

City Council Minutes
Regular Meeting
March 18, 2025 ~ 5:00PM
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska



CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / PRAYER

Mayor Igor Zarembo called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

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

Council present via Zoom: Pete HALLGREN

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

Public present: Approximately 40 people, including 25 on Zoom, were in attendance. The meeting was also broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Zarembo reported Sherman Stebbins would be added to *Request to Speak, Sanitary Survey Bids* and *New Hire Pay* would be added to *New Business*, and *Chris Morley's EMS Plan* would be removed from *Unfinished Business*.

Motion: Leith moved to approve the March 18, 2025 agenda as amended; Stricklin seconded.

Mitchell stated changes to the agenda violated the Open Meetings Act (reasonable public notice).

White asked if anyone in attendance objected to the changes. None were offered.

Prestegard asked to remove *Introduction and First Reading of Ordinance 2025-07, An Agreement with the Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department (RDVFD) Board for Joint Community Fire Support* from *New Business* because an agreement has not been approved.

Leith and Stricklin, makers of the motion, agreed to remove Ordinance 2025-07.

Motion passed on a roll call (to amend the agenda) with six in favor (Stricklin, Leith, Riesner, Hallgren, Prestegard, Zarembo) and one opposed (Mitchell).

AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

White asked to postpone approval of minutes from the March 4 regular meeting and March 10 special meeting.

Motion: Stricklin moved to postpone approval of March 4 and March 10 minutes to April 1st; Leith seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll (Prestegard, Leith, Mitchell, Riesner, Stricklin, Hallgren, Zarembo).

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Cody White reported that the community-owned non-profit, Rural Alaska Emergency Services (RAES) agreement, is awaiting a final review from their legal counsel and will be available to the public soon, to be posted on their website (<https://emsalaska.org>).

REQUEST TO SPEAK

Sherman Stebbins distributed handouts about Capital Project Submission and Information System (CAPSIS) projects from the Alaska Legislature, available to municipalities, unincorporated communities, and non-profits.

Roberts reported the American Community Survey compiles data (household occupancy and income) to determine eligibility for grants. Communities must be 51% low to moderate income. Neither the City (47%), nor Deltana (32.6%) qualify. To argue, they will provide a survey packet so a local resident, possibly more trusted than a census worker, can collect data by going door-to-door.

CORRESPONDENCE - none

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Second Reading, Public Hearing, and Adoption of Ordinance 2025-04, Amending Sections of City Code Title I, Legislative, Judicial, and Administrative

Mitchell questioned how Alaska Statutes (AS 29.35.010 - 29.35.149) pertain to City Code 1.10.015. How does regulating Dextromethorphan, aka Robitussin (cough medicine), apply to local policies and procedures?

Roberts reported that all municipalities have general powers. Statutes spell out what can be regulated. Some communities choose to regulate Dextromethorphan so people can't buy it in bulk to make methamphetamine. She

reported, because Mitchell filed a complaint with the Regional Affairs office in Fairbanks about not following rules in our City Code, she added a line to §1.25.010, “The Mayor has the duties of the City Manager as provided in AS 29.20.250 through AS 29.20.500.”

Motion: Leith moved to hold the public hearing portion of Ordinance 2025-04; Stricklin seconded.

James Squyres reported he sent emails to Council members, requesting the ordinance be tabled until the changes were presented in proper form (additions in blue, deletions in red).

Zaremba called for additional public comment with none being offered.

Leith moved to close the public hearing; Stricklin seconded.

Discussion followed regarding attempts to update the first ten pages of Title I for several months, adding policy to limit meetings to three hours with one 15-minute extension that was created (February 7, 2017) but never codified (City Code 1.10.040(H)), whether requiring two doctors to declare a Council member incapacitated would be a HIPAA violation (Code 1.10.070(C)), and purchasing a newer set of Alaska Statutes.

Motion: Hallgren moved to adopt Ordinance 2025-04 as presented; Stricklin seconded.

Motion: Stricklin moved to amend the motion, to replace lower case letters with upper case; Leith seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call to accept format changes to City Code revisions with five in favor (Riesner, Leith, Stricklin, Hallgren, Zaremba) and two opposed (Mitchell, Prestegard).

Motion passed on a roll call to adopt Ordinance 2025-04 with five in favor (Leith, Stricklin, Riesner, Hallgren, Zaremba) and two opposed (Mitchell, Prestegard).

NEW BUSINESS

Purchases over \$1,000.00

CK #23497 to Alasconnect - \$3,166.55 for March Managed IT Services contract

CK #23498 to Altman, Rogers & Co - \$25,980.00 for FY23 audit work

CK #23499 to Bank of America - \$4,064.63 for March credit card charges, including \$106.54 interest

CK #23500 to GVEA - \$8,338.39 for February electricity

CK #23501 to Hale & Associates - \$4,148.27 to add International fire truck, add Dodge R35 (Doyon truck), and increase general liability and workers' compensation

CK #23502 to Vitus LLC - \$1,163.83 for March heating and equipment fuel

CK #23503 to Whistling Woodworks - \$4,172.40 for library bookshelves (paid from grant funds)

CK #23504 to Carmen Jackson CPA LLC - \$2,072.00 for FY23 audit prep

CK #23505 to Guess & Rudd - \$4,472.50 for February legal services

CK #23506 to Crowley - \$1,324.51 for fuel delivered to Zamboni and Skate Shack

Motion: Leith moved to approve checks 23497 through 23506; Riesner seconded.

