

**City Council Minutes**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**February 21, 2023 ~ 5:00PM**  
**City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**



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

Mayor JW Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

**Council members present:** Mayor JW MUSGROVE, Deputy Mayor Emily DOVE,  
Mike PRESTEGARD, Igor ZAREMBA, Pamela RAWSON, Travis RIESNER

**Council member excused:** Pete HALLGREN

**City employees present:** City Administrator Ken Greenleaf, Administrative Assistant Flower Cole  
City Clerk Pat White

**City employees present via zoom:** Library Director Tiki Levinson, City Contract Finance Stephanie Groppe

**Public present:** Nineteen members from the community were present at different parts of the meeting, including five on Zoom. The meeting was not broadcast over Delta-Greely High School radio, KDHS, 95.5 FM.

**AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** Dove moved to approve the February 21, 2023 agenda as presented; Riesner seconded.

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

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

**White** reported minor corrections made to the February 7 draft minutes.

**Motion:** Riesner moved to approve the minutes from the February 7, 2023 meeting as amended; Dove seconded.

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

**COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**Bill Ward**, Delta Junction resident, reported Senate Bill No. 8 (SB 8) repeals Alaska's Certificate of Need (CON) program for health care facilities. Alaska is one of the few remaining states that still has it. Legislation to repeal CON has died each year since 2018 because of the legislature's irresponsible method of delaying everything to the end of the Legislative Session. Delta Junction, an "island" in the middle of Alaska, has an aging population with advanced medical needs. Delta is at the epicenter of the need for advanced medical care. The existing laws governing CONs restrict and prevent residents all over eastern Alaska from health care services because there is no option to monitor a patient overnight until they are stabilized. Patients must be transported to Fairbanks. Ambulance transports or residents traveling to Fairbanks will become problematic once Kinross ore trucks take over the roads. He asked everyone to support SB 8 during *this* legislative session.

**Debra Darland**, a lifelong resident, reported she was a volunteer EMT for ten years and believes Kinross trucks will create unsafe conditions for emergency services and residents who travel regularly to Fairbanks. She said she does not want to see anyone killed and asked the Council to do whatever they could to protect the people of Delta.

**Sherry Decker**, a 40-year resident, expressed concern about blinding snow and other situations while competing with locomotive-sized trucks on the highways. She offered to go door-to-door to get signatures on a petition opposing the ore haul.

**Musgrove** said the Council has no regulatory authority over what happens on State highways and legislators can't discriminate against Kinross while allowing Crowley or Big State to use the highways.

**Sharon Geagley**, a 40-year resident, said it is unbelievable that the ore haul is even a consideration because it is so dangerous. She questioned the size of the vehicles; if they're even legal. Everyone she knows is opposed to it. Ambulance transports could be life threatening because of delays by ore trucks or military convoys. Kinross is not going to find enough drivers in Alaska and, those that come from the Lower 48, are not going to be qualified on Alaskan highways. If a driver stops because of a whiteout or a moose crossing the road, the ore truck will be unable to stop. The whole thing is insane.

**Musgrove** reported Kinross trucks were designed to meet State and Federal requirements. Both the City of Fairbanks and North Pole passed resolutions against the ore haul, but Fairbanks North Star Borough favors it because the mine processing plant is on their property.

Chuck Creamer, lifelong Alaskan, asked if Kinross could restrict speed between Emmaus Road on the Alaska Highway and Jack Warren Road on the Richardson Highway.

Musgrove reported the City does not own the highways but has requested that the Department of Transportation (DOT) change some of the speed limits signs.

Michael Coon, a lifelong Alaskan and third generation trucker, reported he has driven trucks for 23 years. He used to haul fuel out of Valdez in a truck that was 130-140-feet long, carrying 150,000 pounds. He had less axles and less tires. He recommended Kinross hire drivers with no less than 10 years of experience on roads like Alaska with the similar weather conditions. Referring to Chuck Creamer's request to reduce the speed, he asked to push the boundaries further out to Sawmill Creek Road on the Alaska Highway and the Tanana Bridge on the Richardson. Coon said Kinross is a multi-billion-dollar company and can afford to build a ball mill in Tetlin.

Musgrove reported he and Bill Ward are drafting a list of major, provable, documented concerns to send to DOT and Kinross.

