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**City Council Minutes**  
**July 1, 2003 ~ 5:00PM**

**Regular Meeting**  
**City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**  
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The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on July 1, 2003 in the conference room at City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska. Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith-Dowling called the meeting to order at 5:00pm.

Council members present: Mary Leith-Dowling, Lou Heinbockel, Susie Kemp, Judy Dewar  
Henry Summers. Mark Weller arrived at 5:35pm.  
Council member excused: Mayor Gilbertson (requested 6-27-03)  
City employees present: Dave Zimmerman, Lamar Cotten, Dennis Dooley, Pat White  
Additionally there were 4 members from the community and one out-of-town guest speaker present.

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Leith-Dowling explained add-ons to *New Business* and *Request to Speak*

- ✓ PO# 08010, 08011, 08012, 08013, and 08014
- ✓ Matt Weaver to present update on Sand Creek (Goodpaster) Fire

Heinbockel moved to approve agenda as amended; Summers seconded. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Dewar identified two areas that needed revision in wording.

Heinbockel moved to approve minutes from the June 17, 2003 regular Council meeting as amended; Dewar seconded. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

**COUNCIL COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Mayor Pro tem Leith-Dowling called for public and Council comments on non-agenda items with none being offered.

**REQUEST TO SPEAK**

Matt Weaver, State Public Information Officer (590-8137/Anchorage) introduced himself. He said he wished to present a chronological progression of the Sand Creek (Goodpaster) Wildfire as well as provide information about the current situation and future plans regarding management of the fire. He distributed photos and maps as he presented the history of the fire. His job is to ensure accurate information between the command staff and the public, making sure there is good communication that flows both ways. On the afternoon of June 14, the Alaska Fire Service reported 3,000 lightning strikes. One turned into a 4-acre fire

by 2:00pm. By 4:30am the following morning it had spread to 130 acres, burning both north and east. Seven loads of retardant were transported from Fairbanks. The fire increased in size to the north and to the west and spotted across the Goodpaster River. By June 17 the fire was active, requiring the Delta Initial Attack, a Denali crew and two other crews. The Tazlina crew, a professional hotshot team who are well respected throughout Alaska and other states, saved a cabin. Only an outhouse was lost to fire. The fire continued to grow to 20,000 acres. The progression was to the north and to the east. Five crews along with the Delta firefighters were laying sprinklers, hoses and pumps to protect cabins and homes along the Goodpaster River. Then high humidity and rains slowed the fire. There were no structures lost and no reported injuries. On June 23 the perimeter stopped over to Sand Creek and the fire grew active because the black spruce covered terrain was dry and steep. Some flames were estimated to be 20 and 30 feet high and moving half a mile per hour. Firefighting crews attacked indirectly, securing the fire line. The fire is dead along the winter trail where it is flooded. Crews are securing the fire line by walking along the edges of the burned areas and either covering hot spots with dirt or dousing them with water. Active fire on the western side is being monitored even though it is all wild lands and therefore not a big concern. The visible column of smoke comes from this area.

Zimmerman asked where the fire was in location to the Pogo Creek Mine.

Weaver pointed out the Sand Creek Fire on a map, indicating it is approximately five miles south of Pogo.

Weaver reported there were 200 people working at the peak of the fire on June 30. Presently there are less than 100. Two crews are posted along the upper Goodpaster River. The sprinklers and hoses were left behind so that if the wind or fire changes they are set up to protect the cabins/homes. Weaver said quite a few local residents are employed as guides and riverboat operators. The mission now is to secure the fire line by managing flare-ups, particularly near Whistler's Slough, on the southern edge. There are no immediate plans to dismiss the crews at this time.

Weaver said there would be vibrant growth in the burned areas in the next few years. Part of his job will assess and guide homeowners in creating defensible space, preparing their cabins/homes for any future fires.

Zimmerman asked if the Goodpaster River is restricted.

Weaver said the public is not being prevented from accessing the area/river and certainly not homeowners who wish to check their assets. However, as a safety measure they would like to limit interest if one is not fighting the fire.

Zimmerman asked if the fire will be left to burn until "mother nature takes over."

Weaver stated the fire at both the north and west ends would be left alone. However, on the southern end where there is personal property and cabins, the fire will be actively suppressed.

Kemp asked about the Central fire.

Weaver said crews and equipment were pulled away two days ago. They fly the entire perimeter every morning and every night.

