

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
November 19, 2019 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on Tuesday, November 19, 2019 at City Hall. Mayor JW Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

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

City Council member excused: Pete Hallgren

City staff present: City Administrator Mary Leith, Library Director Tiki Levinson
Finance Officer Stephanie Erickson, City Clerk Pat White

Four community members were present at the start of the meeting and Mike Prestegard monitored equipment while the meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Brown moved to approve the November 19, 2019 agenda; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed without objections.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Brown moved to approve the November 5, 2019 minutes; Lester seconded.

Motion passed without objections.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE - none

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

CORRESPONDENCE

Mental Health Land Sale

Leith referred to the Decision to Issue Negotiated Land Sale by Alaska Mental Health Trust (MHT), dated November 4, and explained a quiet title action, in which a property owner can apply for adjacent land that builds up from riverbed soil. Written comments about the decision to sell three lots along Jarvis Creek and the Delta River are due before December 9. More information is available at the Trust Land Office (907-269-8658) or online (<https://alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/trust-land-office/>).

Discussion followed regarding MHT's Best Interest Decision to sell approximately 90 acres for more than the appraised value and old law about individuals not owning navigable rivers.

Consent for Refugee Resettlement

Musgrove reported the federal government has changed rules pertaining to refugees that come into the United States. Referring to an email, dated November 7, Musgrove said an Executive Order, issued by President Trump on September 26, 2019, requires "a formal consent for continued refugee resettlement in Delta Junction."

Brown asked if the letter from Catholic Social Services (CSS) was intended for every state and local government because she felt it did not apply to Delta Junction. Most people do not move to Delta Junction through the refugee resettlement program. They usually come from another state, not directly from the former Soviet Union, which dissipated in 1991, and not for life-saving reasons.

Musgrove said CSS Program Director Issa Spatrisano informed him that refugees coming into the United States must go through a United Nations process, the Department of State, and then the CSS, the sole coordinator for refugees arriving in Alaska. Refugees go to Anchorage, the only place in Alaska that offers services, unless they have a family tie elsewhere in Alaska. It does not matter whether locals support refugee resettlement because upon arriving in Anchorage and becoming legal residents, they can drive anywhere in Alaska, including Delta Junction. One to five individuals want to relocate to Delta Junction in the next year and they have been in the approval process for up to six years. Musgrove reported refugees are given welcome money (up to \$514/month for no more than eight months) and are eligible for public assistance benefits, the same as any other legal resident.

Discussion followed regarding the City not in a continued partnership with CSS as implied in Issa Spatrisano's letter, the Lautenberg Amendment (of 1990) for former Soviet Union residents who claim religious persecution,

whether Deltana Community Corporation and other communities in Alaska and across the United States were asked to take in refugees, and delaying action until the community has opportunity to offer input.

Musgrove said CSS requested consent to initial refugee resettlement in Delta Junction from the local jurisdiction by December 20. The Department of State wants one by December 26. Protesting will not stop a caravan of refugees from driving to Delta Junction. No matter what the City does, it will not slow down the rate of migration. Al Edgren said he is not against immigration, but referring to Issa Spatrisano's reference to "18,000 refugees," he felt Musgrove's November 19 draft response was too open ended. He asked whether those coming have criminal records, whether they are supported by family members with criminal records, and if noting objection to criminals could be added to the letter. He questioned time needed for refugees to assimilate, learn the English language, or seek employment before arriving in Delta Junction.

[City Clerk note: Issa Spatrisano clarified that President Trump's proposed 18,000 refugee admissions was nationwide. Alaska receives 50 new refugees per year. November 22, 2019]

Erickson read from the UN Refugee Agency website (unhcr.org/en-us/resettlement-in-the-united-states.html), "Persons who have committed serious crimes or who might pose a security threat are not eligible for refugee status or resettlement."

Heinbockel said the City Council represents approximately 1,000 people, even though the area population is larger. He felt the Council did not need to take any action at all. One to five new people won't make that much difference.

Brown moved to postpone discussion to the December 3 Council meeting; Degan seconded.

Motion failed on a roll call vote with three in favor (Degan, Brown, Levinson) and three opposed (Heinbockel, Lester, Musgrove).

Levinson moved to issue a letter to the U.S. Department of State and copy to Catholic Social Services Alaska in favor of refugee settlement; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion failed on a roll call vote with two in favor (Levinson, Musgrove) and four opposed (Brown, Heinbockel, Degan, Lester).

Musgrove said he would issue a note to Issa Spatrisano that the Council declined to take action.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Sullivan Roadhouse / Farmer's Market Land

Leith reported the City Council favored moving forward to obtain ownership of the Farmer's Market land (November 5, 2019) with the understanding that the City would pay only the survey costs to replat Government Lot 60 and Lot 77A, but the State of Alaska wants \$1,200 up front for survey instructions that are estimated to take 40 hours. She asked to take funds from the FY20 budget.

