



---

**City Council Minutes**  
**January 7, 2008 ~ 4:00PM**  
**Alaska**

**Special Meeting**  
**City Hall, Delta Junction,**

---

The Delta Junction City Council met with Senator Gene Therriault, who attended telephonically, Representative John Harris, and Legislative Aide Pete Fellman at 4:00pm on Monday, January 7, 2008 at City Hall in Delta Junction, Alaska. Council members present were Mayor Mary Leith-Dowling, Mike Jenkins, Pete Hallgren, JW Musgrove, and Pablo Martinez. City employees present were City Administrator Mike Tvenge and City Clerk Pat White. Two members from the public were also present. Capital projects for the 2008 Legislative Priority List and revenue sharing were topics of discussion.

Mayor Mary Leith-Dowling expressed appreciation for the attendance of State representatives. Pete Hallgren discussed his concerns about municipal revenue sharing, that the City of Delta Junction, according to its 1,100 population would be granted about \$162,000 or \$168,000 and Deltana, an unincorporated area with a population of about 3,500, would receive a maximum of \$75,000. He questioned the governor's formula for long-term revenue sharing. Hallgren said Valdez, which is slightly smaller than the City of Delta Junction and the greater Deltana area with a population of about 4,000, receives several hundred thousand dollars more. If Deltana and the City's population were combined for the per-capita amount, it would be significantly useful to both areas. Hallgren said revenue sharing focuses on operating costs. Grant monies are for construction but not maintenance and operations.

Mike Tvenge asked to discuss the list of priorities and whether or not the list should be shortened.

Representative John Harris asked about other items that were omitted from the final draft list.

Hallgren said \$300,000 for fairground improvements was omitted on December 18, 2007, after the first draft, when Council opted to not identify it as a priority item. He said the #1 item is still paving of downtown arterial and school bus streets, which Governor Palin vetoed last year. He said \$725,000 is available from previous grants, but there is not enough funding for all the prioritized roads, which will cost an additional \$1,950,000. Hallgren explained the need to pave the three Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT)-owned islands in the center of town on the Richardson Highway and the difficulties in dealing with mowing or weed-whacking the grass and weeds, periodic replacement of damaged vehicle windows because of spraying gravel, and lack of DOT funding to maintain the islands. He said paving of the islands ties in heavily with #2, End of the Alaska Highway Arch (Commemorative Arch). He agreed with Harris that island paving is the State DOT responsibility but Governor Palin informed that she is interested in projects that had statewide consequences. Partnering with DOT and paving the islands would be best accomplished while paving streets.

Tvenge said money is available, after engineering costs, to put toward paving, but the engineers instructed him to reduce the prioritized streets from 5 to 2. However, it does not eliminate the need to pave all 5 of them.

Harris said it would be beneficial to communicate with the administration to discuss last year's legislative list and why the items were vetoed entirely by Governor Palin. If road money is requested, it needs to be known if it will be vetoed again or if the item would be considered. He asked that Tvenge

report to him upon getting a response. He would inquire too, but felt it necessary that the local community make the inquiry.

Senator Gene Therriault agreed with Harris' suggestion and said the islands are obviously a DOT function but, because of the willingness to work the project jointly with the local government, the governor may back it with the limited discretionary funds. Time involved to complete DOT projects is a bone of contention even with DOT personnel, which is the reason he put in for an appropriation bill, to steer some funding back to a statutory program that has not been funded in the last fifteen years. Local Service Roads and Trails (LSRT) is money provided by the State that allows DOT to complete smaller projects in a more timely fashion without meeting requirements for federal dollars.

Hallgren said the City maintains approximately 29 miles of roads, some connecting to State maintained roads. Emmaus Road is one that requires paving because it will funnel traffic off Nistler, which travels between the new elementary school and the Delta High School. Emmaus connects Nistler Road and Alaska Highway and is used by Deltana commuters traveling to and from jobs at Ft. Greely.

Tvenge said two major gravel pits are located east of town and Emmaus could become a truck route to divert traffic from the middle of town, if it were paved. Tvenge continued on the Priority List and said #2, End of the Alaska Highway Arch (Commemorative Arch), was first designed and engineered by the Chamber of Commerce in 1996 and "it is a unique project."

