

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
November 2, 2021 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor JW Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Council members present: Mayor JW MUSGROVE, Deputy Mayor Mike PRESTEGARD,
Lou HEINBOCKEL, Alan LEVINSON, Erin CATTERSON

Council attending by phone: Pete HALLGREN

Council excused: Emily DOVE

Staff present: City Administrator City Administrator Mary Leith, City Clerk Pat White

Staff present via phone: Administrative Assistant Flower Cole, Library Director Tiki Levinson

Sherman Stebbins and Todd Zachgo were physically present, one resident and Ashley Bradish attended by phone, and the meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Musgrove reported *Correspondence: Request from Five Loaves Pantry* would be postponed to November 16.

Motion: Heinbockel moved to amend and approve the November 2, 2021 agenda; Levinson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

White reported the year of the totaled ambulance was reported incorrectly on October 19 (*Introduction of Ordinance 2022-03* – top of page 3). The 2011 ambulance was totaled in 2019. The 2009 ambulance was wrecked in 2020. The 2011 ambulance was removed from the Delta Medical Transport contract. The 2009 was not.

Motion: Levinson moved to approve the October 19, 2021 draft minutes as amended; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Ashley Bradish, Golden Valley Electric Association (GVEA), Public Relations Specialist, reported:

1) They are soliciting Nominating Committee applications for districts 5 and 6 in the upcoming GVEA Board of Directors elections. District 6 comprises Delta Junction, Fort Greely, and areas south of the Salcha River. Interested GVEA members need to complete the form online (gvea.com/elections) by 5:00pm, November 12.

2) The Board of Trustees for the Goodcents Program is looking for volunteers to review applications from non-profits on a quarterly basis. One applicant is needed to serve District 6 for a three-year term beginning January 2022. Applications (gvea.com/goodcents-program) must be submitted to pr@gvea.com by 5:00pm, November 19.

Todd Zachgo, President of the Delta-Greely Skating Association, presented plaques of appreciation to the City of Delta Junction for sponsoring the Delta Skating Association for the 2019-2020 season when the 10UA took state championship and the 2020-2021 season when both the 10UA and 12UA took state championships. Changing subjects, Zachgo said there will not be any ice until Thanksgiving because of warmer-than-normal temperatures.

Sherman Stebbins reported, after almost 20 years, he was moving back to Texas. He presented a framed original drawing by Dixon Pagnella from Atlin, British Columbia. Neil and Joanne Heitman commissioned Pagnella in 1984 and his art, done in colored pencil and watercolor paint, was sent to Anchorage and replicated into postcards that showed the “End of the Alaska Highway milepost with the Trans-Alaska pipeline and buffalo, representative of the Delta Junction area.”

Hallgren thanked Stebbins for his work on the Council (2009-2015) and as a City employee (since March 2020).

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

CORRESPONDENCE

Request from Five Loaves Pantry - postponed

Rural Deltana – Exit from Tanana Loop Landfill

Leith reported electricity for the Tanana Loop landfill facility was put back in the City's name last week and disconnected yesterday.

Discussion followed regarding whether the City firefighters were interested in the structure or using the old landfill for training, the building needing extensive repair and cleanup, selling it or dismantling it, 40+ barrels of crack-seal stored inside, scattered parts and pieces of the Betty Crocker fire engine, and planning a work party next summer.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS**Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 2022-03, An Ordinance Renewing the Franchise Agreement with Delta Medical Transport, LLC for Emergency Medical Services**

Levinson moved to open the public hearing of Ordinance 2022-03; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

Musgrove called for public comment with none being offered.

Hallgren clarified that the one-year extension does not preclude a second one-year extension.

Heinbockel reported the City's financial subsidy may have to be renegotiated.

Heinbockel moved to close the public hearing; Levinson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

Catterson reported Tony White was satisfied with the contract extension through June 2022.

Motion: Levinson moved to adopt Ordinance 2022-03, renewing the contract with Delta Medical Transport as presented; Prestegard seconded.

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

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

CK# 221554 to Alaska Library Network - \$2,000.00 for digital library materials

CK# 221555 to Construction Machinery - \$2,079.60 for transmission work on L150E loader

CK# 221556 to Vitus Energy - \$3,675.46 for heating and equipment fuel at the landfill

CK# 221557 to Phillips Scales - \$2,467.13 for yearly inspection of landfill scale

CK# 221558 to Buffalo Fuel - \$1,272.00 for heating fuel at Fire Station and Public Works

CK# 221559 to Kel's Septic Pumping - \$4,900.00 to service City buildings

Motion: Levinson moved to approve checks #221554 through 221559 as presented; Prestegard seconded.

Discussion followed regarding current fuel prices and invoices from July, August, and September (#221556).

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

Revisit Employee Pandemic Pay Policy

[An employee pandemic pay policy was established April 7, 2020 when business hours at the library and City Hall shortened to 10:00-4:00 because of the COVID pandemic. Four part-time employees were affected by reducing their scheduled work hours for the two weeks that followed. On April 21, 2020 the policy was extended through June 30, 2020. On July 21, 2020 it was extended through June 30, 2021.]

Motion: Heinbockel moved to extend the pandemic pay policy for part-time employees through June 30, 2022; Levinson seconded.

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

Revisit Employee Step Schedule

Musgrove reported the hourly grade for the Landfill Equipment Operator Landfill should move from Grade 5 to 6, the same as the Streets Equipment Operator. He also said the landfill operator needs a part-time assistant.

