



March 4, 2003 - City Hall  
Delta Junction City Council  
5:00pm Regular Meeting

## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL

A regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on March 4, 2003 in the Conference Room at City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska. Mayor Gilbertson called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Council members present: Roy Gilbertson, Presiding, Mary Leith-Dowling,  
Mark Weller, Judy Dewar, Lou Heinbockel, Henry Summers  
Council member excused: Susie Kemp  
City employees present: Dave Zimmerman, Pete Hallgren, Lamar Cotten, Pat White  
Additionally, Janet Boyer, Delta Wind reporter, was in attendance.

### AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA - APPROVAL OF AGENDA

No changes were made to the agenda.

**Leith-Dowling moved** to approve agenda as posted; Summers seconded. Motion carried.

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Heinbockel identified one area to change for a correct description and another to change with correct terminology.

**Heinbockel moved** to approve minutes from the February 18, 2003 regular Council meeting as amended; Leith-Dowling seconded. Motion carried.

### PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

### COUNCIL COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Gilbertson called for public and Council comments on agenda items with none being offered.

### REQUEST TO SPEAK

Kathryn S. Tietz, Stewardship Forester at Division of Forestry in Fairbanks, introduced herself and Clinton Northway, Forestry Technician for the Fairbanks area. Tietz stated she works

with private landowners on enhancing their forests and their defensible space. She also coordinates FireWise Community Workshops for the State of Alaska. The upcoming workshop, May 6-8, will be held in Fairbanks.

Tietz explained the national FireWise Action Program. It begins with single-family dwellings, then subdivisions, then community development. We can prevent and reduce the number of fires but we cannot eliminate them. Homeowners need to understand fundamentals (oxygen, fuel source and heat) needed to create fire. Local dangers are black spruce, dry grasses and narrow accesses to roads. Vents and screens of buildings are small areas that embers can attack, as is debris that collects under porches. Homeowners are encouraged to identify the flammability of their homes. Are roofs, gutters and decks constructed of flammable materials? Are ladders and water sources available? Zone 1 is 30 feet from your home. It includes the woodpile, propane tanks and dry dead grass. These items need to be eliminated. Zone 2, 60 to 100 feet, is a secondary buffer area. Shrubbery needs removed, trees thinned so they have no crown. This will stop fire from being carried from tree to tree should it spread into the forest. Zone 3 is the outer fuel transition. It is continuation of your property. Zone 4 describes if property is located on a slope. Fire travels quickly uphill because it preheats the area ahead of it.

Tietz encouraged homeowners to identify their own risks and manage any flammables on their property. She encouraged consideration of combustible engines, stating the exhaust from four-wheelers can inflame dead grass as can sparks from chain saws. Are there turnarounds on your property for emergency vehicles? How would you evacuate your area and work with emergency communications?

Tietz presented a fire history map showing fires over 100 acres between 1950 and 2001. Most of the fires were in the interior of Alaska. The wind in Delta helps fire grow extremely rapidly. Local dump fires are extremely hazardous should it spread to dead grass and black spruce. Burning contamination becomes a considerable health hazard. Results are the same whether fire spreads from a building structure to wild lands or vice versa if there is no defensible space in the path of a fire.

Tietz explained several fires across the state and lessons learned from them. She said the objective of a FireWise Workshop is for individual community members or groups of urban and remote areas to work together to learn the FireWise process, to take information to your home and community/village. Alaska's program addresses regional concerns, black spruce and dead grass versus swimming pools and fire hydrants.

Tietz invited attendance at their booth at the Interior Home Show the end of March and also to the workshop, May 6-8, 2003, at the Wedgewood in Fairbanks. The workshop is limited to 100 participants. Additional information can be obtained through the Internet sites:

[www.firewise.org/communities](http://www.firewise.org/communities), [www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/fire.htm](http://www.dnr.state.ak.us/forestry/fire.htm) or

<http://fire.ak.blm.gov>. Tietz' work phone is 451-2668 and Andy Williams, Fire Information Officer with Alaska Fire Service, is 356-5511.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

- **Alaska Mental Health Trust Land Sales**

Hallgren reported property would be sold statewide. The land in Delta is a subdivision of approximately 50 acres on the Alaska Highway, along the border of Ft. Greely and north of the proposed Eddy Drop Zone. The 10 parcels are a little over 4 acres each.

## **REPORTS**

**Airport** - Pete Hallgren reported receipt of a bid from GVEA to put in electricity. He also said Richard McDonald was hired and trees were cut down on the section set out for the taxiway. In the spring and when the loader is purchased, Boadwine will build the 400-foot section for the taxiway. The firewood would be free to remove except that it is too dangerous to retrieve. Boadwine will haul it off.

