**City Council Minutes**
**Regular Meeting**
**November 4, 2025 ~ 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, Michael PRESTEGARD, Pete HALLGREN, Rena CASE, Michael PHELAN
**Council excused:** Lance STRICKLIN
**City staff present:** Administrator Lori Roberts, Library Director Tiki Levinson, Finance Officer Kaylee Reierson, City Clerk Pat White
**Public present:** A dozen people were present at the beginning of the meeting plus three on zoom. The meeting was broadcast over KDHS 95.5 FM radio.

## AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Hallgren asked to move *New Business Emergency Medical Services* after *Request to Speak* because of a DART representative in attendance.
Motion: Leith moved to approve the November 4, 2025 amended agenda; Phelan seconded.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Hallgren, Case, Prestegard, Phelan, Leith, Zaremba).

## AMENDMENTS ~ APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Motion: Hallgren moved to approve the October 21, 2025 draft minutes as presented; Leith seconded.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Leith, Prestegard, Phelan, Case, Hallgren, Zaremba).

## SWEAR IN NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS

[1.20.010A - Oath of Office: All City officers, before taking office, shall affirm in writing that they will honestly, faithfully, and impartially perform their duties. The oath shall be filed with the City Clerk.
1.10.070A – Vacancies: The Council shall declare an elective office vacant when the person elected fails to qualify or take office within 30 days after his election. Newly elected, Igor Zaremba and Michael Phelan, were unable to affirm their oaths in writing on October 21.]
White administered the Oath of Office to Michael Phelan (Seat B) and Igor Zaremba (Seat D).

## COUNCIL ELECT MAYOR / DEPUTY MAYOR

[AS §44.62.310(a) - All meetings of the governmental body of a public entity of the state are open to the public except as otherwise provided by this section … may be by teleconferencing … This section does not apply to any votes required to be taken to organize a governmental body described in this subsection.
1.25.020 - Term: The Mayor is elected by and from the Council for a term equal in length to the remaining length of that Council member's term. The Mayor shall take office upon election by the Council on the third Tuesday in October.
1.10.050(A) - Deputy Mayor: The Council shall annually elect a Deputy Mayor on the third Tuesday in October to preside over Council meetings in the absence of the Mayor. The Deputy Mayor shall serve at the pleasure of the Council.]
Hallgren reported private ballots would be used to elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor. He nominated Igor Zaremba as Mayor and called for other nominees with none being offered.
Roberts and White distributed ballots, then collected and counted them. White handed the results to Zaremba.
Zaremba reported he received five votes and Michael Prestegard received one. He thanked Council for voting for him and said to contact him if he lacks judgement, knowledge, or experience. His position as Mayor (since June 4, 2024) has been challenging at times but he looked forward to serving in the same capacity again.

Zaremba nominated Michael Phelan as Deputy Mayor. He commended Phelan for dedicating many hours of labor to help the landfill operation get caught up due to several months of equipment failure.
White distributed ballots, collected them, she and Roberts counted them, and she presented the tally to Zaremba.
Zaremba announced Michael Phelan was elected by all six Council members to serve as Deputy Mayor.
Hallgren reported Zaremba would serve as Mayor through October 2028, and Phelan would serve as Deputy Mayor through October 2026.

**REARRANGE TOPICS OF COUNCIL REPORTING**

Zaremba called for more involvement from Council members; to have a presence, gain a better perspective, and put "more eyes" on potential problems.

Discussion followed regarding Council members not giving orders to City employees (responsibility of the Mayor and City Administrator) and changing topics of Council reporting: Mary Leith (Seat A) – *Cemetery* and *Library*, Michael Phelan (Seat B) – *Landfill* and *Public Works,* Michael Prestegard (Seat C) – *Airport* and *Emergency Preparedness*, Igor Zaremba (Seat D) – *Personnel* and *Parks & Recreation,* Lance Stricklin (Seat E) – *Health & Safety* and *Emergency Services,* Pete Hallgren (Seat F) – *At Large,* and Rena Case (Seat G) – *Schools.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Dean Bean, Vice President, Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department (RDVFD), asked the Council to schedule a meeting with Rural Deltana to discuss separation of fire departments.