Mitchell asked about general liability and workers' compensation (CK 23501).

Reierson reported Rural Deltana firefighters merged with the City Fire Department after the 2024 roster was submitted to the State. She opted to pay the coverage on the volunteers, which increased from 19 to 36, instead of waiting until the end of the fiscal year.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call (Riesner, Mitchell, Hallgren, Prestegard, Stricklin, Leith, Zaremba).

New Pay Hire

[Because of difficulty in filling the street operator position (advertised since July 2024), Henry Muth returned as a fill-in (Fall of 2022) and agreed to train a new employee.]

Roberts reported she hired a street operator who negotiated signing a five-year contract if the City would pay for his Commercial Driver License (CDL) certification.

Reierson reported the new hire has experience in boiler repair, tower climbing, and operating heavy equipment. He was a nuclear machinist while in the Navy. His qualifications put him at Grade 5, Step 5 (\$23.69/hour). Upon getting his CDL, he would move to Grade 6, Step 5 (\$28.25/hour).

Discussion followed regarding getting more local interest had the CDL requirement been removed from the job advertisement, cost of getting a CDL (\$10,000), history of losing employees to Fort Greely because of wage differences, comparing the new hire wages to Muth's (no holiday, vacation, sick leave, or retirement), and requiring the new hire to have his CDL certification within six months.

Motion: Riesner moved to bump the new hire pay from \$23.69/hour to \$28.25/hour upon acquiring CDL certification, with commitment to a five-year contract; Leith and Stricklin seconded.

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

Sanitary Survey Bids

Roberts reported the last Sanitary Survey for five City-owned facilities was conducted in 2020 by M2C1 Construction and Engineering. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) requires one every five years. She received bids from Goldstream out of Fairbanks (\$7,150) and Taiga Engineering out of Anchorage (\$7,650), both referred by ADEC, but no others, including M2C1.

Discussion followed regarding postponing discussion to the April 1 meeting.

REPORTS

City Administrator - Lori Roberts reported that the red fire truck serves as a mobile command vehicle or office on wheels. She thanked firefighters for carrying beepers and cell phones while on-call, but said she was troubled with them being scrutinized on social media.

Discussion followed regarding the red truck allowing volunteers to respond immediately from their location in the event of an emergency and it or the biggest and baddest 30,000-gallon water tender plugging up a two-tire-track driveway only to put out a toaster fire.

Finance - Kaylee Reiersen reported:

- Roberts received a \$2,500 scholarship to attend last year’s Alaska Municipal League conference.
- The FY26 PILT application will be submitted tomorrow.
- Forms are available for each department to make requests for the FY26 budget cycle.

Library – Tiki Levinson reported PFD and IRS forms are available at the library.

Public Health & Safety - Stormie Mitchell cautioned people about icy conditions and moose.

Airport - Mike Prestegard reported 1) grader work is needed around the airport subdivision and one of the taxiways and 2) a meeting needs scheduled with local pilots to find out the results of a survey (wish list).

Emergency Services - Lance Stricklin reported: 1) DMT responded to three calls within a few hours on March 14, and 2) Fort Greely responded to a crash on the Alaska Highway, in which a driver of a Black Gold ore truck picked up the patient and met the ambulance that went onto the hospital.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

EXECUTIVE SESSION – Litigation – Stormie Mitchell vs City of Delta Junction

Hallgren clarified that the lawsuit was due to a recall from the public. The City Council was required to set a date for the recall election (April 18, 2025 set on February 26, 2025) according to Alaska Statutes. A fair amount of expenses accrued in attorney fees to protect the rights of the citizens to proceed with the recall.

Mitchell, as the plaintiff, recused herself from the executive session.

Motion: Leith moved to enter an executive session at 6:48pm to discuss Stormie Mitchell vs City of Delta Junction litigation; Riesner seconded.

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

Zaremba invited Council members to exit to the City Administrator’s office. Present during the executive session were Mayor Igor Zaremba, Deputy Mayor Mary Leith, Council members Travis Reisner, Michael Prestegard, Lance Stricklin, Pete Hallgren (telephonically), City Administrator Lori Roberts, Finance Officer Kaylee Reiersen, City Attorney Pam Weiss (telephonically), and City Clerk Pat White.

Motion: Stricklin moved to reconvene the regular City Council meeting at 7:19pm; Hallgren seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call (Prestegard, Leith, Riesner, Stricklin, Hallgren, Mitchell, Zaremba).

ADJOURNMENT – 7:19pm

Igor Zaremba, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk
Approved: April 1, 2025