

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
August 20, 2024 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor Igor Zaremba called the meeting to order at 5:02pm.

Council members present: Mayor Igor Zaremba, Deputy Mayor Mary Leith, Pete Hallgren, Michael Prestegard, Travis Riesner

Council excused: Pamela Rawson, Lance Stricklin

City staff present: City Administrator Lori Roberts, Finance Officer Kaylee Reiersen, City Clerk Pat White

Public present: Five members of the community and two guest speakers were present at the beginning of the meeting. Two more attended via Zoom. The meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: Riesner moved to approve the August 20, 2024 agenda; Leith seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five present.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion: Leith moved to approve the August 6, 2024 minutes; Riesner seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with five present.

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Leith reported the Delta Historical Society will host a meeting at City Hall on August 21. She invited public participation in collecting data for Alaska's State Historic Preservation Plan. The last five-year study, *Saving our Past: Planning for Our Future*, covered 2018/2023.

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

CORRESPONDENCE

Municipal Election Candidate Filing Period – August 22 / September 6

White reported there are three seats on the October 1 ballot. The candidate filing period is August 22 through 5:00pm, Friday, September 6. Candidate packets are available at City Hall.

Liquor License Renewal – The Draft House and Lodge (License #3999)

Motion: Hallgren moved to show no opposition to The Draft House and Lodge's liquor license renewal; Leith seconded.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Construction Machinery – Repair L150 Loader

Roberts reported:

- Delta Auto Care quoted \$5,326.59 to repair the Volvo L150 loader, Construction Machinery quoted \$13,362.29, and a third quote is due tomorrow. Repairs consist of a diagnostic for the brake accumulator, replacement of a hydraulic return hose, and preventative maintenance (fluids, oils, gaskets, etc.).

Zaremba said the expense to transport to/from Fairbanks is eliminated when the mechanic is local.

- A loader was rented from Airport Rentals after the L150 blew a tire. Rental cost is \$3,000/week. A mechanic from Pogo/Northern Star still plans to assess the L220, which has been out of service for about a month.

Motion: Hallgren moved to award repair of the L150 to the low bidder, not to exceed \$5,400.00; Leith seconded.

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

Information Technology (IT) Contracted Services

Erik Buhl, Account Executive with Ampersand (AlasConnect LLC), reported they were founded in 1999 by Golden Valley who built a fiber network that MTA, a telephone company based in the Mat-Su Valley, took over in 2015. He referenced a packet explaining their proposal and said their services are mostly preventive care. There

has been no preventive maintenance in the past 15 years, nor was any defense added when Starlink connections were recently installed. He explained plans to replace equipment that has Internet access and centralize information from the old server and various personal computers to Microsoft Cloud. They would provide continuous network security and support through a help desk. Once the 36-month contract ends, the City can purchase the firewalls, switches, and access points at fair market value, refresh the contract, or continue the contract month by month. Reierson reported each of five departments (City Hall, Library, Landfill, Public Works, Fire Department) would have firewalls and full IT services for \$633.31/month (\$7,600/year for three years). She suggested adding IT support to annual budget planning.

Discussion followed regarding hackers targeting the private sector, accessing computers through email, locking down networks until ransom is paid, and using each department's Alaska Municipal League Investment Pool (AMLIP) savings or two undedicated AMLIP savings accounts to pay for the IT contracted services.

Roberts reported Ampersand's quote was the only response in several weeks.

Hallgren asked about insurance coverage if the City's data were breached.

Roberts reported the City's annual premium was \$1,045 for cybercrime but only if preventative measures are in place. She read several figures of covered items through Hale & Associates.

Motion: Reisner moved to authorize contracting with Ampersand for IT managed services in the amount of \$633.31 per month for five departments for three years; Prestegard seconded.

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

Security for City Facilities

Roberts reported she received a local bid from Koppers Communications. Two other companies failed to submit bids, and she is waiting on a bid from Verkada, a Seattle-based company, and another local person. Securing City facilities would require a one-time payment, and it would work in conjunction with Ampersand's IT contract. Discussion followed regarding replacing the Community Center doors and frames before adding security, whether the restrooms were inspected for Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance, prioritizing facilities according to urgency, obtaining more bids, outdoor cameras needed at the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena, activity at the old landfill, life expectancy of cameras, and camera failure when temperatures are 20 below or colder.