LTC Alissa Clark reported:

- Even though the government is shut down, soldiers are still participating in military training.
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USASE) will host a public meeting about the Deactivated Nuclear Power Plant at Fort Greely tonight at the Community Center and tomorrow at the Fort Greely CAC.

**REQUEST TO SPEAK**

**RDVFD Lease of Equipment to Forestry**

Tracy Dunham, Secretary, RDVFD, deferred comments to Fire Chief Josh Olson.

Josh Olson, Rural Deltana Fire Chief, reported they are successfully operating as an independent fire department. He expressed appreciation for the City's support in helping them back on their feet by insuring their vehicles. One of the trucks was leased out to Forestry during the fire season and brought in close to $72,000 in revenue, including $14,000 for operator wages. Olson asked for the remainder of the funds once the State of Alaska pays them.

Zaremba reported it will be discussed during the meeting with RDVFD, as requested by Dean Bean.

**Emergency Medical Services – Establish Delta Ambulance Response Team (DART) as the City Medical Advisory Board, Appoint City Representation on DART** (pages 2+3), **Schedule City Council Work Session Regarding Funding, AML Tax Conference Report** (*Visitor Center Rental* – page 3)

Phelan reported City Code 3.05.090 addresses a medical advisory board. Rural Alaska Emergency Services (RAES) has dedicated hundreds of hours (since November 2022) to research financing ambulance services while soliciting and collecting community donations. Phelan asked to appoint Delta Ambulance Response Team (DART) as the City's medical advisor and appoint a member of the Council to the DART Board.

Hallgren reported he attended the DART meeting on October 30 to learn the latest information. He appreciated DART backing the community's desire to maintain the Advanced Life Support (ALS) level of service and he agreed with appointing a Council member to the DART Board to help find a way to fund ambulance services that the City can no longer afford.

Clark Richeson reported he was appointed to the DART Board as a RAES representative. RAES researched and conducted the initial framework to establish ambulance services and continues to collect donations to support the current contract with Delta Medical Transport ($126,000 contributed April-November 2025) but is totally separate from DART. Their responsibility is to stand up a non-profit ambulance operation, draft bylaws, hire an attorney, and encourage partnerships with Rural Deltana, Deltana Community Corporation (DCC), and other community entities. They already confirmed a physician sponsor.

Zaremba reported he authorized City Administrator Lori Roberts to attend the Installation Innovation Forum in Monterey, California (October 27/29).

Roberts reported committed revenue to operate a non-profit ambulance service totaling $850,000 to $900,000; $450,000 from billing, $160,000 from community donations, $100,000 from Pogo Mine, $200,000 from the City landfill (depending on the volume of trash), and $50,000 from Lockheed Martin. Community and Pogo Mine donations may not be dependable on an annual basis. Roberts reported the forum in Monterey was highly informative. Takeaways were that the City must obtain an ambulance, through an OLDCC (Office of Local

Defense Community Corporation) grant. A DOD IGSA (Intergovernmental Support Agreement) between the City and Fort Greely is also necessary.
Discussion followed regarding Robert's securing the NPI (National Provider ID) and Medicare/Medicaid numbers, whether recruiting volunteers was possible, and the City taking responsibility of coding (not billing).
Richeson reported DART must hire an EMS Director as soon as the bylaws and non-profit are drafted.
Phelan restated his request to appoint DART as the City's Medical Advisory Board.
Hallgren asked to get legal opinion about conflicts of interest if Council members serve on the DART Board.
Motion: Hallgren moved to appoint Michael Phelan as City representative on the DART Board subject to City Attorney advice; Leith seconded.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Case, Leith, Hallgren, Prestegard, Phelan, Zaremba).
Motion: Hallgren moved to appoint Michael Prestegard as alternate Council representative; Phelan seconded.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Phelan, Case, Hallgren, Prestegard, Leith, Zaremba).

