



**City Council Minutes
February 7, 2017 ~ 5:00PM**

**Regular Meeting
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**

The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 at City Hall. Deputy Mayor JW Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

City Council members present: Mayor Pete Hallgren (telephonically), Deputy Mayor JW Musgrove, Jennifer Brant Freda Degnan, Lou Heinbockel, William Brennan (arrived at approximately 5:15pm) Audrey Brown (joined telephonically at 5:22pm)

City employees present: Finance Officer Stephanie Prestwich, City Clerk Pat White
Approximately 30-35 people were present and the meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Musgrove reported two proclamations under *New Business* would be moved to follow *City Purchases* and *Fairbanks News-Miner* will be moved to *Request to Speak*.

Heinbockel moved to approve the agenda as amended; Degnan seconded. Motion carried.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Heinbockel moved to approve the January 17, 2017 minutes as presented; Brant seconded. Motion carried.

City Purchases over \$1,000

- CK# 218791 to Aetna in the amount of \$21,859.80 for February group health insurance
- CK# 218793 to Buffalo Fuel in the amount of \$10,509.08 for heating and equipment fuel
- CK# 218794 to Arctic Monkey Garage in the amount of \$2,524.76 for Zamboni repairs
- CK# 218795 to Construction Machinery in the amount of \$1,752.30 for loader repair
- CK# 218796 to Purcell Tire Company in the amount of \$1,939.00 for ambulance tires

Degnan moved to approve check numbers 218791 and 218793 through 218796 as presented; Heinbockel seconded.

Heinbockel said the cost of new studded, mounted, and balanced tires was excessive and it did not include new wheels (CK# 218796). He said he hoped to see some revenue for use of the (Rescue Squad) ambulances because the tires will eventually wear out and he would like sinking funds available to pay for replacements and for future vehicle repairs.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five in attendance (Degnan, Brant, Heinbockel, Hallgren, Musgrove).

Proclamation – Doris Fales

Musgrove read a proclamation honoring Doris Fales for her lifetime of involvement and contributions to the Delta community, including devoting 25 years to the School Board, serving a multitude of committees and organizations, and dedicating the past ten years as secretary of the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) and eleven years as municipal election official. Musgrove added that Doris was employed as City Clerk for one year during George Norton's term as mayor (1962/1964), she served on the City Council when Ray Savela was mayor (1970/1971), and she receives at least one vote as a write-in candidate just about every year during the City's municipal election.

Proclamation – Todd Zachgo

Musgrove read a proclamation recognizing Todd Zachgo for his dedication to the community because of his involvement in several organizations, including many years (17) on the Deltana Community Corporation Board, many years as a mentor and a coach in a variety of sports, and most recently focusing on reviving skating programs that offer opportunities for the younger generation.

William Brennan arrived at approximately 5:15pm.

Audrey Brown joined the meeting by phone at 5:22pm.

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Sue Rodman, Alaska Department of Fish & Game Program Coordinator for the Delta Junction Bison Range (DJBR) Prescribed Burn, explained the purposes of the burn, to produce winter forage to attract bison to the DJBR during the winter months and to diminish damage caused by bison herds to agricultural crops north of the Alaska Highway. The ADF&G, partnering with State Forestry, will manage the burns between Mile 1408 and 1393 of the Alaska Highway. Prescribed burns were last done in 2012 and they hope to start the new DJBR burn in the spring. Phase I would burn cleared fields in Panoramic and Gerstle fields plus the western forested island in Gerstle in March and April. Phase II would burn forested islands in Panoramic and eastern Gerstle in June and July. Weather conditions and restraints will guide all ignitions and how operations are handled.

Discussion followed regarding concerns with not salvaging forested land before burning it, smoke delaying both maturity of grain and harvesting, burning during the summer months instead of late fall, and scheduling more public meetings.

Fuller Cowell, Publisher for the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, reported a decision was made to stop home deliveries of their newspapers to Delta on February 18. It costs approximately \$65,000 more each year than what is raised in revenue to distribute newspapers as far west as Healy and the Denali Park and as far east as Delta Junction and Tok. An economical solution would be to extend deliveries only to Nenana (west) and Harding Lake (east). Cowell explained problems they face in converting customers to electronic editions of the newspaper, either aversion to the electronic world or no access to the Internet. Home deliveries will stop, but they are looking for a feasible solution to a "drop" delivery.