Kemp asked about the winds.

Weaver said it is a south wind pushing the fire north. They do not want it to change and push the fire south.

Heinbockel said winds in Delta are predominantly from the east.

Weaver said the forecast is higher humidity and rain in the next few days. He said he can be reached at 895-2115 for any updates of fire information.

Dewar asked if Weaver is responsible for the map at IGA. She said it is a well-visited site.

Weaver said he helps maintain the map. He also stated signs are posted around town to warn and prevent against fire in the upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> of July weekend.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

### **Eddy Drop Zone Update**

Heinbockel stated he had been optimistic that the Army would take community concerns to heart and do the right thing (put the new training area in the same place in which they've trained in past years). He said they instead have chosen to ignore the wishes of this community for the sake of saving money. Heinbockel said the City has already spent an excess of \$10,000 on legal fees to prevent the Army from using the Eddy Drop Zone (Range Expansion Projects). He feels it is money thrown away. He said he is reluctant to spend any more. The only way the Army will change their decision is if Senator Ted Stevens gets involved and instructs them to build elsewhere.

Leith-Dowling said it is clear they are not concerned with the requests of the community who spoke out against the project.

Heinbockel said Anchorage is experiencing similar controversies. The Army plans to build a huge fence around a portion of Ft. Richardson that was designated for community use. The plan is to use it for another training area. Property owners and neighbors in that area are very upset.

Cotten said the Army has made their decision and the only option our community has is to appeal it judicially. They are not seeking any further information at the "open house" on July 9. They have very descriptively and definitively attempted to answer every question in a tightly written document. He referred to the USARAK Environmental Assessment (EA) response provided to the public this morning around 8:30AM. (The URL is

[http://www.usarak.army.mil/conservation/images/DTA\\_IBCT/DTA%20final%20EA%20AppendixE.pdf](http://www.usarak.army.mil/conservation/images/DTA_IBCT/DTA%20final%20EA%20AppendixE.pdf).)

Cotten read from page 115, referring to the paragraph titled Description of Action, in which they discuss the projected dates of completion, their action plan summary. He said, "The Combined Arms Collective Training Facility (CACTF) is scheduled for completion by September 2007. The Battle Area Complex (BAX) is scheduled for completion in September of 2005. The Collective Training Range (CTR) was signed off in May 2003 and will be completed two months from now." Cotten stated the press indicated that cost was a big factor. He read a portion of the July 1, 2003 Fairbanks Newsminer article, "The construction cost of the selected zone will be as much as 40% less expensive at an estimated \$65 million than the proposed Donnelly Drop Zone (\$100 million) or the Texas Range (\$113 million)."

Dooley said another issue to consider is that the Army never really held a public hearing. They have only presented information and have made a farce of including the community in their plans. He said he wished to caution on avoiding an appeal. "There is no guarantee that the judicial process will be successful but if it is avoided the whole subject may as well be considered dead. There is a lot of grounds for the way in which the Army has positioned themselves that would play admirably in an appeal process." Dooley said the Army had already begun construction when they were holding their information meetings. That presents evidence that the whole process has been a farce. There should have been no construction until this exercise was finished.

Cotten said a determination was made in May 2003 and they have been building the CTR at the North Texas Study Area since then. The last page of the EA specifically states they are not required to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) but just an EA, a short form to analyze impact on federal property.

Leith-Dowling reported there would be an open house at the Jarvis West conference room on July 9. The City has only 30 days to file a protest.

White stated Jim DeWitt, City Attorney, would be in Delta for that meeting. He stated he would be available to meet with Council members after 1:00PM. She also reported Major Dan Hunter has requested the presence of Council ("government leaders") to participate in an aerial and ground tour of the facilities at the Range Expansion Projects. The mayor requested the presence of some key community members as well. The purpose is informational.

Kemp said it is interesting to know that construction of the facilities has already begun. Her experience with the government is that it takes a very long time to accomplish construction, let alone get started. She said it is obvious they have been at this for a long time. Plans were laid and they already knew what they intended to do. All the community efforts were just a waste of time.

Heinbockel said the site they are working on now has not been controversial to anyone. In a meeting with Colonel Lehman it was pointed out that other existing range sites are too dangerous because they have already been contaminated and are full of duds. It is too expensive to clean those areas.