**CORRESPONDENCE** – none

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**
**City Hall Telephones**
Roberts reported that Anatoliy Barladyn recently repaired phone lines at the Delta School District. He may be able to fix City Hall problems by November 30 for an estimated $2,000 - $2,500. ACS will continue to charge $400/month for each of the six phone lines, including fax, but not $16,000 for a new phone system.
Discussion followed regarding reducing phone bills to $155/month, currently paying $189/month for each (two) dedicated 9-1-1 lines, and Roberts presenting quotes and more information on November 18.

**Visitor Center Rental** (plus discussion about taxation to support non-profit ambulance services)
Hallgren reported $500/year in rent does not compare to the maintenance of the Visitor Center. Several buildings (Community Center, Ice Arena, Visitor Center) provide service to the community without breaking even. Many tourists stop for Delta's claim to fame, the end-of-the-Alaska-Highway. Hallgren reported the Council has always avoided undercutting local businesses, including not competing as a landlord (should leasing the Visitor Center be a consideration).
Phelan disagreed, stating the City is in competition with other landlords by charging so little to lease the Visitor Center. Referring to skipped conversation (*AML Tax Conference Report* from page 2), Phelan reported he attended the AML Conference in Anchorage October 21/23. The City is spending more than its income. To be responsible, the Council needs to look at a model municipal code. Alaska Municipal League (AML) would like 1) to meet with the Council to discuss taxation structure, rules and responsibilities in setting up an excise tax, sin tax (alcohol, marijuana, tobacco, gambling), or a bed tax that would not affect the populace, and 2) conducting an assessment so that one demographic area of the community is not burdened more than another. Some taxation proposals are specific to raise funds for a particular purpose in a limited timeframe only.
Zaremba agreed with getting educated and setting terms that this community can live with, should the State of Alaska force borough formation.

**NEW BUSINESS**
**Revisit Check Numbers from Aug 19, 2025 Purchases Over $1,000**
Reierson reported check numbers from the August 19 Council meeting did not match vendors because they were not alphabetized. She asked Council to approve the list of amended purchases (both totaling $24,981.98). Payments were already issued. The correction was necessary to satisfy auditors and to reissue payment because an initial check was never cashed (see CK #23785 - *Purchases Over $1,000* on page 4).
Motion: Leith moved to accept the amended list of checks from August 19, 2025, matching the check numbers to the correct vendors; Phelan seconded.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Prestegard, Phelan, Leith, Case, Hallgren, Zaremba).

**Landfill Gas Wells**
Phelan reported it has been difficult to get three separate quotes to drill gas wells. He received one. The driller must coordinate with the Geotech engineers, the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), the State

of Alaska (permit holder), and Bristol Engineers. Gas wells are federally mandated to keep gas out of buildings and, because the landfill buildings sit lower than the septic pits, the mandate could be argued, possibly reducing the number of wells that are required. Phelan asked Council to authorize him as project manager to make decisions to move the project forward. The contract will need to be awarded. Bristol Engineering submitted an estimate of $20,000 ($10,000 to recalculate the lifespan on the landfill based on current volume and $10,000 for project management services, which would be the responsibility of the project manager).
Roberts reported bids were advertised twice. The end date of the second advertisement is November 14.
Motion: Leith moved to appoint Michael Phelan as project manager for landfill gas wells; Hallgren seconded.
Hallgren asked that Phelan communicate progress with both the Mayor and City Administrator.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Hallgren, Leith, Case, Phelan, Prestegard, Zaremba).

**Time Value Investments (TVI) Money Market Savings Accounts**
Reierson asked whether to reinvest $1,009,730.02 in matured general savings CDs.
Prestegard suggested using it to stand up the non-profit ambulance service and/or to purchase a compactor.
Hallgren reported it took years to build savings, and the City is currently running at a deficit, using ($612,262) savings for ambulance services. If faced with more deficit spending to resolve the ambulance situation, he would rather use reserves without paying penalties.
Discussion followed regarding taking 25% of TVI savings out and reinvesting 75% of it into insured CDs.

