

**City Council Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**February 1, 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, Pete HALLGREN, Erin CATTERSON

**Council excused:** Emily DOVE

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

**Staff present via phone:** Administrative Assistant Flower Cole

Ten community members were in attendance at the beginning of the meeting, four attended by phone, and the meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

**AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** Hallgren moved to approve the February 1, 2022 agenda; Levinson seconded.

**Musgrove** reported *EMS - Unfinished Business* would be moved to *Request to Speak*. He previously asked Tony and Amber White to speak on the subject, which is reason why they should be first on the agenda.

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

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

**Motion:** Levinson moved to approve the January 18, 2022 minutes; Catterson and Prestegard seconded.

**White** reported edits (in brackets under *Emergency Medical Services* - page one): Fort Greely firefighter, Tony White, replaced local firefighter. The City negotiated a contract, not an agreement with Delta Medical Transport to provide ambulance services, not house the ambulance operation at the fire station.

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

**COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**LTC Joey Orr** reported the largest Army exercise at Donnelly Dome Training Area is scheduled March 1 through April 1. There will be a significant increase in large vehicles and machines on the Richardson Highway. AT&T bolstered their bandwidth to accommodate the 6,000 visiting troops and hopefully it is enough to not interfere with local residents' daily use.

**REQUEST TO SPEAK**

**Tony and Amber White - Emergency Medical Services (EMS)** – moved from *Unfinished Business*

**Tony White**, owner of Delta Medical Transport (DMT), reported they are having difficulty in meeting payroll taxes and expenses due to new Alaska Labor laws. Wage increases coincide with the level of services they provide (24/7). Contracts in other municipalities that serve a population of 5,000 and respond to 450 calls per year, have budgets that are seven figures or more. DMT faces a \$25,000 deficit each month.

**Musgrove** distributed printouts of an email from City Attorney Mike McLaughlin who outlined options to ensure the community maintains ambulance coverage: amend the current contract or enter into an emergency contract (City Code §1.41.030). Musgrove declined an option for a 60-day contract because of the lengthy ordinance process. He said the urgency for funding will identify the path to take.

**Amber White** reported DMT's projected shortfall is \$350,000 of their \$750,000 sustainable budget. They've been forced to almost double wages. They can meet payroll on February 5, but not payroll taxes.

**Leith** recommended financing DMT for the next five months through the end of the contract, June 30, 2022.

**Prestegard** agreed, stating it would give time to renegotiate or extend the existing contract.

**Musgrove** reported DMT needs \$300,000 more than the contractual \$50,000/year, equivalent to \$25,000/month.

**Heinbockel** suggested reinvesting undedicated funds and tapping into it for the next five years.

Discussion followed regarding assurance from AML Shared Services to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, it being only as a temporary solution, trimming other department budgets, the ambulance service sharing resources with the Fire Department, national standard for combined services (90% EMS and 10% fire), Federal PILT based on a federal land formula (City of Delta Junction and City of Eagle only incorporated governments), DMT serving the entire Delta/Deltana community, whether DMT will get better reimbursement once a lengthy nationwide government audit is finished (only 43% to 44% recovered on Medicare and Medicaid claims), and addressing the ambulance contract while balancing the City budget, now and in the future.

Tim Castleberry introduced himself, a 22-year resident and current Assistant Fire Chief of the Delta Junction Volunteer Fire Department. He witnessed Rescue Squad volunteers burn out and Tony White hiring paramedics to operate an amazing ambulance service that serves as far as Dot Lake, Paxson, and the Denali Highway.

Tiffany Bouziden, spouse of a military soldier, said she supported the ambulance service because of limited EMS and 9-1-1 services and the projected growth that is expected at the missile fields.

**Motion:** Hallgren moved to amend the current contract by adding subsection 3(b), "In addition to the payments described in Section 3(a) above, monthly payments in the amount of \$25,000.00 shall be made to the Franchisee, payable within the first 15 days of each calendar month through June 30, 2022; Heinbockel seconded.

Discussion followed regarding the last quarter payment of the FY22 contract (\$12,500) to be paid after April 1, \$25,000/month payments starting in February, and reconciling the budget through an ordinance process in August or September 2022.

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

### **LT Matt Mancuso – Alaska State Defense Force**

Lieutenant Matt Mancuso reported the mission of the Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF), part of the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, is to collaborate with citizens, communities, Native corporations, non-profit organizations, and governmental agencies to train an organized state military reserve to prepare, plan, respond, mitigate, and recover from natural and man-made disasters. Using a PowerPoint presentation and handout, Mancuso explained the levels of DMVA operations, detachments located across Alaska, requirements and credentials to serve in the ASDF, and their intent to establish a search and rescue squad in the Delta area to assist Alaska State Troopers. Soldiers, commonly activated for forest fires, have helped with COVID and the winter storm that was declared by Governor Dunleavy on January 4. Delta Junction, working with Fort Greely, needs an emergency management team that is controlled by the local government, yet separate from the Local Emergency Planning Committee whose purpose is planning. Mancuso offered his assistance to establish a team. Information and team applications are available online ([go.asdf.com](http://go.asdf.com)).

