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**City Council Minutes**  
**January 13, 2009 ~ 5:00PM**

**Regular Meeting**  
**City Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska**  
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The regular meeting of the Delta Junction City Council, which was postponed from January 6, 2009, was held on Tuesday, January 13, 2009 at City Hall in Delta Junction, Alaska. Mayor Mary Leith-Dowling called the meeting to order at 5:03pm.

Council members present: Mayor Mary Leith-Dowling, Mayor Pro tem Pete Hallgren, JW Musgrove  
Pablo Martinez, Lou Heinbockel, Dawn Grossmann (telephonically)

Council member excused: Leslie Feilner

Council member unexcused: Pablo Martinez

City employees present: City Administrator Mike Tvenge, Landfill Supervisor Butch Ellis  
Finance Officer Dave Zimmerman, City Clerk Pat White

Fourteen members from the community were present.

**AMENDMENTS TO AGENDA ~ APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Heinbockel moved to approve the January 13, 2009 agenda as presented; Musgrove seconded. Motion carried.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Heinbockel moved to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2008 meeting as presented; Hallgren seconded. Motion carried.

**PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Lea Ann McKenzie, President of Heart Fur Animals, stated their volunteer organization was planning a two-day spay/neuter clinic the second week in April. A location is needed before they can advertise.

McKenzie asked to use the Community Center. She said seventy spay and neuter surgeries were done during the December 2007 clinic that was held in the garage at the old fire hall, one hundred were done during May and September 2008 clinics that were held in the garage at the Arctic Fox Safety building, and a few were done in her home. McKenzie said spay and neuter clinics provide a valuable service.

Tvenge said a decision was made (at the November 13, 2007 meeting) not to use the Community Center and to allow use of the old fire hall, where equipment is now stored.

Hallgren said he has strong feelings against surgeries being performed at the Community Center, where food is served at banquets and weddings.

Discussion followed regarding physical space necessary to host a clinic, using visqueen for floor covering, having restroom accommodations and adequate public parking, using the same non-profit vet as in the past, and researching alternate facilities.

Tvenge said options would be researched and Heart Fur Animals would have an answer by April.

Hallgren stated he would like to discuss the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Hearing, which is scheduled on January 15, 2009 at Jarvis West. He said he would like to know the Council's position before he speaks on the proposed railroad extension to Delta Junction.

Heinbockel asked to discuss it under *New Business* and to allow people in the audience to address their topics of interest that are under *Unfinished Business*.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS** - moved from after *Reports*

### **MOA Between City/DSA/DGSD for the Liewer-Olmstead Ice Arena**

Grossmann disclosed that she holds a position on the Delta Skating Association Board.

Tvenge said the MOA was simplified since the last draft, presented at the December 16, 2008 meeting. He read the City's obligation as, "Will provide building insurance, maintenance, and utility expenses." (It was changed from, "1. Building maintenance and operations expense limited to FY Budget. 2. Will receive DHS funding for a minimum of 132 hours at \$80.00 per hour which shall be used for operation expenses at the ice arena.")

Hallgren questioned the new wording compared to #10 of the Delta Skating Association's portion, "Pay all utility costs exceeding City of Delta Junction budgeted amount."

Leith-Dowling stated a motion was made and seconded at the December 16 meeting (and reconsideration of the motion was scheduled for the postponed meeting on January 6, 2009.)

Hallgren moved to reconsider the motion of approving the MOA; Heinbockel seconded.

Musgrove said the MOA does not address maintenance situations or conserving utility costs, particularly if the high school leaves lights or water on when the City and DSA are responsible to pay for them.

Grossmann said DSA is keeping close track of the facility use and who has keys to access the building.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote with five (Heinbockel, Musgrove, Grossmann, Hallgren, Leith-Dowling) voting.

### **Delta Rescue Squad Sponsorship**

Tvenge referenced Dr. Andreassen's list of duties as a physician sponsor, which was faxed on January 7, 2009. He said other communities pay comparable fees for physician sponsors and it is not uncommon for sponsors to reside outside the community. He said he is awaiting more information from Interior Emergency Medical Services (EMS) and Alaska Academy of Family Physicians.

Ray Andreassen, local physician, owner of Family Medical Center, and physician sponsor of the local ambulance service, said he is concerned about partnership in medical care because "a day will come when there will be no available medical services in this rural area."

Musgrove referred to Andreassen's November 19, 2008 request for \$2,500/month payments beginning January 1, 2009. He asked if the contract would be on an annual basis.

