

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



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor Igor Zaremba called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

Council members present: Mayor Igor ZAREMBA, Deputy Mayor Mary LEITH,
Lance STRICKLIN, Michael PRESTEGARD, Stormie MITCHELL

Council present via Zoom: Pete HALLGREN

Council excused: Travis RIESNER

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

Public present: Eight members were in attendance. The meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Roberts reported *Unfinished Business: Hess Property* would be moved to the November 19 meeting.

Motion: Leith moved to approve the November 5, 2024 agenda as amended; Stricklin seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion: Leith moved to approve the minutes from the regular meeting on October 15, 2024; Stricklin seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with four voting in favor (Stricklin, Hallgren, Leith, Zaremba) and two opposed (Prestegard, Mitchell).

Motion: Stricklin moved to approve the minutes from the October 29, 2024 special meeting; Leith seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call with five voting in favor (Prestegard, Stricklin, Hallgren, Leith, Zaremba) and one opposed (Mitchell).

COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Stricklin referenced Alaska Statutes 04.11.60 and reported existing State law already taxes alcohol sales. Because there is no legislation in place, Delta cannot tap into that stream of revenue. He would like to draft an ordinance to collect alcohol sales taxes that are generated locally. The City received one payment (\$7,100 reported on March 6, 2018) but never took action to continue collecting the sustainable income that could support emergency services.

Zaremba said there will be attorney fees associated with drafting the ordinance.

Hallgren said he supported looking into it. Community input will be solicited during the public hearing portion of the ordinance process. It appears to not be a burden or cost to the community. It's as simple as getting a cut on funds that are collected every year. He asked to get the facts to eliminate confusion.

Amber White thanked the Council for successfully finishing the school crosswalk project.

Zaremba said he is very grateful for community involvement in realizing the crosswalk. He expressed appreciation for the businesses who donated their time, labor, materials and expertise needed to accomplish the much-needed project: Morley Electric, Doyon Utilities, Denali Fenceworks, M2C1, ACS, University Ready Mix, and Heritage.

Sherman Stebbins asked about the City being ordered by the Alaska Department of Labor to pay Corey Groppe additional funds to make up for wages he was to pay his employees on the contracted landfill project.

Zaremba said the State of Alaska was still investigating, but said the City does not need to pay anymore to Tenderfoot Gold.

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Caring Hearts Update and Request for Funding

Elena Powers, Caring Hearts Program Manager, referenced a handout showing statistics between January and September 2024. She reported Caring Hearts, established through Hats of Wisdom (January 2023), provides services for seniors, 55 and older, and people with disabilities. Clients and their homes are assessed to qualify for:

- seven frozen meals once each week with a bag of shelf-stable foods (Meals-on-Wheels deliveries are capped at 12 clients because of limited freezer space and volunteers who prepare the meals)
- transportation to/from medical appointments, grocery shopping, etc.
- minimal home repairs or renovations, i.e., installing handrails or repairing steps

- help in maintaining independence, i.e., stacking firewood, shoveling snow, general housekeeping

In the past nine months, Caring Hearts has had 25 to 30 volunteers, but 18 are currently active. Every volunteer is required to have a background check. There were as many as 35 clients, but currently only 23. Caring Hearts conducted 12 home assessments, delivered 2,190 meals, and traveled 15,870 miles, which included 25 local trips and 53 to Fairbanks. Gasoline expenses for the community-owned van totaled \$2,915.58. Powers said volunteers pay out of their own pockets as well as give “untold hours of time to meet the needs of Delta seniors.” Discussion followed regarding inability to put a price on a meal because volunteers do not always submit receipts for reimbursement and Hats of Wisdom providing office space for Caring Hearts and half its operating costs (about \$6,000/month), space for five freezers, Powers’ part-time salary, and Hats of Wisdom full-time office support. **Motion:** Leith moved to donate \$1,000.00 to Caring Hearts; Hallgren and Prestegard seconded. **Motion passed** on a roll call with six in attendance (Hallgren, Mitchell, Leith, Stricklin, Prestegard, Zaremba). Discussion followed regarding hosting fundraising events, planning an appreciation for Caring Hearts volunteers, the City overseeing a \$25,000 Healthy and Equitable Communities grant from the Division of Public Health that was split between Caring Hearts and Five Loaves Pantry in 2023/2024, and donations accepted at Hats of Wisdom, phone (907-803-7022) or online (hatsofwisdom.org).

