

**City Council Minutes  
Regular Meeting  
June 6, 2023 ~ 5:00PM  
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**



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

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

**Council members present:** Mayor JW MUSGROVE, Deputy Mayor Emily DOVE,  
Travis RIESNER, Pete HALLGREN, Igor ZAREMBA

**Council member attending via Zoom:** Pamela RAWSON

**Council member excused:** Mike PRESTEGARD

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

**City employee attending via Zoom:** Contract Finance Stephanie Groppe

**Public present:** Four members from the community, including one on Zoom, and Representative Mike Cronk from Tok were in attendance. The meeting was not broadcast over the radio.

**AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

**Motion:** Dove moved to approve the June 6, 2023 agenda; Riesner seconded.

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

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

**Motion:** Dove moved to approve the May 16, 2023 meeting minutes; Zarembo seconded.

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

**COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Hallgren reported Councilman Lou Heinbockel (5-18-41/5-30-23) passed away last week. Our community changes over time. People come and go. Occasionally we lose someone who has done something special.

- Lou served over 26 years on the Delta Junction City Council, spanning the years from 1976 to 2022. He served as mayor in 1982 and in 2022. Like every Mayor and Council member, Lou served without pay, benefits, or stipend. He personified the selfless volunteer spirit of Interior Alaskans hoping to build a life, raise a family, and be useful.
- Lou developed and maintained two special interests, education at the Delta-Greely School District and local municipal government. The City was incorporated in 1960 and Lou arrived in 1962 as a soldier stationed at Fort Greely. After his discharge, Lou and his wife, Sherry, went back to the East Coast, got teaching degrees, and moved back to Delta in 1969. Over a 20-year period, Lou helped guide many youngsters to a good education and to have hearts for this community. Many of his former students still reside in Delta, like Mary Leith who served as mayor twice during her time on the Council and retired in 2022 as City Administrator.
- It was not uncommon for Lou to leave school to oversee urgent City business.
- Lou was intelligent, resourceful, and skilled at working on problems. He had wisdom and a common-sense way of looking at things. He was no shrinking violet in expressing his opinion and he had a temper, but his good-natured temperament usually prevailed. He often spiced his comments with memorable wit. The Fire Department had an old tanker truck for decades. Lou termed it "the green albatross." Every year he would ask to either fix it or get rid of it.
- Lou was a proponent of the City, but also helpful to the School District, Deltana Community Corporation, and Rural Deltana Fire Department. While adopting a budget for 2011, Lou said, "...as volunteers we are to do the best we can for the people of our community, and we should not be in pissing matches with each other."
- Lou ran in 1999 for the Council because of great problems arising over the base realignment (BRAC '95) and the private prison controversy that split the community. Everyone was worried about the future of Delta. Lou immersed himself in the details and came to agree with Mayor Roy Gilbertson that the State of Alaska had put the community in a precarious spot. The State bailed us out with a million-dollar loan to pay Allvest to go away. Lou spent the following decade petitioning the State to forgive the loan. Every year he voted against the City's \$50,000 annual payment. (Five payments left after July.)
- Lou always worked hard to balance the budget and he usually made a great chili for the work sessions. He was a special fellow and his individual contributions have made Delta a better place. Hallgren said, "Lou would prefer we get on with this meeting and pass a balanced budget."

**COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS** continued

Sherman Stebbins questioned the justification of *Landfill Cell 2 Completion Contract* (page three) as an emergency. He asked if the Council voted on a sole source contract.

Musgrove referenced City Code §1.41.600, Professional Services, and §1.41.035, Exemption from Formal Bid Requirements, and reported the contract is for professional services, not an emergency. It is no different than Guess & Rudd providing legal services or Tony White providing ambulance services. Musgrove stated that he discussed the proposed contract with the attorney, who approved the process and justification.

Stebbins said the owner of Tenderfoot Gold is presently a City employee. It raises suspicions. The Council needs to abolish the code related to professional services or remove code that requires competitive bidding.

Hallgren reported \$150,000 of a projected surplus from the FY23 budget was allocated toward landfill expansion (May 16, 2023 meeting) and the mayor was authorized to locate equipment and hire a project manager.

Discussion followed regarding difficulty in preparing cover material in frozen ground, limited amount of time before Cell 1 reaches its capacity, and renting equipment not part of the contract.

Representative Mike Cronk reported he is going to Juneau in January and asked about needs in the Delta area.

Musgrove said Cell 1 is almost to capacity and excavating Cell 2 is only partially done. Money will be taken out of savings to pay for the expansion project.