NEW BUSINESS

Final Plat – Yantsen Subdivision

[Since Jarvis Creek overflowed in 2004, Aufeis has been monitored to protect the military's infrastructure and the town proper. The City of Delta Junction withdrew from participating in the National Flood Insurance Program in November 2015 (Ordinance 2016-01) because of the requirement to "enforce federal policies that were beyond the City's limited resources." The U.S. Army and Salcha-Delta Soil and Water Conservation District share their annual reports with the Council about Jarvis conditions and whether there is potential for overflow and flooding.]

Sebastian Saarloos, Delta Surveys, reported the Yantsen Subdivision is in a flood zone according to an inaccurate map from the 1970s, but Flood Zone A has minimal risk and property owner, Ruvim Yantsen, is aware of Jarvis Creek's flooding history. Inability to purchase flood insurance is a problem statewide because of outdated maps.

Motion: Hallgren moved to approve the final plat of Yantsen Subdivision as presented; Prestegard seconded.

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

True Value Investments (TVI) – Reinvest CDs

Reierson reported four CDs matured and need reinvested if that is the consensus. Three CDs have par value of \$246,000 and one of \$640,000. She asked to consider reinvesting them into seven new CDs. The City averages .79 years, but two to three years is recommended. Two more CDs mature in 2025, one more in 2026, and one in 2027.

Discussion followed regarding Reierson meeting with investors on August 21, favoring shorter term options because of the uncertain market, and the Federal reserve rates to be revisited in September.

Hallgren cautioned against "taking on risk with the people's money." Laddered CDs that are under the FDIC-approved limit (\$250,000) are basically riskless.

Motion: Leith moved to reinvest CDs, each capped at no more than \$240,000.00; Riesner seconded.

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

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK #23195 to Delta Trails Association - \$2,000.00 for donation, approved on August 6, 2024

CK #23204 to ACS – \$1,236.43 for August phone and Internet

CK #23205 to Alaska Farmers Co-op - \$1,228.50 for fertilizer used at the cemetery and park

CK #23206 to AT&T - \$1,514.94 for August phones and Internet (\$1,369.86) and Internet at Donnelly Dome (\$145.08)

CK #23207 to GVEA - \$4,426.51 for July electricity

CK #23208 to Professional Development Academy - \$1,500.00 for City Administrator training

CK #23209 to Rent A Can of Delta - \$1,000.00 for portable outhouse at the airport in June and July

CK #23210 to Wells Fargo - \$5,520.70 for July credit card charges

Motion: Prestegard moved to approve checks #23195 and #23204 through 23210; Leith seconded.

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

REPORTS

Mayor – Igor Zaremba reported:

- The culverts for the school crosswalk were buried. Heritage donated five truckloads of pit-run and one of D1, but more is needed. Signs have been ordered. Morley Electric installed poles and lights as well as donating the conduit, wiring, and concrete boxes. Doyon donated a pole, arms, and lights. Alaska Communications bore the hole under Nistler and lined it for the conduit. Denali Fenceworks will cut an entrance into the fence once the ramps for the crosswalk are in place.

- The cemetery expansion has been cleared, and trees are in piles. Zaremba said he encouraged Yvengeny Chenkov to submit fuel costs since he donated his time and equipment to develop the 5.7 acres.

Roberts reported woodcutters must sign a waiver at City Hall and schedule blocks of time so that multiple people are not harvesting firewood at the same time. She will advertise for bids to plant grass by the end of the summer.

City Administrator – Lori Roberts reported:

- David Dawe is still removing trees that fell after recent windstorms, including those that damaged the park fence. He is also working with GVEA to remove fallen trees in powerlines.

- Phillips Scales will need one or two days to replace the scale at the landfill. Shipped parts are expected by the end of September.

Zaremba offered to access the manhole to take the six to eight pictures of piers before work begins.

- She will meet with Alaska government officials on August 22 to discuss Supplemental Emergency Medical Transport (SEMT) reimbursement, whether the City could recover funds used to support local ambulance services. She also met with Lisa Murkowski's aides last week about alternatives, whether the ambulance and Fort Greely could operate as one unit and whether to pursue an occupational head fee for contractors at Fort Greely.

- She will meet with Rural Deltana and Delta Junction firefighters on August 21 to finish a questionnaire from the City Attorney about a joint agreement.

- She and Flower Cole are updating Emergency Preparedness documents, a requirement for the radios grant.

- The end-of-the-Alaska-Highway milepost marker at the Visitor Center was finished on August 17. A plaque identifying people who donated toward the project, flags, and flag poles need installed before a ribbon-cutting ceremony is scheduled.