CORRESPONDENCE

Public Notice - New Tower on Hanson Road

Roberts reported Trileaf, an environmental, architecture, and engineering company from Chandler, Arizona, issued a public notice, dated October 1, 2024, that they are in the process of completing a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Review to erect a 120-foot telecommunications tower (124-foot overall) inside a 50’x50’ fenced-in area on Hanson Road.

General Election – November 5, 7:00am-8:00pm at the Community Center

Zaremba encouraged voters to make their voices heard by voting before the polls close at 8:00pm. White reported that over 400 residents voted early at City Hall in the (four days) two weeks prior to November 5. That steady stream of voters continued at the Community Center today. [Note at 8:00pm: The turnout at the polls was 358 out of 955 registered voters from the City Precinct 050 and 1,197 out of 3,363 from Deltana 054. The General Election results won’t be certified until November 30.]

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Bogdan Koval – Hess Property – moved to November 19

Alaska Municipal League (AML) Conference – December 9-13

White reported the City Administrator, Finance Officer, and Administrative Assistant are scheduled to attend the AML Conference in Anchorage. Zaremba reported five AML resolutions (2025-01/2025-05) will be voted on at the November 19 Council meeting. Roberts will represent the City by casting votes for or against the resolutions during AML’s business meeting on December 13. Discussion followed regarding Council members unable to attend the AML conference and possibly scheduling elected officials training with Maise Thomas, Alaska Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA). Hallgren encouraged Council members to participate in training and to review the *Primer for City Council Members*, published by the DCRA and an excellent resource.

Landfill Scale House Boiler

Zaremba reported the scale house is set up for a boiler system. Discussion followed regarding advertising for bids and Phillips Scales not replacing the seals before finishing the recent scale upgrade.

Plow Truck

Roberts reported the plow truck is expected to be back in service by November 8. Both Airport Rentals in Delta and Fairbanks do not rent plow trucks. Discussion followed regarding soliciting quotes from local equipment operators to fill the *Seasonal Street Maintenance Agreement*.

NEW BUSINESS

Delta Junction Volunteer Fire Department (DJVFD) Equipment Maintenance

Zaremba reported Yevgeniy Chenkov was hired to repair Engine 161 for \$4,842 (September 3, 2024). More extensive work was found while the engine was torn apart. Chenkov was given permission to repair the additional work, which was done on September 16, but additional expenses were not approved.

Discussion followed regarding inability to wait two weeks for Council approval and not needing to follow the purchase process for services under \$5,000 (City Code §1.41.015).

Motion: Stricklin moved to pay Yevgeniy Chenkov \$2,422.00 for more repairs to Engine 161; Hallgren seconded.

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

Chains for Landfill Loader

Roberts reported chains are needed to prevent the loaders from sliding backwards on steep angles. Glacier Chain Supply, based in Anchorage, quoted \$4,022.68 for a pair of chains, \$9,466.41 for a pair of heavy-duty chains, and twice the price for two pairs of each (\$8,045.36 or \$18,932.82).

Discussion followed regarding getting more quotes, including shipping, and using Landfill Equipment savings.

Zaremba reported Landfill Equipment Operator Tenali Hicks prefers chaining four tires on the 220 loader.

City-Related Emails for Council Members

Roberts reported emails will be provided, so the public can reach Council members on City-related business.

Reierson asked Council to contact her to access the emails.

City Purchases over \$1,000

CK #23309 to Aetna - \$18,920.54 for November group health insurance

CK #23310 to Bank of America - \$1,945.61 for credit card charges

CK #23311 to Bob's Services - \$1,289.48 for parts to repair sander and spinner motor

CK #23312 to Delta Medical Transport - \$46,000.00 for November EMS contract

CK #23313 to Grainger - \$2,178.12 for LED crosswalk sign

CK #23314 to Guess & Rudd - \$1,264.49 for September legal services

CK #23315 to Ingram - \$1,198.81 for library books

CK #23316 to Microcom - \$1,914.00 for library Internet (July – November)

CK #23317 to Phillips Scales - \$9,300.00 for landfill scale installation, final payment

CK #23318 to Shiners Cleaning Service - \$1,850.00 to paint walls and clean carpet in three offices at City Hall

CK #23319 to ULINE - \$1,162.80 for trash cans at City Hall, Library, and the Community Center

CK #23320 to Vitus - \$4,955.90 for October heating and equipment fuel

CK #23321 to Yevgeniy Chenkov - \$2,424.00 to service International dump truck

Roberts reported Henry Muth installed the sander assembly. Parts were received from Bob's Services in Anchorage, the only business that had them (CK #23311).

