

**City Council Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**October 19, 2021 ~ 5:00PM**  
**City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**



**CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER**

Mayor Lou Heinbockel called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

**Council members present:** Lou HEINBOCKEL, Pete HALLGREN,  
Alan LEVINSON, Michael PRESTEGARD, JW MUSGROVE

**Council attending via phone:** Erin CATTERSON

**Council excused:** Emily DOVE

**Staff present:** City Administrator Mary Leith, Library Director Tiki Levinson, City Clerk Pat White

**Staff via phone:** Stephanie Erickson

Two community members attended by phone along with guest speaker, Catherine Miller from Fort Wainwright. The meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

**AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** Levinson moved to approve the October 19, 2021 agenda as presented; Heinbockel seconded.

**Motion passed** by unanimous consent.

**AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING**

**Motion:** Musgrove moved to approve the minutes from the October 5, 2021 regular meeting; Levinson seconded.

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

**Motion:** Hallgren moved to approve the minutes from the October 12, 2021 special meeting; Musgrove seconded.

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

**COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Leith reported there are two outside connections, the radio and zoom (Internet) via telephone.

**ELECT MAYOR**

Heinbockel called for nominations for mayor.

Hallgren nominated JW Musgrove as mayor.

Heinbockel called for other nominations with none being offered. He said he will not vote for any candidate with a three-year term and he intends to initiate an ordinance to set two-year terms for both mayor and deputy mayor.

**Motion:** Hallgren moved to elect JW Musgrove as the new Mayor; Prestegard seconded.

**Motion passed** on a roll call with five in favor (Prestegard, Levinson, Catterson, Musgrove, Hallgren) and one opposed (Heinbockel).

Heinbockel passed the gavel to Musgrove who presided over the remainder of the meeting.

**ELECT DEPUTY MAYOR**

**Motion:** Hallgren nominated Mike Prestegard as the new Deputy Mayor; Heinbockel seconded.

Musgrove called for other nominations with none being offered.

**Motion passed** on a roll call with six in attendance (Catterson, Prestegard, Heinbockel, Hallgren, Levinson, Musgrove).

**RECONSTRUCT COUNCIL INTERESTS / REPORTING**

Musgrove lead discussion to divvy up interests and reporting (reflected in updated Council list and future agendas).

**CORRESPONDENCE – none**

**REQUEST TO SPEAK**

Catherine Miller, Deputy to the Garrison Commander, reported she represented the U.S. Army Garrison Alaska at Fort Wainwright regarding the Department of the Army Legislative Environmental Impact Statement (LEIS), an extension of U.S. Army land withdrawal. Congress withdrew almost 870,000 acres of public land in 1999 (Military Lands Withdrawal Act) and reserved them for use by the Army. It comprised the Yukon Training Area, Donnelly Training Area East, and Donnelly Training Area West. The 1999 withdrawal expires November 6, 2026 unless Congress enacts legislation to extend it. The Army proposes extending it for another 25 years or to assign control

of the land to the Secretary of the Army until they no longer need it. Miller encouraged Delta residents to submit comments through the October 25, 2021 deadline.

Hallgren referenced an October 18, 2021 email from Catherine Miller and asked if the new \$10/year Recreational Access Permit (RAP), effective January 1, 2022, was part of the LEIS process. Donnelly Dome is important to area residents and tourists. People want Donnelly Dome removed from the RAP area, so it is accessible irrespective of red-flagged training. Under the proposed fees, a family of five might have to pay \$50 just to picnic at Donnelly. Miller said to share concerns during the scoping period about removing Donnelly Dome from Army-managed lands, but to contact Matt Sprau (matthew.h.sprau.civ@army.mil) about RAP fees because it is a separate issue.

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

### Donnelly Training Areas

Hallgren reported most of Fort Greely was turned over to Fort Wainwright after the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC '95). Donnelly training areas, owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), were placed under Army management. The Delta community experienced a wildfire in 1999, but threat of fire or flood were not addressed in the Army's EIS. The City drafted a Memorandum of Agreement with U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK-MOA-029) and successfully established conditions on training during fire season, i.e. requiring fire breaks, extra firefighters, and an immediately available helicopter. USARAK would consult with the City on fire issues and the status of Aufeis on Jarvis Creek. Over time, personnel changed and communications ceased.