### **Tiki Levinson – 2021 Annual Library Report**

Library Director Tiki Levinson shared *A Five-Star Library Snapshot* via PowerPoint, detailing activities and encounters experienced by library staff on January 27, 2022. The Library Journal collects data from libraries across the United States. They ranked the local library as a 5-Star Library for the 11th year plus the third best according to budget level (\$200,000 to \$399,000). They are the highest in the nation in their category for circulated items. Levinson touched on literacy in Alaska and benefits found at the Delta Community Library, i.e. secure public computers, tutoring, on-line classes, and interlibrary loans.

### **CORRESPONDENCE**

#### **Alaskan Steakhouse (#3999) – Liquor License Renewal**

**Motion:** Heinbockel moved to show no opposition to Alaskan Steakhouse's liquor license renewal; Hallgren seconded.

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – See *Request to Speak* (page one)

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

CK# 221717 to Stephanie Erickson - \$1,575.00 for finance services 1-13/1-25

CK# 221718 to Vitus Energy - \$5,596.31 for heating fuel

CK# 221719 to Buffalo Center Service - \$3,932.41 for equipment fuel for vehicles and equipment

**Motion:** Levinson moved to approve checks #221717 through 221719; Prestegard seconded.

Discussion followed regarding transitioning financial responsibilities, AML personnel to arrive on February 7, and switching Cougar Mountain finance software to QuickBooks.

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

**Resolution 2022-06, A Resolution Amending the City of Delta Junction Employee Policy Plan by Adding a Landfill Operations Assistant Position**

**Musgrove** reported an assistant to the landfill equipment operator was discussed in the past. He asked to provide variables, so that once the landfill operations assistant increases responsibilities, the City Administrator and Mayor can bump the grade level without Council approval.

**Motion:** Levinson moved to adopt Resolution 2022-06, amending the Employee Policy Plan by adding a landfill operations assistant position; Hallgren seconded.

Discussion followed regarding the City administration determining the starting grade level by the applicant's capabilities and paying the new hire at the level of the full-time equipment operator when filling in.

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

**REPORTS**

**Mayor** – JW Musgrove reported:

- The part-time landfill assistant position will be advertised.
- He is working on ARPA to understand how to use funds. AML Shared Services will oversee the program.

**Airport** – Alan Levinson reported the runway is plowed. Cones mark the runway. The tie-down area is plowed and there are available spaces for visitors.

**Library** – no report

**Health & Safety** – Lou Heinbockel reported 5,500 new COVID cases were reported in Alaska, including a sizeable number from Delta. The infectious rate of the new variant is high, but believed to not be as deadly.

**Schools** - Erin Catterson reported dates of upcoming basketball games and:

- The Delta Elementary School (DES) celebrated their 100th day of school on January 28.
- DES will host a steak dinner / fundraiser on February 11. Proceeds will support school activities.
- School is closed on February 21.

**Emergency Services** – Erin Catterson reported Delta Medical Transport had 25 runs since January 1 and the Fire Department had two alarms. She expressed concern about people needing fire or medical services while being trapped in their homes because of snow-packed driveways.

Discussion followed regarding a mutual aid agreement with Fort Greely, but no rescue equipment to open driveways except for a six-wheel Argo track vehicle.

**Emergency Preparedness** – Mike Prestegard reported:

- Personnel from the Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management will be at the Community Center (2287 Deborah Street) February 4/5 to assist area residents in applying for relief funds. Their purpose is to verify, inspect, and document claims for Individual Assistance per Governor Dunleavy's disaster declaration on January 4. Library staff (895-4102) are available to assist residents in filing online (ready.alaska.gov) by the March 4 deadline and people can also call (1-855-445-7131). Individuals and families with primary residence damages or essential personal property losses during the 2021-2022 winter storms should bring photo ID, detailed description of damages and/or losses, photo or video documentation, invoices for repairs already completed, and proof of home ownership, occupancy (utility bill), and insurance. Information is available on the City website

(deltajunction.us) and Facebook. [February 3, 2022 Note: Disaster Assistance Center visits to Delta (February 4/5) and Fairbanks (February 7/12) were cancelled due to illness. New dates will be announced when known.]

- U.S. Army helicopters were called out in two separate instances to rescue people on snow machines who were not prepared to survive breaking down in the backcountry.

**Park & Recreation** – Mike Prestegard reported the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena will require work on its ventilation system. There were recent fuel delivery issues because the contractor was unaware of a buried tank.

**Public Works** – Lou Heinbockel reported Aurora Avenue has been fenced off and shut down. He asked to purchase a snow blower attachment for the Skid Steer which could also be used at the outdoor rink and building exits of the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena.

**Landfill** – Lou Heinbockel reported sanding could have prevented vehicles from sliding into the scale house after Chinook winds brought temperatures up to 46 degrees and created slippery conditions.

Hallgren moved to extend the meeting another 15 minutes. Motion failed for lack of a second.

**At Large** – Pete Hallgren reported he is a candidate for District 6 in the GVEA Board election in May.

**City Administrator** – Mary Leith reported Kinross Manh Choh is scheduled to meet with local residents at the Community Center on February 15, 5:00-8:00pm, the same night as the next Council meeting.

Hallgren reported Salcha residents have an agreement with the trucking community who haul diesel fuel from Valdez to not travel during school bus schedules. He asked if Kinross would consider the same.

**Cemetery, City Clerk, Finance, Additional Reports** – no reports

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS** - none

**ADJOURNMENT** – 8:08pm by default

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JW Musgrove, Mayor

CITY  
SEAL

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Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: February 15, 2022