

**City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
June 18, 2024 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Deputy Mayor Mary Leith called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Council members present: Deputy Mayor Mary Leith, Travis Riesner, Pete Hallgren, Mike Prestegard

Council excused: Mayor Igor Zaremba, Pamela Rawson

City staff present: City Administrator Lori Roberts, Finance Officer Kaylee Reiersen,
Administrative Assistant Flower Cole, Library Director Tiki Levinson, City Clerk Pat White

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

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Riesner moved to approve the June 18, 2024 agenda as presented; Hallgren seconded.

Motion passed by unanimous consent.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

White explained two minor corrections to the draft minutes (*seize to cease* and *are to as*).

Motion: Riesner moved to approve the June 4, 2024 minutes as amended; Prestegard seconded.

Motion passed by unanimous consent.

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Tony White, Fire Chief, reported the Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department (RDVFD) Board of Directors are discussing merging with the Delta Junction Volunteer Fire Department. RDVFD is struggling with professional liability coverage. White said he would keep the Council informed as consolidation develops.

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Lisa Conrad reported:

- She would introduce Kinross' chef at the July 2 meeting.
- Kinross' barbeque will be held at the Delta Lions club house on June 25, 5:00-7:00pm.

CORRESPONDENCE

Girls Softball Association – Request for Funding

Amy Cummings, President of the Delta Softball Association, reported 44 girls registered this year. When she was younger, there were three teams for each age group and they had home games every week. Girls softball has grown again. 14U, 12U, and 10U teams practice twice a week, scrimmage with home teams, and travel to Fairbanks every weekend, June through August. Players are registered and insured through Interior Girls Softball Association. Cummings asked for \$1,500 to replace equipment and register in the Fairbanks Golden Heart Tournament, June 28/30 (\$300 for each age level).

Discussion followed regarding organizing tournaments and fundraisers in Delta and tabling discussion to July 2.

Summit Church – Request for Funding - tabled to July 2

Fill Seat E Vacancy by July 1

Leith referenced the Seat E advertisement and said anyone interested in filling the seat until the next regular election can submit a letter to the City Clerk no later than 5:00pm, Monday, July 1 for appointment on July 2.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolution 2024-02 - Pioneer Park Operation and Use Agreement

Roberts reported she is working with the City's insurance broker, Hale & Associates. The Pioneer Park Pavilion is presently covered as well as event insurance for the June 20/21 Solstice Stampede.

Leith said Resolution 2024-02 needs to be finalized along with the attachments, the Pioneer Park Use Agreement and the Bill of Sale of the pavilion. It will be brought back on July 2.

Cemetery Expansion

Roberts reported the *Waiver and Release for Access to, and Use of City Property* was written by the City Attorney. *Rules and Regulations* stipulate that woodcutters must sign a waiver (at City Hall) to get permission to access the area. As a precaution, a schedule will limit the number of woodcutters in the designated 5.7 acres. Twelve-inch stumps must be left standing. Salvaging wood is for personal use (proxy cutters permitted); commercial cutting is prohibited. Roberts said the bid will go out in July, after the local public has enough time to harvest the firewood.

\$25/month Cell Phone Reimbursement

Reierson reported cell phone reimbursement for all seven full-time employees would cost \$2,100/year. It would not be taxable income. Four employees are currently authorized to receive reimbursement.

Motion: Hallgren moved to pay \$25.00/month to all full-time employees for use of their cell phones; Riesner seconded.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Revisit Pay Scale for New Hires

Reierson reported wages for the Streets Equipment Operator were approved at the June 4 Council meeting, but an error was made. Grade 3, Step 5 (\$21.90/hour) should have been Grade 6, Step 5 (\$27.97).

Motion: Riesner moved to amend the previously adopted wage for the Streets Equipment Operator by changing Grade 3, Step 5 (\$21.90/hour) to Grade 6, Step 5 (\$27.97/hour); Hallgren seconded.

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

Locks and Cameras for All City Properties

Roberts reported a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) system that uses key fobs, like what hotels and the local school district use, could resolve ongoing issues with keys to City properties. They cost a nickel to replace and nothing to deactivate and reissue. Installation, 200 ID tags, battery backup, training, and a one-year warranty would cost \$2,400. A RFID system would not include gates or padlocks. Cameras are needed at the scale house to identify drive-offs (three in one day last week).

Riesner said cameras would be useful to stop people from making donuts as soon as the rink parking lot is graded. He agreed with key fobs for City facilities, but not the ice arena. The electronic challenge would invite vandalism.

Leith suggested bringing back the topic on July 2.

FY24 Surplus

Reierson reported the FY24 budget has roughly \$350,000 in surplus. She asked whether to move funds into savings or roll them into the FY25 general fund.