Discussion followed regarding inability to stop with loaded trucks, empty trucks being more dangerous because of having no traction, drivers unable to see their back trailer, meeting trucks on bridges, DOT constructing only ten passing lanes (incorrectly referred to as pullouts during the February 7, 2023 Council meeting) that will be one to two miles in length, and road construction challenges during the summer months.

## **REQUEST TO SPEAK**

### **Advocates for Safe Alaska Highways**

Bill Ward reported the *Advocates for Safe Alaska Highways* (ASAH) are likeminded individuals who are concerned about safe highways. They do not have 501(c)3 status or paid staff, just donated time and money. Most of the members are longtime Alaskans with history in the Interior. They are not anti-mining but believe in proper resource development. Every citizen has the right and obligation to question, challenge, or debate any large-scale operation, public or private, that impacts their lives and future. He asked the City to get involved and to get Kinross to respond to the public's concerns. He read 17 AAC 25.100, Road Closures and Restrictions, from the Alaska Administrative Code, "The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities may prohibit the operation of vehicles upon any highway or may impose restrictions on any aspect of vehicle operation on any highway whenever the highway, in the judgement of the commissioner, may be seriously damaged or destroyed by such operation or whenever it is deemed necessary by the commissioner in the interests of safety to the traveling public. The restrictions shall be effective after due notice has been given to the public except in an emergency requiring immediate action." Ward said the State of Alaska has the authority to get involved but it takes political will. Governor Dunleavy and the Legislature are in favor of the mine, not necessarily the ore haul. He asked the Council to get involved on behalf of the community. A ball mill is an option.

Bill Ward read a letter from Karen Cedzo, a 39-year resident of Delta, in which she asked the Council to raise questions and identify issues concerning the ore transportation plan. She was concerned with the unprecedented monopolization of essential Interior highways and the lack of investment from Kinross for maintenance of them. Military convoys pose challenges, especially in the winter, however drivers can avoid them because they're not 24-7-365. The Kinross plan is timed, strictly scheduled, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days each year. The 60 to 90-foot tractor trailers will haul raw polluting ore 244 miles between Tetlin and Fort Knox, which will include 120-180 road/highway crossings each day. Cedzo said Alaska's Permanent Fund invested a million dollars in the Kinross gold mining venture. Kinross needs to be held responsible for road damages and liability issues that will likely develop from accidents and fatalities. Their audacious, immovable position undoes any good they've done through community and philanthropic activities. The DOT admitted that the three WWII-era bridges on the Alaska Highway need to be replaced, but none can be built before 2024 when Kinross plans to start moving ore.

Musgrove read two letters into the record:

Mary Corcoran, a 45-year resident, asked the Council to consider infrastructure and public safety; to support alternatives to the ore haul. Travel will be disrupted every 12 minutes by double tractor-trailer, 95-foot trucks that weigh 80 tons. The ore haul will have negative impact on school buses, emergency vehicles, area residents' commute to/from Fairbanks for work or goods and services not available locally. Unlike our military who train to

keep our nation secure, the ore haul benefits a foreign mining company. “Kinross can make other choices to process their ore. Their robust profits should not be at the expense of our dollars to repair the roads those trucks will tear up. And most importantly – NO ONE should suffer the loss of life or property in the dangerous scenario the company proposes.”

Ruby Hollembaek, a 43-year resident of Delta whose father and brothers had careers in mining, said most labs are on site; ore is not trucked away from the mines to be processed. She said, “let common sense prevail,” while expressing concerns about accidents and infrastructure failures.

Musgrove called to recess at 6:08pm and resumed the meeting at 6:22pm.

**CORRESPONDENCE** - none

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - none

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **Request for Proposal (RFP) Auditing Services**

Groppel said she would like to advertise by April 7 to award in mid-May.

Musgrove advised Council to review the RFP draft to discuss at the March 7, 2023 meeting.

#### **City Purchases over \$1,000**

CK #22466 to Buffalo Center Service - \$14,262.00 for October, November, December equipment fuel

CK #22467 to Construction Machinery - \$2,698.75 to diagnose L150E loader

CK #22468 to Deltana Community Services Partnership - \$2,500.00 matching donation for Ptarmigan Heights utilities (approved 8-16-22)

CK #22469 to Delta Medical Transport - \$9,258.31 to reimburse for payment to H&H to replace fuel pump on Ambulance 181 (2009 Ford)

CK #22470 to Numbers Count - \$3,000.00 for accounting services (2-6 / 2-17)

Motion: Prestegard moved to approve checks 22466 through 22470 as presented; Dove seconded.