Heinbockel recalled history, newspapers delivered a day late in 1965 and home deliveries beginning in 1971, and he explained his anger upon receiving notice that area newspaper deliveries would be discontinued.

Cowell said he shared Heinbockel's frustration. He explained the competition for newspapers has never been greater, that 80% of revenue used to come from advertising and 20% from circulation. Now Craig's List gives away free classified ads, creating stiff competition. Cowell explained history of the newspaper, the significant drop in subscribers in Healy, Nenana, Delta, and Tok, and the struggle to survive as a viable newspaper.

Alan Hoover, Fairbanks News-Miner Circulation Manager, explained his research and that Walker Brothers, who deliver mail to Delta six days a week, appear to be the best option if enough papers are sold to warrant dropping them at a central location.

CORRESPONDENCE**ADL 419913 - City of Delta Junction Pioneer Park Land Sale**

[The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water proposal is to offer the Pioneer Park property to the City for 50% less than Fair Market Value with a reversionary clause. If approved, all surface estate interest in the parcel will be conveyed to the City upon completion of an appraisal, survey, and any other deliverables identified during adjudication. March 1, 2017 is the deadline for written comments on the proposed land sale.]

Musgrove reported the City is gradually moving toward purchasing the Pioneer Park property from the State of Alaska. The 4.49-acre parcel was reduced to 3.5 acres due to the exclusion of the Alaska Highway right-of-way.

Discussion followed regarding whether an updated survey will be available showing the 3.5-acre parcel, the property reverting to the state should it cease to be used for "public use," the Pioneers owning all the improvements made to the property, and not yet knowing what 50-percent of the commercial value is.

Stray Animals

Musgrove, referencing a January 31 memo regarding public concerns about animal control, said the City Council does not have enforcement capabilities, nor funding to hire a dog catcher.

Discussion followed regarding appreciation for Heart Fur Animals, a non-profit established 12 years ago, that depends on volunteers who pick up and provide temporary homes for stray animals, and advertisement at IGA and other locations.

Chamber of Commerce Request to Move Office into Visitor Center and Open for Winter

Jessica Leija, a newly-appointed Chamber of Commerce board member, reported their board is comprised of volunteers and one employee who works four hours a day. They currently pay \$350/month for office space, but would like to move into the Visitor Center since they already pay for heat, phone, and Internet. She said the upstairs viewing area would not be used for office space. It is not handicap accessible and, if it is to be opened to the public, the Chamber would appreciate help in paying for insurance. They just want space to set up a computer and a phone.

Brown said it was always the intent to allow visitors access to the upstairs because of the panoramic view. This year more visitors and tourists are expected because of the 75th anniversary of construction of the Alaska Highway. She said she is unaware of anyone ever falling down the stairs or climbing over the partial wall.

Rhonda Swearingen said the scenic view is obstructed by trees that have grown since the building opened (1985).

Hallgren said AML/JIA, the City's insurance provider, inspected the stairway (September 2016) and advised that ADA-compliance modifications were not necessary because the Visitor Center is a pre-existing structure. Discussion followed regarding Pogo donating funds to upgrade the restrooms, whether any Chamber members/businesses could provide office space, when the lease agreement for the Visitor Center will be finished, unresolved attempts to contact one of the two artists who built the counter that was removed (May 2016), Heinbockel asking to increase the City's liability coverage, and Hallgren asking that the City be listed as additionally insured on the Chamber's insurance policy.

Rhonda Swearingen said they would save money by moving their office into the Visitor Center and they could also capture revenue off merchandise sales during the winter months.

Brant said the upstairs was used as an office while she worked at the Visitor Center last summer. She said she would prefer it be used as office space rather than not used because of being a potential liability issue. She noted that, during her time at the Visitor Center, not one person inquired about what was upstairs.

Musgrove said greeting visitors cannot be done if the office is upstairs.