**City Clerk** - Pat White reported the City Hall flag would be flown at half-mast on March 6 in honor of volunteer firefighter, Chris Kobierowski. March 6 is the anniversary of his death in 2001.

**Dept of Economic Development** - Pete Hallgren stated the next regular meeting would be moved to Wednesday, March 19, instead of March 18 because several will attend a meeting in Fairbanks with the Interiors Builders Association to discuss housing needs and opportunities in Delta.

Hallgren reported he received a request to have a facilitator for the upcoming work sessions. He said Cotten would be available on Thursday, March 20, for the project/planning/vision work session. The Roundtable will also be moved to March 19. The budget workshop will be rescheduled for Thursday, March 13, instead of March 6. Each meeting will start at 5:00pm, either in the conference room at City Hall or across the street at the Community Center.

Heinbockel offered to serve clam chowder for the March 13 work session.

Hallgren stated study packets will be out for Council review this on March 7 and that Cotton will prepare an agenda for the meeting on March 20.

Discussion followed regarding clarification on what topics will be covered and how it will be presented at the work sessions.

Hallgren stated that public comments on the Draft Environmental Assessment (Draft EA) regarding the proposed new range are due Wednesday, March 12. He provided a copy of the City Attorney's draft, explaining the City's position. Hallgren stated he requested additional research from DeWitt to add a section on hydrology. This is more than what Council authorized at the February 18 Council meeting. There are various water questions that may affect the town. It may prove the Eddy Drop Zone is not a favorable location. He explained that the water flows slightly east of town and under the school road. The City airport is also a channel for Jarvis Creek as is the culverts out on Jack Warren Road. There are verbal reports that in the early 1990s there was a problem with overflow from Jarvis Creek that may have caused the ground water to change, causing several businesses downtown to drill new wells.

Hallgren stated Al Edgren, from State Forestry, stated the fire danger status could change dramatically from one day to the next. USARAK can be in the middle of maneuvers and get shut down.

Discussion followed about other regions of consideration, contamination, the need of extensive cleanup and a possible bridge across the Delta River.

Hallgren said many items of concern are legally irrelevant. One concern is the noise issue. He said the Army has an annoyance scale. It is not based on the loudness of the noise but rather accumulative (average decibels) noise over a 24-hour period.

Council discussed acceptance of Army presence but concern of the firing range too close to the community.

Hallgren reported DeWitt included information, received from Freedom of Information Act (FIA), in his draft regarding the 1999 fire. DeWitt said BLM identified then that there was an extreme chance of burning down Ft. Greely and the town of Delta Junction in the 1999 fire.

Heinbockel said he was driving a busload of firefighters when the south wind kicked in and caused all-out concern. What saved this town was the fact that the wind died down in the early hours of the morning. The Ft. Greely fuel firebreaks out by Alyeska Pump Station #9 were not effective.

Hallgren encouraged Council and community members to turn in comments by March 12. Those that attended the hearing must speak to the court reporter for their comments to be recorded or "heard." He said comments could be faxed to 353-9867 no later than March 12.

Hallgren reported there were six bids opened on February 28. The lowest bid was \$30,000 less than the next lowest but it did not meet the specs on the engine displacement. He said he is now considering the next two lowest bids, \$220,000 (Craig Taylor - Komatsu) and \$222,000 (Construction Machinery - Volvo).

Council discussed bids.

Hallgren said, instead of a 4-yard, this bid requested a 5-yard wheel loader. Used equipment will be looked at for other City equipment needs.

Hallgren reported the City Fire Chief wants to apply for a FEMA grant. It will include breathing apparatus and training funds and will be around \$210,000. Hallgren said that there is a 10% local match and other grant funds cannot be used for this (\$21,000) match. Hallgren said fiberglass air tanks are \$4,500 each and the fire department needs 10.

Summers said the current ones are very old with steel tanks, which are being phased out.

Hallgren said another potential plan to purchase the air tanks is to use the EDA grant. It can be used to replace outdated equipment. He will contact EDA to ask for authorization. Results of a FEMA grant should be known by the end of June.

Hallgren requested authorization from Council to approve the FEMA grant request and also approve the \$21,000 local match.

**Dewar moved** to authorize the request for a FEMA grant, not to exceed the 10% (\$21,000) local match; Summers seconded.

Council discussed the grant process.

**Motion passed** unanimously on a roll call vote.

Cotten reported the Regional Government Options Study Committee would meet on March 5. The purpose of the meeting will be to appoint a chair, provide some background information and outline objectives and approach for the study. Meetings will be monthly and will last until June. The public must understand that we are not attempting to create a borough; we are attempting to make an intelligent decision about an important public policy that is not going to go away because "some people do not like it." The study also includes reviewing a

history of local government, a look at Delta and then looking at different levels of government. The committee will also study the cost of a borough and how they get paid. There is no outcome to this study and therefore, there are no decisions to make. The message to the public needs repeated: we are to study the issue and provide good information.

