
City of Bethel, Alaska

City Council Minutes

December 14, 1999

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Bethel City Council was held on December 14, 1999, at 6:30 p.m. in the Lions Club, Bethel, Alaska. Mayor Mike O'Brien called the meeting to order at 6:35 p.m.

ROLL CALL

There were present:

Mike O'Brien, Mayor	Agnes Phillips
Jerry Drake	Karol Pobrislo
Joerene Hout	Stanley "Tundy" Rodgers
Dario Notti	

comprising a quorum of the Council.

Also in attendance were:

Bob Herron, City Manager
Gaye Vaughan, City Clerk

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

No one stepped forward to speak.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Corrections and typographical errors were noted by Council members.

MOVED BY:	Notti	To approve the corrected minutes of the regular meeting of November 16, 1999.
SECONDED BY:	Drake	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Copies having been made available to the public, Mayor O'Brien noted by title only the items on the consent agenda.

The award of a contract for the ice road was removed from the consent agenda at the request of a council member.

Approval of 2000 City Council Meeting Schedule (City Clerk)

Approval of funding for tenant improvements to Braund Building (City Manager)

MOVED BY:	Drake	To approve the agenda and consent agenda as amended.
SECONDED BY:	Pobrislo	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor O'Brien announced the following:

The Dept. of Health and Social Services has offered grant funding of \$500,000 for alcohol and tobacco awareness for children. There are four levels of funding based on population. There will be an RFP conference on January 27 at the Hilton Hotel in Anchorage. Without objection, Council Members Hout and Pobrislo will attend. Also, City Manager Herron or Parks & Recreation Director Athanas will also attend. A memo from the Police Department regarding the highest used statutes from which the city prosecutes. As there is no city ordinances on these subjects, the fines paid to go the state. If the city council were to adopt ordinances similar to these statutes, the fines would come to the city.

Council Member Notti said the city would have to come up with the court costs involved.

Mayor O'Brien stated that since these are fines, not criminal cases, the people are not entitled to an attorney.

Council Member Notti felt that someone must be present in court to represent the city.

A lengthy discussion ensued.

Council Member Drake stated that should be investigated.

Council Member Hout also believed the matter should be looked into.

- Governor's Talking Points
- BP/ARCO merger
- Governor's proposal for tribal governments
- Alaska Housing Finance Corp. has dropped the interest rate for first time buyers.

MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Herron relayed the following information:

Department Head reports were included in the agenda packets.

The last union negotiating meeting was held after the November council meeting. The contract should be before the council for ratification in January. The City Christmas Party will be held on December 18 for employees, council members and families. Every employee will be given a collector thermometer. The City Manager presented each council member with a thermometer. After the public hearing on Ordinance #99-27 later in the meeting, he requested an Executive Session to discuss the negotiations.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Mayor O'Brien noted there are vacancies on the Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Port and Public Works Commissions/Committees.

Public Works Committee

Council Member Drake reported that the committee had met at noon on this day and had had a very good meeting. They had discussed the recycling center and would like to review it and work on it. It needs to be worked on over the winter. He added that the committee is eager to do the leg work for the Council.

Council Member Pobrislo stated that contractors are filling neighborhood dumpsters. She felt the contractors should be renting a dumpster so residential ones are not being filled up.

Council Member Hout relayed her experience in trying to rent a dumpster during a remodel project.

Council Member Notti stated that most contractors take their debris to the landfill.

City Manager Herron stated his long range plan to work with the Public Works Committee and the Public Works Director to contract out the garbage service.

Without objection, Mayor O'Brien said recycling would be sent to the Public Works Committee for review.

Transportation Commission

Council Member Hout stated that no meeting was held this month.

Senior Citizens' Advisory Board

Council Member Hout stated that Bob Charles has applied to the U.S. Dept. of Justice for a grant to study senior abuse. She noted that there is no heat in the Senior Center bus.

Clerk's Note: Council Member Phillips arrived at the meeting.

Parks & Recreation Committee

Council Member Pobrislo noted that the Committee had not met since last month. She stated that the Committee needs members and suggested that maybe the committee should be more of a task force formed to address certain issues then disband. She felt that would give Parks & Recreation an injection of new ideas and energy. She asked for Council input on this idea.

Council Member Drake would like to see the Public Works Committee membership reduced to five members.

Planning Commission

Council Member Notti stated that the Commission had met and dealt with two action items. An item relating to GCI had been removed from the agenda. The other item dealt with enforcement of a building being constructed without a site plan or permit. The commission had also discussed fill and new boardwalks. The next meeting is January 13.

Mayor O'Brien asked if there was any discussion on the proposals for the new boardwalks and trails.

Council Member Notti replied that the bike path will be paved if it is to be a part of the highway. If it is constructed as a separate path or boardwalk, it will probably not ever be re-paved. The community committee members would like to see it as a separate path, but they have different idea than the Planning Commission members.

Council Member Hout felt the Council should hold a meeting on the new path.

Council Member Pobrislo asked about the minimum distance between the vehicle lane and the bike/pedestrian lane.

A discussion ensued regarding the plans for the new path.