[The FY24 budget had \$25,000 allocated to the landfill closure account (*TVI - LF Sinking Fund*) and \$25,000 to the landfill equipment (*AMLIP.2 LF Eqpt*). The first draft of the FY25 budget showed \$50,000 moved into the landfill closure and \$25,000 for landfill equipment. Another \$25,000 was allocated to landfill equipment during the June 4, 2024 Council meeting.]

Prestegard asked to move the remaining FY24 airport funds to a savings to level the ski strip (*AMLIP.12 Airport*).

Levinson asked to transfer unused library funds to the library expansion savings, *AMLIP.11 Library (10)*.

Riesner asked to fund installation of the Toyo stove at the landfill scale house, which will cost about \$10,000.

Also, he said there is no guarantee the 3¢ from increased landfill tipping fees will bring in \$300,000 to fund Emergency Medical Services (EMS) as reported on June 4. He suggested at least funding continuation of EMS.

Prestegard asked about replacing the seals on the landfill scales.

Riesner said the landfill scales need to be upgraded. Parts are no longer available, so the scales are obsolete. He asked to allocate money for lawn care, referencing past administrators Ken Greenleaf and Mike Tvenge who brought their own mowers on June 14 to cut overgrown lawns at City Hall, the Community Center, and the library.

Prestegard said the exterior walls at City Hall received quite a bit of damage during the recent rainstorm.

Roberts reported the insurance adjuster is due this week. Water damage to the walls and floor will be extensive.

White asked to add \$20,000 from the FY24 surplus to the *AMLIP.6 Ice Arena (5)* savings for building upgrades.

Hallgren disagreed with divvying up or frittering away surplus funds on anything other than “core projects,” expressing concern with not being able to wholly fund EMS services.

Motion: Hallgren moved to transfer FY24 surplus: 1) add an additional \$25,000 to the landfill closure savings (*TVI - LF Sinking Fund*), 2) add an additional \$25,000 to the landfill equipment savings (*AMLIP.2 LF Eqpt*), 3) move \$150,000 into a new EMS sinking fund, 4) move \$13,000 excess airport budget to airport maintenance, depending on June 30, 2024 ending balance, and 5) move \$70,000 excess library budget to *AMLIP.11 Library* savings, depending on June 30, 2024 ending balance; Prestegard seconded.

Motion: Hallgren moved to amend the motion to add another \$10,000 to landfill equipment (*AMLIP.2 LF Eqpt*) to install the Toyo stove at the scale house; Riesner seconded.

Motion passed with no objection to add another \$10,000 to landfill equipment savings.

Motion passed on a roll call with four in attendance (Hallgren, Prestegard, Riesner, Leith) to move the \$293,000.

Motion: Hallgren moved to use FY24 funds to purchase a 42-inch Kawasaki zero-turn riding lawn mower for \$3,299.00; Riesner seconded.

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

Second Reading, Public Hearing, and Adoption of Ordinance 2024-03, An Ordinance for the City of Delta Junction, Alaska Providing for a Budget for the Fiscal Year 2025

Motion: Riesner moved to go into the public hearing portion of Ordinance 2024-03; Prestegard seconded.

Leith call for public comment with none being offered.

Motion: Hallgren moved to close the public hearing; Prestegard seconded.

Motion carried by unanimous consent.

Reierson reported new-hire wages were adjusted in the latest budget draft, dated June 13, 2024.

Hallgren reported the Alaska Department of Labor published a .974% inflation factor. Reierson already included a 1% Federal COLA increase in the June 13, 2024 budget draft. The budget is balanced with a potential surplus of \$23,842, which includes draw from savings: \$120,000 for the landfill thermo-sensors, \$40,000 for cemetery expansion, and \$10,000 for the school crosswalk.

Motion: Hallgren moved to adopt Ordinance 2024-03, using the FY25 budget draft, dated June 13, 2024; Riesner seconded.

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

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK #13123 to ACS - \$1,224.71 for June telephone and Internet

CK #13124 to Crowley - \$1,954.72 for landfill equipment fuel

CK #13125 to Davis Wright Tremaine - \$1,890.00 for May legal services

CK #13126 to Delta Building Supply - \$1,316.17 for maintenance supplies

CK #13127 to Delta Library Association - \$10,910.00 - passthrough funds from fundraiser on May 11

CK #13128 to GVEA - \$5,589.54 for May electricity

Motion: Prestegard moved to approve checks #13123 through 13128; Riesner seconded.

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

REPORTS

Mayor – no report

Finance – Kaylee Reierson reported:

- All credit card machines have been updated and the landfill has not had any more failed transactions.
- The auditors are working through FY23 discrepancies that are tied to errors found in 2021 and 2022 (items incorrectly categorized). They are working through the process to ensure books are organized.