Hallgren reported the landfill expansion is expected to cost \$400,000. Additionally, the Kinross / Manh Choh gold mine in Tetlin wants to utilize space at the landfill because the Tok landfill cannot handle daily deliveries. Hallgren expressed concern with expansion, coupled with outside demands. He asked if Tok needs a bigger landfill.

Cronk said most land in Tok is privately owned, but he will make inquiries.

Musgrove reported Northway Village Council asked the City of Eagle to administer a grant so they could purchase an incinerator and a dump truck. The grant required a municipality to function as a passthrough for the funds. Delta and Eagle are the only organized cities in the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area. Eagle declined, but the City of Delta agreed to help. Healy Lake asked for the same.

Hallgren explained options being considered to continue ambulance services and that COVID grant money will run out within the next 12 months.

Cronk said legislators and Governor Dunleavy are aware of the ambulance issues.

Hallgren shared concerns about the Kinross ore transportation project, specifically the size and number of trucks (every 15 minutes) and the condition of bridges between Tetlin and Fairbanks.

Cronk reported \$200 million was allocated to District 36. Half of it will be used to replace the Johnson River and Gerstle River bridges, starting in 2024. They are working on passing lanes around Tok now. Alaska is also close to signing a deal for a gas pipeline from the slope to Nikiski.

Stebbins referenced a pay increase for legislators in the last session and he asked where Cronk stood.

Cronk said he voted against the pay raise.

**REQUEST TO SPEAK** - none**CORRESPONDENCE****Liquor License Renewal – The CAVE Wine Bar & Grille, LLC (License #187)**

Motion: Hallgren moved to show no opposition to The CAVE's liquor license renewal; Dove seconded.

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

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** – none**NEW BUSINESS****Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance 2023-03, An Ordinance for the City of Delta Junction, Alaska Providing for a Budget for the Fiscal Year 2024**

Motion: Dove moved to introduce and hold the first reading of Ordinance 2023-03 and to set the public hearing, second reading, and adoption for June 20, 2023; Riesner seconded.

Musgrove explained changes to Budget Draft 3 since the work session on May 3.

Hallgren reported Stephen and Wanda Sorensen of the Delta Farm Bureau proposed \$40,000 to replace the milepost marker at the Visitor Center (May 16 meeting). A temporary facelift of the milepost and Welcome-to-Delta signs is affordable this year.

Musgrove reported the Visitor Center budget increased \$4,000 to \$5,000 and another \$1,000 could be used from the Administration / Donations line item. FY24 surplus dropped from \$3,973 (Budget Draft 2 printed on May 4) to \$973 (Draft 3 introduced on June 6).

Hallgren reported the City applied for a \$25,000 grant to be split between Caring Hearts and Five Loaves Pantry. It is not part of the FY24 budget. The budget is balanced, even though hundreds of thousands were taken from savings. A budget reconciliation will be done in October 2023 to amend the FY23 budget to include \$150,000 that was allocated to the landfill expansion project.

Levinson asked to reinstate the library sinking fund (\$10,243 in AMLIP.11 savings account as of March 31, 2023). M2C1 estimated \$40,000 to engineer plans to expand the library. The Library Board has saved \$10,000.

Discussion followed regarding adding 15 hours per week to library staff time, tracking landfill fuel (daily landfill operation versus the “Big Dig”), and Cronk advising the City to sign up for Capital Project Submission and Information System (CAPSIS) to request capital funding for various projects.

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

### **Audit Contract**

Groppel reported no one bid on the audit contract (May 12 bid opening). She asked whether to advertise again.

Hallgren suggested calling auditors to get verbal quotes.

### **Landfill Cell 2 Completion Contract**

Musgrove reported the general service agreement requires both a business license (received) and insurance. Why hire Corey Groppel / Tenderfoot Gold instead of putting the contract out for bid? Groppel gained experience as the manager while employed during the first half of excavating Cell 2. Expediting its development became obvious when the snow melted. Groppel and his employees will comply with the City’s drug testing policy.

Hallgren said Groppel is temporarily employed on the Cell 2 project and he is in the best position to oversee it.

Greenleaf reported the 470 excavator will arrive in two weeks. The first rock truck arrived today. The second is expected on June 8. Both were sent by barge from Seattle.

Motion: Hallgren moved to award the Cell 2 Contract to Tenderfoot Gold; Dove seconded.

