



City Council Minutes
March 7, 2006 ~ 5:00PM

Regular Meeting
City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska

The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council was held on Tuesday, March 7, 2006 at City Hall in Delta Junction, Alaska. Mayor Thomas “Roy” Gilbertson called the meeting to order at 5:00PM.

Council members present: Mayor Roy Gilbertson, Mayor Pro tem Mary Leith-Dowling, Lou Heinbockel
Pablo Martinez, Leslie Feilner, Mike Jenkins

Council members excused: Mike Tvenge

City employees present: Pete Hallgren, Dave Zimmerman, Pat White
8 members from the community were also present.

AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Gilbertson reported one item to add to *Unfinished Business*:

- ✓ Council Recommendation on Sewer / Water Study

Leith-Dowling moved to approve the agenda as amended; Feilner seconded. Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Leith-Dowling moved to approve the February 21, 2006 minutes as presented; Feilner seconded. Motion carried.

PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Eileen Herman introduced herself, stating she was acting on behalf of the Delta-Greely Little League. She distributed a price quote for 4 aluminum bleachers from Boca Raton, Florida for \$13,380. She said there were currently no bleachers at the Little League field in the park but bleachers were available near the softball fields. One aluminum bleacher would sit 50 people. She asked to consider using federal impact funds to purchase bleachers, two for the t-ball field and two for the Little League field.

Gilbertson asked if there was a business closer than Florida.

Herman said she did not research comparable pricing but thought one could be located on the west coast.

Hallgren said the current bleachers located at the park are old school castoffs and the insurance company has requested they be replaced. If purchase of new bleachers is considered, replacing existing bleachers should also be considered. Hallgren said outhouses were closed last year because of concerns with children falling into pits. He was researching whether or not to construct some type of safety device, such as a stainless steel funnel, so they can be reopened and used. Last summer it cost \$300/month to rent one porta-can and have it serviced three times a week. Two were placed near the pavilion in the center of the park, one near the playground, and one near the Little League fields. Hallgren said the wish list that was submitted to the legislature last December listed the #4 priority as a \$35,000 basketball

court at the park and #5 was a skateboard park for \$85,000. He stated the wish list priorities could be rearranged. The subjects are all of competing interests, directed toward youth activities.

Gilbertson said the old bleachers should be addressed.

Discussion followed regarding moving and using the skating rink bleachers and contracting Chad Morris to create something more safe and permanent at the park.

Heinbockel said he would prefer something done to secure a more permanent outhouse arrangement instead of purchasing bleachers that would be used only 6 or 8 weeks out of the season.

Gilbertson asked Hallgren to research purchasing bleachers and resolving the outhouse situation.

Herman said Little League starts the last week in May.

REPORTS

Fire Department – Carin Bear reported she researched railroad related fatalities, which was a question she had at the Council meeting on February 27. Four hundred deaths at railroad crossings are reported annually. There are 10 train collisions daily in the United States. Additionally 13 bicyclists die in railroad crossings on a yearly basis. She said she felt those figures were serious enough to cause concern but should be verified with the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) before making any decisions on which route the railroad should pass through Delta Junction. Bear said our remote location concerned her in dealing with a train-related situation whether or not the railroad planned to provide extra equipment for such a situation. In any case the local fire department would be the first responders. Bear stated firefighters were beginning the third portion of training. Five members are still enrolled. She said she was grateful for Dave Boadwine's continued support regarding maintenance at the fire station.

Cemetery – Mary Leith-Dowling reported she, Dave Boadwine and Dave Zimmerman have reviewed costs associated with burials. The City receives less income than what it costs to provide the service, especially when a backhoe must be rented. She suggested raising the rate because what is collected (\$550 to \$700) does not cover the cost of equipment used, whether it is owned or rented. Fees in other communities range from \$900 to \$2,500. Leith-Dowling said the \$200 plot fee did not need to be increased. She suggested charging \$800 for the service and asked for other opinions.

Heinbockel said he agreed.

Leith-Dowling said ordinance change was not necessary.

Hallgren asked to allow for public input before finalizing a decision at the next meeting.

City Clerk – Pat White stated the City Council was invited to participate in the *Relay for Life* on May 12. It is an American Cancer Society signature activity that started in 1985 and will be the first time event in Delta Junction. She asked that both the City Council and their families join with City staff and their families to participate as a team. White said if everyone contributes \$5 it would be enough to pay the \$150 team registration fee. Then each member is encouraged but not required to raise a minimum of \$100 in donations. Each team donates a silent auction item and White said she and other employees would donate their time to make lap quilts. She said the other individual requirement would be to walk at the school track. Each team is to have one or more people rotate over the 24-hour period. (One hour of walking is equivalent to 3 or 4 miles depending on the pace, whether it be strolling or fast-pace-calorie burning.) White asked for Council support and participation in representing the City of Delta Junction. Discussion followed regarding participation and commitment for the 24-hour period.

White volunteered to be the team captain and would attend a meeting on March 8.

