

January 7, 2003 - City Hall
Delta Junction City Council
5:00pm Regular Meeting

MINUTES

Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith-Dowling called the regular meeting at 5:00pm. Ron Beck, Henry Summers, Mark Weller and Lou Heinbockel were present. Mayor Gilbertson and Susie Kemp were excused.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA - APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Leith-Dowling discussed two purchase orders to add onto New Business. Summers moved to approve the agenda as amended with the add-on; Heinbockel seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Leith-Dowling provided information on changes already corrected. Beck moved to approve minutes of the December 16, 2002 regular meeting; Summers seconded. Motion carried.

REPORTS

Rescue Squad - Hallgren stated he talked to Jim DeWitt, City attorney, about purchasing a new ambulance. He believes a duplicate of the last one can be purchased without putting it out to bid and will respond in writing.

Airport - Mark Weller, referring to a notice Council members received, stated he feels the terrorism insurance writer would be a waste of time and money.

Weller asked about resurfacing the runway, which will be discussed under New Business. Weller said when the work is being done it has been suggested to grade the north-south strip, bringing in a couple loads of fill if needed to level out and maintain air traffic for the 2 or 3 weeks to complete this. He requested to smooth that strip out for winter ski also. The second strip would be valuable.

Heinbockel asked for a conclusion regarding the Cummings' family providing the equipment work.

Hallgren stated the City attorney reported it would be complicated. In the meantime, we are waiting on GVEA for the firm price on the latest electrical layout.

Weller said the City could rent Cummings' equipment if their bid is competitive.

Hallgren said that would not be a problem unless they were to drive/operate the equipment. The City would have to put them on payroll.

City Clerk - White asked for clarification on an issue from the last meeting. Leith-Dowling stated the item addressed was a suggestion and not an instruction.

Dept of Economic Development -

Hallgren stated Impact money is not here. Representative John Harris spoke with Fairbanks and Juneau yesterday, reporting that there is a letter stating the "check is in the mail". This money, \$270,000, is needed to pay the Waldo's for the landfill property. Cotten asked for it on December 12. Waldo's are holding out on the transfer till the end of this week.

Hallgren reported receipt of recent fire subscriptions. Letters were sent out and to date there are 45 subscribers, totaling \$3,600.

Discussion followed regarding whether or not City Council members, firefighters and EMTs are excluded from paying the fees.

Beck thought Council had agreed that City Council members would not be exempt.

Hallgren thought Council members and City employees were exempt but he ignored it and paid the requested amount.

Hallgren reminded Council of upcoming meetings. A work session is scheduled for 5:00pm, Tuesday, January 14 at the school district office to work on the school replacement strategy with the School Board. Another work session is scheduled for 9:00am, Saturday, January 18 at the Conference Room. Both breakfast and lunch will be provided. This work session will prepare, in detail, the financial status of the City. Project timelines will be established, some rough and some comprehensive. The meeting will be detailed discussion to enable the Council to make better decisions. Other community issues will be addressed at the end of the meeting. The length of the meeting is not known.

Hallgren reported on the loader bid process and that the City had received a protest from the next higher bidder.

Discussion followed.

Hallgren stated the protest was given to James DeWitt, the City attorney, and will be discussed at the next Council meeting. Hallgren will provide the reason for protest upon receiving information from DeWitt.

Hallgren reported status of the water problems at the Community Center. Bob Morley used "bomb pills" which are five times the strength of Clorox. So much debris was brought up that it clogged the toilet lines. Morley was instructed by Environmental Health Division of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) to run water on and off for three weeks. The latest tests are straight from the well and from the farthest part of the piping. Results should be received within the next two days. The debris was rust related.

Hallgren stated Morley has been plowing the bike path along school road with the snow blower attachment on the brush cutter.

Hallgren reported on the TV repeater services. Initially MACTEC was asked to prepare a proposal to complete a study, including research on digital access. It was decided to not pursue this and just concentrate on rebuilding the system. Hallgren recommended getting proposals to rebuild the existing 911 radios, the Deltana repeater, the City repeater and the City TV repeater sights. All are to be rebuilt to the same specs as when they were originally built. It may or may not include buying new radios. It will keep the existing systems in the existing sights but in new condition. It is getting so complicated. This proposal will use up available funding but it will accomplish the agenda item and have a productive outcome. Hallgren said it would be best to rebuild our own system to see that it functions before we investigate new systems. Hallgren stated MACTEC indicated the least expensive and best solution is to cut both towers down and put up two smaller towers rather than platforms. The goal is for the 911 systems, Deltana repeater, City repeater and TV reception to all function. Find a new site? We can look at finding an additional or replacement site for one of the repeaters once all radios are working right. Hallgren stated he believes the problem is not military related, nor is it with the repeaters.