Heinbockel moved to authorize City Administrator Mary Leith to work an agreement, allowing the Chamber of Commerce to open the Visitor Center year-round and to use a portion of the downstairs for office space, keeping the upstairs accessible to the public, and pending liability insurance to come into effect; Brennan seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in favor (Brennan, Heinbockel, Brant, Degnan, Hallgren, Musgrove) and one opposed (Brown).

Pogo Mine – Preliminary Draft Permit Review

[The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation Wastewater Discharge Authorization Program issued a Notice of Review of the preliminary draft permit for Sumitomo Metal Mining Pogo LLC. Public comments are accepted during the formal 30-day review period, which follows a 10-day review period that ends February 13.]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department – Request for Financial Support

Steve Baugh requested a \$9,600 contribution to Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department (RDVFD) to purchase two self-contained breathing apparatus. The retail price is \$7,200, but the manufacturer's demonstration models were reduced to \$4,800 each. They intend to replace 12 units, all of which are reaching the end of their service life. Referring to a financial report, the \$300,000 *Cash on Hand – Reserves* is for long-term plans to construct a fire station near the Tanana Loop and Jack Warren intersection. They also plan to replace two aging tenders that are 1970s models, which generate revenue when they are leased to fight forest fires. Most of the \$40,000 in the *Non-profit Contributions* is from Deltana Community Corporation (DCC).

Musgrove suggested saving the request for the next budget cycle.

Discussion followed regarding Prestwich researching funds to donate, RDVFD's sources of revenue, present status of the City's Fire Department breathing apparatus, and bringing back the subject at the February 21 meeting.

Brennan moved to authorize Finance Officer Stephanie Prestwich to locate \$5,000 in the FY17 budget to donate to RDVFD; Brown seconded.

Hallgren asked to allocate funds to Rural Deltana's line item during the upcoming budget cycle.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in favor (Brant, Degnan, Brennan, Hallgren, Brown, Musgrove) and one opposed (Heinbockel).

NEW BUSINESS

Three-Hour Time Limit on Council Meetings

Heinbockel moved to establish a policy to limit Council meetings to three hours with an exception of one 15-minute extension that is voted on by a majority of a quorum; Brown seconded.

Heinbockel said majority of a quorum differs from majority of membership, four out of seven.

Hallgren said State Statutes require a majority to act on anything. The City Council would require four votes.

Heinbockel moved to amend the motion to remove the majority-of-a-quorum clause; Brown agreed.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five in favor (Brown, Degnan, Brant, Heinbockel, Brennan) and two opposed (Hallgren, Musgrove) - to limit Council meetings to three hours with an exception of one 15-minute extension.

Proclamation – Doris Fales (moved to page one)

Proclamation – Todd Zachgo (moved to page one)

Fairbanks News-Miner Advertising (moved to page two)

Former 9-1-1 Dispatch Lines

Heinbockel moved to authorize Finance Officer Stephanie Prestwich to remove unused phone lines; Brennan seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote (Degnan, Heinbockel, Brennan, Brant, Hallgren, Brown, Musgrove).

REPORTS

Mayor – Pete Hallgren reported the City Attorney is presently reviewing drug policies. He, Musgrove, and Leith are working to recommend other changes to the Employee Personnel Policy.

Musgrove reported other possible revisions and/or language clarifications:

- Prohibiting cashing out vacation time except upon retirement and enacting a policy to limit how much vacation time an employee can accrue. The idea of vacation time is for employees to use it.
- If City offices are closed when temperatures drop to 40 below, employees must use accrued vacation time for hours not worked. He suggested opening offices should the weather warm up later in the day.
- Pay periods end on the 15th or 30th/31st of each month. Payroll is expected the next day. The current process allows only a small window to prepare paychecks. Weekends and holidays complicate the process. Musgrove suggested allowing time between turning in timesheets and receiving paychecks, but finding a way to accommodate employees to adjust to a new pay schedule.

