

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
September 17, 2024 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor Igor Zaremba called the meeting to order at 5:01pm.

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

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

Public present: Seven community members were present. The meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Roberts asked to move *Landfill Scale House Boiler* and *Landfill Loader* from *New Business* to *Unfinished*.

Motion: Leith moved to approve the September 17, 2024 agenda as amended; Stricklin seconded.

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

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Misspelling last names were discussed.

Motion: Leith moved to approve the minutes from September 3, 2024 as corrected; Stricklin seconded.

Motion passed by unanimous consent with six in attendance.

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Sherman Stebbins read a statement he posted on Facebook about his concerns within our community. During the Ambulance Service – Community Advisory Committee (AS-CAC) meeting on September 11, Delta Medical Transport (DMT) “rolled back” demands for one million dollars to operate a local ALS (Advanced Life Support) ambulance service. In FY23 DMT provided a 24/7 ALS service in Glennallen for \$176,000 and one in Delta for \$550,000. At this time, the City of Delta Junction can afford about \$300,000/year, plus about \$100,000 from Supplemental Emergency Medical Transport (SEMT) funds if the City takes over “aggressive billing and collections.” He suggested disbanding the AS-CAC because it is waste of time and money. “Stop being a cheerleader for DMT...Quit kicking the can down the road.” Stebbins told Roberts that she, as a public official, is held to a higher standard and he was disappointed that she rushed the last CAC meeting.

Zaremba said Roberts acted responsibly during the short, informational CAC meeting. He respected Stebbins for his passion and commitment to the community but disagreed with some of his statements. DMT’s Request for Proposal (RFP) was \$995,000 (December 19, 2023) but at no time did they demand one million dollars. Discussion followed regarding the State of Alaska quoting \$1.4 million for an ALS ambulance service and no requirement to pay back American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds for inability to maintain a “sustainable” service.

Roberts referred to Stebbins’ statement about what can be recovered from SEMT funds and said the amount is unknown. She expressed concern for her safety and Stebbins bashing her on social media without ever speaking with her.

REQUEST TO SPEAK - none

CORRESPONDENCE - none

NEW BUSINESS

Watson Replat Preliminary Approval

Sebastian Saarloos reported Spengler Road landowner, Cole Watson, wanted to vacate a lot line between two existing lots and turn them into three, 1A (2.86 acres), 1B (3.05 acres), and 2A (9.46 acres). A 25-foot public access, a long driveway, will serve Lot 1A and, because it is less than 600 feet, it does not require a dedicated cul-de-sac. An existing power line runs east-west between lots 1A and 1B.

Discussion followed regarding a correction in the title block (Plat No. 2007-91 to 2007-191) and showing Note #13 (A 15-foot-wide public utility easement from an existing power pole to the existing service pole, centered on the existing line and poles, within Lot 2A is hereby dedicated by this plat) on the final plat diagram.

Motion: Stricklin moved to approve the preliminary plat for Watson Replat, subdividing H and L Stock Subdivision, FRD Plat No. 2007-191 as presented; Riesner seconded.

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

Rock Screen (14-Foot Rip Rap)

[On July 2, the Council approved paying \$29,990 to Rock Tough in Redmond, Oregon to build a new rock screen to replace the 20-year-old grizzly. Sifting gravel is necessary to make cover material for daily landfill operations.] Roberts reported locating someone to ship the rock screen has been a challenge. Independent Dispatch, Inc. quoted \$11,500 to truck the rock screen from Portland to Seattle, send it by barge to Anchorage, and truck it to the landfill.

Motion: Hallgren moved to pay Independent Dispatch \$11,500.00 to deliver the rock screen to the landfill; Leith seconded.

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

City Council Regular Meeting October Date Change

Roberts asked to change the October meeting dates to accommodate the City Clerk who oversees the Municipal Election on October 1.

Discussion followed regarding pros and cons of shifting the Council meetings in October, City codes that reference the election timeline, and staying with the published three-meeting schedule (October 1, 8, and 15).

Zaremba reported Leith will chair the three meetings and he will attend the October 15 meeting via zoom.