Library – Mary Leith reported:

- Last week, 60 kids, kindergarten through third grade, participated in a camp-themed summer reading program. This week 30 older kids learned to pitch tents, make trail mix, and start fires with flint and steel.
- Yesterday’s rock painting classes with Ruth Segler were enjoyed by all who participated.
- Over 100 youth signed up for the Summer Reading Bingo Challenge. This year’s prizes are courtesy of a grant and the Alaska Community Foundation.

Health & Safety – Travis Riesner reported there were three separate incidents that resulted in injuries last weekend. He advised people to take a water safety course and show common courtesy toward others.

Emergency Preparedness – Travis Riesner reported people near Salcha are preparing to evacuate because of the wildfire. He advised using headlights while traveling north and to call Forestry (895-4225) before burning.

Schools / Emergency Services – no reports

Park & Recreation – Mike Prestegard reported:

- He will visit the location of the proposed dog park on June 20. He disagreed with Zaremba's (March 19, 2024) statement about kids and dogs not sharing the park, even with a fence between them. Entrance directly into the dog park from the parking lot would eliminate contact with people. Organizers will raise the necessary funds to create a dog park.

Roberts said she wanted public input. Does the community want a dog park? Do they want the City to maintain it? What would insurance cost? She asked about Stormie Mitchell's grant. Where does the 25% match come from?

- The Kiwanis pavilion was taped off to discourage public use until it can be repaired.

Roberts reported Andrei Sicotorschi quoted \$6,000 to remove and dispose of the old well pump and pressure tank near the Little League fields and to install a new one. Arctic Drilling recently closed their business. A third contractor was too busy to give a quote. Roberts asked to use FY24 funds and pay half of the \$6,000 quote.

Motion: Hallgren moved to commit \$6,000.00, authorizing Andrei Sicotorschi to replace the well pump on the west end of the City Park; Leith seconded.

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

Landfill / Airport – no reports

Public Works – Mike Prestegard reported the City is having trouble keeping employees.

Roberts reported:

- The Council authorized spending the \$73,854.83 balance of the Public Works grant to purchase a jib crane for the Public Works building (November 21, 2023). She explained issues with navigating around the crane and said the Public Works crew would prefer to purchase a tire changer, tire cage, wheel balancer, hydraulic press, pipe rack storage, emergency lights, and a cooling fan instead. The non-functioning well needs capped off and gutters need repaired. The Public Works crew wants to also install flooring to prevent the lift station from freezing. Roberts reported she has cleared the proposed purchases with the grant administrator. Sicotorschi will remove the well pump at the fire station and cap it off for \$4,500.

- The City brush hog was stored at JW Musgrove's residence until today. It has not been used in two years.

Prestegard said his goal is to replace it (five-foot deck) with an eight-foot mower deck.

At Large – Pete Hallgren reported:

- There are two or three construction sites between Delta and Fairbanks. He asked how ambulances or Alaska State Troopers get around 40 cars that are stopped, awaiting a pilot car.

Lisa Conrad reported construction stops to allow emergency vehicles to pass.

City Administrator – Lori Roberts reported:

- Efforts to resolve funding for ambulance services have been positive and productive. Rural Alaska EMS (RAEMS) is collecting contributions, specific for Delta Junction, that are tax deductible because of their 501(c)(3) status. The 3¢ per pound from increasing landfill tipping fees (adopted on June 4, 2024) will be helpful. Senator Lisa Murkowski is expected to attend a roundtable at City Hall on June 24 to discuss community needs, i.e., school crosswalk and sustainable ambulance services. Delta Medical Transport, Mayor Igor Zaremba, Sean Richardson, and representatives from the school district will also attend.

- She is reviewing all employee job descriptions, to make sure detailed duties are included.
- Forestry was awarded a grant to revise the Community Wildfire Protection Plan in August or September.
- City Hall offices were flooded after the recent rainstorm (June 13). Adjusters from Hale & Associates are expected this week.
- The park fence was significantly damaged by what appears to be a moose.
- She is researching needed permits for the school crosswalk and whether Delta would qualify for a Street Safety grant through the State of Alaska.

- The cemetery expansion and fuel-at-the-pump bids are ready to be advertised. Fuel at the pump was awarded to Buffalo Services, but they were bought out by Three Bears shortly thereafter.
 - An attempt to deliver arsenic soil to the landfill was rejected. Other landfills in the Interior did the same.
- Cemetery** – Pat White reported the Public Works crew have been busy with broken water lines and adding topsoil to sunken graves.

City Clerk – no report

Additional Reports – none

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Flower Cole reported she has worked for the City for seven years and has attended Council meetings for 17 years.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:38pm

Igor Zaremba, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: July 2, 2024