
City of Bethel, Alaska

Port Commission Minutes

Date 12/19/2005

Regular Meeting

City Council Chambers

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Port Commission was held on 12/19/2005 at 7:30p.m. in the City Manager's Office, Bethel, Alaska.

Brandon Leary called the meeting to order at 7:35p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission did have a quorum, the following members were present:

Brandon Leary
Allen DeSousa
Clair Grifka
Heath Martin
Alan Murphy
Thor Williams

Also in attendance were the following:

Anna Hoggard

Absent:

Donna Chris

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES of the November 21, 2005 regular meeting, signing of August, September and October final drafts

MOVED BY:	Thor Williams	To adopt the November 21, 2005 minutes
SECONDED BY:	Clair Grifka	

VOTE ON MOTION	Passed unanimously
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APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Allen: Bethel Search & Rescue Van to be added to the agenda under Old Business, Item B.

MOVED BY:	Thor Williams	To approve the regular agenda, with above addition to Old Business
SECONDED BY:	Allen De Sousa	

VOTE ON MOTION	Passed unanimously
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PORT DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Heath: My November report is included in your packet. The seawall repair was completed on November 23rd. The final inspection was done on December 9th. The rock still needs to be replaced at the toe of the wall but in the interest of public safety we've decided that we would do that work ourselves in the spring rather than opening a hole in the ice in Brown Slough. I attended meetings in Anchorage with the Corps of Engineers, the State of Alaska and our engineers, PNG. The infill problems in the Small Boat Harbor were brought to the attention of the Corps of Engineers. In the past, they have come out and done a survey based on a bench mark elevation somewhere on the land, the elevation in the boat harbor and the tides. They then apply a formula to calculate the water in the boat harbor. We have come to the conclusion that somehow the tidal elevation for Bethel is off. Bethel tidal information is based on the tidal elevation for Dillingham. We are going to do some tide readings ourselves in the spring. If that shows there is a break in the tide, the Corps of Engineers and NOAA will come out and conduct a 30-day tide survey.

Allen: They told us that they were going to come out every 5 years to do the dredging; there was no mention of it depending on the tide.

Heath: It was my understanding that they came out every 5 years to do a survey. They have actually done surveys more often, in 2001 and at our request in 2004.

Allen: I can remember reading somewhere that it was to be dredged every 5 years not just surveyed.

Heath: Unfortunately, that's not the case. We are scheduled for 2008. There have been some changes to the way the Corps operates and there's a good chance that we can do this ourselves ahead of their schedule. They would then reimburse us. In the past this was impossible to do with a Corps project. They do realize that there is a definite problem. There is a major choke point at the entrance to the harbor that is nearly impassible at low tide. I would like to see this turn into something that we can do on our own and the Corps reimburses us for the work. You know how the funding works with the Corps. That way we can take of problems as they arise.

Allen: That would make more sense.

Heath: We also talked some more about expanding the channel, the small boat harbor and putting a dry dock in the area to the east of the harbor. The Corps responded that they would like to get involved with that project. The City would have to develop the uplands but we already have the equipment and manpower to do that and now would be the perfect time to that. The Corps thinks that would solve a lot of the in filling problems we are having currently. While we're on the subject of the Corps of Engineers, you are all aware of the Brown Slough Bank Stabilization Project. We have already made one change to the scope of work for this project. There's a timber wall that was suppose to be built from Corina's to the bridge. The City and the Corps agreed that it shouldn't be a timber wall but now we are having trouble acquiring the right of way. We are basically being held up by a couple of property owners. The question is do we have to do that part of the project? No we don't. We have a very weak structure on the west side of slough. The engineers seem to think the slit is the only thing holding that wall in place. I asked the Corp if we could delete that project and they were just short of having a fiddle dance over that idea. So we will be doing the tie backs and the resurfacing of the east addition.

Allen: So specifically what won't we be doing?

Heath: We won't be doing the work inside of Brown Slough from Corina's back towards the bridge.