- Only two letters were received about establishing a dog park (public requests in August 2021 and March 2024). One was interested, but not inside the City limits, and the other had no interest in a dog park at all.

Finance – Kaylee Reiersen reported:

- The last of the financial documents were submitted to Alliance to finish FY21 and FY22 audits. FY23 is almost finished. Neither she nor Roberts were employed during the FY23 budget process, so they have learned a lot about past finances and grants, some that were never properly closed. The “misallocated funds” were mistakenly put in the general fund. Because of being backdated in a different fiscal year, some funding was already spent before it was moved to AMLIP savings. No money is missing. The problem lies with switching Cougar Mountain software to QuickBooks. Everything is accounted for, and all reporting is up to date.

- Credit cards changed to Bank of America because Wells Fargo switched to Master Card. It may take two months to transition between the two. The new company will reimburse 1.5% on purchases (cash back) instead of accruing miles.

Library – Lori Roberts reported Library Director Tiki Levinson finished the library’s grant reporting today.

Emergency Preparedness – Travis Riesner referenced recent discussion about increased theft and said outdoor surveillance cameras are worth the investment.

Schools – Travis Rierson reported school started back on August 19. He cautioned drivers about increased traffic, buses, and drop-offs around the schools and on roadways.

Park & Recreation – Igor Zaremba reported the trees that fell into the park fence line will be repaired next year.

Airport – Mike Prestegard reported he expects the airport to be busy during the upcoming hunting season and:

- Recent high winds carried the windsock at the airport downwind and tipped over the portable outhouse.

Prestegard questioned putting in a foundation if the City plans to continue providing the Rent-a-Can.

- He and JW Musgrove added gravel to one of the tie-down spaces and repaired the electrical circuit in another (discussed on August 6 Council meeting). He explained the need to add more tie-down spaces.

Discussion followed regarding Musgrove using his backhoe to clear space to park vehicles near the tie-downs, safety concerns about local pilots replacing a windsock and frame assembly without safety precautions, and local pilots donating the new windsock and assembly, their time, and equipment.

Roberts said she would address the safety issue at the pilot’s meeting on August 22.

- He and Musgrove are researching aircraft-related signage to replace those that were run over or removed.

Signs are to alert people who cross the runway.

- A meeting will be held on August 22 to establish a pilot’s association and pecking order.

Don Quarberg reported he has had his airplane parked at the airport since 1983 and there has never been a meeting in which local pilots could give input in how the D66 airspace was operated.

Discussion followed regarding frustration from local pilots, pushback toward volunteers who installed a new windsock above the tree line and other pilots who wanted to put in a runup pad, and moving the August 22 meeting to August 29 to discuss management of the City-owned airport.

Public Works – Mike Prestegard reported the Alaska State Troopers cannot enforce speeding on Rapids Street without signage, although all residential areas are 25mph, even if there is no speed limit sign. He questioned putting up a box with a camera that alerts drivers of their exact speed.

At Large – Pete Hallgren reported he serves on GVEA’s advisory committee that meets monthly. There are over one thousand electric co-ops in the United States and most of them do not produce electricity. They purchase and distributes it. Alaska is not connected to the continental grid and must rely on local resources that are reliable and affordable. GVEA generates a large amount of its electricity from coal, hydroelectric power, naphtha, wind, solar, fuel oil, and natural gas.

City Clerk – Pat White reported:

- The Division of Forestry and Fire Protection applied with the Department of Natural Resources to clear a firebreak around the northeastern side of Quartz Lake. The deadline for public comment is August 29. Stop by City Hall for the Public Notice (LAS 35149) or contact Austin Michels (austin.michels@alaska.gov or 907-451-2710).

- The Department of the Army is soliciting input about decommissioning Fort Greely’s Nuclear Power Plant. Contact Brenda.M.Barber@usace.army.mil or 443-253-3048 with questions before September 6.

Additional Reports – Mike Prestegard reported he visited with Senator Sullivan today at the Big Delta Brewing Company. Most of the conversation was about funding ambulance services in Delta.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Andrew Palmer asked if Delta Medical Transport (DMT) will be required to “open their books.”

Discussion followed regarding DMT being a private contractor, two ambulance proposals submitted, one from DMT and the other from LifeMed Alaska (December 19, 2023), and DMT’s contract extended on a month-by-month basis.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:34pm

Igor Zaremba, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: September 3, 2024