Discussion followed regarding plans to amend the MOA for at least ten years, the City participating in regular teleconferences with a fire mitigation working group, and changes to City Attorney Michael McLaughlin's letter in response to the September 24, 2021 LEIS scoping notice: 1) add verbiage to "... purpose of the proposed action is to obtain an extension of the land withdrawal of the three training areas for another 25 years or more, or have the land assigned to the control of the Secretary of the Army until such times as the Army determines it no longer needs the lands for military purposes" and 2) remove Donnelly Dome from range expansion, so it is managed by the BLM and people are not required to go through the permit process, and sending copies of the scoping letter to Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan, and Representative Don Young.

Motion: Musgrove moved to issue Mike McLaughlin's scoping letter after adding verbiage; Prestegard seconded. Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Levinson, Catterson, Prestegard, Heinbockel, Hallgren, Musgrove).

Motion: Heinbockel moved to issue a second scoping letter, requesting release of Donnelly Dome from the military training area; Prestegard seconded.

Heinbockel suggested realistically adjusting the boundary around Donnelly Dome from the west side of the Old Richardson Trail/Highway to the southern extension of the Fort Greely reservation, which is State land.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Heinbockel, Hallgren, Catterson, Prestegard, Levinson, Musgrove).

Hallgren asked to issue a letter to Matt Sprau about the \$10 RAP fee and to request a public meeting.

## NEW BUSINESS

### City Purchases over \$1,000

CK# 221533 to Attu Development - \$2,000.00 to remove snow on airport

CK# 221534 to Buffalo Center Service - \$1,283.39 for vehicle fuel

CK# 221535 to GVEA - \$3,965.98 for September electricity

CK# 221536 to ACS - \$1,608.61 for October phone and Internet

CK# 221537 to Guess & Rudd - \$1,650.00 for legal services (\$120 – election questions and \$1,530 - Grizzly Construction contract to bury river weights)

CK# 221538 to Siemens Industry - \$2,166.00 to repair library heating system

CK# 221539 to Wells Fargo - \$3,331.86 for credit card charges

Motion: Levinson moved to approve checks #221533 through 221539 as presented; Prestegard seconded.

Discussion followed regarding paying Grizzly Construction (\$32,200) to bury river weights (\$35,000 approved on September 7) because of inability to contact Matt Walker, contracting Attu Development to remove snow from the runway, airport listed as a #2 priority because of potential for medivac transports, depth of snow more than what volunteers were capable of moving, and Heinbockel recommending hiring qualified operators to run City equipment and paying them the same rate as the last road maintenance contract (expired 2020).

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Prestegard, Heinbockel, Levinson, Catterson, Hallgren, Musgrove).

**Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance 2022-03, An Ordinance Renewing the Franchise Agreement with Delta Medical Transport, LLC for Emergency Medical Services**

Leith reported Tony White, owner of Delta Medical Transport (DMT), asked to limit the new contract to two years, through June 30, 2022, because he intends to change the status of his business. The 2011 ambulance was removed from the contract and the new 2012 used ambulance was added.

Motion: Heinbockel moved to introduce Ordinance 2022-03, hold the first reading, and set the second reading, public hearing, and possible adoption for November 2, 2021; Hallgren seconded.

Tony White reported new tires were put on the 2012 ambulance. It will be in service once its insured. DMT has had normal growth over the past three years; no increases in respiratory or cardiac illnesses, but an increase in injuries due to four-wheeler and dirt bike accidents. DMT's mutual aid with Fort Greely is working well because there are days with four, five, six runs, but typical average is one to two calls each day.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Hallgren, Catterson, Prestegard, Heinbockel, Levinson, Musgrove).

Heinbockel reported DMT collects less than 50% of ambulance transport fees. The City subsidizes the ambulance service, but could not operate it any cheaper. The City and Rural Deltana provide fire service, but because of not charging, insurance companies are the only ones making any money.

Tony White reported most fires are fought during the winter when it is 30 or 40 below. Things break at those temperatures. Firefighters reverted to using personal cell phones, eliminating the need to purchase more radios. The City of Fairbanks donated 14 new air packs valued at \$60,000 and the North Pole Fire Department gave Delta hoses that they took out of service. He said steadily replenishing the Fire Department budget would be appreciated.

