

City Council Minutes
Special Meeting
March 28, 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, Travis RIESNER, Pete HALLGREN, Stormie MITCHELL, Lance STRICKLIN

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 24 physically present plus 25 on Zoom.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Barbara Parker reported she supported the ordinance to extend ambulance services to the community.

Steven Hilton reported, “you never fully realize an emergency situation until it happens.” He expressed gratitude for the ambulance service when his wife recently needed medical intervention. Basic Life Support (BLS) would not have been enough. Hilton said he works with Rural Alaska Emergency Services (RAES) who are securing \$5,000 in community donations each week. He fully supports the City-backed agreement with RAES and Delta Medical Transport (DMT) to continue services until a sustainable plan can be decided.

NEW BUSINESS

Second Reading, Public Hearing, and Adoption of Ordinance 2025-06, An Ordinance Approving an Agreement with Rural Alaska Emergency Services and Delta Medical Transport for Emergency Medical Services

Hallgren asked to 1) remove paragraph G from page one of the Ordinance cover sheet (“The City faces little risk in entering into a one-year contract with the possibility of extending a Professional Services Contract with RAES and DMT because it may be terminated by the City without cause at any time on a ninety (90) days’ notice”) and 2) to correct the Ordinance as written on the agenda to read, “ ... Approving an Agreement with Rural Alaska Emergency Services and Delta Medical Transport for Emergency Medical Services.”

Motion: Leith moved to hold the public hearing portion of Ordinance 2025-06; Stricklin seconded.

Sherman Stebbins reported 1) changes were made to the title of the ordinance on the agenda after it was advertised and 2) he objected to removing paragraph G (as it was on the Ordinance cover page and introduced on March 21). He suggested removing Terms of Agreement 3b, which allows all parties to terminate the agreement. (Leaving G and removing 3b) would give more power to the Council and the community should they choose to exit the agreement.

White reported she created the May 28 agenda by cutting and pasting from a previous agenda format, but did not correct the title before posting it publicly. The City Attorney agreed that the incorrect agenda was acceptable because the correct ordinance number and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) agreement were attached to the agenda.

Julia Phelan reported the purpose of the agreement is to stabilize EMS in Delta and to evaluate the proposals that were presented. She agreed with striking G from the ordinance because any reason to terminate the signed agreement would be a justifiable cause.

Hallgren reported the City would take full responsibility for the million dollars if RAES or DMT dropped out.

Zarembo reported it is in the City’s best interest not to have a window to exit (without cause).

Mitchell questioned plans for next year if savings are spent to pay for this year’s ambulance services.

Riesner reported extending DMT’s contract for a year will allow time to research funding.

Stricklin reported that the State EMS awarded one of three assessments to Delta. Their purpose is to identify the best EMS system for the Delta/Deltana area.

Hallgren said the assessment will identify how to afford an Advanced Life Support (ALS) system.

Motion: Hallgren moved to drop paragraph G from the two-page Ordinance 2025-06 and to change the title on the agenda to read, “An Ordinance Approving an Agreement with Rural Alaska Emergency Services and Delta Medical Transport for Emergency Medical Services” (from Extending the Franchise Agreement with Delta Medical Transport, LLC for Emergency Medical Services); Leith seconded.

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

Zaremba called for public comments about the attached agreement.

Krista Meeks, RAES Treasurer and member of the community, said she supported the one-year plan, accepting donations from the community to pay for ambulance services while establishing the non-profit EMS service.

Roberts explained changes to the EMS Agreement (in the current version as deletions) after it was introduced (March 21). She explained three edits to Exhibit C (page 10) prior to tonight’s meeting. 1) EMS billing (Exhibit C, paragraph 3a, page 10) includes private pay insurance, 2) “... is ready to take over” was edited to read, “... is ready to *assume* EMS billing ...” (Exhibit #, 3b), and 3) “All recovered billing will be redirected back to this EMS system” was removed. Roberts clarified that the monthly payment to DMT was based on their bid at the December 19, 2023 meeting. Monthly payments of \$85,404.17 (\$1,024,850.04/annually) would be payable on the 8th day of each month. A 3% increase on January 1, 2026 would increase the total to \$1,032,536.42 for the calendar year. Why calendar versus fiscal year? It was written in the Request for Proposal (RFP) that was awarded to DMT in December 2023. With RAES’ \$180,000 contribution (\$15,000/month), the City’s portion drops to \$852,536.42.

Sherman Stebbins asked who receives the Supplemental Emergency Medical Transport (SEMT) funding.

Zaremba reported the City would use SEMT revenue toward DMT payments.

Hallgren reported recovered money from insurance billing will go to the service provider.

Leith moved to close the public hearing; Stricklin seconded.

Zaremba called for objection with none being offered.

Motion: Leith moved to approve amendments to the EMS Agreement, red-lined sections following the introduction on May 21 and changes to Exhibit C during tonight’s second reading; Stricklin seconded.

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

Motion: Stricklin moved to adopt Ordinance 2025-06 as amended; Riesner seconded.

Hallgren recalled volunteer EMTs providing ambulance services for forty years until accreditation and regulations became too complicated. We, as a community, are grateful for the many years of excellent service from volunteers and from DMT (2013-2025). The population inside the City limits cannot afford to pay for an ambulance service for the whole Delta/Deltana area. Three-quarters of the residents live outside the City limits and three-quarters of the local area utilizes ambulance services. The City has built up savings in unencumbered assets, enough to pay for one year of service (April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2026). The upcoming year is opportunity to find a sustainable EMS service.

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

Alan Levinson expressed appreciation for the Council, staff, RAES, and DMT for their patience in going through this difficult process.

ADJOURNMENT – 6:11pm

Igor Zaremba, Mayor

CITY
SEAL

Pat White, City Clerk

Approved: April ---, 2025