

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
April 2, 2019 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on Tuesday, April 2, 2019 at City Hall. Mayor Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

City Council members present: Mayor JW Musgrove, Deputy Mayor Freda Degnan
Lou Heinbockel, Alan Levinson, Charles Lester, Pete Hallgren (telephonically)

City Council member excused: Audrey Brown

City employees present: City Administrator Mary Leith, Finance Officer Stephanie Erickson
Library Director Joyce McCombs, City Clerk Pat White

About a dozen residents and two out-of-town guests were present at the beginning of the meeting. Michael Prestegard volunteered to tune audio equipment while the meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Musgrove reported Resolution 2019-05 and Resolution 2019-06 would be removed from the agenda (page 3).

Degnan moved to approve removal of the resolutions; Hallgren seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance.

Levinson moved to approve the April 2, 2019 agenda as amended; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Levinson moved to approve the minutes from the March 19, 2019 meeting as presented; Lester seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Jennifer Morley, President of the Delta Girls Softball Association and 12U Coach, reported she has coached for four years and is trying to build the local girls softball program. The condition of the ballfields affects safety of the players and inability to invite outside competition. Morley said City Administrator Mary Leith gave a green light to improve the field that is northwest of the soccer fields. Realistically they can focus on one field at a time, but the goal is to get enough community support to improve the whole complex. They have received donations of labor, topsoil, gravel, and equipment, but need financial help. Morley explained using a tarp to protect the infield when it is not in use and upgrading the ballfields to the same condition as in the past.

Discussion followed regarding access to water once winter is officially over, budgeted money available in *General Donations* and *Park & Recreation*, and the cost of the tarp (about \$1,000 plus shipping from Seattle).

Heinbockel moved to commit up to \$1,500.00 toward ballfield improvements by the Delta Girls Softball Association; Lester seconded.

Abigail Juleff-Coleman, softball player, said volunteers can help pick up trash and pick rocks out of the grass. Donations help pay for uniforms, upkeep of fields, bleachers, and the concession stand, and to repair the concrete in front of the restrooms.

Discussion followed regarding Morley submitting a list of upgrades to consider during the upcoming budget cycle, soliciting the Fire Department to burn the fields, consulting with the High School before scheduling to burn, and building a feeder team from the younger generation.

Caitlyn Hebert asked for original ballfield plans to determine how much dirt to bring in.

Candice Orozco said she is in her ninth year of softball and wants safe fields so others have good experiences while playing softball.

Will Brennan asked if volunteers could use the City-owned riding lawnmower if they do maintenance on it.

Musgrove reported the City Administrator could coordinate use of equipment with summer-hire employees.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance (Lester, Levinson, Degnan, Hallgren, Heinbockel, Musgrove).

Will Brennan, American Legion Post No. 22 Commander, reported Seth Hanson, a Delta Junction High School senior, will represent Alaska and compete with 52 other students in the National American Legion Oratorical Scholarship Competition in Indianapolis on April 6 and 7.

Mike Paschall, Delta Wind Editor, reported he wanted to speak on the same topic that he spoke on during the March 19, 2019 Council meeting, the refusal of the City administration to release a letter from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that addresses an alleged violation of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). City Attorney Mike McLaughlin's

response to a letter did not present the picture of why the document might be protected from disclosure. Paschall said he understands the EPA has alleged violations and offered some type of a settlement as a payment versus a flat fine. The letter came from the EPA; it's not information that the City is using to defend themselves against the EPA. If the City continues to deny his request to see the EPA letter, Paschall said to expect a request for a hearing to review the administration's decision.

Heinbockel asked Paschall if he inquired with EPA for a copy of the letter.

Paschall said he sent a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the EPA. They have up to 20 working days to respond and should they deny his request, it will likely be because it is part of an active investigation.

Craig Cugini presented a brief update on the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers (BOSS) project, replacing the milepost at the Visitor Center (discussed at the September 18 and October 2 Council meetings). Donations from local businesses are being managed by City Finance Officer Stephanie Erickson. Delta Industrial offered dump trucks to haul the old marker (wood and cement) to the landfill and Cugini asked to waive those tipping fees. Completion of the milepost project is scheduled for May 11, prior to the Visitor Center's official opening on May 13. Cugini asked to contact him with ideas for the new milepost, so they can move forward on its design.

Musgrove said tipping fees would be waived for all debris associated with tearing down the old milepost.

Heinbockel suggested discarding the concrete debris at the French drain at the airport rather than hauling it to the landfill.

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

CORRESPONDENCE - none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

City Surplus Sale

Leith reported the list of items for a surplus sale is still being developed.