Heinbockel moved to approve \$1,200.00 for survey instructions to replat the Farmer's Market; Brown seconded.

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

NEW BUSINESS

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK# **220383** to Delta Skating Association - \$1,282.49 for Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena upgrades

CK# **220391** to Becker Arena Products - \$2,444.80 for Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena fiberglass boards

CK# **220392** to Delta Transport Services - \$4,437.99 for above-ground heating fuel

CK# **220393** to Duncan GIS - \$1,057.50 for mapping software assistance

CK# **220394** to Buffalo Center Service - \$1,493.94 for Public Works and Fire Department equipment fuel

CK# **220395** to Buffalo Fuel - \$8,087.41 for below-ground heating fuel and gasoline for Zamboni

CK# **220396** to Cook & Haugeberg, LLC - \$9,533.63 for FY19 audit, payment #2 (\$13,991.63 to date)

CK# **220397** to GVEA - \$4,569.06 for October electricity

CK# **220398** to Alaska Communications - \$1,712.93 for November phone and Internet

Heinbockel moved to approve checks #220383 and 220391 through 220398 as presented; Degan seconded.

Discussion followed regarding paying Delta Skating Association (DSA) for bills at Delta Building Supply (\$412.98 on DSA's account and \$869.51 on Todd Zachgo's), rates discounted when bulk fuel is purchased, fuel tanks typically low at this time of year, and picking up utilities at the Visitor Center in January.

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

Heart Fur Animals Spay and Neuter Clinics

Musgrove reported the Public Works conference room, aka former Rescue Squad meeting room, was added to the list of City facilities that are leased to the public (November 5, 2019). Medical certification and proof of insurance from the veterinarian will be required as recommended by the City's insurance agent, Hale & Associates, and City Attorney Jim DeWitt. A lease form and a hold harmless agreement must be on file before a key is issued, a three-day advance notice will be required for employees to reposition equipment and Heart Fur Animals will be required to cover the carpet with reinforced visqueen and secure it with duct tape.

Brown moved to authorize Heart Fur Animals to lease the Public Works conference room and the adjacent bay to hold spay and neuter clinics; Lester seconded.

Discussion followed regarding spay and neuter fees handled by the vet and the City supplying the initial sheet of visqueen that will be cleaned after every use and stored at the Public Works building.

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

Holiday Gift Cards

Musgrove reported holiday gift cards are given to City employees and volunteer firefighters each year.

Brown moved to include volunteer City Council members to the list of recipients receiving holiday gift cards.

Musgrove called for a second with none being offered. The motion failed for lack of a second.

Discussion followed regarding the list of active volunteers (12), provided by Fire Chief Tony White, and purchasing gift certificates at IGA.

Heinbockel moved to approve purchasing \$50 gift cards for City employees and volunteers; Degnan seconded.

Brown said she would abstain from voting because she did not believe there were 12 active volunteer firefighters.

Discussion followed regarding Delta Junction Volunteer Fire Department responding to Rural Deltana fires and vice versa and Heinbockel's opposition to Brown abstaining.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five in favor (Lester, Levinson, Degnan, Heinbockel, Musgrove). Brown abstained.

Request to Purchase Cutting Edges for Motor Grader

Leith referred to a memo from Equipment Operator Corey Groppe, dated November 15, explaining the need to purchase cutting edges a year in advance. She said the blades (approximately \$6,000 for ten sets) are purchased from a business in Valdez, but manufactured in Sweden. About five sets of cutting edges are used each winter.

Disposition of Medic 182 (2011 Ambulance)

Musgrove reported a north-bound ambulance was hit by a south-bound pickup near Shaw Creek on November 9.

Erickson reported the pickup driver's insurance, State Farm, had not determined liability yet. Per grant regulations, the ambulance had not used its useful life of ten years, so if it were totaled, any monetary settlement must be put toward ambulance services or given back to the State of Alaska.

Discussion followed regarding putting insurance funds toward maintenance of Medic I (2009 model) and whether salvaging wheels, tires, and other parts of Medic II (2011) was an option.

REPORTS

Mayor – JW Musgrove read a thank you card from the Quilts of Valor ladies who used the City Hall conference room to assemble quilts on November 15/16. The quilter's group honors local military and veterans.

City Administrator – Mary Leith reported:

- A crew will begin to transport gravel to the landfill from the old rifle range. Council previously approved the Department of Environmental Conservation's plan to treat, test, and dispose of material (August 6, 2019).
- Bryn Dunbar, GIS Analyst with the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) is collecting aerial imagery and offered to include Delta Junction if the City would contribute \$3,000 or \$4,000 toward the project. Leith referred to the State (Division of Community and Regional Affairs) proposing a similar mapping project (discussed at Council meetings from June 4, 2013 to June 6, 2017 and requesting an \$87,500 match) and she reported Tom Duncan, who works with the City's addressing project, encouraged partnering and said, "aerial imagery is probably the single

most valuable and frequently used GIS layer that you can get.” He questioned the cost difference to map the entire REAA (Regional Educational Attendance Area) since the City provides addressing for the whole area.

