

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
May 21, 2024 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor JW Musgrove called the meeting to order at 5:10pm.

Council members present: Mayor JW MUSGROVE, Travis RIESNER, Mike PRESTEGARD,
Pamela RAWSON (until 6:39pm), Mary LEITH, Pete HALLGREN

Council excused: Deputy Mayor Igor ZAREMBA

City staff present: City Administrator Lori Roberts (until 6:07pm), Finance Officer Kaylee Reiersen,
City Clerk Pat White

Public present: Eight people were present at the beginning of the meeting.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Musgrove reported *Community Cleanup* under *Unfinished Business* would be postponed to the June 4 meeting.

Motion: Leith moved to approve the May 21, 2024 agenda as amended; Riesner seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

White reported “legal” was added to the motion under *Executive Session – Cell 2 Wages*, “to discuss *legal* concerns about contract wages at the landfill” (last motion on page 4 of the May 7 draft minutes).

Motion: Leith moved to approve the May 7, 2024 minutes as amended; Rawson seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS - none

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Delta Skating Association Board Update

BJ Sloan introduced himself as the newly elected President of Delta Skating Association (DSA) and he expressed interest in continuing a working relationship with the City Council to serve the youth within the community. DSA is working on a list of maintenance projects needed at the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena.

Musgrove reported the 2023-2024 Memorandum of Agreement between the City, DSA, and the school district, dated January 10+11, 2024, includes hiring a rink manager. DSA would reimburse the City for rink manager wages, but there were no applicants. Hopefully there will be interest for the 2024-2025 season.

Jacob White said he appreciated the efforts to find a rink manager. He reported 40 or 50 people turned out on May 10 (prior to Community Cleanup on May 11) to clean in and around the rink facilities.

Hallgren questioned a solution to the septic system freezing up multiple times last winter.

Musgrove said it will require some supervision from DSA. Heat tape or additional cover may resolve the problem.

Roberts, referring to Sloan’s comment, said summer hire can help with some maintenance projects. Referring to Jacob White, she reported Public Works hauled five truckloads of debris to the landfill after Community Cleanup.

Elementary School Principal Milt Hooten – Nistler Road Crosswalk

Musgrove reported the State Department of Transportation said the proposed crosswalk is in the section of Nistler Road that the City maintains. He questioned how the State of Alaska could build schools on opposite sides of a paved street without addressing traffic control in the construction plans.

Milt Hooten used a Power Point to show an Alaska State Trooper blocking traffic as students walked along North Clearwater (through the school campus), a long-standing problem in moving students between the High School, district offices, and the elementary school. The Junior High gymnasium is the designated meeting place in the event of an emergency or evacuation. Students move between all three schools for various reasons, i.e., routine evacuation drills, High School students working with elementary students. Dirt-bike trails and ditches are unacceptable. The existing painted crosswalk between the elementary school and the ice rinks is useless due to snow buildup. He suggested extending the crosswalk through the elementary school parking lot to a path that parallels North Clearwater on the other side of Nistler.

Discussion followed regarding the purpose of a crosswalk (to stop traffic so students can cross Nistler), speed bumps not effective, installing a gate to the fenced field (alongside North Clearwater), illuminating triangle-shaped “children crossing” signs, and hosting a community-wide fundraiser.

CORRESPONDENCE

Memorial Day Ceremony – Rest Haven Cemetery – May 27, 2024, 12:00pm

Musgrove reported the American Legion Jack Warren Post 22 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 10450 will host the annual Memorial Day ceremony at Rest Haven Cemetery at noon on May 27. A barbeque would follow at the Big Delta Brewing Company.

Copper River Emergency Medical Services Council, Inc. - Request for Financial Support

Musgrove reported funding for ambulance services is a problem across Alaska. A letter from Copper River EMS (CREMS), dated May 16, 2024, requests \$10,000/year from Delta Junction, stating “as the nearest southern neighbor” they would likely respond to emergencies as far north as Mile 185.5 Richardson Highway (north of Paxson Lake) and the Denali Highway (between Paxson and Maclaren River Lodge when it is open in the summer). Otherwise, Delta Junction EMS would be dispatched to emergencies on both the Denali Highway and the Richardson between Sourdough Lodge and Summit Lake. Delta Medical Transport (DMT), the current 911 ambulance service for the CREMS region that is based in Glennallen, will end after June 30, 2024.

Tony White reported the State of Alaska will no longer support the Glennallen EMS, but dispatching Delta EMS to cover the area past Miers Lake is unrealistic even with the existing mutual aid with Fort Greely. He asked the Council to clarify that in response to their letter. All resources have been exhausted without finding a solution.

Amber White reported Crossroads Ministries funded CREMS for five years and are now out of funding. The State of Alaska provided two new ambulances but will no longer provide financial support. Volunteer EMT and medics no longer respond to tone-outs. They are in the same situation as Delta/Deltana.

Discussion followed regarding estimates of ambulance services costing \$500,000/year in Glennallen and \$900,000/year in Delta.

Robertson River Bridge

Musgrove reported the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities issued a letter, dated May 20, 2024, soliciting public comment about reconstructing Robertson River Bridge on the Alaska Highway. [Contact Kerri Martin, Northern Region Environmental Manager at 1-907-451-2273 or rachel.allen@alaska.gov.]

Budget Work Session

Musgrove reported the budget work session (5:00pm, May 28) would be recorded, but not transcribed.

Reierson reported another budget draft would be prepared, which will include funding for recent new hires.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Alternate Day for Community Cleanup – moved to June 4, 2024

NEW BUSINESS

Internet Services at the Landfill

[\$3,762 was lost in credit card transactions through May 15, 2024.]