Finance Committee

Council Member Phillips stated she had not attended the last meeting. She noted that she and Council Member Hout had attended a forum with Representative Kapsner and Senator Hoffman.

Public Safety Commission

Mayor O'Brien stated the Commission met the previous week. He noted that the Commission will hold a public hearing on February 3, 7 to 9 p.m., regarding the proposed alcohol delivery site. The Commission had discussed safety but in light of freeze up, it was tabled until August. Abandoned buildings will be on the agenda for January 3.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance #99-27: Relating to Purchase and Sale of, and a Ground Lease and Bill of Sale for the Laundromat (City Manager Herron)

Mayor O'Brien called for public testimony. Seeing and hearing none, the public hearing was closed.

MOVED BY:	Drake	To adopt Ordinance #99-27.
SECONDED BY:	Hout	

City Manager Herron reiterated that he would like to discuss the negotiations with the Council in Executive Session at the end of the meeting.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Ordinance #99-28: Relating to Acquisition of a Road Grader (City Manager Herron)

Mayor O'Brien called for public testimony. Seeing and hearing none, the public hearing was closed.

MOVED BY:	Pobrislo	To adopt Ordinance #99-28.
SECONDED BY:	Notti	

City Manager Herron recommended approval of the ordinance stating that it is a housekeeping ordinance.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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NEW BUSINESS

1999 Audit Presentation

Karen Altman presented the 1999 Audit to the Council. She noted that the fund balance a year ago was \$3.8 million and it is now \$3.6 million.

Advance award of 3-year contract for ice road maintenance (City Manager)

City Manager Herron requested the Council authorize him to award the bid to the lowest bidder. The bids are to be opened on January 22.

MOVED BY:	Hout	To authorize the City Manager to award a 3-year contract for ice road maintenance to the lowest bidder.
SECONDED BY:	Notti	

Council Member Pobrislo asked why it was a three-year contract, to which City Manager Herron replied that after a contractor has set a schedule and put an investment into equipment, the contract is not worth it. There were only two bidder last year. Having a three-year contract will make it more competitive and the bidders will see it as a long term investment.

Also in response to questioning, Mr. Herron replied that it is a political decision to plow more often.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Council Member Pobrislo stated the ME School play was great. She congratulated the wrestlers and noted that four or five of them placed in the top six. She stated that she would like to see Bethel become a first class or home rule city, mostly to help support the schools.

Council Member Notti wished everyone Happy Holidays. He noted that an initiative was soundly defeated only two years ago on the subject of the city's classification. He asked that the subject of a maintenance easement in front of his home be on the next agenda.

Mayor O'Brien also congratulated the wrestlers. He noted that wrestling was the only reason he finished high school. He announced that KYUK will be broadcasting council meetings beginning in January. He felt that citizens should have access to the meetings. Regarding a reclassification initiative, he felt the campaign, or lack of one, had a lot to do with the defeat. He noted that the additional revenue would go toward education and other worthwhile projects. The city would need to take a long look at it but also need to mount an education campaign. He also wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Council Member Drake stated that a change in the city status could severely affect the funding for schools. He asked that each committee be sent a copy of the council procedures, the commission/committee procedures, and the ordinance which formed the commission/committee. He would like the council to hold noon work sessions with the commissions and committees.

Council Member Phillips wished everyone a Merry Christmas. She noted that the water service ran in the red in the audit and asked about the water rates.

City Manager Herron stated that once the city has the public utility certificate, he will come back with a recommendation regarding the rates.

Council Member Hout stated the city has changed since the initiative two years ago. She would rather see Bethel become a home rule city than incorporated into a borough. She noted that there is no money in the city budget at present for the schools and that she sees a lot of waste in the school system and all over the state. She noted that the roads are very icy and drivers need to be on the lookout for school buses. She told of one driver who ran through the lights on her bus. She was glad to see the good sanding job.

Council Member Notti wondered if the people currently serving on a commission or committee would consider volunteering to serve on a second one.

Council Member Pobrislo stated the idea is to get a variety of people on the commissions/committees and not have everything done by just a handful of people.

City Manager Herron spoke to the issue of school funding stating that it is a difficult issue. In the last five years, \$7,000,000 was appropriated by the legislature for all the maintenance and new school construction in the state. About half a billion dollars is needed. Over the last five years LKSD received \$7 million. Urban schools get \$1.40 vs. \$.60 for rural schools for new enrollment.

City Clerk Vaughan presented Mayor O'Brien and City Manager Herron with a Loss Control Award from the Alaska Municipal League Joint Insurance Association for five years of losses less than 1%.

The Council took a brief recess at 8:45 p.m. prior to going into Executive Session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOVED BY:	Hout	To recess into Executive Session.
SECONDED BY:	Drake	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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The Council reconvened the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Moved BY:	Phillips	To adjourn the meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Hout	

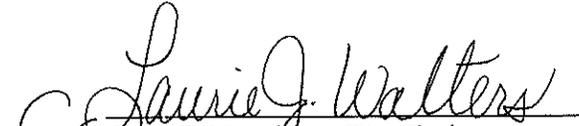
VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 11th DAY OF JANUARY, 2000.

ATTEST:


 Mike O'Brien, Mayor


 Gaye J. Vaughan, City Clerk