

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
January 18, 2022 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor JW Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

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

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

Staff present via phone: Administrative Assistant Flower Cole

Six community members attended by phone at the start of the meeting. The meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Levinson moved to approve the January 18, 2022 agenda; Hallgren seconded.

Musgrove said he would mention one item under *Correspondence*.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion: Levinson moved to approve the January 4, 2022 minutes; Dove seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call.

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS – none

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

CORRESPONDENCE

Musgrove reported Mindy Eggleston, President of the Delta Junction Trails Association, sent a card thanking the Council for supporting the River Walk Park project.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK# 221696 to Aetna - \$7,875.84 for January group health insurance

CK# 221697 to Stephanie Erickson - \$1,290.00 for contracted services (finance)

CK# 221698 to Denali Fenceworks - \$1,300.00 to build two new park fence gates, payment 2 of 2

CK# 221699 to Attu Development - \$4,600.00 to grade airport (invoice #509, dated January 2, 2022)

CK# 221700 to Airport Equipment Rentals - \$3,566.15 to rent loader for street maintenance

CK# 221701 to Payment Remittance Center - \$3,697.67 for credit card charges

CK# 221702 to Attu Development - \$1,900.00 to grade airport and roads (invoice #510, dated January 13, 2022)

Motion: Dove moved to approve checks #221696 through 221702; Hallgren seconded.

Discussion followed regarding two baby changing stations for restrooms at the rink (\$680 - part of CK# 221701).

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS)

[A volunteer ambulance service, Delta Rescue Squad, operated for almost 50 years. The City financed it and collected insurance reimbursements. It ended in 2011 when EMTs quit responding to calls. Fort Greely firefighter, Tony White, responded and eventually hired people to work shifts. In 2013, the City negotiated a contract with Delta Medical Transport (DMT) to provide ambulance services. The City paid DMT an amount of \$50,000 for that February 15, 2013 contract and the ones dated September 3, 2019 and November 2, 2021, but not February 4, 2014 (\$72,833.34 for 17 months) or June 6, 2015 (\$25,000). A work session was held on January 12 to discuss local ambulance services and DMT's \$295,000 deficit.]

Leith asked whether to solicit other interest by putting the contract out for bid or to begin negotiating a new one.

Hallgren reported DMT has provided excellent service to the community and going back to an all-volunteer service is not going to happen. He asked whether American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds could be used, whether the City Attorney had been consulted, whether an RFP is required or if the non-bid stance can continue

past the current contract (through June 30, 2022). He asked that opinions from experts be in writing, that the Mayor and City Administrator conduct negotiations, and that they present solutions during an executive session. Catterson recalled when tone outs were not answered. Now response time is minimal because paramedics are on call at the fire station. Medics have a good working relationship with the firefighters and together, they provide a great service to the community. She said it is unrealistic to consider bringing in a new ambulance provider.

Levinson said the bid process would identify true market costs for EMS in Delta Junction. He questioned taking funds from other departments to make up the deficit.

Heinbockel said citizens should pay for ambulance services if the City cannot afford them, raising revenue locally is not going to happen, and he doubted another business could provide the service, but it is not known.

Discussion followed regarding the City of Delta Junction, the only local organized government, using PILT funds for the entire area, unstable local fuel prices (\$3.96, \$4.09, and \$4.45/gallon), grant funds being a short term solution, continually losing trained medics to better paying jobs, paying Fairbanks for dispatch (\$40,000+), collecting E911 revenue (\$15,000-\$20,000), and possibly collecting fuel surcharges and environmental fees.

Hallgren reported the public is grateful for the City's involvement to resolve issues with providing EMS services.

Committee for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF)

Leith reported \$700,000 was received of \$1.4 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds plus guidelines about distribution. She asked about forming a committee with community-wide representation, similar to the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) committee.

Discussion followed regarding using rescue funds on infrastructure projects over the next four years, expanding meals-on-wheels and usage of the Senior Companion van if money replaces what was taken from North Star Council on Aging's restricted grant, hiring a temp with ARPA funds to organize paperwork and oversee the committee, and whether CARES recipients could qualify for ARPA funds.

Musgrove volunteered to serve on the ARPA/SLFRF committee.

Hallgren asked if ARPA funds could be used for uninsured ambulance bills.

2022 Holiday Schedule Change

Musgrove reported changes to the holiday schedule that were not included when it was approved on December 7. The library will be closed Christmas Eve, December 24, 2022 and New Year's Eve, December 31, 2022. Staff will have the option to work or take personal leave.

Motion: Prestegard moved to amend the 2022 Holiday Schedule per January 14, 2022 edits; Levinson seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call.

REPORTS

Mayor/Personnel – JW Musgrove reported a part-time temporary landfill assistant will be advertised. The job requires some equipment experience.

Heinbockel expressed concern about attracting a skilled employee for non-competitive wages and no benefits. Discussion followed regarding the existing step schedule, summer hires acquiring skills on the job, and having more than one employee at the landfill as a safety precaution.

Airport – Alan Levinson reported:

- The runway is plowed, but has high snow berms. Cones need put back to mark the runway.
- Airport Subdivision II roads are one lane only. Ski Strip Drive is not compacted and is too narrow for an airplane because berms allow no clearance. South Taxiway, a short strip that accesses the runway, was widened.
- The tie-down area is plowed, but there are no spaces for new planes because of the snow volume. Bills were sent to tie-down tenants and airport property owners.