Musgrove reported Buffalo Center was behind in their billing (CK #22466).

Greenleaf reported most businesses do not release vehicles until repair work is paid. DMT paid the bill to get the ambulance back in service. The circumstances were urgent because another ambulance broke down (responding to a traffic accident at Summit Lake on February 11).

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Zaremba, Dove, Riesner, Rawson, Prestegard, Musgrove).

### **REPORTS**

**Mayor** – JW Musgrove reported he and Bill Ward are drafting a letter to the State of Alaska, DOT, and Kinross, pointing out provable claims against the Kinross ore transportation project. He said his main concern is the bridges. Is there a definitive statement from DOT when bridges will be restricted to a certain weight because of a specific engineering analysis? He said the State asked the Legislature for money to repair bridges, but it does not disclose if the bridges are out of compliance for anything specific.

**Library** – Emily Dove reported:

- The library hosted a STEAMY DAY for kids, ages 8 and up, on February 17. Students had the day off from school, so they attended a Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math event, an afternoon of thinking and building. Electric circuits, stomp rockets, zip lines and more were created.

- The Library Lions program will return February 24. Curious kids will be able to listen, create, and learn. Many of the resources that were purchased with American Rescue Plan Act funds will be used in the program.

- Tax forms, PFD applications, legal business, book requests, issuing new library cards, and dealing with the 2,000 items checked out in the past month keep the library staff busy on winter days. In addition, five children and their families completed the library’s 1,000 Book Reading Program.

**Health & Safety** – no report

**Schools** – Pamela Rawson reported a senior basketball event will be held on March 3. Basketball regionals are scheduled at the High School on March 9/11.

**Emergency Services** – Pamela Rawson reported DMT had 23 transports so far this month and the Fire Department responded to one fire inside the city limits.

**Emergency Preparedness** – no report

**Park & Recreation** – Igor Zaremba reported:

- Both indoor and outdoor ice rinks are active. The emergency doors at the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena are clear of snow and the building is well lit.
- Snow load may be adding stress to the fence on Kimball Street because of snow removal efforts. The berm is probably a solid 2 1/2 feet deep by 10 feet wide.

Musgrove reported Aurora Avenue (between park and library) is closed once snow removal requires heroic efforts.

**Landfill** – see *City Administrator Report*

**Airport** – Mike Prestegard reported the airport has increased activity because of increased daylight.

**Public Works** – Mike Prestegard reported roads have been well maintained, even though it's snowed up to six inches in the past two or three weeks.

**At Large** – no report

**City Administrator** – Ken Greenleaf reported:

- Efforts to acquire a Pogo-donated loader is progressing. He hopes to have it within the next two weeks.
- The 2003 L150E loader will be auctioned on March 3. [February 27: Auction date changed to March 10.]
- An excavator was rented and is moving dirt at the landfill to ensure there is enough cover material.
- Mil-Tan Road continues to be a challenge. Henry Muth monitors drifting every day.
- He was notified by the water branch of Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) that the engineering grant application he is submitting (deadline = March 10) specifically targets sewer and septic, which is not applicable to Delta Junction. However, the grant can be used to fund the engineer study for the Bristol permit to install DEC-required thermal sensors for the gas monitoring system, which will cost approximately \$150,000. The grant could also pay for add-on fencing to make the landfill fence taller and for engineering to install a road inside the fence line. Both will combat windblown trash.

- North Pole is phasing out a 30-year-old, well-maintained fire truck that suits our needs. They intend to donate it to an Alaskan community through an application process. The truck holds 2,500 gallons, almost as much water as our tenders and it is a full-response rig (tender, pumper, crash truck all in one).

- The City will begin updating emergency response policies. It will be a challenge and will take a couple of months, but the documents must be on file to be awarded any grants.

- He received a visit today from a homeschool student who is part of Gadget Girls, a team of incredibly intelligent young ladies who compete in robotics. They have won twice at the national level. It is amazing what 8-to-15-year olds can build. They represent an incredible talent pool here in Delta Junction.

**Cemetery** – Pat White reported only one winter grave is left at the cemetery.

**City Clerk** – Pat White reported over 500,000 passport renewals across the country were processed online since August. Effective February 7, the service was stopped through March.

**Finance** – no report

**Additional Reports** – none

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS** - none

**ADJOURNMENT** – 7:02pm

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JW Musgrove, Mayor

CITY  
SEAL

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Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: March 7, 2023