Andreassen said there is no contract and payment would be on a monthly basis, after services are rendered. If he does not perform the services, he will not submit a bill. He will remain the physician sponsor as long as the Rescue Squad and community require the service. He said sponsoring the ambulance service is not by contract, nor is it by employment. He asked that payment for services begin January 1, being fair to bill for January services on February 1. The other rescue squads and so forth that he sponsors, and has judiciary process with, pay on a monthly basis. Only Priority 1 Air Rescue, who has taken over MAST operations, is on an 18-month contract.

Hallgren moved to contract with Dr. Andreassen on a monthly basis to be the EMS physician sponsor for the Delta Rescue Squad beginning January 1st, 2009 and that either party can terminate the relationship with a 30-day notice; Heinbockel seconded.

Hallgren said a role of local government is to provide essential services (i.e. landfill and medical emergencies) that do not pay their own way. Recreation is not considered one of them. He said sponsorship services have always been free in the past, but medical services would be reduced without a physician sponsor. Dr. Andreassen's request is within the realm of reasonableness and we are blessed by having a physician and a clinic, whereas many small towns in America are not. He said he also understands the complaint about subsidizing a private business, but feels the City's duty is to provide ambulance services. It would be a disservice to the entire community to limit the squad in how they provide care. A sponsor who is a non-resident would also be a disservice and would not be as good as someone locally.

Musgrove asked if there is any funding to cover the cost, which is outside the normal budget process, because it borders along emergency spending.

Zimmerman said there is no money budgeted, but there is money in reserves.

Heinbockel asked for a budget revision in the near future.

Grossmann said she appreciated local medical services. She questioned a check-and-balance, if there would be some checklist to verify if responsibilities of the sponsor are actually being accomplished.

Heinbockel said terms of the month-to-month agreement could be dissolved at any time. He gave a brief history of when Andreassen's were first welcomed into the community and when a physician from Fairbanks sponsored the ambulance service and the local physician's assistant, Ken Ryther, who operated the local clinic.

Musgrove asked if a contract or an agreement is necessary.

Hallgren said an agreement could include all the functions as listed in Dr. Andreassen's list, as required by the State of Alaska and the federal government.

Karen Andreassen, wife of Dr. Andreassen, said State of Alaska regulations are very specific to what level the squad can operate.

**Motion passed** unanimously on a roll call vote with five (Heinbockel, Musgrove, Grossmann, Hallgren, Leith-Dowling) voting.

Ray Andreassen asked for a work session in the near future to prepare for a coming disaster before there is a crisis and to discuss those budget issues before the new cycle begins in June.

Leith-Dowling agreed that a work session is needed.

## REPORTS

**Rescue Squad** – Cory Nydam reported the Delta Rescue Squad would vote on new officers at their annual election tonight.

**Fire Department** – Dawn Grossmann referenced a memo from Fire Chief Carin Bear, dated January 6, and reported the City Fire Department (DJVFD) responded to thirty-seven calls in 2008, twenty-five being fire related. Grossmann said she attended a training session and toured the facility. She is impressed by the dedication of the volunteers, but concerned with shortage of equipment that requires firefighters to share. She reported details of the January 3 house fire, which was caused by a woodstove, and said 5 residents and their pets escaped through egress windows in the basement. Both Ft. Greely and Deltana fire departments responded with support. DJVFD Engine 5 received damage during the  $-52^{\circ}$  temperatures. Discussion followed regarding the fire, weather related issues, and Engine 5 repairs (\$2,000 estimate).

**Airport** – JW Musgrove reported attempts have been made to drag the runway to keep the drifts down.

**Cemetery** – Mary Leith-Dowling reported there would be a burial at the cemetery this week.

**City Administrator** – Mike Tvenge reported:

- Public comments would be welcomed at the Surface Transportation Board EIS presentation on January 15, 2009. He said the Northern Rail that connects North Pole to Delta would also connect Delta to Seward. Delta 1, which is the proposed route that the Council prefers, would cross the Delta River near Jarvis Creek, and Delta 2 would cut through the Tanana Loop area and bisect the town.

- Senator Mark Begich requested the City provide documentation for an economic recovery project and a 16-mile bike path, which was supported by Deltana Community Corporation (DCC), was submitted on December 24, 2008. Suggested projects are ones that can be built this summer.

Hallgren said he understood that a decision was needed in a short time frame, but he would have preferred something other than a bike path, even though it would be the largest project for Delta Junction.