Hallgren reported on two items, yet to be explored, that have surfaced within the last two weeks. 1) A statewide emergency system is presently being constructed and 2) there is possibility of having fiber optic Internet in Delta in the near future.

Weller said the line already exists along the pipeline.

Hallgren stated Channel 17 does not belong to the City. However, when it has problems, he complains to Alaska Rural Communications Service (ARCS) and they repair at their expense. A recent e-mail, addressing the ARCS equipment, stated the repair issues fall under the State of Alaska's partnering agreement with ACS. What would it cost for a reliable system that would last for years? The belief is the entire system could be renewed for \$25,000. But Channel 17 belongs to the State. The City has never agreed to take over ownership or maintenance. Hallgren asked if Council wished for him to explore it further.

Heinbockel said Channel 17 and the state's involvement has been very reliable. He gave a brief history.

Discussion followed regarding reception and different locations around Delta.

Hallgren asked if the City opted to upgrade or purchase new equipment but not take over the maintenance.

Heinbockel said the system should be left to the state to both operate and maintain.

Beck said "checking into it" would mean to have the State come down and fix their equipment and tower, especially if it's their responsibility.

Discussion followed.

Council agreed to have Hallgren research Channel 17 and the issue about reception. The goal is to have reception for radio and TV by next September.

Hallgren reported an ad was placed in the local newspaper. The ad requests proposals for Social Service impact funds. He stated that Dennis Dooley, City Planner, put together a two-page application, which is available to pick up at City Hall.

Hallgren said he has been asked to allow members of DREDC (Delta Regional Economic Development Council) oversee the Social Service proposals.

Discussion followed.

Council decided DREDC would act as an advisory body, to review and screen agency applications. They would set up criteria, complete the initial screening and pass recommendations to the City Council. The Council will make final decisions.

Heinbockel stated DREDC is to not make promises to any agency.

Lamar Cotten discussed his (3-page) handout, *Delta Regional Government Options Study*.

The purpose of the study is to inform Delta area residents of regional government. He said there is a huge interest from the State's legislators and administrative branches that are taking a hard look at the unorganized borough. In all likelihood the State will present this in the upcoming months. Cotten suggested getting community involvement by establishing a special committee and appointing two representatives from each of the five different entities (City Council, Deltana Corporation, Delta/Greely School District (DGSD), Chamber of Commerce and DREDC), planning to meet once a month in order to complete the process by May or June 2003.

Discussion followed.

Beck said reporters from Fairbanks canvassed the community, getting quotes on how the community feels about a borough. He stated should a borough be forced upon Delta, he

would like to understand who the clientele will be that can pay these taxes because so many would be exempt.

Hallgren stated the State legislature and Local Boundary Commission (LBC) could force a borough.

Discussion followed regarding past history of borough attempts.

Hallgren asked about the City's position. He asked, "What would be the least objectionable boundaries to the people of this community?" Cotten has talked to staff at LBC and pressed the concept that the model borough boundary, Eagle to Mentasta to the Canadian Border and Tok, does not make sense. Is the LBC willing to consider a borough the size of the school district? They appear to be amenable.

Leith-Dowling stated she would like knowing the reason(s) why Delta's petition to incorporate was rejected a couple of years ago.

Cotten stated he would provide the report of why LBC rejected the borough proposal.

Heinbockel said he thought people had to vote about forming a borough.

Cotten stated that is correct, except this mandate is new State law. It is considered by many State historians as the most acrimonious bill ever passed.

Discussion followed regarding the grant and the purpose of the borough study.

Hallgren stated that if we, the City of Delta Junction, are to be forced into a borough we wish to have a say and that is to have the borough the size of the school district. He said we do not want to be in the position where a bill comes out saying if Delta does not form a borough going to the Canadian border, the model borough boundary that the LBC adopted, by such and such date this is the borough that will automatically go into effect. It gives us the option to be in our own area and not have to serve Tok and Mentasta and Eagle. Hallgren said the study would say if there must be a borough it must be for Delta, not an interior borough from Delta to the Canadian border.