Hallgren said the area where the arch is to be located was recently cleaned up but entitlement of the property has not yet been transferred from the State DNR. (The U.S. Army was responsible to clean up contamination left from a fueling station at the "triangle" area and upon satisfaction of the Brownfield cleanup the property is to be deeded to the City of Delta Junction. It has taken many years to complete the cleanup. The Visitor's Center, Farmer's Market (on skids), and the Sullivan Roadhouse are all located at the Triangle and are managed by the Chamber.) The arch will promote tourism and is of statewide interest.

Tvenge stated forgiveness of the 2004 State prison balance, which totals \$1,050,000, is the #3 priority. He said the no-interest loan from the state was appreciated because it saved the City from technical bankruptcy but the City felt the State was part of the problem and they should eliminate the debt. Also an excess of \$200,000 was expended to research formation of a potential Deltana Borough but area voters overwhelmingly defeated it and therefore eliminated chances of having the remainder of the loan forgiven.

Discussion followed regarding circumstances of the debt, all of last year's items that were vetoed by Governor Palin, and statewide revenue sharing.

Hallgren said the City of Delta Junction has argued being involved in the prison issue because of State statute, which required a government-to-government relationship. The legislation that was introduced was not at the City's request. There is no question that the City can continue to make the loan payments but the \$50,000/year could be used for operations. Eliminating the debt or increasing revenue sharing would be appreciated.

Therriault said he would consult with Governor Palin regarding the State's involvement in the prison proposal.

Tvenge stated the #4 request consists of a Stryker motorized gurney, 2 Medtronic Life Pak 20's (ambulance life monitors), 6 Automatic Electronic Defibrillators (AEDs), and a new F-450 4X4 Medtec ambulance. All items are for the Delta Volunteer Rescue Squad, totaling \$237,000. The new ambulance would replace Medic III, which was purchased with federal impact funds, but it has had problems since its day of purchase. It is never used on long transports, i.e. Fairbanks. Four-wheel drive would assist the volunteer crew in times of marginal road conditions, covering the Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) of approximately 5,892 square miles and south to Paxson (toward Glennallen on the Richardson Highway), north to Birch Lake (Mile 306 on the Richardson Highway), and south to Dot Lake (on the Alaska Highway).

Leith-Dowling said the Delta Rescue Squad is made up of volunteers who deserve decent equipment.

Tvenge stated a mausoleum (#5) is on the Legislative Wish List for the sixth time. The cemetery sits on 37 acres and is located outside the city limits but it serves the entire Delta community.

Leith-Dowling stated the Pioneers have requested the mausoleum and many people have difficulty with the concept of burying ashes in cemetery plots. The request also includes funding for an irrigation system, which is presently accomplished with portable water hoses.

Discussion followed regarding grave digging and hazards of leaving open gravesites for winter burials.

Tvenge explained #6 on the list, renovation and construction of the multi-use recreation facility. He said approximately \$1.5 million of impact funds were used for structural and electrical upgrades, a new fire alarm system, a Zamboni room, and public restrooms, which basically completed "phase one" of upgrading the facility. The facility was built in 1991 and flushed toilets are new, as of Christmas 2007. Portable restrooms have been used for the past sixteen years. He said the facility is basically a skating rink but has been engineered and designed to serve as a recreation center. Initial bids were \$4.5 million but impact funding was enough to bring the building up to code and add the mentioned improvements. It sits unused during the summer months. A rec center was high on the list at the community meeting in December 2002 but cannot continue if funding is not available. It is one of the largest City-owned buildings in town and plans are to turn it into just that, a rec center.

Discussion followed regarding creating an appropriation bill to replace or repair bridge infrastructure and identifying where the Jarvis Bridge is on the overall Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) package.

Tvenge said the Jarvis Creek Bridge is on the STIP but there is no money for its construction.

Leith-Dowling referenced handouts, Resolution 2008-03 and 2008-04, which addressed road improvements. She explained plans for improvements in other parts of Alaska and said the needs of the Richardson Highway, which was the first major road system built in interior Alaska, must not be overlooked.

Harris stated traffic on the Richardson is considered minimal compared to that on the Parks, Seward, and other highways.

The public meeting adjourned at 5:05pm.

Pat White, CMC

Approved: January 15, 2008