**Finance** – Dave Zimmerman referred to a FY09 budget comparison, dated January 13, 2009, and asked Council members to review the past six months of operating expenditures. He said the additional PILT funding from the BLM (\$321,527.14) has been received and deposited. The current rate of interest on the money market account is 1% on an annual basis.

**Library** – Mary Leith-Dowling reported PFD applications and IRS forms are available at the library and the library was closed during the recent cold spell.

**Recreation** – Lou Heinbockel reported hockey games were cancelled last weekend due to the cold. He questioned the library, City Hall, and landfill being open at  $-55^{\circ}$  and asked to set a policy for severe cold days because it creates a safety concern, particularly when operating vehicles.

Tvenge said it was decided last year that City staff would come in later in the day, around 10:00am or noon, when temperatures would likely warm up. Most everything slows down during cold weather.

Hallgren said he has concerns about pipes freezing in unattended buildings.

Heinbockel asked to close the landfill when temperatures drop to  $-25^{\circ}$ .

Discussion followed regarding varying temperatures and notifying the public of closures via the Delta News Web (deltanewsweb.com) and Delta Wind Online (deltawindonline.com).

Ellis said he goes by the temperature at City Hall on weekdays and the Mt. McKinley sign on weekends.

**Public Works** – Lou Heinbockel reported frost heaves have developed on Emmaus in the last 10 days.

## **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

See discussion prior to *Reports*

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Request from Rural Deltana Volunteer Fire Department (RDVFD) for \$100,000**

Heinbockel stated he agreed with Rural Deltana's request for funding, dated December 22, 2008, but did not want to make a decision until Council had an opportunity to discuss the (\$321,527.14) Federal PILT in a work session.

Musgrove agreed, stating the request is not an emergency and should be dealt with in the regular process.

Grossmann asked if the ambulance sponsorship would come out of the PILT.

Heinbockel said physician sponsor fees would come out of the existing budget, which will be reviewed.

Hallgren said PILT funds should be handled the same as Missile Defense impact funds, which required reports and accounting. The FY09 budget needs to be revisited to determine when funding will run out, currently projected through 2010 or 2011. Hallgren said three-quarters of the local community reside outside the City limits and he understands Rural Deltana's request, which is supported by the fact that the PILT is based on BLM land. He said logically, others should request a portion of the PILT also.

Leith-Dowling said Deltana had an opportunity to become part of an incorporated community and over 90% of the people chose not to.

Hallgren said not everything about the borough proposition was bad. It would've brought in another \$1.5 million of useable income for the area.

Heinbockel said Deltana's request needs clarification, if it is a one-time infusion or if funding is needed on an annual basis.

Mike Paschall, President, RDVFD Board of Directors, said most all grants require matching funds, which need to be on-hand at the time of applying for grants. Otherwise the matching funds would come out of operating funds. Paschall said Congress distributed funds to offset costs and expenses for communities and RDVFD would like a part of it.

Musgrove said others will request funding also and part of the PILT may need to be used to keep the local government operational beyond the projected date.

Hallgren said there is need for government in some areas, specifically to provide EMS and fire services. Residents should at least care about fire protection. He said it is difficult to comprehend why people are not willing to contribute during good economic times, which is what Delta is currently experiencing. The school district has been able to collect only \$6,000 or \$7,000 toward their \$193,000 match needed for the \$9.5 million weatherization project.

Discussion followed regarding past history of the local government.

Paschall said the newly acquired PILT came outside the normal budget process and it will not affect the City's existing budget. RDVFD can use it toward equipment grants and fuel. He said RDVFD normally operates on roughly \$60,000, but only \$40,000 last year. Some firefighters gave over five hundred hours of volunteer time.

Hallgren said the City contributed \$15,000 to Deltana (on October 21, 2008). He questioned why more people are not contributing.

Paschall said \$15,000 was collected in donations and this year the suggested amount increased to \$75. He said even if every household paid, it would not cover all the operation expenses.

Cory Nydam, EMT and firefighter, said Delta Rescue Squad and Delta Junction Volunteer Fire Department work hand-in-hand with RDVFD. If one agency is funded, the others should be given an equal amount. Nydam said the goal is to work together area wide.

Grossmann said she agreed in combining resources for centralized emergency services.

Discussion followed regarding the two fire department's budgets and analyzing the current budget.

Paschall said he would provide a budget, financial statement, or any other information to support Rural Deltana's request, but he is unable to identify specific grants because applications have not been submitted due to RDVFD not having available funds to match them. \$100,000 could be spent on fuel or firefighter gear. He said, according to NFPA (National Fire Protection Association), the 2004 firefighter personal protective gear is no longer standard. Deltana could apply for revenue sharing, but don't, assuming DCC will pass funds onto the fire department.