Cotten said he's not advocating a borough. Why don't we understand what it is and then make decisions?

Weller asked what is driving the study. Is it so Delta can become a governmental system like the North Star Borough or Mat-Su? Do they want us to become a borough so we can tax ourselves and pay our own way? Our fair share of taxes?

Cotten said it is likely to be the latter. Delta is on the short list of areas that are most likely to organize a borough because it is believed they can afford to do it. Let's be better informed, whether or not we like the idea of forming a borough.

Weller said it would be cheaper for all to just pay a State income tax.

Cotten said that is very unlikely to happen.

Discussion followed about other possible options other than being a borough.

Cotten explained the borough petition process. He said Senator Gary Wilken stated to streamline this process there should be two areas submitted for LBC review each year.

Beck said that should be a concern. If we go through the petition process and come to a conclusion of what area would be best in a borough, down in Juneau they may say, "Ok, we have one on the line now."

Cotten said there are similar studies throughout the State. He personally had prepared three proposals himself and none have ever incorporated as a borough.

Discussion followed about creating a committee of members to participate in the study.

Randy Petersen, from the audience, said he owns property down at Sawmill Creek. He would like people out there, without power and cleared roads, represented. The State dropped maintenance of Cummings Road and has given up on the ag project.

Discussion followed about different sections of the community being represented.

Weller said he wants not only groups representing their interest but also an equal number of independent "Joe-citizen".

Weller moved to reduce the representatives from the public groups (City Council, Deltana Corporation, DGSD, Chamber of Commerce and DREDC) from two to one representative and also appoint five representatives from the community at large, Delta-Greely community area-wide, to be approved by the City Council; Heinbockel seconded.

Beck asked to allow time to digest this and further discuss it at the January 18 work session.

Weller and Heinbockel both agreed to table the motion, to further discuss it at the work session.

Cotten explained government and how other communities function.

Hallgren discussed the prison controversy and how it affected Delta. He asked why the City receives the money instead of some other organization? It is because the City is the only qualified organization that could qualify to receive the federal impact funds. We are trying to serve the entire Delta community with a base of only 800+ people. Ultimately whether the City gets larger or it is forced into a borough, it is the only way all of the people in Delta will be able to have their opinion heard.

Cotten said the intent to study is not to make a recommendation. It will provide information on what it costs to provide "this level of service at this level of government". Hopefully the community will have a better understanding of what it costs and how to find a way to pay for it. From that the informed voter/local resident can make decisions. The study is not to advocate anything.

Hallgren said borough means paying for your school. The people must vote to sell the bonds. The State will pay 70% of the building. This all gives more power. It would give more funding options. Find out what the people want. It may be very minimal. Two road graders, a building to house them, people to operate them. Then find out what it will take to provide them. We may find that it will take a 20-mil tax rate to grade Cummings Road. That will not wash.

Discussion followed regarding City versus borough.

Public Health and Safety - Henry Summers stated the Fire Department is pursuing bid proposals for new equipment.

Hallgren said it must go through the competitive bid process. The important thing is to find out exactly what apparatus the department wants to purchase. Both Delta and Deltana will be handled in the process.

Discussion followed regarding requests and decisions made in past history.

Public Works - Lou Heinbockel stated some streets have been graded.

Summers' presence was excused at 6:47pm.

OLD BUSINESS

- Channel 17 TV Maintenance

Heinbockel stated he is not in favor of maintaining Channel 17 in its current condition. He said he feels it is the State's responsibility. He said he would support it if the State positioned it in a location that everyone could reach and also that it would provide a decent signal.

Hallgren will research Channel 17 maintenance further.

NEW BUSINESS

- MACTEC Proposal to Engineer Paving of Mil-Tan Road
- MACTEC Proposal to Engineer Resurfacing of the Airport

Hallgren said both proposals would be put out for separate bids. They are under discussion at the same time because both will require crushed rock. He stated the costs to pave Mil-tan are high because it costs the same to do a two-mile job as it does a one or three-mile job. The airport requires a fair amount of work, not just dropping gravel. MACTEC will provide Council with the benefits and downfall of chip seal or asphalt. They will also consider putting in an additive alternate to seal existing cracks in the asphalt. The hill, at the intersection of Mil-tan and the paved section of Nistler, could be shaved off about 5 feet but won't provide much benefit for the cost. MACTEC feels the most effective way to take care of it would be by grooving the pavement.