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK #23240 to Bank of America - \$7,841.92 for July credit cards charges

CK #23241 to Koppers Communication - \$23,315.76 for 50% deposit for security system (approved September 3)

CK #23242 to ACS - \$1,151.65 for September telephones and Internet

CK #23243 to City of Fairbanks - \$41,230.00 for 2024 dispatch contract

CK #23244 to FLUENT IMS - \$1,200.00 for Fire Department's 2024 annual app subscription and hardware rental fee

CK #23245 to Grainger - \$2,220.27 for LED crosswalk sign (\$2,178.12) and milepost caution signs (\$42.15)

CK #23246 to GVEA- \$4,392.51 for August electricity

CK #23247 to Hale & Associates - \$13,189.54 for FY25 adjustments to workers compensation premium (\$5,803.93) and general liability (\$7,385.61)

CK #23248 to Interior Hardware - \$2,343.17 for August supplies (miscellaneous hoses, splice kit, gaskets, and \$1,595.99 paint sprayer)

CK #23249 to Spartan Services - \$4,911.19 for final payment to clean carpets at City Hall after water damage on June 13 (\$840.00 paid July 11)

CK #23250 to Vitus Energy LLC - \$7,148.62 for June-September heating fuel

CK #23251 to Wells Fargo CC - \$7,425.00 for July + August credit card charges, including \$3,299.00 Zero-Turn lawn mower (purchase approved June 18)

Discussion followed regarding transitioning from Wells Fargo credit cards (#23251) to Bank of America (23240), paint sprayer used for asphalt at the skating rink and reusing it next year to paint City facilities (23248), and insurance to reimburse for carpet cleaning (#23249).

Roberts reported \$3,500 was recovered from recycling copper, enough to pay for the new lawn mower (23251).

Motion: Leith moved to approve checks #23240 through 23251; Riesner seconded.

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Tenderfoot Gold

[\$90,000 was budgeted during the FY25 budget cycle to address Davis-Bacon wages that were withheld from Tenderfoot Gold employees who worked on the Cell 2 project. The Alaska Department of Labor audited Tenderfoot Gold and recently disclosed that they were delinquent in their employee wages, owing \$34,049.52.]

Roberts referenced a handout, marked confidential, and said she wanted Council members informed of all the findings before making it public.

Zaremba recommended taking no action until a formal request is received from Tenderfoot Gold.

Hallgren said it will be difficult to discuss potential settlement outside of an executive session and without the City attorney's opinion.

Landfill Scale House Boiler

Zaremba reported two quotes were received, one for a Toyo stove and one for a boiler.

Roberts reported a separate entrance into an extended back room of the scale house is set up for a boiler.

Discussion followed regarding existing baseboards, past issues when the underground glycol lines were broken, and getting competing quotes, with fuel tanks and stands, for both the Toyo stove and the boiler.

Landfill Loader

Roberts reported Alaska Municipal League (AML) wrote a grant for small communities to acquire a loader. The 25-match would be \$125,000 for a new L150 and \$65,000 for a smaller loader. The City could get a new L150 if the L220 cannot be repaired.

Zaremba reported what repairs were needed on the L220 and worst case, costing as much as a new loader if the transmission needs replaced. Tenali Hicks, landfill equipment operator, prefers getting the L220 back in service. Discussion followed regarding awaiting quotes from mechanics who inspected the L220 to get it operational plus an additional \$2,000+ to transport the loader to Fairbanks for repairs.

REPORTS

Mayor – Igor Zaremba reported the streetlights are wired in at the school crosswalk. More gravel was delivered and is ready to be spread.

Roberts reported one flashing sign arrived, the other was backordered and will arrive in October.

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

- She is working to reinstate Medicare and Medicaid after activating the City's NPI number and completing required paperwork to bill ambulance services through the Supplemental Emergency Medical Transport (SEMT) Program. An extension for the SEMT Program was granted through April 1st. (The FY24 audit must be certified before acceptance into the SEMT Program.) Reinstating Medicare/Medicaid should take 15 to 50 days.

- The six-month term has lapsed for Community Advisory Committee (CAC) volunteers. Members, new and old, must submit new applications, available at City Hall or online (deltajunction.us/need-community-input/). She issued a statement soliciting input from the community about ambulance services that can be documented.

- The landfill will be closed September 23/25 to install the new scale. The computer system from 2012 will be updated at the same time as well as the State of Alaska's annual inspection.

- The landfill will also be closed on September 26, 8:30-11:30, for an in-house refrigerant class. The landfill will be open to the public thereafter. (Thursdays are typically open only to commercial haulers.)

- The City, Zender Environmental, Backhaul Alaska, and Caring for Alaska / Matson have partnered to host an electronic recycling event at the landfill on September 27/28, 11:00-3:00. It is free-of-charge. Residents are encouraged to drop off microwaves, toasters, laptops, desk computers and monitors, phones, radios, televisions, DVD players, printers, cables and wires, fluorescent bulbs. Items that are not included are large appliances, smoke alarms, scrap metal, household batteries, ballasts, medical equipment, anything containing fluids.

