislative funds and he questioned whether they would have holding tanks or separate drain fields. He reminded the Council that the water fountain on the outside of the pavilion in the center of the ball fields was removed (in 2009).

Stebbins suggested finishing the outhouses first and making them durable enough to withstand many years. He said the majority of use at the park is on the Little League end, which is reason why he thinks they should take some ownership in maintaining and monitoring them.

Musgrove expressed concerns with providing water because users have no vested interest in the outhouses.

Discussion followed regarding no decisions about what portions of the park would be paved, user groups being responsible to lock up restrooms and outhouses, and the City being responsible for winterizing the park each year.

Hallgren said the buildings come from only one manufacturer and there is no need for competitive bidding because all other resources have been exhausted.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with four voting in favor (Brown, Stebbins, Vanden Boom, Leith) and two voting against (Hallgren, Musgrove).

Credit Card Machines

Prestwich explained research related to installing a credit card machine at City Hall, the library, and at the landfill scale house. She suggested leasing it instead of purchasing it because of upgrades and updates. Annual fees are \$95/year per machine plus a one-time installation fee of \$45, essentially \$93/month for each of the three machines. Prestwich suggested a \$1 convenience fee to absorb the cost of the lease(s). She also suggested creating separate accounting to keep track of charges.

Discussion followed regarding whether to charge the \$1 convenience fee, shopping around, patrons willing to donate at the library via debit cards, and both the City and the customer benefitting from being able to use credit/debit cards.

Musgrove said he was adamantly opposed to a convenience fee because “gouging people for \$1 is childish.”

Hallgren said he would support moving into the 21st century because of being a service organization and he had no problem with charging the service fee. Florida gas stations charge an extra 10¢ per gallon if paid with a credit card. Discussion followed regarding not allowing businesses to pay with credit/debit cards when garbage deliveries are over \$250, credit card companies continually changing their policies, most businesses imposing a minimum purchase before accepting a credit card payment, and creating a cheat sheet to keep track of multiple transactions (one swipe) with one convenience fee.

Hallgren moved to 1) adopt the Finance Director’s proposal to purchase credit card machines for City Hall, the library, and the landfill scale house, 2) charge a \$1 usage fee, except on donations, and 3) set a minimum sale of \$5.00 to use credit/debit cards; Leith seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five voting in favor (Hallgren, Brown, Stebbins, Vanden Boom, Leith) and one voting against (Musgrove).

Purchase Orders

PO#017885 to Aetna, Inc. in the amount of \$16,994.47 for March group health insurance

PO#017886 to Alaska Communications Systems in the amount of \$3,111.87 for February phone & internet service

PO#017887 to Airport Equipment Rental in the amount of \$992.04 for plow repair parts

PO#017888 to Buffalo Fuel, Inc. in the amount of \$1,444.80 for fuel oil and gas for landfill equipment

PO#017889 to Guess & Rudd in the amount of \$1,150.00 for email and travel to Delta to meet with Council committee

Musgrove moved to approve purchase orders 017885 through 017889 as presented; Vanden Boom seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

ADJOURNMENT

Musgrove moved to adjourn at 6:40pm; Vanden Boom seconded. Motion carried.

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: March 17, 2015