Discussion followed regarding the hazards of the Mil-tan/Nistler intersection. The existing pavement width (24 feet) meets State standard (750 vehicles per day). The speed limit is 35mph.

Hallgren stated there is \$120,000 available for road maintenance.

Heinbockel asked to add widening the road with chip seal, providing a hard shoulder on both sides.

Discussion followed regarding road conditions.

Hallgren will inquire about widening with chip seal and painting lines.

Heinbockel moved to approve proposals from MACTEC to engineer the paving of Mil-tan Road and engineer resurfacing of the airport; Beck seconded.

Weller asked to include a cross strip to make the airport serviceable.

Hallgren said the City does not want to spend money to engineer a cross strip.

Discussion followed.

Motion passed unanimously, to accept MACTEC proposals, on a roll call vote.

- Renewal of Liquor License by the Loyal Order of Moose #911

Heinbockel moved for the City of Delta Junction to show no objection to the application for renewal of a liquor license; Weller seconded. Motion carried.

- Purchase Orders
 - PO#07560 to Aetna WHO-AAS in the amount of \$4,365.50 for January 03 insurance
 - PO#07561 to Bank of America in the amount of \$2,405.39 for Hallgren and Cotten Nov/Dec travel
 - PO#07562 to David Boadwine in the amount of \$599.00 for Robolaser survey transit
 - PO#07563 to Lamar Cotten in the amount of \$6,498.95 for December planner services
 - PO#07564 to Guess & Rudd in the amount of \$636.77 for November legal services
 - PO#07565 to Peter Hallgren in the amount of \$637.39 for MD Conference costs
 - PO#07566 to Heiman Fire Equipment in the amount of \$979.90 for a portable tank

- PO#07567 to NC Machinery Company in the amount of \$1,520.12 for road grader repairs
- PO#07568 to Rural Deltana Fire Department in the amount of \$562.93 for honors banquet (catered meal) on December 10, 2002
- PO#07602 to Delta Fuel Company in the amount of \$1,481.56 for December fuel charges

➤ PO#07603 to PDC, Inc. in the amount of \$2,925.66 for multi-use facility consulting Leith-Dowling noted Purchase Order #07568. She stated \$250 was approved at the last meeting. This purchase order is more than the amount agreed upon. White stated \$250 is what the City was asked to cover and Rural Deltana was instructed to have the City pay the full amount.

Discussion followed regarding communication and approving the additional amount.

Heinbockel questioned Purchase Order #07567 for road grader repairs. He reviewed back-up papers supporting amount charged.

Heinbockel moved to approve Purchase Orders #07560 through #07567 and add-ons, Purchase Orders #07602 and #07603; Weller seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Heinbockel moved to pay half of \$562.93 (PO#07568) as the City's portion of the honor's banquet; Weller seconded.

Motion failed on a roll call vote. Weller voted not to pay half. (Council members present constituted a quorum but all must agree for the motion to pass.)

Weller moved to pay the whole amount "based on the fact that the volunteers provide a tremendous service and next time we, hopefully, will have better communication"; Beck seconded.

Motion failed on a roll call vote. Heinbockel and Leith-Dowling voted against the motion.

Hallgren stated because \$250 was authorized at the last meeting, on December 16, and the motions failed, \$250 would be paid.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Tana Wood commented on the borough study document created by Cotten. She stated it was incredibly well done. She asked why you wouldn't want a comprehensive study of this kind of information. Nobody likes taxes. Why wouldn't you want a good regional profile? Or a historical overview? Why would you not want a study of different kinds of government options? With that we can make intelligent decisions. It might quell some rumors.

Wood stated she felt organizations do represent the community. How much better could the Council do in picking citizens to be on a committee than to choose those that are already elected by the people of the community? They are not just business people. The purpose of the committee is to guide the study. Those selected will basically be the grunt workers.

Leith-Dowling agreed with Wood's comments.

ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS

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Weller asked about a letter from Valdez, to provide a letter of support for improvement on the Richardson Highway. (The letter was received in Council boxes, not meeting packets.)

Heinbockel asked to table it and bring back at the next meeting as an agenda item.

ADJOURNMENT Weller moved to adjourn at 7:22pm; Beck seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat White, City Clerk