

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
August 17, 2021 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor Freda Degnan called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

Council members physically present: Mayor Freda DEGNAN, Deputy Mayor Lou HEINBOCKEL, Michael PRESTEGARD, Pete HALLGREN, Erin CATTERSON

Council excused: Charles LESTER, Alan LEVINSON

Staff physically present: City Administrator Mary Leith, Administrative Assistant Flower Cole, City Clerk Pat White

Staff present via phone: Finance Officer Stephanie Erickson

Eight members from the community were present at the start of the meeting, one attended via phone, and the meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Heinbockel moved to approve the August 17, 2021 agenda as presented; Hallgren seconded.

Hallgren asked to break after *Comments on Non-Agenda Items* to share cake and wish Mayor Degnan a farewell. He thanked Degnan for her service (appointed June 2, 2015, elected October 2015, 2016, and 2019, appointed Deputy Mayor October 2017, 2019, and 2020, and moved into the Mayor position on December 1, 2020).

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion: Prestegard moved to approve the August 3, 2021 minutes; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance.

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - none

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Mindy Eggleston, Delta Junction Trails Association (DJTA) President, shared a short video about DJTA's history in developing trails throughout the community. A 2015 plan described 14 different trail proposals, including DJTA's legacy, the Liewer Community Trail. To date, over \$850,000 has been invested from grant funds, local donations, and volunteer hours. It includes \$450,000 in Brownfield Assessment to clean up the old trespass shooting range (2019) near the current trail project, the River Walk Park. The 32+ acres also involves cleanup of an old dump that is currently awaiting a second Brownfield assessment.

Carol Austin referred to an aerial diagram and briefly described development of the 1 ½-mile trail in the River Walk Park. Funding is \$75,000 from a Recreational Trails Grant and \$5,000 from a GVEA Foundation Grant, matched by the City of Delta Junction (\$3,000) and individual contributors (\$2,000).

Discussion followed regarding parking and disposing of the pipeline weights (blow them up or bury them).

CORRESPONDENCE

2021 Municipal Election

White reported there were 933 registered voters in the City precinct (608) as of August 4, 2021. Eliminating duplicate addresses reduced the list to 519 households. Five Council gave approval via phone to spend extra to advertise the four seats in the upcoming election. Advertisements were mailed to Post Office boxes and rural street addresses August 10/11, not including out-of-town and out-of-state voters, Council members and family, and City Hall staff who live inside the City limits. Minus staff time to stuff envelopes, it cost less than \$350. The filing period is August 27 through September 10. Candidate packets are available at City Hall.

Hallgren reported valuable training for new Council members is available through the Alaska Municipal League's annual conference in November. It is useful for local residents who want to serve their community, but lack expertise in government matters.

Approve Slate of Election Officials (October 5, 2021 Municipal Election)

White reported election officials must be qualified voters and precinct residents (City Code 1.15.010(c)).

Motion: Heinbockel moved to approve the nine election officials in the upcoming election; Catterson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Catterson, Prestegard, Heinbockel, Hallgren, Degnan).

Donnelly Dome LLC Liquor License Transfer of Ownership and Location

White reported E+G Cellars (Package Store License #785) is located in the old Diehl's building next to Wells Fargo Bank. Cellar Side Door (Package Store #567) will be located at Station Stop 49 (the old Norton Tire complex). E+G Cellars and Cellar Side Door are two businesses with separate licenses. Northern Liquors (#785) transferred to E+G Cellars in 2011. Jack's Liquor Store (#567) transferred to Donnelly Dome Liquors in 2019.

Motion: Heinbockel moved to show no opposition of Donnelly Dome Liquors' transfer of license ownership and location to Cellar Side Door; Hallgren seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Heinbockel, Hallgren, Catterson, Prestegard, Degnan).

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS**City Purchases over \$1,000**

CK# 221421 to Arctic Fire & Safety - \$1,888.60 for street sign posts and brackets

CK# 221422 to Wells Fargo - \$7,828.28 for credit card charges

CK# 221423 to State of Alaska - \$32,265.00 to purchase Pioneer Park

CK# 221424 to Construction Machinery - \$1,817.54 for loader parts

CK# 221425 to GVEA - \$3,063.38 for July electricity

CK# 221426 to Aetna - \$11,917.00 for group health insurance

CK# 221427 to Grainger - \$1,199.44 for urinal parts at Community Center and backboard for basketball hoop at outdoor rink

Motion: Hallgren moved to approve check #221421 through 221427 as presented; Heinbockel seconded.

Discussion followed regarding drafting a long-term agreement with the local Pioneers of Alaska to use Pioneer Park, keeping ownership in the hands of the City, substantial investments by the Pioneers organization (well, septic, pavilion, electricity), and paying half of the appraised value (\$32,000) for the 3.5 acres.

Ruth Benson thanked the Council for buying Pioneer Park. She said Delta Pioneers devoted "blood, sweat, and tears" to build the pavilion with the DEC-permitted kitchen.

See *Additional Public and Council Comments* (page four).

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Hallgren, Heinbockel, Prestegard, Catterson, Degnan).

Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance 2022-02, An Ordinance Providing for Amendment of the FY21 Budget

Motion: Hallgren moved to introduce and hold the first reading of Ordinance 2022-02; Heinbockel seconded.

Erickson reported the budget surplus was \$480,395 as of June 30, 2021.

Heinbockel recalled a time when emergency services were not affordable. He expressed concern with overspending, specifically for emergency services.

Discussion followed regarding receiving more revenue than anticipated, adding street repair expenses, and adding \$25,000 to the landfill equipment sinking fund.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Catterson, Hallgren, Prestegard, Heinbockel, Degnan).