**FY26 First Quarter Budget Update**
Reierson reported:

- The first quarter is the City's biggest spending months because of insurance.
- Mapping services were overspent because of fixing duplicate addresses and entering subdivision data that was never done.
- $10,000 was budgeted for landfill equipment rentals, but $44,600 was spent.
- City Hall and Community Center expenditures were high because of gutter installations.
- A deposit was paid for survey work at the cemetery expansion.

Discussion followed regarding funding for EMS paid only through March 2026, no response from the State of Alaska to the City's request for forgiveness of the $50,000/year prison debt (FY26/FY28 outstanding), Phelan requesting to review terms of contracts, i.e.; Delta Skating Association, Visitor Center, grass cutting no longer contracted out, possibly requesting volunteerism for funds that are donated to user groups, i.e., sports teams, never ending upgrades (buildings, park fences, dugouts, ice rink, etc.), how PILT has increased over the years and Revenue Sharing (Community Assistance) has decreased, whether curbside garbage pickup could be beneficial, and consumers expecting a significant rate increase for electricity.

**Purchases Over $1,000**
CK #23781 - $1,004.91 to Arctic Fire & Safety for VFD equipment repairs, gas monitor calibration, and House Identification signs
CK #23782 - $1,225.00 to Association of Defense Communities for Roberts to attend 2025 Installation Innovation Forum in Monterey, California Oct 27/29
CK #23783 - $85,404.17 to Delta Medical Transport for November 2025 ambulance contract
CK #23784 - $1,172.81 to Follett Content Solutions for library books
CK #23785 - $1,000.00 to Professional Development Academy for Roberts to attend cybersecurity training Aug - Nov (replace check #23684 from August 18, 2025)
CK #23786 - $1,513.39 to Shell for October equipment fuel
CK #23787 - $6,571.93 to Vitus for October heating and equipment fuel
Prestegard asked to disclose RAES's contribution with Delta Medical Transport payments.
Reierson reported a stop payment was made on check #23684, and RAES has paid $16,500/month since July. [Their November EMS payment was received on November 6.]
Motion: Leith moved to approve checks #23781 through 23787; Hallgren seconded.
Motion passed on a roll call with six in attendance (Case, Prestegard, Leith, Hallgren, Phelan, Zaremba).

**REPORTS**

**Mayor** – Igor Zaremba reported:

- Eastside Auto is assessing the Dodge truck because of an emissions code.
- Glenn Melton, the new Public Works mechanic, pulled the sander apart and got both it and the F350 International plow operational. While the sander was down, David Rusher, Public Works Foreman, and his wife sanded roads from buckets. At the time Victoria Rusher was employed (filling in for the City janitor).
- The gray water tank at the fire station was pumped on October 24.
- Six recaps (retreaded tires) arrived for the grader. They were $8,000 compared to new tires ($10,000 to $12,000).
- The entrance doors at the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena were repaired on October 30. There are plans to adjust the tension so the doors close easier.
- The wing on the grader was installed on October 31, and it is ready to push snow.
- A new battery was replaced in the Zamboni.
- The big tire changer has both single-phase and three-phase options and is in the process of getting mounted at the Public Works building.

Roberts reported that the Public Works crew will produce a weekly report identifying what issues they face and what was accomplished. The same is expected from personnel at the landfill.

**Administrator** – Lori Roberts reported:

- The last aerial map, done by GVEA in 2023, was given to Tom Duncan, City mapper, to update the City mapping program.
- Landfill personnel have started cleaning septic pits on the northern side, preparing for it to be reopened.
- Referring to the EMS issue, she reported she reached out to AML about the Big Beautiful Bill. The State of Alaska is soliciting input about where communities need funding, which may benefit Delta's EMS crisis.
- State of Alaska personnel hosted a public meeting on October 30 to work on the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which is to be completed by December 30. They are scheduled to meet again on November 19/20. Public comments are due by December 10.
- An updated Hazard Mitigation Plan will be presented in December.
- The Small Communities Emergency Response Plan (SCERP) was updated and distributed.
- The annual Alaska Municipal League (AML) conference is at the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage December 10-12. Early Bird registration ends November 14 and discounts at Captain Cook ends November 10.