Dewar reported the plan is to have a prescribed fire rotation, one burn every three years on the North Texas Range. She said she was concerned with the smoke.

Discussion followed regarding the invite to tour the facilities.

White said she would report to Major Hunter on July 2 regarding the number of Council members who will be available to participate in the air and ground tours.

## REPORTS

**Rescue Squad** – Lynn Harris said runs are up from last year and they are presently busy keeping up with one run each day. She asked about an update regarding the arrival of the new ambulance.

Heinbockel, referring to Hallgren's memo that was provided in his absence, reported bids are not out and will not be until after his return on July 14.

Dooley reported he was assigned to compile documents for Hallgren's approval upon his return. The project is not stagnant.

Harris said she is concerned about the 120 days it takes from the date the contract is signed for the ambulance to be built to specifications. It now appears that the new ambulance will not arrive until February or March. She said she does not understand the delay.

Heinbockel said the only excuse he can say is that Hallgren has many "irons in the fire".

Harris asked if work on the additional bay would start next year or would it be possible to start sooner.

Heinbockel reported there would be no construction on either the new fire hall or the addition onto the ambulance facility.

Dooley said the contractor will make that choice once the bids are out and awarded. The EMS work is considered very routine and construction is civil. There will be a meeting (9:30am on July 9) to clarify wants and desires for the addition. The contractor can decide to build throughout the winter or wait until spring.

Harris said she is concerned that the old ambulance (Medic II, owned since 1984) is parked in her yard. She would like for it to be available in the event that it is needed. Therefore it needs to be in storage.

Heinbockel stated leasing warm storage space would not be a problem. It can be easily taken care of.

**Airport** – Mark Weller said he was happy to see there were no restrictions made on housing at the airport. (He did not attend the last meeting when the decision was made.)

Weller reported he conferred with Hallgren and gravel was to be laid on the taxiway.

Heinbockel said a second set of cones was placed for pilots to land while the taxiway is being worked on. He asked how lists are prioritized. He said the City dump truck has been hauling fine crushed gravel on Deborah and Kimball for the past few days, delivering it to pathways/access roads. The airport has been an issue for years and now, the park has priority. He said he wished to ask what could be done to keep the dust down on City streets. Referring to Hallgren's memo, Heinbockel said the topic was discussed and resulted in a final decision that it would be too expensive. Heinbockel said he has a problem with that. It will cost \$40,000 to maintain dust control on the 29 miles of road that the City maintains. But there is no reason to control the dust on all 29 miles.

Dewar said consideration should be limited to the inhabited roads.

Heinbockel said he suggested limiting it to Rapids, Deborah, Hayes, Kimball and North and South Clearwater.

Summers reported Alyeska uses the least expensive product, CSS1. It is asphalt-based but requires a permit showing Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) clearance and Economic Development Administration (EDA) will not fund any project that requires a permit. Also if the asphalt product is used "every mother in town will be at the next meeting requesting Council steam clean their carpets. Dogs, cats and kids will track the residue inside."

Weller said roads were always oiled where he grew up.

Summers stated it would cost an estimated \$100,000 to oil all the City streets.

Dewar asked about watering the roads. She said it is environmentally sound. Because it does not require a permit it may be a consideration.

Summers said calcium chloride was the first choice product except it was the most expensive (\$5,000 per mile). That would cover the cost of the product but not the work of spreading it. He said Fairbanks uses it on all their main roads. Calcium chloride requires more product and more water.

Dooley said it has a residual value in the second and third seasons.

Summers said another drawback to using calcium chloride is that it causes pitting in any equipment that has aluminum. It will not be wise to use near airplanes, boats or boat trailers. It is used, however, by DOT in the winter. It is mixed into the gravel to keep it from freezing and it is also mixed with another product to reduce its concentration.

**City Clerk** – Pat White reported she was asked to move the flag from the back of the conference room. She asked if Council members had any objections to move it to the front.

Leith-Dowling said she did not want the board covered.

Dewar said the chairs do butt up against the base of the flag.

Heinbockel said to get a smaller flag if necessary.

White asked about a freestanding flag in the corner at the front of the conference room.

Dewar said she had no objection to moving the flag. No one else showed objection.

White said she would locate what flags are available.