Cotten reported Karl Hanneman, regional manager at Teck-Pogo, would attempt to attend the Builders Association meeting on March 18. They will address their housing concerns. The school district has authorized an update of their school projections, in preparation for this meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss concerns of what is happening in Delta. There will be a number of bankers invited to this meeting also.

Cotten reported the Local Boundary Commission (LBC) was asked by the legislature to select areas of Alaska, under their definition of feasibility that could become boroughs. They have finalized their report and will present it sometime this month. They identified 8 areas. This area, called the Upper Tanana, combines both the Delta and the Tok REAA. Cotten reported he requested Delta be separated from Tok, listing dozens of reasons from makeup to economic to existing political structures for the two different areas. (For some reason) the commission chose to continue to use the model boundaries and not explore it further. Senator Wilkens had two bills last year. One stated these 5 areas would be organized into a borough by 2005 or "we will do it for you." The other, SB48, stated that each year LBC would identify two areas per year that will become a borough. Cotten said if either bill passes it does not mean that Delta is still forced to join Tok. He said he would continue to emphasize the differences between Delta and Tok districts. Both areas are upper Tanana and are considered road communities but Cotten said he's unable to identify any other link other than the economic drivers (Pogo, Slavic and the military).

Discussion followed regarding other proposed areas pegged by the LBC.

Heinbockel said 25-30 years ago the only issue that made sense was when the commission took Delta's recommendation to put the boundary all the way to the Canadian border. He said his recollection was that the only sense it made was to share wealth with those that had limited wealth.

Discussion continued.

Cotten stated the Tok REAA has 24% native population. Delta has less than 2%. Delta has at least 1000 Slavic community members and Tok must have less than 2%.

Hallgren reported the new governor dismissed 3 of 5 members of the LBC so the commission may have a different philosophy than the old one.

Cotten stated when LBC wrote the description of model boundaries, it was newly appointed, Darryl Hargraves that voted against putting Delta and Tok areas together.

**Finance/School** - Judy Dewar stated she would like all areas of reporting shared equally amongst Council members. She said the *Finance* position, dealing with impact funding, was not her area of expertise.

Hallgren requested Council select someone to report on *Finance*. He said, even though the City has a capable Finance Officer, he needs interaction and to be informed and up-to-date. Zimmerman files a report at each Council meeting. Hallgren prefers details to be asked and

reported back to Council. Raw figures can be extremely deceptive. He said an example is the budget from July 1 to June 30. Annual income does not arrive until October.

After much discussion Dewar agreed to report as *School Liaison* (name changed per Heinbockel's request), Heinbockel offered to take back *Parks* along with *Hockey Rink*, *Public Works* and *Landfill* if Gilbertson would take on *Finance*.

Hallgren said he welcomed any Council member to present questions at any time.

Gilbertson reported the \$2.5 million promised to the school is to arrive within 30 days. It bumps the school district total to 6 million.

Dewar reported that Karen Cedzo would oversee the Partnerships for Progress Committee. Her previous job was Public Relations for UAF. She will help organize, evaluate and make recommendations on handling (\$275,000) impact funds to be used for the training center.

**Hockey Rink** - Gilbertson requested Council consider the hockey building needs before the next Roundtable meeting. He said he is not, nor has been, comfortable with the idea of expanding the Community Center. He also stated he feels the hockey rink can be insulated but needs final recommendation from the architects/engineers. He wants the hockey rink to be functional.

Weller asked about the gymnasium that the rifle team uses. Could an addition be added to the hockey rink instead? The Sportsmen's Club could possibly support it, as the Hockey Association supports the hockey rink. He said he is concerned about students being exposed to lead levels.

Heinbockel said he has always been concerned about fire and students being killed because of shoddy maintenance and construction. He said use of the gymnasium for a rifle range should not have been allowed, nor should it be now. It should be a stand-alone facility.

Heinbockel said he was astounded that an arctic entry was listed as a priority in making improvements for the hockey rink. Immediate needs are bathrooms, locker rooms and water. Codes cannot be met without water.

Dewar said to identify what needs to be done to the hockey facility but show some progress. She stated that when improvement ideas were presented they were not listed by priority.

Hallgren said the idea was to complete a number of things with the grant money. The library is tied in with the rec center. The concept was to get the library and the City Hall completed the first year. Any leftover monies from other projects can go right into the recreation center. The first year money may eat up the major portion that is available. That is how the arctic entryway was included. It was something that could be completed as well as useful. It was considered an improvement, not a project that was given a priority over putting water in.

Gilbertson said the hockey rink is something that will affect the whole community. So does the library. He encouraged Council members to be prepared for the project planning session on March 20.