Library – Emily Dove reported:

- A new program for elementary kids, featuring books and activities for kids after school on Thursdays, will begin on January 27. Lauren Morton, a local author, will share her book, Zooey's Moon: An Alaskan Space Odyssey, on February 5 at 1:00pm. Brooke Carson will teach a knitting class for beginners, starting February 8.

- 26,238 items were borrowed from the library in 2021 despite COVID closures and challenges.

- The Library Journal analyzes data across the United States each year to identify exemplary libraries. The Delta Community Library was given the highest rating, Five Stars, for the 11th year and also ranked the third best in the nation according to budget level.

Health & Safety – Emily Dove reported:

- COVID cases in Alaska have increased. Information is available at coronavirus.alaska.gov. As a reminder, wash hands, continue social distancing, and stay home if sick.
- Testing is available at the local clinics, Family Medical Center (FMC) and Interior Alaska (IAMC). Delta Public Health Center (PHC) is running low on free home test kits (two tests per kit, one kit per person), but gave out 50 today. The Federal Government will send four free test kits per address. Order online (covidtests.gov).
- Vaccine information is available on the Vaccine Monitoring Dashboard (covidvax.alaska.gov).
- FMC offers vaccine appointments on Wednesdays. The Delta PHC will hold a vaccine clinic on January 26. Register online (myhealth.alaska.gov). Call for assistance (895-4292). The PHC also offers flu shots.
- IAMC is offering Monoclonal Antibody treatments.

Schools - Erin Catterson reported the annual Dean Cummings Basketball Tournament was held January 13-15.

Emergency Services – no report**Emergency Preparedness** – Mike Prestegard reported:

- Since the winter storm hit the last week of December, people have helped neighbors by shoveling snow from driveways and roofs, clearing paths to fuel tanks and wood piles, delivering groceries or medicine, starting vehicles, etc. Many focus only on helping the elderly. Others are available for hire. City Hall received 18 calls for assistance since January 4. Staff linked them to people who could provide the necessary services. Prestegard emphasized communicating with neighbors even if they don't ask for help or share their true circumstances.
- Wait lists for firewood deliveries are six weeks to three months out. People are asked to rely on alternate sources of heat because firewood suppliers in Delta and North Pole are maxed. Two woodcutters in Tok make regular deliveries to standing customers in Delta, but they're getting stressed like all the others.
- Thankfully, there have been no power outages, as electricity could serve as another source of heat.
- Senator Mike Showers, Representative George Rauscher, and Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHS&EM) Director Bryan Fisher telephonically attended the Local Emergency Planning Committee meeting on January 10, 2022. Because of Governor Dunleavy's declaration on January 4, residents can apply for disaster recovery grants. Library staff (895-4102) are available to help residents apply online (ready.alaska.gov) before the deadline (March 4, 2022).
- He would like to update the Small Community Emergency Response Plan (SCERP), a chart of emergency contact numbers.
- *The Individual & Family Preparedness Guide, a Comprehensive Guide to Preparing for Disasters* is available on the DHS&EM website (ready.alaska.gov). Paper copies are available at the front counter at City Hall. Dove reported resources are available online about multiple types of emergencies, what foods are best for storing, how to store water, etc.
- Due to potential flooding in the spring, Prestegard advised having a two-week supply of food on hand as well as other necessities.

Park & Recreation – Mike Prestegard reported the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena is a busy place. He explained hard ice, soft ice, and how difficult they are to maintain. He also reported one of the heaters ran out of fuel last week.

Public Works / Landfill – Lou Heinbockel reported:

- The Public Works crew has been very busy moving snow. He asked to sand intersections due to the forecast of heavy rain, +40° temperatures, and winds up to 70mph. He asked to purchase an attachment for the Skid Steer to throw snow away from roads. It could be useful at the outdoor rink, around the rink facility, and building entrances. A (\$199) battery-operated snow shovel would also be perfect to remove snow.

Musgrove reported the wing blade would be mounted on the grader to move snow berms further away from roads.

- The landfill is busy when its open to the public.
- The D6 dozer was moved to Eastside Auto today.

Cemetery – no report

At Large – Pete Hallgren reported roads in Fairbanks are covered in ice and uncomfortable to drive on.

City Administrator – Mary Leith reported a contractor delivered 40 refrigerators to the landfill from Fort Greely last week. Forty more are expected.

City Clerk – Pat White reported:

- The price for passport books, not cards, increased \$20, on December 27, 2021. Adult passport books are now \$130 (cards are still \$30) and passport books for minors are \$100 (cards are \$15). Priority and priority express postage also increased, effective January 9 and 10, 2022.

- Turnaround time for processing is now 8-11 weeks and 5-7 for expedited service.

- Passport applications are trickling in. City Hall averaged only 14/month in 2021. Approximately \$5,740 (\$35 per application) was collected in revenue in 2021 minus postage (\$264) and staff time. Over half of passport applications in 2021 were expedited (customers pay postage).

Finance – Mary Leith reported Stephanie Erickson issued a budget-versus-actual report through December, dated January 18, 2022, including a one-page report on investments and grant balances.

Additional Reports – Lou Heinbockel reported it is difficult to find places to dump snow because there is so much.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS - none

ADJOURNMENT – 7:17pm

JW Musgrove, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: February 1, 2022