**Dept of Economic Development** – Lamar Cotten reported on a meeting held yesterday. He said the City attested the apprenticeship program by having Mayor Pro tem Leith-Dowling present. She signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Ground Based Missile Defense System Project* in which it is agreed to train apprentices as approved by the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Apprenticeship Training, and Employer and Labor Service. The agreement is between the Delta/Greely School District (DGSD) and Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council and its participating local unions, Alaska Works Partnership, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Bechtel Construction Company and Fluor Alaska, Inc. along with their contractors and subcontractors. The program is directed toward Delta High School students and its graduates. Cotten reported a workshop with USDA representative, Bill Allen, followed the first meeting. He said Gary Hall, Construction Trades Program Instructor/Coordinator, and Karen Cedzo, DGSD Public Relations Advisor, reported the construction for the training facility is lacking 30% of what they need for completion. Boeing and Bechtel showed interest in helping. The Rasmussen Foundation and possible other grants are currently being researched. A decision must be made by July 15, in which the school board will reconvene. One possible approach that needs to be explored further is to see if the State can supplement or replace the training component of the impact grant. They could then put the money into the capital portion of the project. Cotten reported Hall hired Unit Company to look at design which will be \$250,000 less than what was initially quoted. Both meetings reflected a positive attitude about the apprenticeship program.

Leith-Dowling stated many people could now envision the project with a broader scope.

Cotten said this and every other training center are challenged with how to pay for a long-term operation. He said there are no guarantees but there are good outlooks because of those that are backing the program.

**School Liaison** – Judy Dewar reported the school district is not seeing the predicted (200+) student enrollment. The expected influx of families has not occurred. And in the Slavic community there has been only five new families.

Leith-Dowling said there is a lot of shifting in which some are moving away as others move in.

**Landfill** – Mark Weller said he visited the dump today. He reported he has never seen it so bad.

Dooley stated an inspection is scheduled by DEC on Thursday. Dooley plans to attend the meeting in Hallgren and Mayor Gilbertson's absences.

Heinbockel said he would also attend.

**Library** – Mary Leith-Dowling said attendance on Sundays has increased. There were 24 patrons in the 4 hours it was opened last Sunday. The request now is to have the library open during evening hours, beyond the 6:00pm closing time each weekday. It will be a consideration. However, the library is open longer now than it has ever been in the past.

**Park** – Judy Dewar said the park access roads are being graveled, the broken-off metal posts in the access roads are being removed, and the gate for the Little League is being installed. She is pleased with the progress.

**Personnel** – Lou Heinbockel said to note the third person has not yet been hired for the equipment operator position even though the wages were increased. He said he feels the increase still does not compare to the going wage rate. Therefore, there will not be a lot of interest for the positions. He also said some City employees, Mr. Morley in particular, is deserving of comparable wages. Maybe the budget that was approved should have included increases for Morley. He possesses a Class A CDL, has many qualified skills and no doubt qualifies as an equipment operator. He asked what Morley's wages are and how many hours he works each week.

Zimmerman stated Morley is paid \$14 per hour and he averages about 17 hours per week.

**Public Works** – Dennis Dooley addressed the issue about the needed pedestrian crossing. He has asked Gerald Rafson, Northern Region Planning Manager for the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), to send the Alaska Traffic Manual. (Dooley referred to a June 30, 2003 letter in which Mr. Rafson stated DOT&PF feel "the situation in Delta Junction does not qualify for an additional pedestrian crosswalk.") Dooley stated their interpretation is not clear and he will pursue their decision. He said there was an ordinance passed in 1981 that stated DOT must conform to community standards.

Discussion followed regarding the lone existing pedestrian crosswalk (near the Tesoro gas station and the Nistler Road intersection) and how the lines are painted white instead of yellow.

Dewar said if flashing lights cannot be obtained, another consideration would be to put up bright yellow signs. She asked for this at the existing crosswalk and also at the busiest area in town, between the post office and the grocery store.

Kemp suggested inviting Gail Gardner from the DOT office in Fairbanks to visit Delta to see the areas in question.

Dooley said it is a credible issue that can be appealed.

Heinbockel said DOT reevaluated the speed limit once they had changed it from 55 to 65 without consulting Delta. They conceded on the Richardson Highway portion near Jack Warren Road but ignored the Alaska Highway completely.

Dewar asked to include a copy of the letter (written by concerned citizen, Wanda Morden, on May 28) that was provided to Council about the problem with the invitation letter to Gail Gardner.

Discussion followed regarding one person's circumstances versus another and how consideration must include everyone's needs.