Motion: Leith moved to approve checks #23309 through 23321; Stricklin seconded.

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

REPORTS

Mayor – Igor Zaremba reported:

- The school crosswalk lights are visible from the Mil-Tan/Nistler intersection (two miles away). “They will ease people into having a stoplight in Delta.”

Discussion followed regarding the need for stoplights at the Richardson/Jack Warren and Mil-Tan/Jack Warren intersections and Mitchell's concerns about traffic speed and Kinross ore trucks on the Richardson Highway, just north of the Jack Warren turnoff.

- City employees are still using their personal vehicles for City business but do receive compensation (mileage or fuel). Another City truck may need to be purchased soon.

City Administrator / Landfill – Lori Roberts reported:

- She and Reierson set up a weather station at the landfill and installed a computer chip that automatically enters weight from the scale. Signs (approved at the October 15 meeting) are due to arrive within two weeks.
- She is working on adjusting contracts, requests for proposals, policies, and finding ways to save money.

Finance – Kaylee Reiersen reported:

- Printer leases for City Hall and the library expire next month. She will present quotes on November 19.
- She was unable to resolve some issues with the phone company and questioned if Council knew about a two-wire circuit that was installed between 2288 Deborah Street (City Hall) and 1474 Alaska Highway (near Northway) prior to 1995. Two bills for \$112.37 and \$112.36 are paid every month.

Discussion followed regarding the Alaska (Alcan) Highway ending at Mile 1422, Mitchell suggesting the circuit belonged to the Coast Guard, Leith guessing it was part of the Alascom tower, Leith and Stephanie Groppe shutting down emergency services for four hours several years ago when they attempted to identify phone lines, whether the 911 lines are redundant and not connected to Delta dispatch that is no longer in service, circumstances related to cancelling the fire station phone line, and duplicate Internet serving the fire station and the Public Works.

- She and the auditors are still working on the FY23 audit.
- The Fire Department requested new software for State reporting.

Library – Mary Leith reported:

- The Library Board and outreach from the Fairbanks Concert Association sponsored a performance from Waipuna, a musical group from Hawaii at the Fort Greely Community Activity Center on November 3. Sixty-eight people attended. Youth were invited to participate in free cultural and educational workshop.

- Tracey Porreca taught two sourdough bread classes on October 26. She is scheduled to teach again on November 9.

Schools – Mary Leith reported:

- Elementary School Principal Milt Hooten is “over the moon” grateful for the school crosswalk, particularly how the community rallied behind the project for the safety of the students.
- The schools went into a lockdown for several hours on November 1. It involved several schools in Alaska.
- Two weeks ago, the middle school girls’ basketball team placed second in Glennallen, and they took first place in the basketball championship in Delta last weekend.

Health & Safety – Stormie Mitchell reported:

- Fort Greely alerted the public about aggressive moose on the base.
- Veterans Day is associated with increased reports of abuse and suicides because it is an emotional time for veterans and their families.

Cemetery – Stormie Mitchell reported the Public Works crew prepared three winter graves.

Zaremba reported one of the winter graves will be used within the week and there are 46 gravesites that are available to purchase plus the two remaining winter graves.

Discussion followed regarding not receiving any bids to plant grass in the new section at the cemetery, Roberts wanting to do it in-house, and using the grizzly to screen the topsoil from the clearing debris.

Airport – Mike Prestegard reported pilots are packing snow for ski planes, but the runway has not been plowed.

Roberts reported packing is preferred.

Emergency Services – Lance Stricklin reported:

- A toy run for Christmas is getting organized.
- Efforts are underway to recruit firefighters.

Zaremba reported he requested a quote to fix the old ambulance that is at the Public Works building. It is of value but needs to be serviced.

Park & Recreation – Igor Zaremba reported both rinks are in use.**Emergency Preparedness** – Igor Zaremba encouraged people to drive slower because of icy conditions.**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Tim Webb reported he focused on brush cutting the southern end of Mil-Tan before snowfall.

ADJOURNMENT – 7:29pm

 Igor Zaremba, Mayor

 CITY
 SEAL

 Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: November --, 2024