Hallgren said he has requested information from the architects before the project planning work session. He said, "Dollars add reality and until we know costs we can't inject reality."

**Library** - Mary Leith-Dowling reported Joyce McCombs, Librarian, and Nancy King, Librarian Assistant, are going to Juneau for a library conference.

**Park** - Pete Hallgren inquired about repair to the park fence. Small bids of \$2,000 or less can be put out and not be required to get Davis-Bacon wages.

Discussion followed regarding areas that needed repaired.

Weller said he would inquire with a softball representative regarding what has already been done to maintain the fences.

**Public Works** - Lou Heinbockel reported RJ McDonald cut back trees on more intersections. He suggested having an annual project to cut it all back.

Discussion followed.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

- **Over the Counter City Land Sale Rules**

Hallgren discussed the 2-19-03 land sales document he prepared. Because of well and septic placement problems, lots will not be sold individually if less than ½ acre. One major rule is to have Council approve purchase of properties before the City sells over the counter. There will also be deed restrictions on each lot. Should there be multiple buyers, Council will have discretion on the first one to offer a price.

**Heinbockel moved** to authorize the use of the Over the Counter City Land Sale Rules; Weller seconded.

**Motion passed** unanimously on a roll call vote.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Fee Proposal from PDC Engineers for Condition Surveys**

Hallgren reported PDC used a significant portion of their proposed fee recently when they were down with their crew, inspecting four City buildings. He said Dooley, City Planner, agreed that (\$51,000) fees are reasonable.

Heinbockel said he would like to see construction instead of continually paying for engineering and consulting fees.

Discussion followed.

Gilbertson reported the process must be followed in order to move on because of using federal funds.

**Weller moved** to approve the work order from PDC in the estimated amount of \$51,071; Leith-Dowling seconded.

Hallgren stated the Jan/Feb/March estimated (\$245,000) advance of impact funds was received yesterday and therefore, nothing must be fronted.

**Motion passed** unanimously on a roll call vote.

- **Liquor Renewal for Jack's Liquor Store**

**Heinbockel moved** to show no objection to Jack's Liquor Store license renewal; Weller seconded.

Hallgren asked if Council wanted to discuss renewals in the future. Renewals do not require action.

Summers said he has no problem with existing businesses but would like awareness of new ones.

Discussion followed.

Council agreed that by publicizing liquor license renewals as an agenda item both the Council and the public have an opinion in the direction of the community.

**Motion passed** unanimously on a roll call vote.

- **Purchase Orders**

- PO#07696 to Letha Burcham in the amount of \$6,000.00 for LEPC typing services
- PO#07697 to Lamar Cotten in the amount of \$6,269.64 for consulting fees
- PO#07698 to Guess & Rudd in the amount of \$8,104.79 for legal services
- PO#07699 to MACTEC in the amount of \$9,647.44 for engineering services (Mil-Tan Road)
- PO#07700 to MACTEC in the amount of \$7,108.42 for engineering services (airport runway upgrade)
- PO#07701 to Morgan, Stanley, DW, Inc. in the amount of \$7,554.00 for audit correction from 2001 lot sale (transfer fund to Permanent Fund account at Dean Witter)
- PO#07702 to Amazon.com in the amount of \$602.19 for library books

**Weller moved** to approve payment of purchase orders 07696 through 07702 as listed; Heinbockel seconded.

Leith-Dowling asked about PO #07696.

Summers explained the manual is a local emergency contingency plan for the City of Delta Junction. He said every community is to provide guidelines for any type of natural disaster. Burcham's job is to create a manual for Delta from approximately ten different plans from around the state. The project is due by the end of the month.

Zimmerman, Finance Officer, reported the manual would be about 3" thick and consist of between 200 and 400 pages. It includes emergency plans for such disasters as flood, fire and nuclear reactor waste. Members of LEPC will review it once in its final stage. Money put out will be reimbursed to the City.

Discussion followed regarding charges and what they covered.

Heinbockel asked if fees are in addition to City wages.

Summers explained the \$9,000 contract to prepare the manual. Burcham prepares the manual during non-business hours, working from her home. It is under contract with Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC).

**Motion passed** unanimously on a roll call vote to approve purchase orders.

Hallgren stated attorney fees were for the recent bid protest. EDA will accept a letter from the City so money can be used to pay these fees.

#### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mayor Gilbertson called for additional public comments with none being offered.

#### **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Heinbockel requested to be excused from the March 19 and April 1 meetings. There was no objection.

Gilbertson asked Heinbockel to temporarily chair the first couple Government Options Study meetings. After discussion, Heinbockel agreed.

Cotten reported the school district (DGSD) would officially appoint Mike Schultz as their representative on March 6.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Heinbockel moved to adjourn at 7:26pm; Dewar seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pat White, City Clerk