Remove Secretarial Duties from Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Finance Position

Musgrove, referencing a March 28, 2019 memo and the January 17, 2017 City Council minutes, said he wished to reduce the load of non-core business on the Finance Officer. He asked to remove secretarial and House Identification Project duties from the Finance Officer's responsibilities, but continue processing and tracking LEPC funds from the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management (DHS&EM).

Heinbockel moved to remove secretarial duties from City Finance, effective June 30, 2019; Degnan seconded.

Discussion followed regarding losing \$3,000 of DHS&EM income and enough time for LEPC to arrange for a secretary.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance (Degnan, Hallgren, Lester, Heinbockel, Levinson, Musgrove).

NEW BUSINESS

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK# 220000 to CDW Government, Inc. in the amount of \$1,379.54 for tech support line for new server at City Hall

CK# 220001 to Bristol Engineering Services in the amount of \$1,240.25 for help on 4-year landfill permit

CK# 220002 to Airport Equipment Rentals in the amount of \$6,333.50 to rent excavator for use at airport subdivision

CK# 220003 to Joyce McCombs in the amount of \$2,295.33 for reimbursement (\$2,220.33 to attend State Library Conference in Juneau and \$75 for phone reimbursement)

Heinbockel moved to approve checks #220000 through 220003 as presented; Degnan seconded.

Discussion followed regarding \$1,250 reimbursed from the State Library (CK# 220003).

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance (Hallgren, Lester, Heinbockel, Levinson, Degnan, Musgrove).

Preliminary Plat – Alaska State Land Survey No. 2018-17

Colin Craven, Natural Resource Specialist, explained location of the parcel, which is north of the Alaska Highway and east of the trailer park and Attu Street. The survey consists of two federal parcels, one without legal access. The Department of Natural Resources, Division of Mining, Land and Water proposes combining both parcels into one that is less than seven acres, dedicating part of the right-of-way for the highway, making legal easements for utilities, preparing it for a state land sale, and offering it publicly through a sealed bid auction. The highway right-of-way would be kept at its current width.

Discussion followed regarding a nearby gravel pit that precipitated adopting an ordinance prohibiting new gravel pit sites within the city limits (Ordinance 81-04, dated August 25, 1980) and whether ownership of the highway easement would be transferred to the Department of Transportation or the City of Delta Junction.

Hallgren moved to approve the preliminary plat for ASLS No. 2018-17 as presented; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance (Levinson, Hallgren, Degnan, Lester, Heinbockel, Musgrove).

Resolution 2019-05, A Resolution Supporting Development of the Road Belt Electrical Transmission Line – removed from agenda

Resolution 2019-06, A Resolution Supporting Completion of the Northern Rail Extension, Increasing Defensive Capabilities at Fort Greely, Alaska, and Encouraging Development of Critical Arctic Infrastructure – removed from agenda

2019 Lawn Maintenance Proposal

Leith reported changes to the lawn maintenance contract: requiring grass clippings be hauled off premises to eliminate problems with hornets, adding an optional alternate for mowing ballfields, and reducing the 2% increase to 1.5% (should the one-year contract be extended on an annual basis for up to two additional years).

Heinbockel said he preferred the summer hire mow inside the ballfield fences.

Musgrove agreed, but suggested keeping the optional alternate in the contract.

Discussion followed regarding weed control and not requiring use of a mulching blade.

Heinbockel moved to approve bid specs for the 2019 lawn maintenance agreement; Levinson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with six in attendance (Heinbockel, Levinson, Lester, Hallgren, Degnan, Musgrove).

Cell Phone Reimbursement

Musgrove explained that five employees take advantage of the cell phone reimbursement policy (\$25/month paid quarterly - approved during the January 4, 2017 Council meeting). It is appropriate for the landfill equipment operator and Public Works employees because it is often their only means of contact and for Stephanie Erickson because she is their primary contact. He asked to add Reta Russell-Houghton, the Scale House operator, so she can effectively communicate via phone or text with the landfill equipment operator.

Discussion followed regarding calls from the scale house land line resulting in long distance charges, most people carry unlimited texting, identifying the position instead of an employee, and researching City-issued cell phones and installing radios in landfill equipment.

Heinbockel moved to reimburse the Scale House Operator the same as other City employees; Levinson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five voting in favor (Lester, Levinson, Heinbockel, Hallgren, Musgrove) and one opposed (Degnan).

Discussion followed regarding revisiting cell phone reimbursement during the budget cycle.

Musgrove asked for an effective date to reimburse the Scale House Operator, who started employment in May 2018.

Levinson moved to begin reimbursing the Scale House Operator for cell phone use on the first day of the present quarter (April 1, 2019); Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with four voting in favor (Hallgren, Levinson, Degnan, Musgrove) and two opposed (Lester, Heinbockel).