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

### **Amendments to City Employee Policy Plan**

Musgrove reported verbiage needs clarified in the *Regulations for Step/Grade Schedule* section of the *Employee Policy Plan*. More detail was added to #3, “Step increase will be applied the month after month of hire, and on the same day as day of hire, or as close as practicable.” If Joe was hired on May 16, 2016, he would see his step increase on June 16, 2017. Step increases are based on acceptable performance appraisals.

Motion: Riesner moved to amend the *Employee Policy Plan* as presented; Hallgren seconded.

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

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

CK #22589 to A-Z Attachments - \$7,500.00 to ship bucket for 2003 L150E loader (auctioned March 10, 2023)

CK #22590 to Alaska Department of Labor – Mechanical Inspection - \$1,125.00 for biennial boiler inspections

CK #22591 to Alcan Auto & Truck - \$1,657.35 for repair/maintenance of City equipment

CK #22592 to Buffalo Center Service - \$4,151.89 for vehicle/equipment fuel during April

CK #22593 to Delta Rental Services - \$1,576.45 for glass damage on rented excavator

CK #22594 to Firewood Boys - \$1,000.00 for topsoil delivered to cemetery and park

CK #22595 to NC Machinery - \$1,630.00 for dozer parts

CK #22596 to UL LLC - \$1,116.30 for fire engine ladder inspections (2019 invoice was misplaced)

CK #22597 to Delta Building Supply - \$1,854.47 for facility repair/maintenance

CK #22598 to Delta Fuel Industries - \$1,200.00 to rent compactor

CK #22599 to Vitus Energy LLC - \$2,407.44 for landfill equipment fuel

Musgrove referenced CK #22589 and reported \$6,000 was paid (to A-Z Attachments in Illinois on May 2, 2023) for a bucket to fit the 2003 L150E loader (that was auctioned on March 10). The bucket off the 2003 loader was put on the 2018 L150G loader that Pogo donated to the City, with a promise that a new bucket would be purchased

for the 2003 loader. The 2018 loader did not come with a bucket. [The 2003 loader sold for \$13,500 and the 2018 loader was a \$135,000 donation.]

**Motion:** Riesner moved to approve checks 22589 through 22599 as presented; Dove seconded.

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

## REPORTS

**Mayor** – JW Musgrove reported tables, chairs, and a riding lawn mower are stored in the garage at the Community Center. Items that belong to Aging Disability Resource Center (ADRC) will be moved next week. Caring Hearts may want to utilize the space to store freezers for their meals-on-wheels program. [Freezers were stored in the Community Center garage since July 2018 when the Senior Companion Program oversaw the meals-on-wheels program. They were moved to Hats of Wisdom in January 2023 when Caring Hearts assumed the program.]

**Finance** – no report

**Library** – Emily Dove reported:

- The Delta Library Association fundraiser on May 20 was very successful. Many community groups and individuals helped build baskets, provide music, and cook hotdogs.
- 90 children registered for Summer Readers. Today's activity was painting ocean-themed shirts.
- Over 300 people used the library one day last week. Visitors are stopping by to use the Wi-Fi, ask questions about the local area, and choose paperback books to take down the road.
- A local family gave away 200 vegetable starter plants on June 3. The intent is to grow vegetables to share with the Caring Hearts meals program.

**Health & Safety** – Emily Dove reported:

- Immunizations for children, pregnancy tests, family planning, contraceptives, free COVID home test kits, COVID boosters, and Naloxone kits are available at the Public Health Center. Call 895-4292 for more information or to make an appointment. Naloxone kits require a short training. Narcan, the brand name for Naloxone, reverses the effects of opioids and is now as common in medicine cabinets as Tylenol. Delta Junction is not immune to the explosive rise in Fentanyl use and overdoses. There were two overdoses last week, one in which the person was naively exposed while sharing a pipe that was laced. Narcan is also effective for elderly people who mistakenly take a second dose of pain medications.

Riesner stated Narcan is a band aid, not a fix all, until medical services are available.

- Call 988 to access a trained counselor at Careline Alaska suicide and crisis lifeline.
- Fresh Start, a program run by the Alaska Department of Health (DOH), offers free coaching for better health. More information is available on the DOH website and Facebook.
- Research current scams online at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).
- Dial 911 for all emergencies. To report a crime or accident, call the Alaska State Troopers (907-895-4800) or send it electronically ([dps.alaska.gov/crimereport](http://dps.alaska.gov/crimereport)).

**Schools** – Emily Dove reported school staff are finding homes for lost and found items through June 8 and collecting outstanding lunch balances.