**At Large** – Pete Hallgren encouraged Council participation in the annual AML Conference, especially newly-elected training December 3 (online) and December 8-9.

**Finance** – Kaylee Reierson reported:

- The FY25 audit was done last week and resulted in only one finding, a payroll issue.
- An external accountant is no longer needed because all audits from the past ten years are caught up.

**City Clerk** – Pat White reported the Community Thanksgiving Dinner was moved from the Community Center to the Junior High School gymnasium on November 27, 1:00-4:00, due to the recent government furlough and expecting a larger crowd.

Motion: Hallgren moved to extend meeting for another 15 minutes at 8:00pm; Leith seconded. Motion carried.

**Library** – Mary Leith reported:

- The adult winter reading challenge is in full swing. Finishers receive stickers and will be entered into drawings for prizes. The adult challenge generated lots of interest and book sharing.
- A Christmas card-making class is scheduled for the evening of November 14.
- All library staff passed the online Passport Acceptance Agent exam and are working toward taking over processing passport applications in January.
- Library Director Tiki Levinson will attend Literacy Night at Delta Elementary on November 6 to promote the library and all it has to offer to young people in our community.

- Statistics of the month: Did you know that the library staff proctors tests? Remote learning is still popular and means tests must be monitored by an approved institution. Tests that are not online require library staff to monitor, time the test, scan it, and return it to the university.

**Cemetery** – Mary Leith reported:

- There are 23 plots that are available for purchase at Rest Haven Cemetery, plus two winter graves (five were prepared, one was used two weeks ago, a burial is scheduled for Friday, and one grave will be reserved for a pending death). Two other private graves are also prepared for expected deaths.
- Since January, there have been 16 local deaths, ten of which were buried at Rest Haven.
- Completion of the cemetery expansion next spring will be in good time.

**Health & Safety** – Michael Phelan advised people to pack a winter travel bag with boots, mittens, and something bright and flashy for the side of the road in case of vehicle failure.

**Emergency Services** – Miles Patton reported DJVFD responded to three structure fires and five motor vehicle accidents in the past two weeks. DMT responded to over 40 EMS calls in the past month.

Hallgren asked about an updated quarterly report from Delta Medical Transport.

Roberts reported DMT has a new auditor and a new accountant. They will come back to the Council once their books are in order.

**Landfill / Cemetery** – Michael Phelan reported:

- Both loaders are back in service at the landfill. They have small maintenance issues that can be done in-house. There is no need for loaner equipment now that City equipment is operational.
- Burying debris in the northeast corner of Rest Haven Cemetery may be the best solution to dispose of it.
- There is a possibility that Partners for Progress could excavate and build a parking lot at the cemetery as part of their academy next year.

Roberts reported that projects need to be proposed to Partners in January. The students are already repairing one city limits sign. Building Cell 3 at the landfill could be good exposure to operating equipment.

**Airport** – Mike Prestegard asked to grade North Taxiway, but there is an inch of snow on the runway.

**Emergency Preparedness** - Mike Prestegard advised residents to get chimneys cleaned out and to test vehicle brakes. Multiple military vehicles were in the ditch because of not checking or replacing tires.

**ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Al Edgren referenced operating costs of the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena and recalled when the City, High School, and Delta Skating Association each paid one-third. That arrangement may be worth revisiting. Regarding taxation, he suggested looking internally for other ways to cut the budget before considering taxes.

Reierson reported the School District and DSA contributed $20,000 to the FY26 ice arena budget ($91,463).

**ADJOURNMENT** – 8:18pm

_____ CITY _____

Igor Zaremba, Mayor SEAL Pat White, City Clerk