City Administrator – Pete Hallgren reported a State approval for subdivision is not needed to sell the Waldo property. The plat is not yet complete though. He reported:

- The local phone number for the landfill is 895-1807 and that has been advertised. The phone system has a recorder for calls received during non-business hours.
- He met with Ted Hawley, MACTEC septic system designer, in Anchorage last week to submit a temporary permit extension application to use the septic system at the old landfill. It will be used until the new landfill septic system is functioning.

- He attended a meeting in Anchorage regarding setting up job training for upcoming construction of the gas line. Whit Hicks from Delta Mine Training Center also attended.

School Liaison – Mike Jenkins reported the Delta / Greely School Board, after meeting on Saturday, March 4, appointed Dr. P.J. Ford Slack as the new DGSD Superintendent for a two-year contract (July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2008).

Hallgren said he, Gilbertson and Leith-Dowling met the three candidates on March 3.

Library – Mary Leith-Dowling reported Librarian Joyce McCombs attended the Alaska Library Association Conference and explained the highlights of the conference: The top three topics covered Library Security (our computers are well protected), Patron Privacy (our staff is well trained and vigilant), and Legalities of the Patriot Act (who to call and what to say if we are investigated). McCombs found a resource for cataloging materials of a minority language (specifically the Slavic community), setting up a wireless Internet connection for patrons with laptops (Delta needs ASAP), and ways to survey current services and ensure they are effective. Leith-Dowling stated some fascinating library-related facts were 1) only 68% of Alaskan households have Internet but 99% of Alaskan public libraries have Internet, 2) Alaskans borrowed over 4 million items from public libraries last year, and 3) more than 9,000 users enter Alaska's public libraries every day. She stated McCombs shared library quotes: 1) People support what they help create. 2) Good planning preserves the best of what is with a course of action for what can be. 3) GOOGLE has thousands of possible answers to your questions. Librarians have the correct answer.

Leith-Dowling reported Judy Dewar would present her African Safari slide show on April 7 at 7:00PM at the library, Miki and Julie Collins are scheduled to present a slide show, book and fur sale on April 21, the annual Open House fundraiser is scheduled for April 29 and Leith-Dowling said she was enjoying sorting old Delta newspapers to archive in an attempt to preserve history.

Park – Hallgren reported the fence was run into on Kimball Street near the kiddy playground. Damages were not extensive but it will require repairs in the spring.

Public Health & Safety – Pablo Martinez reported the Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) officials would like a joint meeting with Council members to discuss relationships and expectations. Discussion followed regarding possible dates. Gilbertson, Leith-Dowling and Feilner agreed to attend with Martinez at 11:00AM on March 14.

Public Works – Lou Heinbockel asked if the John Deere tractor was operating. It had been out of service for the past two years.

Gilbertson said Boadwine was repairing it.

Charter Commission – Lou Heinbockel reported the public was asking good questions on the City's borough-related question-and-answer blog (via www.ci.delta-junction.ak.us).

White stated public comments regarding the proposed borough ends March 31, 2006. (Comments are published at www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca/lbc/deltana.htm.)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Council Recommendation on Sewer/Water Study to Unfinished Business

Hallgren said the City received a \$100,000 grant approximately two years ago to study the feasibility of a water and/or sewer system in the Delta area. The State handles the grant and we selected an engineering firm, KAE Inc., to conduct the study. KAE completed the 35% draft submittals and, after a work session on May 26, 2005, decided none of the options met our needs as a community at that time. Because there is funding still available they have requested finalizing the study or reallocating the money elsewhere. Hallgren said Council voted to not continue the feasibility study on June 7, 2005. That decision needs clarifying by selecting the best alternative should the downtown area grow at anytime in the future. It will eliminate having to conduct another study. Hallgren said the least expensive alternative that also made the most sense was a water system only. The maintenance area aligned with the Richardson Highway and the Nistler Road to the school. The system would provide water to businesses and the school in downtown Delta Junction. It would provide fire hydrants for fire protection. It would be

expandable at a later date to provide water to residential areas in downtown Delta. Hallgren said he drafted a letter stating crowding is not an issue at this time, presently soil is good for septic systems and private wells are in good condition. He also stated the new septic waste facility was not yet functioning properly and asked to hold the rest of the unspent money until next summer in case expertise from KAE is needed to solve the problems. Hallgren said he met with MACTEC engineers, Ted Hawley and Shaun Sexton, on March 3 and he believes the problem will be solved.

No motion was made. Council authorized Hallgren to issue the letter to KAE.

NEW BUSINESS

Lawn Maintenance Bids

Hallgren stated lawn contracts from last year contained provisions for an automatic 3% increase for a total of 3 years, as long as both the contractor and the City were in agreement. Joslin Enterprises, the cemetery contractor, was the only one to accept that agreement.