Musgrove referenced a memo from Kaylee Reierson, dated May 15, about spotty reception and problems with the credit card machine at the landfill scale house (staying connected long enough to process card transactions).

Roberts reported the scale house gets less than half a megabyte of download (.04). Bandwidth is shared with Fort Greely. Of three researched, Starlink is the only one that can provide Internet service at the landfill.

Musgrove reported the antennae for the scale house must be pointed toward the cell tower. On the hill, overlooking Cell 2, he had five bars on his cell phone, but that strong signal and narrow bandwidth off the tower may not resolve the problem. Starlink appears to be the #1 choice across Alaska. They have not provided a quote yet.

Motion: Rawson moved to subscribe with Starlink, not to exceed \$2,500.00; Leith seconded.

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

REPORTS

City Administrator / Landfill / Public Works / Cemetery – Lori Roberts reported:

- She has been conducting interviews to fill the streets equipment operator and landfill assistant positions.
- She is getting the cemetery expansion project ready for bid, hopefully to be completed this fiscal year.
- She is helping research how to fund ambulance services.
- She is reviewing grants and contracts to ensure all are in compliance.

Roberts excused herself at 6:07pm.

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK #23097 to ACS - \$1,788.02 for May phone and Internet

CK #23098 to Davis Wright Tremaine LLP - \$1,552.50 for legal services (Labor Law wages)

CK #23099 to GVEA - \$7,384.83 for April electricity

CK #23100 to Katmai Solutions - \$1,200.00 for contract payment 1 of 4

CK #23101 to Wells Fargo - \$4,672.11 for April credit card charges

Motion: Leith moved to approve checks #23097 through 23101; Riesner seconded.

Discussion followed regarding many municipalities having problems with late fees and two options to avoid them, electronic delivery or auto pay.

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

REPORTS

Mayor – JW Musgrove reported:

- The City administration is close to hiring a heavy equipment operator and a new landfill assistant, who happened to take the three-week heavy equipment course through Partners for Progress.
- The City reimburses some employees for use of their cell phones. It will be an agenda topic on June 4.

Finance – Kaylee Reiersen reported:

- The credit card bill will increase in the next two months due to filling City vehicles at the pumps. That portion of the fuel contract must go back out to bid, since Buffalo Service is no longer in business. The credit card was also used to purchase the Starlink subscription (\$693).

- Auditors are working on the FY23 audit.
- The City has received the final reimbursement for the Healthy & Equitable Grant. Reporting is due July 4.
- New card readers have been ordered for City Hall, the library, and the landfill scale house.

Library – Mary Leith reported:

- The library staff and board raised \$17,000 during its annual fundraiser on May 11. It was a record high.
- Sixteen children graduated from Story Time and will start kindergarten next fall.
- It is time to register children for summer reading programs.

Musgrove reported David Dawe, Public Works, installed a new water fountain at the library.

Health & Safety / Emergency Preparedness – Travis Riesner reported:

- Delta Powersports will host an Alaska Safe Riders course on June 1. Participants must pre-register, take a course online, and bring their certificate and an age-appropriate All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV). More information is available online (alaskasaferiders.org/events).

- Drivers need to be cautious of ATVs and should not assume operators are abiding by the speed limit.
- A photographer recently died in Homer from getting too close to a cow moose and her twins.
- Bears are out. People need to use caution, be alert, and be aware of their surroundings.

Schools – no report

Emergency Services – Pamela Rawson reported:

- The Ambulance Service – Community Advisory Committee (AS-CAC) meeting on May 20 was very productive. The next meeting is scheduled for June 25, 6:00-8:00pm.

- DMT responded to 17 ambulance runs so far this month.

Reiersen reported American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds will last through September or October.

Park & Recreation – no report

Airport – Mike Prestegard reported:

- Someone vandalized traffic control signs at the airport again.
- Blue cones were put out to mark the taxiway.
- The windsock will be repaired this week.

At Large – Pete Hallgren recommended attending the annual Memorial Day ceremony at Rest Haven Cemetery.

City Administrator – see top of page three

City Clerk – Pat White reported U.S. Department of State Passport Services is conducting a trial to communicate with applicants; emails to renew (from USPassportRenewal@state.gov) or an optional survey after applying for a passport (noreply@gemailserver.com). Text messages will appear from 1-888-904-6435.

Additional Reports – none

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Lisa Conrad reported Kinross will host a community barbecue on June 25, 5:00-7:00pm, at the Lions Club House (blue building on Gibson Lane, off the Alaska Highway).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Musgrove called for a brief executive session to discuss wages paid during excavation of Cell 2 last summer. He asked to entertain a motion in accordance with AS 44.62.310 (b) for “action not taken except to give direction to an attorney or labor negotiator regarding the handling of a specific legal matter or pending labor negotiations.”

Motion: Riesner moved to recess into an executive session to discuss legal issues about Cell 2 wages; Prestegard seconded.

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

Rawson excused herself at approximately 6:39pm.

Finance Officer Kaylee Reiersen and Council members Mike Prestegard, Mary Leith, Travis Riesner, Pete Hallgren, and JW Musgrove exited the Council chambers at 6:40pm and returned at 7:12pm.

Motion: Hallgren moved to reconvene the meeting; Leith seconded.

Motion passed by unanimous consent with five in attendance (Hallgren, Prestegard, Riesner, Leith, Musgrove).

ADJOURNMENT – 7:12pm

Igor Zarembo, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: June 4, 2024