Hallgren said he is interested in figures that will keep RDVFD from going out of business.

Heinbockel said he preferred to share funds with Deltana, but only through the budget cycle. He said the City's fire department operates on a \$77,000 budget.

### **Gaming Permit Renewal - Nenana Ice Classics**

#### **Liquor License Renewal – Buffalo Lodge, Jack's Liquor & Service, and Loyal Order of Moose #911**

Musgrove moved to show no opposition to the gaming permit renewal for the Nenana Ice Classics and liquor license renewals for the Buffalo Lodge, Jack's Liquor & Service, and Loyal Order of Moose #911; Heinbockel seconded.

Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

### **Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Hearing**

Hallgren stated he and Mayor Leith-Dowling planned to attend the EIS hearing on January 15. He asked for parameters in which to speak on the Northern Rail Extension because he planned to speak as an individual, if not as a representative of the City Council. Hallgren explained the two proposed routes for the Northern Rail Extension that pass through the Delta segment of the Alaska Railroad. Delta 1 would cross the Delta River near Jarvis Creek and Delta II would cross the Delta River south of the Tanana River Bridge and run through the City of Delta Junction limits, crossing all the main roads. Hallgren said he preferred Delta 1 because that route will not hinder traffic at road crossings, affecting school buses, EMS functions, employees commuting to work, and other travelers. The rail line will ultimately connect with Canada and the Lower 48, with as many as 300-car freight trains. He said there is no benefit to route the railroad through the middle of the community. Hallgren said he had concerns and referenced the Draft EIS pertaining to noise and vibration (page S-18), subsistence hunting (S-17), and trespassing violations relating to recreation and hunting (S-21). [A booklet and CD are available at City Hall or can be downloaded from the Surface Transportation Board's website ([www.stb.dot.gov](http://www.stb.dot.gov)) under "E-Library," "Decisions & Notices," and "12/12/08." Public comments are due by February 2, 2009.]

Heinbockel said the railroad should be routed west of the Delta River, it should involve a ROW large enough to transport wheeled vehicles, there should be numerous crossings, and there should be an access across the Delta River.

Discussion followed regarding preference between the two routes and encouraging local workers and soldiers to live at Ft. Greely and not commute from Fairbanks.

### **Purchase Orders**

PO#013132 to Aetna WHO-AAS in the amount of \$8,798.34 for Jan '09 group health insurance

PO#013133 to ACS in the amount of \$1,658.43 for Dec '08 phone service

PO#013134 to AML in the amount of \$750.00 for 2009 annual membership dues

PO#013135 to Crowley Petroleum in the amount of \$5,425.34 for Dec '08 heating oil

PO#013136 to Delta Professional in the amount of \$838.17 for Dec '08 vehicle fuel

PO#013137 to ESRI, Inc. in the amount of \$2,100.00 for 2009 mapping software renewal

PO#013138 to Hendricks Auto Parts in the amount of \$612.00 for batteries, wrench tool set, and wiper blades for Public Works shop

PO#013139 to Interior Mechanical Services in the amount of \$665.18 for 2 snowplow angle cylinders

PO#013140 to Simplex Grinnell in the amount of \$1,207.00 for annual fire extinguisher inspection

PO#013143 to Buffalo Center Auto Parts in the amount of \$510.74 for oil, filters, grease, hoses, and fuses used by Rescue Squad, Landfill, and street maintenance

PO#013144 to M2C1 Construction & Engineering in the amount of \$2,284.45 for Oct '08 paving management (final payment)

Heinbockel moved to approve the listed purchase orders as presented; Musgrove seconded. Motion passed unanimously on a roll call vote.

#### **ADDITIONAL PUBLIC AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Joe Brokus, VP of the Deltana Community Services Partnership Project, thanked the Council for cooperating and supporting their organization.

Leith-Dowling stated a work session would be scheduled for 5:00pm on January 27, 2009 and the next regularly scheduled Council meeting would be on February 3.

Margie Mullins, Delta Vanguard Editor, questioned if the City's fire department is funded through subscription fees.

Heinbockel said DJVFD is funded through general revenue. Donations from City residents offset the fire department's budget. Some residents donate to both DJVFD and RDVFD.

Hallgren said \$15,000 was collected in donations last year from City residents and RDVFD collected the same amount.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Heinbockel moved to adjourn at 7:22pm; Musgrove seconded. Motion carried.

Pat White, CMC

Approved: February 3, 2009