Leith reported the hourly grade for the Scale House Operator should also move from Grade 2 to 3, the same as Library Aides. A 10% increase for all hourly employees would cost \$2,500/month (\$30,000/year). Two of three recent resignations were hourly employees. Higher wages may be necessary to attract new hires.

Motion: Heinbockel moved to move the Landfill Equipment Operator to a Grade 6 and the Scale House Operator to Grade 3; Levinson seconded.

Discussion followed regarding whether the FY21 budget could absorb increased wages, Hallgren concerned with future consequences over the 10% overlay, i.e. PERS benefits, postponing discussion to November 16, more research needed to justify the wage increase, recommendation from the engineer firm when the landfill was designed to have two employees at the landfill, and creating a part-time, 25-hour landfill/Public Works position. Hallgren asked for more data showing costs and job requirements.

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

Motion: Levinson moved to hire a landfill equipment operator assistant to be shared with Public Works, at Grade 4, and to revisit the position at the next budget cycle to determine if the position is to continue as part-time or bump to full-time; Heinbockel seconded.

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

Heinbockel asked that the administration look into a part-time, on-call, after-hour grader operator as a backup.

Musgrove referred to discussion about paying Butch Brant to remove snow from the runway (October 19, 2021) and said a backup plan is necessary for street maintenance (expired 2020) that includes keeping the runway prepared for unexpected emergencies. Brant's skills ensured the top layer of finer material was not removed.

REPORTS

Library – JW Musgrove reported:

- The library had over 120 trick-or-treaters stop on October 30. Some folks signed up for new library cards and others expressed interest in participating in children's programs.
- The library has teamed up with Afterschool Network of Alaska and Anchorage Municipal Library to offer a series of family science workshops. The first one, exploring light and shadow, will be on November 6 at 1:00pm, in time for the end of daylight savings time, as days get shorter. Families can call the library to register.
- Three seats are open on the Delta Library Board. Board members can vote through 2:00pm, November 9.
- The library is hosting the third annual Lego Challenge. Participants build their Lego-themed projects and email photos to the library each week. Prizes will be awarded at the end of the month.
- Candy Trivia ends October 30. To date, 48 correct answers were entered into the contest drawing.

Mayor/Personnel – JW Musgrove reported Leith is advertising three job openings. The COVID pandemic has proven that some jobs can be accomplished by working from home, particularly accounting and payroll. Additional discussion under *City Administrator* and *Finance Reports*.

Airport – Alan Levinson reported the airport is in good shape since snowfall and volunteers hung a streetlight in the tie-down area a week ago.

Discussion followed regarding moving the light out toward the airplanes and Heinbockel offering to donate a LED replacement bulb that is bright white.

Schools - Erin Catterson reported upcoming schedules for High School volleyball, wrestling, basketball, and rifle. She also reported:

- The Delta Elementary School hosted its second Trunk or Treat on Saturday, October 30.
- The DES trimester ends November 5.
- SAT exams are scheduled for November 6.
- The school district was awarded a \$500,000 grant that will be used in the next five years for technology equipment, activities, and career pathways for Junior High and High School students.

Health & Safety – Mike Prestegard reported 18 new COVID cases were reported in Delta on October 29/30.

Emergency Services – Erin Catterson reported:

- Halloween Safety Night was held on October 30. It was not overcrowded, but it was a good turnout.
 - A brush truck, decked in festive Christmas lights and Christmas music, will be driven around town for a few hours each night.
 - The Delta Junction Volunteer Fire Department was awarded a \$4,900 grant from IREMS (Interior Region Emergency Medical Services). They also plan to apply for the annual Forestry grant that is awarded in May.
- Emergency Preparedness** – Mike Prestegard cautioned people about hazard conditions due to new snow on ice.

Public Works / Landfill – Lou Heinbockel reported snow has been cleared on all priority #1 streets.

Leith reported:

- Delta East Side Truck & Auto will repair the landfill D6 dozer once parts arrive.
- Delta Surveys completed the landfill drawing (dated October 26, 2021) that details the well location and edges of the existing pit. Utilization of the eight-foot extension (plus two feet of material, approved October 20, 2020) will start within the next year.

Park & Recreation – Mary Leith reported the River Walk Park, which is on City property, was vandalized on October 24 or 25. One entrance post and one chain were ripped out. Alaska State Troopers are investigating it. Heinbockel suggested using boulders to block the trail entrance, same as at the Liewer Community Trail.

Cemetery – no report

At Large – no report

City Administrator – Mary Leith reported:

- Job announcements were advertised for a Finance Officer (Stephanie Erickson’s resignation effective October 22), Maintenance (Sherman Stebbins’ resignation effective November 5) and Landfill Equipment Officer (Dennis Burke’s resignation effective November 27).

- A few more parts are expected to finish the 2009 ambulance repairs (wrecked October 2020). It should be in service by November.

- Volunteers have delivered meals to area residents for three years. This week marked their 166th week. [Deborah Snyder, “The Senior Companion Program terminated January 31, 2020 and fully transitioned to a Nutrition, Transportation, and Support Services grant with the Department of Health and Social Services.” The use agreement for the North Star Council on Aging to operate from an office in the Community Center was renewed April 21, 2020 (Resolution 2020-05).]

City Clerk – no report

Finance – Mary Leith reported Stephanie Erickson is paid \$60/hour to transition out of her job while staying current with bills and payroll. [Erickson resigned October 8, effective October 22, but stayed home the last week due to illness.]

Additional Reports – no report

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS - none

ADJOURNMENT – 6:45pm

JW Musgrove, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: November 16, 2021