**REPORTS**

**Mayor** – JW Musgrove reported he appreciated everyone's vote as mayor and he will work with Heinbockel to resolve issues pertaining to the mayor's length of term.

**Airport** – JW Musgrove reported one less airplane is occupying the tie-down area, undergoing extensive repair.

**Schools** – Erin Catterson reported the Elementary School will host Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 30.

**Emergency Services** – Erin Catterson reported:

- There were 42 ambulance calls since September 21 and three fire calls.
- The Fire Department's annual Halloween party will be on October 30, 1:00-5:00.

**Emergency Preparedness / Health & Safety** – Michael Prestegard reported:

- Road conditions were very poor a week ago. He suggested packing extra clothes and protection in vehicles in the event of going in the ditch. Have a supply of wood and fuel oil at home without relying on outside resources.
- The Great Alaska Shakeout will offer a drill about earthquakes on October 21. Information is available online (shakeout.org).
- COVID cases are hitting close to home. The Public Health Office (895-4292) is offering booster vaccines.

Musgrove questioned reinstating a mask policy at City Hall due to staff and Council being affected by the virus.

Heinbockel reported masks are not required at the Alaska State Troopers, nor the Division of Motor Vehicles.

**Library** – Tiki Levinson reported:

- Library staff were busy with Baby Lap Time today and Story Hour tomorrow.
- She received a grant to purchase and implement a new software operating system for the library that will meet the needs of the community with better outreach and sharing of resources.
- Little trick-or-treaters in costumes are invited to the library on October 30, 1:00-5:00.

**Public Works** – Mary Leith reported Denali Fenceworks is building replacement gates at the park.

Heinbockel reported Sherman Stebbins moved snow to the front of all the other entrance gates.

**Landfill** – Mary Leith reported:

- There is concern about having enough cover material at the landfill.
- They hope to keep the north septic pit functioning, even though Pogo septic and trash have increased.
- A decision regarding whether to add scale house hours on Thursdays will be postponed to spring.
- Phillips Scales will conduct its annual inspection and testing on October 21.

**Park & Recreation** – Lou Heinbockel reported the school district will contribute more toward this year’s use agreement (partnership with the City and Delta-Greely Skating Association to use the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena) because of not participating last year (2020-2021 season).

**Cemetery** – Lou Heinbockel reported a local resident complimented the City crew for their part in a recent burial. Leith reported Henry Muth is researching purchase of a bucket for digging graves.

**At Large** – no report

**City Administrator** – Mary Leith reported:

- Eight people attended the redistricting meeting on October 18 at the Community Center. It appears Delta will be combined with Tok, Valdez, and Alaskan villages.
- Finance Officer Stephanie Erickson resigned, effective October 22. Additional discussion under *Finance*.
- The title for Pioneer Park is in the mail. Half of the appraised value was paid (\$32,265 approved August 17, 2021). Leith said the City will have ownership and will draft a use agreement with the Pioneers organization.
- Forty-two people attended the Mahn Choh (Kinross) virtual meeting on October 14. Sixty-some attended the one for Salcha. Most attendees were concerned about road damage.
- The River Walk Trail is getting a lot of use, including cross-country skiers.

**City Clerk** – no report

**Finance** – Mary Leith distributed Erickson’s quarterly report, *Budget v Actual*, dated October 19, 2021.

Discussion followed regarding eventual adjustments to the budget due to escalating fuel prices, getting advice from Stephen Hammond, M2C1, about the fuel tank at the library, Leith drafting an agreement for Erickson to fill in before a new person is hired, increasing the starting wage on the matrix, setting up zoom capabilities, and losing tech skills with Erickson’s departure.

**Additional Reports** – Mike Prestegard reported snow machines and four-wheelers are legal on public highways. Discussion followed regarding criteria for off-road vehicles, driver’s ed not part of the school curriculum, option for local government involvement in the new bill, and Heinbockel’s reasoning to allow ATV’s on pavement.

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS** - none

**ADJOURNMENT** – 7:44pm

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JW Musgrove, Mayor

CITY  
SEAL

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Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: November 2, 2021