Leith-Dowling moved to approve the 2006 lawn maintenance contract for the cemetery in the amount of \$7,828.00 (\$7600 + 3%); Feilner seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Hallgren said the park contractor was not interested in continuing his contract. That contract will need to be put out for bid. Last year the City Hall, Community Center, Library lawns and the grass along the Richardson Highway was done by force account. He recommended the same for this year. The City owns a lawnmower that is housed in the Community Center garage. John Lunn will return to Delta this summer and is interested in working for the City again. Hallgren also recommended not putting the Richardson out for bid either. It too was done by force accounting on an ad-hoc basis. Bids were thrown out last year because they were too high.

Heinbockel said he would prefer to ask for public interest. It may be economic to combine contracts. Discussion followed regarding responsibility of the Richardson Highway (City or DOT), contract costs from previous years and comparing labor required in three contracts.

Debbie Joslin stated the cemetery was cut weekly last year compared to the park that was cut every two weeks. She said she felt they earned the income off the cemetery because a lot of time was required to cut around headstones, water flowers and remove rocks. Joslin said the requirements for the City Hall / Community Center / Richardson Highway contract were too restrictive, specifically because the lawn was required to be trimmed every 5 days and only on weekends. The Richardson Highway portion required different equipment. She said bids may come back more reasonable if the grass cutting and flower-watering schedules were more flexible.

Nick Herman stated several business owners voluntarily mow the section of the Richardson in front of their business. He asked the City to persuade others to do the same.

Hallgren explained past history and amounts paid. He said \$2,743 was paid last year for lawn maintenance of the downtown campus (City Hall / Community Center / Library and the Richardson Highway) compared to \$4,975 in 2004 and \$4,147.50 in 2003. Costs were reduced considerably because of paying part-time wages and using City-owned equipment.

Discussion followed regarding slinging rocks and replacing passing vehicle windows.

Carin Bear said she preferred grass cutting not be during night hours.

Hallgren stated contracts would be separated, one for the City Hall / Community Center / Library, one for the park and one for the Richardson Highway and would be brought back for recommendations at the next meeting along with revisiting the written requirements.

Discussion followed regarding past attempts in revising lawn maintenance requirements.

White explained past history in putting City Hall flower baskets and flower beds out to bid. She stated bids were \$599 in 2004 and \$585 in 2005. She and Letha Burcham spent a Saturday afternoon in 2003 selecting flowers, which cost \$120, and then library aide Becky Riche planted them on a wage basis, which was about \$100 total. She said she and Burcham agreed to do the same this year, patronizing each of the local commercial businesses, and Ludmila Kravchuk (new janitor) agreed to accept the extra hours

to plant them. She asked for approval instead of putting the project out to bid. White stated she suggested the same for the library.

Discussion followed regarding frequencies of watering for lawn and flowers.

Plat Approval – Hennager Acres

Hallgren stated Council is asked to approve the Hennager Acres subdivision plat as presented. It is located next to Brewis Subdivision on the Richardson Highway. The Affidavit of Beneficiary, a written permission from the mortgage holder approving the plans to subdivide, has not yet been received. Request for approval, if granted, would be subject to receiving the affidavit document. Hallgren said the property couldn't be subdivided when a mortgage is owed.

Discussion followed regarding removal of old vehicles and legal separation for well and septic systems.

Heinbockel moved to approve the subdivision plans for Hennager Acres as presented with the stipulation that authorization from the mortgage holder is filed before the clerk finalizes the transaction; Martinez seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Torba Street Names

Hallgren stated the Torba Subdivision was approved on November 1, 2005 but street names were not included in that approval. Street names requested would be Torba Street for the street furthest west and Galina Street for the one furthest east.

Heinbockel moved to approve Torba and Galina Street names as presented; Leith-Dowling seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

Purchase Orders

PO#010662 to Aetna WHO-AAS in the amount of \$6,633.30 for March '06 group health insurance

PO#010663 to B&A Heating & Service in the amount of \$843.25 for replacement of zone valves at new library

PO#010664 to Lamar Cotten in the amount of \$700.00 for Feb '06 consulting services

PO#010665 to Sam's Club in the amount of \$692.86 for PC software, copier paper used at City Hall and a TV monitoring system for the landfill

PO#010666 to State of Alaska, DEC in the amount of \$2,076.00 for 2006 annual fee for landfill permit

PO#010667 to Amazon.com Credit in the amount of \$792.80 for children's library books

PO#010668 to Outdoors American Communications in the amount of \$596.60 for Feb '06 web service

Leith-Dowling moved to approve purchase orders 010662 through 010668 as presented; Feilner seconded.

White stated \$52.80 of #010668 was billed in error. Instead of reissuing another check that amount would show as a credit on the next statement.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS

Janet Boyer asked about results since the surveillance cameras were installed at the landfill.

Hallgren said he would not respond to the question.

Boyer asked about the meeting with the architect on February 27 regarding the ice rink.

Hallgren stated it would be a topic at the March 21 Council meeting.

Charlie Hennager asked what the game plan was regarding upgrade of the ice arena. He was concerned with the approaching construction season.

Hallgren said Council could move the project forward once proposals are received.

ADJOURNMENT

Feilner moved to adjourn at 6:22PM; Heinbockel seconded. Motion carried.

Pat White
City Clerk

Date of approval: March 21, 2006