Musgrove said the topic would be put on the December 3 agenda.

Leith asked for a general feel from the Council.

Musgrove said there were no objections.

- Jim DeWitt issued an email, formally retiring from Guess & Rudd and the practice of law, effective December 31, 2019. Leith read DeWitt’s letter, his “honor and privilege to represent some of the finest people and municipalities in Alaska since 1976 ... some clients for more than 40 years ...”

Discussion followed regarding whether to research other legal firms, Guess & Rudd attorneys currently involved with the City’s EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) issue, and discussing it at the December 3 meeting.

City Clerk – no report

Finance – Stephanie Erickson reported:

- Communities in the unorganized boroughs were paid back-PILT monies that were held longer than normal. The City of Delta Junction will receive \$26,796.40 in additional PILT funds from 2017, 2018, and 2019.

- The Public Works building grant (\$81,000 remaining) was extended to June 30, 2021.

LEPC / Emergency Preparedness / Public Health – Audrey Brown reported:

- The LEPC met on November 18, even though they did not have a quorum. Their next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2020.

- LEPC will host a Point of Dispensing (POD) flu vaccine clinic without Public Health involvement (except for nurses to administer vaccines) December 17, 18, or 19. The POD would be short notice, as in a real emergency.

Library – Freda Degnan reported:

- The library will host two *Wiser at Your Library* events. Thirty people are already signed up to take Shelly Ward’s holiday card making class on November 21. A family gingerbread house making event will be on November 30, at 5:00pm, following the Sullivan Roadhouse lighting.

- The phone system agreement with ACS was signed.

- The bid process for the E-rate program closes in 28 days. The federal government subsidizes the library’s Internet and phone service through the E-rate program.

Schools – Freda Degnan reported:

- Delta High School student Hailey Williams signed a letter of intent to run track at Duke University.

- There will be no school November 28+29.

- A School Board business meeting will be held on November 21.

- The Delta Elementary School Concert will be held on December 17 at the Delta High School.

Airport – Alan Levinson reported:

- Airport use is minimal.

- Volunteers pack the runway regularly even though the wind thwarts their efforts.

- The City Administrator is working on a package to auction the first ten lots in Airport Subdivision II.

Musgrove said significant drifting will be removed and Remington Road will be plowed before the sale.

Public Works – Charles Lester reported:

- The lift station is working.

- The blade will be serviced and the snow gate will be mounted.

Park / Recreation – Lou Heinbockel reported there is a lot of skating activity at the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena because of fresh ice. Referring to discussion on November 5, he asked whether Alaska Heat scheduled ice time.

Musgrove said it is up to DSA to charge for ice time because they contribute immeasurable hours to maintain the rinks. The hours of volunteer labor do not show in the cost for ice.

Leith said DSA sent a schedule to Alaska Heat, but have not booked any ice time yet.

Cemetery – Lou Heinbockel reported four winter graves were prepared.

At Large – Deputy to the Garrison Commander, Craig Cugini, invited the local public to upcoming events that provide opportunities to enhance quality of life for soldiers and their families:

- Earl Hughes and the Woodshedders concert at the Community Activity Center (CAC) on November 22.

- USAG Alaska Comedy Night, featuring Ronnie Jordan and Nick Nichols, at the CAC on November 23.
- Live music by Natalie Stovall and Austin Moody at the CAC on November 30, starting at 7:30pm.
- Daniel Dugger and friends, another comedy tour, will be at the CAC on December 5.
- The Fort Greely Holiday Bazaar will be held at the CAC on December 6, 4:00-8:00pm.
- An indoor tailgate party will be held at the CAC on December 14, during the Army-Navy game.

Cugini reported status of the BOSS project, replacing the milepost at the Triangle. BOSS, previously known as Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers, is now called Better Opportunities for Single Servicemembers. They partnered with Partners for Progress and the Delta High School and meet about once a month. Construction plans were revised to give the milepost a longer life. It is reasonably priced, but more expensive than initially proposed. An update will be provided at the December 3 meeting.

Additional Reports – Lou Heinbockel reported FNSB will shut down five transfer sites, but enlarge the one in Salcha.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Tiki Levinson invited Council, staff, and Mike Prestegard to the City of Delta Junction Family Christmas Party at the library on December 13.

Al Edgren referred to discussion about ice time (*Park and Recreation Report* on page 4) and said, “You manage the hockey facility and the hockey association will manage the skating rink and the people.”

ADJOURNMENT

Heinbockel moved to adjourn at 7:39pm.

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: December 3, 2019