**Emergency Services** – no report

**Emergency Preparedness** – Travis Riesner reminded people to contact the Department of Forestry (895-4225) if/when they plan to burn because “it’s gotten warm, it’s gotten dry, and it’s always windy.” He also advised not stockpiling wood near homes, clearing brush, and cleaning gutters.

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

- The outdoor rink/basketball court is busy, even as late as 1:00am.
- Families are hosting barbecues at the park and the playground is busy.
- He would present a plan to correct the leaning (Kiwanis) pavilion before winter hits. He is concerned that it may not withstand another snow load.
- He was approached by people requesting a second volleyball court. Others are interested in mosquito magnets or spraying the bushes to control mosquitoes.

**Airport** – JW Musgrove reported the airport is busy. One pilot got stranded in Delta on his way to Valdez.

**At Large** – no report

**City Administrator / Landfill / Public Works** – Ken Greenleaf reported:

- A rented excavator was used for the past week to accumulate enough dirt to close Cell 1. The landfill was assessed by Neil Lehner and his replacement last week; Cell 1 has roughly five months of life left.
- Bristol Engineering quoted approximately \$27,000 to start the new three-year permit cycle. As part of the package, Bristol will provide guidance in engineering the new requirements from the Department of Conservation (DEC) for additional sensors that are expected to cost \$120,000 to \$150,000. The first two grant applications were denied, but a secondary grant was submitted.
  - The Volvo 220 is down and being diagnosed.
  - Heavy Equipment Operator, Henry Muth, retired on June 2. Staff celebrated with him before he departed.
  - The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) discussed bridges today. Kinney Engineering, hired by Kinross, is conducting their own supplemental survey, which is based on facts, not opinions. The bridges have exceeded their lifespan. Kinney Engineering will present findings tomorrow about increased use of the bridges.

Musgrove reported stress indicators are built into the structures. The bridges are subject to weekly inspections.

- Rural Alaska EMS has narrowed their search for ambulance services to two candidates. Rural Alaska is presently waiting on their 501(c)(3) status and expect to move forward within three weeks. The City Council will have to trust the process and partner with them as the prime contractor by the end of July or find a different path. Greenleaf said the City must front money for the supplemental emergency medical transport program, but they will receive a percentage of it back at the end of the year. It is not sustainable long-term. The City will do the billing. He said Deltana needs to participate in the discussion because ambulance services affect them also.

- Topsoil was hauled to the park to fill ruts. Sand was hauled in to upgrade the volleyball court. The bubble on the playground apparatus was hit by a bullet and will need to be fabricated because parts are no longer manufactured. New boulders were delivered to the playground.

- A 19-year-old was hired to fill the summer maintenance position.
- There was a huge turnout for Community Cleanup on June 3. Dumpsters were emptied twice. Groups of 30 and 40 people went through food lines at the Triangle. He wants to make next year's event even bigger.
- He expects to hear results within a few weeks about the Safer Grant, which will pay for a Fire Chief for three years. Their job is to develop policy, maintain equipment, and build the Fire Department. The position goes away if the grant is not renewed.
- Heidi Bialik, City janitor, planted six small coniferous trees that were donated by Fort Greely.
- The Department of Transportation (DOT) posted information about passing lanes and replacing the Bear Creek Bridge.

- The Division of Natural Resources (DNR) is advertising the 2023 Alaska State Land Auction, in which 209 parcels of land are available. Some parcels are in the Delta area.

**Cemetery** – no report

**City Clerk** – Pat White reported:

- Darla Theisen with the Census Bureau was in Delta through May 31 conducting an American Community Survey of 60 addresses.
- Fielding passport questions is steady, but not stressful. Only 26 applications were processed in May (compared to 60 in March). Seven of the 20 expedited applications were hand carry, which is more time consuming (passports applications are sealed and handed back to the applicant to deliver to a courier). We have never done that many hand-carries in several years, let alone one month. About three-quarters of the May passport applicants were out-of-towners, all of whom were grateful for the service.

**Additional Reports** – JW Musgrove reported a no-borough meeting is scheduled in the senior lounge at the Community Center on June 15, 6:30pm. The advertisement states “there have been murmurings that the State of Alaska Local Boundary Commission would like to organize Deltana and the rest of the unorganized areas into boroughs.”

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS** – none

**ADJOURNMENT** – 7:28pm

Approved: June 20, 2023

_____	CITY
JW Musgrove, Mayor	SEAL
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Pat White, City Clerk	