



City Council Minutes
April 5, 2005 ~ 5:00PM

Regular Meeting
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska

The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on Tuesday, April 5, 2005 at City Hall in Delta Junction, Alaska. Mayor Gilbertson called the meeting to order at 5:02PM.

Council members present: Mayor Roy Gilbertson, Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith-Dowling
Lou Heinbockel, Leslie Feilner, Susan Sandy

Council members excused: John Sloan and Will Pecchia

City employees present: Pete Hallgren, Dennis Dooley, Dave Zimmerman, Pat White

Four members from the community were also present.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Sandy moved to approve the agenda as presented; Leith-Dowling seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Leith-Dowling moved to approve the minutes from March 15, 2005 as presented; Feilner seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Al Edgren asked to explain recent radio purchases. He said approximately \$300,000 of Homeland Security funds were used to upgrade most of the radios that are hand-held portables and those that were installed in fire trucks and ambulances in Delta and Deltana. Alaska Land Mobile Radio (ALMR) communicates digitally and through analogue. Cell phones are digital. The City and Deltana Fire Departments currently have analogue radios. The new radios capabilities would enable both types of radios to be used to speak to Ft. Greely, BLM and the Division of Forestry. They should last 15 or 20 years. The present aging radio system had too many incompatibility issues because of different models and different brands purchased over a long span of time. Did we need new radios right now? No. They were a good investment though and would be needed in the near future.

Dooley reported recent news about a judge who was shot in Atlanta, Georgia. They had difficulty communicating between State and federal agencies involved in the manhunt. Because of upgraded radios, Delta would not have to experience the same situation.

COUNCIL COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Gilbertson called for Council comments on non-agenda items with none being offered.

CORRESPONDENCE

Request for Support from Mark Ames

Hallgren explained Mr. Ames' request for a letter of support from the City of Delta Junction to modify the Pioneer Park name (previously known as Alaskaland) to Centennial Pioneer Park.

Discussion followed and Council opted to maintain their position as that of the September 3, 2002 meeting in which they wished to not be involved, stating "...the historical matter was best left for the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FSNB)." Hallgren suggested re-dating the September 9, 2002 letter and sending it again.

REPORTS

Rescue Squad – Pete Hallgren reported members of the Rescue Squad were in Fairbanks picking up Medic III, which was just released from (transmission) warranty work.

Fire Department – Carin Bear reported Fire Fighter I training was to begin on May 20. 13 had applied for the 16 spaces. The Fire Department had completed 120 community-wide home visits to date. An extension was allowed because of so many homes remaining on a waiting list. Bear expressed appreciation for a gas calibration meter that was purchased through Homeland Security grant funding. She reported tone-outs might be received by voice only between April 4 and April 8 due to changes in Fairbanks dispatch. Hopefully it would be handled in a safe manner.

Planner – Dennis Dooley reported Deltana Community Corporation (DCC) board members were reviewing maps he presented to them on March 15. He said he appeared to be on schedule regarding E911 preparation and planned to have a map for Council review next week to deal with problems with street names.

Airport – Leslie Feilner reported the runway-crossing problem was to be resolved in May or June after the snow cleared and signs could be posted.

Cemetery – Mary Leith-Dowling reported some fencing had been damaged and was visible because of the melting snow. It was probably from moose.

City Clerk – Pat White reported passports would be a standard requirement to re-enter the United States from Canada, Mexico, Panama and Bermuda by 2008. It was part of a tightening of U.S. border controls, stemming from the 911 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

White reported 14-year-old Steve Bealer approached City Hall to provide community service hours last week to earn his Boy Scout Star Badge. White instructed him to shovel and scrape the sidewalks and spread rock salt. Afterwards Bealer took it upon himself to find a more meaningful task so he took down signs, those that identify the three ball fields in the center of the park near the pavilion. He sanded and repainted them before putting them back. His older brother Paul was responsible for designing and constructing the gazebo on the City Hall lawn in 2000 as part of his Eagle Scout project.

City Administrator – Pete Hallgren reported:

- SB98 (supplemental appropriations for fuel and utilities) passed and was submitted to the governor on March 30. It allows \$67,000 to our community for fuel costs, good until June 30, 2007. He would inquire for exact details, if it could be used for reimbursement, insurance or just fuel costs.
- Research on the energy costs of the new buildings proved to be not as staggering as originally thought. However it would take more time to resolve. All the fuel tanks at the new buildings were first-filled whereas existing buildings were under "keep full". Hallgren said he shut off the (3) heat tapes at the landfill scale house because the \$100/month heating bill was unnecessary. Fire Station contractors owe roughly \$2,000 for fuel oil used from the time it was put in to substantial completion, September 1. The landfill contractors will have some returns also. Hallgren reported the library still suffers from run-away heat. There would be a time in the near

future in which the slab heat and air handler system would need to be regulated. Reducing one would increase the other. The building gets warmer when it is closed.