REPORTS

Mayor – JW Musgrove reported:

- Stephen Hammond, local M2C1 environmental engineer, and George Lyle, Guess & Rudd environmental attorney, are helping resolve Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issues, which are still in the investigative phase.
- He and Leith conduct employee performance appraisals. He asked for input from anyone who would like to comment on staff performance. They affect step increases and whether employees are even retained.

City Administrator – Mary Leith reported Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is accepting applications for the 2019 Alaska Community Transportation Program (CTP) through May 15, 2019. Projects are categorized as 1) urban and rural or 2) remote. Communities not connected to the road system by road or ferry are considered remote. All others are urban or rural. Leith mentioned a couple intersections that need lighting and she asked for other ideas to submit. Go to the CTP website (www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/cip/stip/projects/2023_ctp_peb.shtml) for more information.

City Clerk – Pat White reported:

- The State Division of Elections is researching methods to reduce expenditures. One proposal is to print precinct registers and voter lists on 3-hole cut paper instead of continuous feed paper from an obsolete printer that costs over \$125,000 to operate. Another way would be for municipalities to print their own election documents.
- Peak season for passport processing is March through late August. (Mid-March to mid-July was reported on February 5.) Anyone needing a passport sooner than six weeks should pay the \$60 expedite fee plus express postage.

- The passport agency expects a high volume of passport card applications because of the requirement to carry a federally-approved ID to access military bases, federal facilities, and to board domestic flights (October 1, 2020). Alaska-issued Real ID driver's licenses qualify, but do not meet Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) requirements, so they cannot be used to prove citizenship at land or sea border crossings. Passport books and/or passport cards are federally-approved ID and are accepted for international travel.

- The Census Bureau is reaching out to municipalities to create a Complete Count Committee (CCC) in each community and to recruit enumerators for the 2020 census. They are hoping to improve participation in the new census. Population counts reflect government funding for public resources. In Alaska, one resident accounts for about \$3,000 in federal funds each year; \$30,000 over the ten-year census cycle. [Interested in being part of a CCC? Contact Barbara Miranda (barbara.m.miranda@2020census.gov). Interested in employment? Apply online (www.2020census.gov/jobs).]

Finance – Stephanie Erickson reported the auditors are still working on postemployment benefits, she is working on a quarterly report, and she is preparing a preliminary budget. Erickson asked to contact her with input for the budget draft. Discussion followed regarding the March 31 deadline to submit the final audit report to the State of Alaska.

LEPC / Emergency Preparedness – JW Musgrove reported Audrey Brown was attending the Rural Resilience Workshop in Fairbanks.

Public Health – Freda Degnan – no report

Library – Freda Degnan reported:

- Andrea McCarrick, newly-hired library aide, starts on April 3, overseeing the Summer Reading Program and other duties.

- The library will be closed Friday, April 26 to finish preparing for the annual Open House and Basket of Books Silent Auction on April 27, 10:00-4:00.

Schools – Freda Degnan – no report

Airport – Alan Levinson reported:

- The airport is snow free, but some serious frost heaves developed in the upper ski strip. The mayor and the Public Works crew built a French drain at the intersection between the two runways. The frost heaves were dug out and replaced with gravel from the pit that will be used for debris from clearing the airport subdivision roads and taxiways.

- One new tie-down was recently rented out.

- There is more activity at the airport because of warmer weather.

Discussion followed regarding Erickson keeping a worksheet to track costs associated with Airport II development, whether \$80,000 (\$5,000 per pole) was still valid to install electricity, and the French drain helping mitigate Jarvis Creek overflow in the spring.

Public Works – Charles Lester reported:

- The French drain is excavated and they are now removing stumps. Approximately 80% of the gravel needed to install Airport Subdivision roads is available.

- The large end dump must be repaired soon.

- Several streets require crack sealing and East Reeve will require some serious brush cutting.

Heinbockel suggested hiring a business to brush cut intersections and corners because there is a lot of it.

Park / Recreation – Lou Heinbockel reported:

- It would be appreciated if the Fire Department can burn all dry growth around park fences.

- Repairs are needed to the park fence near the corner of Deborah Street and Aurora Avenue.

- Pertaining to the annual spring cleanup, Heinbockel said, "Our town looks really good."

- Plastic fencing was added to the crosswind taxiway. He questioned why stumps were not used to keep four-wheelers out.

Musgrove said barricades were used to funnel motorized vehicles behind the tie-down area to the school district.

Cemetery – Lou Heinbockel – no report

At Large – Pete Hallgren – no report

Additional Reports - none

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS - none

ADJOURNMENT

Degnan moved to adjourn at 7:06pm.