Allen: What about the problems with the bridge? That was suppose to help with the sloughing off around the bridge that's causing the bridge to be the way it is.

Heath: That sloughing probably has very little to do with the way the bridge is. The Corp never intended to do any of the bank stabilization work in Brown Slough anyway. The Feds allowed \$3.75 million to do this project and we got a match, so that's nearly \$5.5 million in our pockets. This is something we can do on down the road. Yes there is some erosion but it sloughes off at 6:1 slope instead of a cut bank.

Brandon: If the property owners don't want the improvement, fine.

Heath: The Corp will reimburse us for property, that's part of the match, but we don't want to pay \$200,000 for 7000 sq ft of property. They aren't going to reimburse us that much.

Alan: So the Corp thinks if we went in and did the repairs to the east side it would cause problems on the west side.

Heath: Yes because the slough is so narrow and we already have some problems on the west side. The replacement of the wall on the west side will be one of our next big projects. Once that we have a stable structure we can dredge Brown Slough and proceed with the bank stabilization on the east side and make it more useable.

Thor: Is there anyway to dredge just one part of the slough to make it easier for boats to get in and out?

Heath: Yes but we don't know how the slit will react. We would have to have an engineer look at it.

Allen: What it amounts to is that the State wants us to take over ownership of the entire facility but that's not going to happen until it's fixed.

Heath: And on that note we can go right to DOT. We do have a condition survey ongoing. There was a little delay in the seawall repair. We found a cracked sheet in the closed cell that belonged to the state, so I felt it prudent that they make the decision on how to repair it. The condition survey has to include the new construction. I would recommend that we don't make any decisions on the dock until we see the survey even though DOT is very anxious to sign it over to us. The maintenance schedule for next year is pretty much done. I should have something on paper for the commission sometime in January.

Allen: Do you have anything scheduled in the way of floats for the Small Boat Harbor?

Heath: Not for floats, there's plenty of other stuff though. We may have enough to do another row of floats. We have room for at least one, possibly three more floats.

Allen: I would like to see that in the budget if possible.

Thor: I know last year we spent the money on the plastic fingers but they didn't get put up this year, at least that I saw.

Heath: One row did get put up, and we have enough for one more. We'll start repairing the wooden floats this spring and will be adding more floats next year. We wanted to do that this past spring but ran out of time. I think that's all I have for now.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Brandon: I don't really have much at this time that has to do with the Port, but I would like the city to find it in their heart to find some ice road money.

Heath: Being as it could be very beneficial to the city that might be something the Port Commission could look at doing.

Brandon: I believe there was a \$30,000 grant for the ice road. I don't believe all of the money was used and the remainder was put into the general fund.

Heath: Speaking of the City's funds. I have a copy of the city's audit that was handed out at the last council meeting. The Port of Bethel has \$2,025,828.00 in designated funds and \$1,035,291.00 in undesignated funds and in our cash account we have \$250. The kicker is the amount due to the Port from other sources is \$2,691,100.00. I would have to say the Port is in pretty good shape barring any catastrophes.

Brandon: One other thing on the ice road. If the Port was willing to do something, and since the only access to the ice road is through the Port maybe we could look at issuing permits. The ice road brought a lot of business to the city and if they want that to continue it's going to have to be paid for somehow.

Heath: A \$25,000 investment on the part of the Port towards the ice road could be a boon to the city. The commission would have to present that to the City Council.

Brandon: I'd like to welcome Alan to our little group.

MOVED BY:	Allen DeSousa	The Port recommends to City Council that Port is willing to spend up to \$30k on ice road
SECONDED BY:	Alan Murphy	
VOTE ON MOTION	Passed unanimously	

COUNCIL REP'S COMMENTS

Thor: Just a reminder to turn in the commission meeting minutes to the city clerk. Also there is some concern about meeting attendance. According to BMC, vacancies are the responsibility of the committee or commission. Just to keep the body informed of those issues. Also, in respect to what Heath mentioned about the 2005 audit. Right now if you look at the city budget you can not tell how much money the Port has. This has been an issue for quite awhile. We need to know how much we are spending, what we are receiving and how much is going into the slush fund.