- Another room divider was purchased through a local business that was able to give a better price than the first one that was purchased through a Fairbanks vendor.
- Gene Kane, Hallgren's replacement, opted to not take his position due to "unforeseen personal developments" per his March 21, 2005 memo. Hallgren stated he appreciated being asked to continue as City Administrator but would request 1) a one-time accrual of 10 additional days of vacation because he "squandered" his vacation in anticipation of leaving his employment, 2) permission to participate as a member of a State Board or Commission and 3) regular City employee wage increase on July 1. Regarding the State Board or Commission, Hallgren said he was interested in becoming involved with AML, who were researching a training system for small municipalities. He said City PERS rate would decrease July 1, probably because of his retirement one and a half years ago.

Gilbertson asked to honor Hallgren's requests. He said Gene Kane would have been an asset to the community but he was honored that Hallgren would stay. The equivalence of the requested vacation days would have been used in the crossover training between the two administrators.

Sandy moved to approve Hallgren continuing as City Administrator and to meet his requests for employment; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Sandy said she appreciated Hallgren's willingness to stay through the new transition the community faced.

Hallgren said he was grateful for the comments. He considered it unusual for someone in his position to hear compliments at that stage of employment. He was in no way dissatisfied with his position or the community when he initially resigned. He was interested in change and maybe something more exotic. He said he now felt "quite invigorated" and had a good attitude.

Library – Mary Leith-Dowling reported the March '05 library stats: She said 2,408 patrons visited the library compared to 1,238 one year ago. 54 of them were new residents compared to 30 in 2004. 1,570 books were checked out in 2005, compared to 1,520 in 2004. 651 patrons used the Internet in 2005, almost doubling it from 2004. She said she speculated new computers prompted the interest. The Deltana Corporation Grant had completely paid for several furnishings that included a video display rack, CD display, credenza, paperback rack, bookshelves and table/chairs. Leith-Dowling said Joyce McCombs would attend the new statewide Inter-Library Loan training session at UAF on April 27/28. The Alaska Library Association would pay her expenses. McCombs will attend the Statewide Reference Database training at the Fairbanks Schools Technology Learning Center on April 29. Leith-Dowling said she and McCombs wanted to invite Council and the community to the annual fundraiser, the Open House & Basket of Books Silent Auction on April 23, 10:00 to 5:00PM.

Heinbockel asked if the public was charged to use the Internet. He questioned Internet cafes that charge for the service and wondered if it could be a means of raising revenue.

Leith-Dowling said contributions were accepted and they increased during tourist season but generally public libraries did not charge for the service.

Hallgren said currently \$75/month was paid for high speed Internet. That covered the connection of the library and Delta Wireless. It was then broadcast to City Hall using the same connection. There were problems however with the Delta Wireless signal getting into the library. Within the next two weeks the City would switch to Alaska Communications Systems (ACS). Under the new DSL service the City would pay approximately \$120/month and the library would pay approximately \$120/month.

Personnel – Roy Gilbertson reported Dennis Dooley's Planner position would end at the end of April.

Public Works – Lou Heinbockel reported Dave Boadwine prepared a packet for a plow-truck/sander to purchase before the next snowfall.

Heinbockel said he would like to pursue NOT moving all the city's equipment to the old fire hall but instead continue to rent warm storage. He said he felt the old fire hall was an "albatross" that he would prefer be leveled. He asked to explore some way to not utilize the space and avoid the high cost of maintaining it.

Hallgren said decisions should be made because renovating the office space in the old fire hall (farthest end opposite the Delta Rescue Squad) was scheduled to begin for the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Also expansion of one of the doors was a consideration should the building also be used for equipment storage. Leaving the wing on the grader would require a larger door.

Al Edgren said LEPC would not want to assume costs to pay for the office space in such a large building. He asked to re-visit the issue concerning situating LEPC in the old library office area.

Hallgren advised against use of the old library office.

Discussion followed regarding the (old library) conference room design, new room dividers, the acoustics and the speaker system.

Heinbockel asked to set a time line for disposal of the Waldo house, as it was valued at \$100,000. He felt the property should be earning interest.

Hallgren said it must be surveyed before it can be put up for sale.

Charter Commission – Lou Heinbockel reported the next Charter meeting was scheduled for April 6. He said he had a strong inclination to request it be the last meeting because the City had spent a substantial amount of money on the project. A petition had circulated around town collecting 341 signatures from residents who would vote against borough formation. He said it was realistic to accept that the same people would vote a borough down. Spending any more money on the issue and going nowhere would be foolish. He strongly favored organization of a borough and felt our community had "missed the boat" for the past 25 years. To date \$70,000 to \$75,000 had been spent for the borough study/Charter Commission and the only progress would be if the Local Boundary Commission (LBC) recognized the boundaries that would be "rightful" for our area. That would prove the study successful. He said it was time to let the democratic process take over, no matter if the outcome would be that the people vote it down.

Department of Transportation (DOT) Liaison – Mary Leith-Dowling referred to a report from the Alaska Highway Community Initiative, which was administered by a group in British Columbia. The report summarized what had been accomplished over the past two years. Under the history of Alaska Highway Facts, Leith-Dowling read, "...constructed in 1942, the highway was the largest construction project ever completed in North America. Built just over 8 months from Dawson Creek, BC to Delta Junction, Alaska." Delta was rightfully and historically designated as "the end of the Alaska Highway." Leith-Dowling said she participated in a teleconference that dealt with safety issues along the road and areas that needed improvements. Donations toward their efforts would cost the Delta Junction community \$2,500. Because the issues were related to tourism Leith-Dowling asked for participation from the local Chamber of Commerce to split that cost.

Additional Reports by Council – Susie Sandy reported she attended a meeting in Glennallen regarding the Scenic By-Way. Forming a Richardson Highway committee and representing Delta Junction were Ron Pierce, Walt and Dorris Kopp, Merle and Susie Sandy and Pete Hallgren. Valdez and Glennallen also had representation. The stretch of highway from Valdez to Glennallen and the stretch from Ft. Greely to Fairbanks were designated as Scenic By-Ways. The goal was to also include the road between Glennallen and Ft. Greely. Their purpose was to promote the Richardson Highway and work with the Department of Transportation (DOT) to improve road conditions. She said the next meeting was in April and she would share information as it developed.

Leith-Dowling said the Alaska Highway was also under consideration to be designated as a Scenic By-Way. The Alaska Highway Initiative group was looking for involvement from someone in Alaska to promote the section of the Alaska Highway from the border to Delta Junction.

Sandy said there was talk in designating the entire Alaska Highway as an International Scenic By-Way. Carl Ekstrom's goal was to get the Richardson Highway designated as an All-American Highway. The first step would be to be designated as a Scenic By-Way.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

Lawn Maintenance Contract

Hallgren stated minor changes were made to the current lawn maintenance contract. He explained the changes to the City Hall, Richardson Highway and Cemetery portions. He said the new library would not be part of the contract because it would take at least one year to establish their lawn. Otherwise the contract was ready to be put out for bid.

Heinbockel asked about the amount of work at the cemetery.

Leith-Dowling said the northeast corner of the cemetery was added to the contract last year. It did not include maintenance of the Pioneers section. The City's responsibility was three quarters of the cemetery grounds.

Buffalo Lodge – Liquor License Renewal

Hallgren said a hearing would be scheduled should a municipality protest against a renewal. The public had a right to object to the renewal of a business' liquor license if they demonstrated too much noise or illegal activities or if they were behind in payment of sales or property taxes.

Heinbockel moved to show no opposition to the Buffalo Lodge liquor license renewal; Leith-Dowling seconded. **Motion carried.**

Delta High School Business Professionals of America - Fee Waiver Request

Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc. – Fee Waiver Request

Sandy moved to approve fee waivers as requested by Business Professionals of America to use the Community Center for their fundraiser (silent auction and rummage sale on April 9) and by Alpha Omega Life Care, Inc. for their fundraiser (ham dinner on May 7); Feilner seconded.

Motion passed on a roll call vote with four voting in favor and one (Heinbockel) voting against.

Survey Agreement – Visitor's Center Property (Triangle) – PO #09748

Hallgren reported a decent survey was the first step toward ensuring the pollution question was resolved. The State owned the property in which the Visitor's Center sits. The State Division of Natural Resources (DNR) felt the ground might still be contaminated from the old tank farm. The military would be responsible for paying for the clean up and without a decent survey it could not be resolved. The State issued instruction to local surveyor Art Saarloos. Hallgren said it was the worst nightmare of conflicting property lines in this area. DNR would not accept the Chamber of Commerce's plat map, stating it was not sufficient. Saarloos requested one-third payment in advance and would produce work within 30 days (April 24). Hallgren said the work was not put out for competitive bid because Saarloos had been working with the State on the project.

Leith-Dowling moved to approve the agreement for Art Saarloos to complete the survey work and produce a plat map of the triangle for no more than \$5,000; Sandy seconded.

Feilner asked about the size of the property.

Hallgren said the exact amount was not known. The area included the Visitor's Center, Sullivan Roadhouse museum and the Farmer's Market. He said the concern was pollution from petroleum products getting into ground water. Plans were to use the property. The End-of-the-Alaska-Highway sign would be constructed over the road and one leg of it would be placed on the property.

Discussion followed regarding clean up and whether it was ever fully completed.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Purchase Orders

PO#09748 to Delta Surveys Associates in the amount of \$1,665.00 for survey deposit

PO#09777 to Aetna WHO-AAS in the amount of \$5,449.59 for Apr '05 group health insurance
PO#09778 to ACS in the amount of \$754.32 for Mar '05 phone service
PO#09779 to Alaska Industrial Hardware, Inc. in the amount of \$1,578.88 for equipment for new landfill building (air compressor, bench grinder, bench vise, 12-ton jack, floor creeper)
PO#09780 to Busy Bee Office Supply in the amount of \$738.45 for office supplies (key tags, 11X17 paper, file storage boxes) and wall panels
PO#09781 to Bank of America in the amount of \$2,445.20 for credit card purchases (paper feed belt for color printer, Symantec virus software, Cotten's travel, new chair/printer/ink toner for administrator's office, torch cutting kit and cylinder cart for new landfill equipment shop, John Deere tractor flywheel surface)
PO#09782 to Delta Building Supply in the amount of \$3,000.00 for Feb/Mar '05 warm storage rent
PO#09783 to Delta Texaco in the amount of \$1,363.27 for Mar '05 diesel fuel
PO#09784 to Family Medical Center in the amount of \$10,021.32 for oxygen sensors and oxygen tanks
PO#09785 to Heiman Fire Equipment in the amount of \$1,684.40 for new fire truck equipment, replacement light bulbs and 12-volt battery charger
PO#09786 to Interior Building Supplies, Inc. in the amount of \$591.80 for (old library) wall paint and drop cloths
PO#09787 to Lang Equipment Company in the amount of \$7,048.48 for new fire hall lockers
PO#09788 to Lamar Cotten in the amount of \$5,941.59 for Mar '05 consultant services
PO#09789 to MACTEC Engineering & Consulting, Inc. in the amount of \$5,454.41 for Feb '05 engineering services (contractor delay claims)
PO#09790 to Joyce McCombs in the amount of \$1,135.12 for reimbursement for travel to Barrow library conference
PO#09791 to Willis of Alaska Inc. in the amount of \$2,297.00 for new fire station insurance
Leith-Dowling moved to approve purchase orders 09748 and 09777 through 09791; Sandy seconded. Heinbockel said he would like to "see" money spent on a skating facility and asked when the City would stop paying for engineering services that were not visible.
Hallgren stated MACTEC would complete their work by June. Until the high-energy problems were determined, the City was responsible to pay. MACTEC engineers suggested bypassing them and contacting the contractor directly on any items that were clear warranty work.
Sandy stated several items were purchased in Fairbanks and she wondered if they were priced locally.
Hallgren said prices were checked in Delta. The first compressor was actually purchased locally.
Sandy said she wanted as much local purchasing as possible.
Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Janet Boyer asked about money spent on the borough study.

Hallgren confirmed that it was paid out of impact funds.

Tana Wood said Super-Fund worked on the contaminated property around 1999-2000. One rumor was that the digging stopped because they had run out of funding. She also commented on the money spent toward the Charter Commission. She said it was well spent if it produced a viable charter that LBC could accept but agreed with Heinbockel who said it was time to quit. She felt it was a good service for the community.

Hallgren said the Corps of Engineers (COE) issued a written report last November stating they considered the contamination was no longer a problem and wanted to close the case. DNR said the study minimized the work needed and were working directly with COE. Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) had yet to comment but they had tested existing wells north of the area and found no contamination.

Discussions followed regarding what areas were considered contaminated.

Edgren said he would like to get with a work committee to deal with the existing hockey facility and to “fix what we have” in order to move forward.

Hallgren said there were a number of ideas but the users needed to be involved. The City did not own the land next to the hockey rink. The school would relinquish that property once they got title but the holdup was the survey.

Gilbertson asked for comments on Daylight Saving Time. He said he would prefer more daylight in the morning and would like to support the (HB 176) bill in legislation to eliminate Daylight Saving Time. Discussion followed regarding time zones and supporting the bill.

ADJOURNMENT

Leith-Dowling moved to adjourn at 6:36PM; Sandy seconded. Motion carried.

Pat White, City Clerk

Date of approval: April 19, 2005