City Administrator – Pat White reported on behalf of Mary Leith:

- Instead of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Delta-Greely School District and the Delta Trails Association (discussed at October 18, 2016 meeting), the Alaska Department of Natural Resources issued a public access easement for “reasonable concurrent uses” for their section of the Liewer Community Trail. Tort protection is now in place for the full trail.
- Authorization was given at the January 4 meeting to purchase new Automated External Defibrillators. Five new batteries, about \$300 each, were purchased instead and cost as much as two new defibrillators. Tony White received the software and computer cable and expects to be done with the upgrade by the end of the week. AEDs will be located at City Hall, the Community Center, Delta Community Library, the landfill, and the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena.

City Clerk – Pat White reported:

- She will recruit election officials at the October municipal election. Doris Fales resigned as Municipal election official after eleven consecutive years, the last five as Election Supervisor. Election workers rotate periodically should someone not be available and there has always been enough people on the waiting list to fill the nine positions. White stated she is grateful for those that have filled the openings; 12 of the 20 precinct residents who have been election officials/judges in the past 15 years have logged five to 15 years each.
- Routine passport processing requires a six-week turnaround. Expedites now take 2-3 weeks. Visitors will be required to carry a passport or other acceptable identification to access Fort Greely as of June 6, 2017. There has not been a flood of applicants as anticipated because most people have other forms of acceptable ID, i.e. military/retired or a Common Access Card (CAC).

Finance – Stephanie Prestwich reported:

- She received an anonymous donation of \$5,000 for the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Alaska Highway.
- Equipment Operator Corey Groppe requested purchase of a 16-foot moldboard that holds the cutting edge on the motor grader. The existing moldboard is 14-foot with a two-foot extension.

Discussion followed regarding obtaining expert advice and bringing the topic back at the February 21 meeting.

Emergency Services / Public Safety – Freda Degnan asked residents to take precautions around wood stoves, particularly because of two recent house fires. She reported Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department responded to 97 calls within their district in 2016. Twenty-one were related to structure fires.

Heinbockel moved to extend the meeting another 15 minutes; Brant seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Airport – JW Musgrove reported:

- There is activity at the airport subdivision and brush is being removed.
- Delta Pilots have packed snow at the airport.

School District – William Brennan reported the American Legion Oratorical Scholarship contest will be held at the High School starting at 5:00pm, February 17. The student taking 1st place receives \$500; 2nd place, \$250; 3rd place, \$100; and all participants receive \$50. On a national level, 1st place is \$18,000; 2nd place, \$16,000; and 3rd place, \$14,000.

Park / Recreation – Jennifer Brant reported:

- The Zamboni was returned in time for the Mite-hosted Fire on Ice Cup, which was a success.
- Everyone has access to a thermostat in the furnace room at the rink, so the temperature can be adjusted at any time. Signs are posted to turn the thermostat down upon leaving, but they're ignored. Brant asked to purchase a new thermostat with a cover so it cannot be tampered with and it can be programmed to reduce temperatures when the rink is not in use.
- May would be a logical time to schedule routine maintenance of the Zamboni. Brant asked to contact a certified Zamboni repairman to do the annual maintenance.

LEPC / Emergency Preparedness – Audrey Brown reported:

- The Local Emergency Planning Committee held a meeting on January 9. Mike Paschall is still the president and Lauren Morton is the new Vice President. The next meeting will be on March 13 and the LEPC Spring Preparedness Conference will be held in Anchorage the first week in April.
- She will work with the American Red Cross to present a Pillowcase Project for 3rd through 5th grades in March or April. Red Cross and Disney sponsor the project, which teaches children to prepare for local disasters and emergencies.

Public Works – Lou Heinbockel reported:

- Downed timber at the airport subdivision is still in the City street right-of-way, but it was sold to Matt Andreassen and will be moved to his property. Talus Enterprises, land clearing contractor, will be finished by the end of the week.
- There was no need to extend Talus' land clearing contract (discussed at January 17, 2017 meeting) because Dr. Andreassen and his son, Matthew, already removed trees from the trail (west end of Remington Road between the paved street, aka Service Street, and the airport subdivision).

Additional Reports – William Brennan reported Elliott Ross, Fort Greely's Point of Contact, will contact the City regarding coordination of events for the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Highway.

ADJOURNMENT

Heinbockel moved to adjourn at 8:10pm; Degnan seconded.

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: February 21, 2017