Discussion followed regarding solvents, paints, and household cleaners stored in a Conex and one that is needed for recyclables (car batteries, oils, aluminum cans, copper), and Roberts drafting a recycling plan with the Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC).

- The park and cemetery have both been winterized. The Visitor Center will be done next week after a boiler inspection and the Farm Bureau's end-of-season cleanup.

- The ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the reconstructed milepost marker is planned for opening day of the Visitor Center next spring. There are enough remaining funds to purchase and install flagpoles for an American flag and four smaller ones that represent Canada, Alaska, Yukon, and British Columbia.

- Henry Muth is expected to start grading roads on September 23.

Zaremba reported Muth will train an employee in the event of needing a backup grader operator.

- All firewood has been salvaged from the cemetery expansion clearing. David Dawe is scheduled to remove all debris and prepare winter graves this week.

Zaremba expressed appreciation for Yevgeniy Chenkov's efforts to expand the cemetery, saving the City from a big expense and making firewood available to area residents.

- The contract to merge the City of Delta Junction (DJVFD) and Rural Deltana (RDVFD) fire departments is currently being reviewed by the two fire chiefs. The annual donation letter is also in a draft form.

Finance – Kaylee Reiersen reported:

- \$409/month was paid to service one dumpster that was used by City Hall, the Community Center, and library. Large cans for each facility will replace the dumpster and they will be serviced by the Public Works crew every Wednesday. Accommodations will be made for large events.

- The State of Alaska is reviewing the FY22 audit correction plan that Alliance auditors created to track state and federal grants.

Library – Mary Leith reported:

- The library teamed up with the Delta Junction Trails Association on September 14 for the soft opening of additions to the River Walk Park. Seventy-five participants enjoyed the event. The library provided ingredients for s'mores, courtesy of a summer grant from the Alaska Community Foundation. The local Scout troops oversaw the fire and s'more station. StoryWalk, a book broken into 18 panels displayed along the trail, was a huge success. An outdoor scavenger hunt was enjoyed by those who walked the trail.

- A technician from Siemens worked on the air handler and controls, but more work is needed. Entrance doors are difficult to open because of extreme negative pressure.

Roberts reported a mechanic is needed to replace both boiler pumps.

- Changes will be made to children's programs in October after a public survey is completed.
- There is no documentation, but the Department of Education plans to restore Public Library grant funds to 82 libraries across Alaska. (The Delta Community Library used to receive \$7,000 annually.)

Health & Safety / Emergency Preparedness – Travis Riesner encouraged residents to prepare for winter by cleaning gutters, chimneys, and dryer vents. He added to watch for slow moving traffic.

Emergency Services – Lori Roberts reported updating the Integrated Preparedness Plan (IPP) and Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) are almost finished.

Park & Recreation – Igor Zaremba reported:

- Both the park and outdoor rink are still busy, even though temperatures are cooler.

Riesner reported hockey signups started yesterday.

- The Kiwanis Pavilion is fenced off and Mike Phelan is drafting a plan to rebuild it while salvaging the original four beams.

Landfill – Igor Zaremba invited parents to get their kids involved in community service by contacting him or City Hall to pick garbage off the fences at the landfill.

Airport – Mike Prestegard reported Friends of Delta Airport, the newly established pilots' group, installed four "aircraft only" signs on Rapids Street. They are also filling in potholes in the tie-down area with donated D1 gravel.

At Large – Pete Hallgren reported the newspaper indicated construction on the Richardson Highway was to end yesterday, but signage said it would resume October 1.

Zaremba reported the Department of Transportation appears to have finished constructing passing lanes north of Tenderfoot and they are starting new ones headed south.

City Clerk – Pat White reported:

- Ballots are available at City Hall for early voters (two weeks prior to the October 1 Municipal Election). Mary Leith is running unopposed for Seat A, a three-year term. Stormie Mitchell is running unopposed for Seat B, a one-year term. Lance Stricklin is running unopposed for Seat E, a three-year term.

- Early voting for the State of Alaska School Board (REAA) Election on October 1, 8:00am-8:00pm, and the General Election on November 5, 7:00am-8:00pm, changed since reported on August 6. Early voting for the REAA election will be available at City Hall (2288 Deborah Street) Tuesdays and Thursdays, September 17, 19, 24, and 26, 12:00-4:00pm. Early voting for the General Election will be at City Hall Tuesdays and Thursdays, October 22, 24, 29, and 31, 12:00-7:00pm.

Additional Reports – none

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS - none

ADJOURNMENT – 6:53pm

Mary Leith, Deputy Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: October 15, 2024