Request to Use COVID Funds for House Identification Program Address Signs

Erickson reported the House Identification Program (HIP) is a Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) project. Rural Deltana paid for address signs for the past two years because Homeland Security funding for LEPC was cut. Erickson asked to use Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) funds to buy more signs. Discussion followed regarding approval of the expenditure from the Local Government Specialist who oversees CARES funds and some residents electing to pay \$30 for their signs.

Motion: Heinbockel moved to authorize \$10,000.00 of CARES funds to purchase HIP signs; Hallgren and Catterson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Heinbockel, Prestegard, Hallgren, Catterson, Degnan).

Request to Use COVID Funds to Purchase Used Ambulance

Erickson reported Fort Greely posted two used ambulances online. Dot Lake wants one. Fire Chief Tony White suggested purchasing the 2012 ambulance for \$29,500. It has low mileage (30,006) and a rebuilt engine.

Discussion followed regarding \$26,895.34 available from insurance reimbursement (totaled 2011 ambulance) and \$23,471.44 remaining of Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act funds.

Motion: Prestegard moved to authorize spending \$2,604.66 of CARES funds to purchase Fort Greely's used 2012 Ford F450 ambulance; Hallgren seconded.

Hallgren expressed concern about 400 billion dollars in CARES funds spent fraudulently nationwide.

Discussion followed regarding instances of other communities purchasing ambulances with CARES funds, concerns with following rules about spending, endorsement from the Local Government Specialist, and whether the ambulance is adequately outfitted with medical equipment.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Prestegard, Hallgren, Heinbockel, Catterson, Degnan).

Resolution 2022-03, A Resolution Amending Resolution 2022-01 for Acceptance of Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds

White reported Resolution 2022-01, accepting Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recover Funds, was adopted on July 13, 2021. The operating budget as of January 27, 2020 (\$1,846,469) was incorrectly reported as \$1,819,784.

Motion: Heinbockel moved to adopt Resolution 2022-03, correcting the error as discussed; Hallgren seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with five in attendance (Catterson, Heinbockel, Prestegard, Hallgren, Degnan).

Resolution 2022-04, A Resolution Amending the Employee Policy Plan Regarding Raises for Salaried Employee Steps

White reported tweaking the *Employee Policy Plan* by changing biennial to annual increases (discussed during the budget work session on May 12, 2021 and reported at July 13, 2021 meeting) did not address all the changes:

- adding Steps 11-20 to the matrix for Salaried Employees (page 18 of the *Employee Policy Plan*)
- removing Grade 4 for Salaried Employees (pages 18+19)
- changing step increases from biennial to annual for Salaried Employees, Steps 1-10 (page 20)

Discussion followed regarding tabling discussion because the revisions still lacked details.

REPORTS

Mayor – no report

Airport – Michael Prestegard reported:

- New residents are utilizing the tie-down area, which raises concern about running out of space.
- Installing a yard light is necessary to prevent gasoline theft from airplanes.

Schools - Erin Catterson reported school started August 12 and kindergarten started today.

Emergency Services – Erin Catterson reported:

- Delta Medical Transport had 35 runs since July 13. The Delta Junction Fire Department had five.
- Firefighters are able to respond to alerts on their phones.

Discussion followed regarding 14 days left in the trial, eliminating expensive handheld radios, and reimbursing firefighters for use of their personal cell phones.

Emergency Preparedness – Michael Prestegard reported GVEA offers information about using generators for standby electricity. Anyone interested can find it online (gvea.com/resources/outages). They also mailed a checklist of items to last 72 hours. He said it is the time to prepare for outages and winter driving conditions.

Health & Safety – Mike Prestegard reported there were three local COVID cases in August with one in the past seven days. The Public Health Office has administered 33 COVID vaccines in August and 1,375 since January 2021. Vaccines can be scheduled through the Public Health office (895-4292) or online (myhealth@alaska.gov).

Library – no report

Public Works / Landfill – Lou Heinbockel reported the landfill looked as pristine as ever. Nonetheless, wind conditions will affect scoring in the August 5 landfill inspection because of windblown litter.

Discussion followed regarding Landfill Equipment Operator Dennis Burke preparing more cover material, the Pogo loader back in service tomorrow, problems with the Cat tracks, the older loader retrofitted with a computer, but still experiencing problems, last month's trash volume twice as much as a year ago, two 15-yard dumpsters ordered in July and currently being detailed, and the conditions of the septic pits.

Park & Recreation – Lou Heinbockel referenced the request to designate a section of the park for dogs (August 3 meeting) and suggested considering the southeast corner of Harper and Kimball.

Discussion followed regarding mounds of overburden located in the area.

Cemetery – Lou Heinbockel reported the new water system at the cemetery is convenient for residents to tend to gravesites, but most people do not know how to access it. He asked to post directions.

At Large – no report

City Administrator – Mary Leith reported:

- A water leak was found in the fire station and is scheduled to be inspected.
- The Sullivan Roadhouse Museum and Highway’s End Farmers Market will be surveyed next spring.

City Clerk – Pat White reported she and Flower Cole will participate in passport fraud training on August 26.

Finance – Stephanie Erickson reported receipt of \$10,882.83 in FY21 Electric Cooperative Tax Revenue Sharing.

Additional Reports – Pete Hallgren’s comments moved to *Correspondence - 2021 Municipal Election* (page one).

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Nat Good, President, Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo 35, expressed appreciation for the City preserving Pioneer Park in perpetuity should the Pioneers organization ever cease to exist.

Flower Cole thanked Freda Degan for her time on Council and for serving as Mayor.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:19pm

Pete Hallgren, Presiding Deputy Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: September 7, 2021