Heinbockel said a sign is needed to indicate a pedestrian crosswalk.

Kemp said at this time no one is going to stop, even if they see someone standing along the road. There is nothing to identify that they intend to cross the highway.

Dooley said he was approached to inquire about "some junk encroaching a road." He referred to a memo he addressed to the Council. He is not asking for action but said it may be required later. His understanding is that there is a long-standing feud between two neighbors. It happens that both are actually encroaching on the road right-of-way (ROW). One has old vehicles and the other has a beautiful hedge. Dooley asked, "Should the City require removal of the negative encroachment, what stops enforcement of the policy for the other party on the other side of the street?" He also asked, "How often does this exercise happen once the community increases in size?" Normally homeowners make improvements to the ROW as part of their home beautification.

Heinbockel said the three derelict vehicles could be considered a hazard compared to the lawn and bushes on the other side of the street. Everyone in this community encroaches on their streets. Some plant flowers. Some construct fences. One neighbor planted spruce trees years ago, now resulting in the worst sight-reducing intersection in Delta Junction.

Discussion followed regarding right-of-way distances and other means of encroachment using junk vehicles, leach fields and berms.

Dewar asked if members of the community need to be forewarned of upcoming encroachment rules before the proposed streets are paved.

Dooley said he would like Council guidance on the subject. The Council needs to decide on whether to address the issue as encroachment itself or encroachment as a hazard.

Heinbockel said he would speak with the citizen who voiced complaint.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Preliminary Report on the Eddy Drop Zone**

Topic fully discussed under *Correspondence*.

### **Purchase Orders**

PO#07988 to David Boadwine in the amount of \$1,219.94 for toolbox and travel expenses to pick up Kenworth dump truck

PO#07989 to Lamar Cotten in the amount of \$6,068.34 for June 03 consulting services

PO#07990 to Delta Lawn Care in the amount of \$3,622.50 for lawn care services

PO#07991 to Hale Products Inc in the amount of \$16,950.00 for foam sprayer for Fire Department

PO#07992 to Heiman Fire Equipment in the amount of \$1,205.40 for fire fighting equipment

PO#07993 to Julia Phillips in the amount of \$1,017.94 for LEPC emergency center kit

PO#08010 to Alpha Omega Life Care Inc in the amount of \$750.00 for (Domestic Violence Transportation) Social Service Grant Award

PO#08011 to Alpha Omega Life Care Inc in the amount of \$2,000.00 for (Train Hospice Staff) Social Service Grant Award

PO#08012 to Alpha Omega Life Care Inc in the amount of \$18,860.00 for (Mini-Van Vehicle) Social Service Grant Award

PO#08013 to Alpha Omega Life Care Inc in the amount of \$2,500.00 for (Respite Caregivers) Social Service Grant Award

PO#08014 to Alpha Omega Life Care Inc in the amount of \$750.00 for (Stranded Traveler) Social Service Grant Award

**Heinbockel moved** to approve purchase orders 07988 through 07993 and 08010 through 08014 as presented; Kemp seconded.

Dewar said the cemetery is looking very good. She asked how payment is issued to Delta Lawn Care (PO#07990).

Discussion followed, identifying payment for the contract (which covers three separate bids – cemetery, park and City/highway) is broken into three payments throughout the summer.

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

#### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Pro tem Leith-Dowling called for additional public comment with none being offered.

#### **ADDITIONAL COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Dewar asked consideration to ban burn barrels if the City takes over the public landfill. She said burn barrels are an increased fire hazard, smoke is a nuisance, and certain burnable items (tires, for example) create problems. It may create a “hot” topic but she said there are people in the community that take the concern seriously. They are unhappy living with these current conditions.

Discussion followed regarding paying attention or ignoring the dumping of ashes, open garbage pits and the hazardous areas in town.

Heinbockel stated an ordinance would need to be introduced. However, he felt dust is more offensive than burn barrels.

Ken Farrow, from the public audience, reported a commercial operation (not a homeowner) has four garbage barrels for use by his 20+ residents. What is scavenged out of the dumpster diminishes the cost of having the dumpster emptied. And burning plastic is obnoxious to other residents who live in the area.

Dewar said it is a commercial problem as well as a residential problem. She said she would appreciate it being addressed.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Kemp moved to adjourn at 6:30pm; Heinbockel seconded. Motion carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

Pat White  
City Clerk