Allen: That also helps with accountability. So we can show the Corp how much we are putting into things like the seawall etc. So they can't say we aren't doing our fair share.

Thor: It's always been a concern to me that some of the \$3.2 million in the reserve account is actually reserves for the Port, because they are intertwined. It all goes into the same saving account. To let this body know I am going to call a special meeting of the Council to put the ice highway on the agenda so it's introduced.

Allen: Maybe the ice highway should be included in the budget to encourage the villages to chip in what they can.

Heath: Our administrative overhead cost is significantly lower this year than it has been in years past. We are taking on more responsibility for the billing and collections, and trying to be more of a stand alone business like it used to be. So putting in ice road money shouldn't be a problem.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Allen: I like to welcome Alan to the commission. It's good to have your experience on the commission.

Clair: I also like to welcome Alan to the commission.

Alan: Thanks for welcoming me aboard. It's going to be a learning process for awhile, but I'm looking forward to being involved.

OLD BUSINESS

A) Purchase of Uplands on City Dock from Crowley Marine

Heath: Per the Commission's recommendation, the City Council unanimously approved the purchase and the contract is now in the hands of the City's legal department.

B) Bethel Search and Rescue

Allen: Well they didn't show up again, but we can discuss this anyway. The Commission is looking into giving BSR a lot on Oscar Way for their van or office. Previously we weren't able to give them a 5 year commitment so they weren't interested in our offer. From what I understand they have to move their van now. I think it would be a benefit to the community for the Port to donate the space to BSR, so they have the access to the river and a place to store their equipment.

Brandon: We've invited them to the meeting several times, but they haven't shown up.

Thor: What if we send them an agenda of the January meeting with a note asking them to attend.

Heath: We will certainly do what we can to accommodate them, we have the space available.

NEW BUSINESS

A) Discussion of Tariff and Scheduling of Work Session

Heath: The new tariff has to be posted for 30 days. We have quite a bit of business we need to tend to so I would recommend that we save the January meeting for that and schedule two work session in January to work on the tariff.

Allen: If I remember correctly, in the past as long as we had it filed by March 1st to go into effect on April 1st that was ok with the mainline carriers so they could plan their fees accordingly.

MOTION TO SCHEDULE TARIFF WORK SESSION

MOVED BY:	Thor Williams	Schedule tariff work sessions for January 11 th at 6:30pm
SECONDED BY:	Brandon Leary	

VOTE ON MOTION	Passed unanimously
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B) Letter of Support regarding Hoffman Highway repair

Allen: I don't think the letter we have is strong enough, but other than that I have a few corrections. I am Vice-Chair. Heath is the Port Director. In the second paragraph it should say we are the Port Commission. It should mention that the project should have been completed in 2002 in paragraph 2.

MOTION TO ADOPT AMENDED LETTER OF SUPPORT CONCERNING HOFFMAN HIGHWAY REPAIRS

MOVED BY:	Thor Williams	Adoption of amended letter of support for highway repairs
SECONDED BY:	Allen De Sousa	

VOTE ON MOTION	Passed unanimously
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C) Appointment of New Commissioner, Alan Murphy

DISCUSSION

Brandon: Is there anything else anyone would like to comment on?

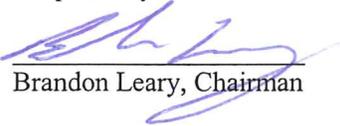
Thor: I would like to mention that the chain link fence along the seawall is keeping people from destroying that area.

ADJORNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 9:15pm

NEXT MEETING: January 16, 2006

Respectfully Submitted:


 Brandon Leary, Chairman

APPROVED THIS _____ day of _____ 2005.

ATTEST:
