
City of Bethel, Alaska

City Council Minutes

November 21, 2000

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Bethel City Council was held on October 24, 2000, at 6:30 p.m. in the council chambers, Bethel, Alaska.

Mayor Rodgers called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Comprising a quorum of the Council, the following were present:

Mayor Rodgers	Karol Sanchez-Pobrislo
Jerry Drake	Agnes Phillips
Mike O'Brien	Dario Notti (arrived at 6:40)
Carl Berger	

Also in attendance were the following:

Bob Herron, City Manager
Colleen Soberay, City Clerk

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Marty Langlois, resident of Bethel, spoke to council in regard to safety. He asked council if there were any plans to put a boardwalk from 4th Ave., near AC Value, to Kilbuck elementary school. He asked that if there were no plans to build the boardwalk, could the Boy Scouts be directed to do so as a project. He also said he is very concerned about the dangers of walking around 4th Ave. and Willow St. area because of traffic. He asked council to put a street light in at the intersection of 4th and Willow for the safety of children. He also addressed lighting at the new post office. He said he is concerned that lighting at the new post office would take away from the view of the stars, which he said was one of the nicest things to see in Bethel. He asked that council consider sensitive lighting for the new post office.

Mayor Rodgers explained the liability reasons behind the boardwalk being removed.

Manager Herron said the city is working on having a street light installed at 4th and Willow and hope to have one put in by January. He also said he would look into adding a walkway utilizing sand.

Jeff Haggland, GM of Swanson's, commented on the fuel prices listed in the newspapers. He said the numbers are not accurate.

Council member O'Brien said despite the newspapers, fuel prices have been high. He commented on the rise in prices and pointed out that there was an upper trend in the fuel prices. He said only in the last month have prices dropped down. O'Brien thanked fuel companies for the decrease in fuel prices this past month and that it has provided some relief.

Council member Berger asked Mr. Haggland how Swanson's prices its fuel.

Mr. Haggland said they purchase from fuel farms like everyone else. He explained the costs associated with purchasing their fuel from fuel farms.

Council member Berger asked what the possibility was for fuel prices to go up or down.

Mr. Haggland said he didn't want to argue with council about fuel prices or take credit for the recent drop in fuel prices. He said he does not anticipate a price increase in fuel unless the Swanson's costs go up.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY:	Drake	To approve the minutes of the regular meeting of Oct. 24, 2000.
SECONDED BY:	Pobrislo	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Manager Herron addressed council questions asked at the last council meeting in regard to the population determination given in the Mayor's report. He said the AK Dept. of Community and Economic Development based the Bethel population on the number of permanent fund applications. Manager Herron also said this population number is reliable until we get the new census report. He also explained which fuel companies he has talked to in regard to high fuel prices.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY:	Drake	To approve the agenda with the addition of <i>new business</i> item C: Ordinance #00-26 and a discussion about collecting sales tax and dock fees owed to the city in executive session.
SECONDED BY:	Berger	

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

Mayor Rodgers announced the following:

- Governor's Talking Points for the weeks of October 23 and 30 and November 6 and 13, 2000
- Notice of Administrative Appeal—AVCP, on behalf of the affected member villages of the of the Kuskokwim River drainage vs. State of Alaska
- Letter from Office of the Governor—*Re*: Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program.
- Letter from AK Dept. of Community and Economic Development—*Re*: Intent to apply for FY 00 CDBG grant
- News Releases from Alaska Housing—AHFC to issue \$160 million in mortgage revenue bonds and AHFC and Four A's receive \$572,600 AIDS grant
- Letter from AK Dept. of Environmental Conservation—*Re*: Pollution control
- News Releases from Alaska Housing—Agencies report violence high among homeless women
- Announcement from Alaska Native Health Board—*Re*: Support for tobacco programs

Mayor Rodgers asked council for concurrence to appoint Kevin Carter to the Port Commission and Thor Williams to the Public Works Committee. Council Member O'Brien noted that Mr. Carter's first choice is the Public Safety and Transportation Commission. Council Member Berger said Mary Gregory will not ask to be re-appointed to the Commission. Council member O'Brien said two members [Carl Berger and Mary Gregory] terms are soon to expire on the Commission and recommended that Mr. Carter be appointed to Public Safety and Transportation. Council discussed committee and commission vacancies.

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To appoint Kevin Carter to the Public Safety and Transportation Commission and Thor Williams to the Public Works Committee.
SECONDED BY:	Drake	

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

City Manager Bob Herron noted the management reports included in council packets and reviewed the following items with council:

- EPA — Explained that the City met with EPA November 3, 2000 in Anchorage in regard to the Notice of Violation and the City's proposed Plan of Action. The first meeting with the EPA addressed 55 gallon drums and the secondary containment for lube storage and a day tank inside the City shop. The second meeting that took place was centered on the large storage tank of used oil. In this meeting it

was determined that additional cooperative analysis of the regulations and previous test samples was warranted.

- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) — The Bethel Planning Commission passed Resolution #00-3 that comments on major amendment #1 to the 2001-2003 STIP. This resolution clearly addresses the City's concerns.
- Tsikoyak Subdivision — Explained a letter addressed to Martha and Walter Larson Sr., in regard to necessary public improvements such as street lighting and asked for comments.
- Recycling — An *ad hoc* committee that includes Jerry Drake, Clair Grifka, Donna Handley, Brian Glasheen and others have met over the last several months to discuss the recycling issue. Explained the memo from Clair Grifka concerning the current proposed option.
- Police Officer Recruitment — Bethel is suffering from a critical need for additional police officers. To cover 24 hours per day, every day, the Bethel Police Dept. requires 15 police officers, but the City only has 10 police officers. This is operating at a 66 percent manpower level. Each of the 10 officers is averaging an extra day of duty per week. Manager Herron recommended the City of Bethel consider signing bonuses and housing subsidies to attract new police officers.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Senior Advisory Board

Council member Berger said the board met November 21, but it was an abbreviated meeting due to the passing of Joe Chief, Sr. He said the board's nominating committee is due to hold elections, but the board is still working on its by-laws. He said the Senior Center had a Thanksgiving dinner November 21 at noon. He thanked ONC for their contributions for the dinner. He said the next board meeting is scheduled for early December.

Planning Commission

Council member Notti said the commission met November 9 and discussed two agenda items. He said the first was an introduction to the Venes preliminary plat, but the motion failed three to one. The second item he said the commission dealt with was Resolution 00-3, supporting the priority of resurfacing Tundra Ridge and Ptarmigan roads. He said the resolution passed unanimously.

Port Commission

Mayor Rodgers said the commission did not meet on November 20 as scheduled, but will meet on November 27. He said the Port Director is out for the winter and that Manager Herron is covering the Port for the winter.

Public Works Committee

Council member Drake said the committee met November 21 and discussed several items. He said the RFP in regard to the removal of abandoned vehicles is still being drafted. He also said a resolution would be drafted by the committee requesting the city

take over the recycling project. He said ONC may have some grant money to help, but it's only at the discussion stage.

Public Safety and Transportation Commission

Council member O'Brien said he was unable to attend the meeting. Council member Berger said he attended the meeting. He said the commission discussed pedestrian safety in regard to crosswalks needed for the area between YKHC and the hospital. He said the commission discussed possible solutions, such as designating that area a hospital zone and lowering the speed limit.

Manager Herron said he talked to YKHC about a crosswalk. He said himself and Gene Peltola have talked to DOT, but DOT is not doing anything.

Finance Committee

Council member Phillips said the committee discussed recommendations to council. She said the recommendations are in the minutes, but would like Finance Committee recommendations to be on the next council meeting agenda for discussion.

Parks and Recreation Committee

Council member Pobrislo said the committee was scheduled to meet on November 15, but did not have a quorum. She said the meeting has been re-scheduled for December 6 at 6 p.m.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Item A — Discussion Item: City of Bethel Strategic Plan for Computers and Networking and Presentation by United Utilities, Inc (UUI).

Linda Hoff, Vice President/GM of Unicom, gave a presentation about the 6-month free wireless demo project UUI offered to Bethel. She explained that UUI made the offer to Bethel last spring, but council directed that a task force be set up to determine the technology needs of the city. Ms. Hoff thanked the task force for all of their hard work and said it was a pleasure working with the task force. Ms. Hoff explained the objective of the demo project. She also said it would take 60 to 90 days to have the system up and running. If after the 6-month free demo the city decides they do not want to buy into the system, Unicom will simply remove the wireless demo and the city would revert back to its current technology system—at no cost to the city. She said there will be no charge for installation of the project for the city, but estimates it will cost UUI \$50,000 to install.

Council member Drake said he gave the City of Bethel Strategic Plan for Computers and Networking to council for review and hoped everyone reviewed the plan. He thanked the task force for creating this plan. He said the task force has developed the city networking plan and UUI's proposal would dove tail right into that plan. This demo

offered by UUI, he said, would provide greater access. He recommended council accept UUI's offer of a 6-month free wireless demo.

Council member Pobrislo asked what would cause this system not to work once in place. Ms. Hoff said extreme weather conditions may cause the system not to work. She also said wireless systems are very reliable and United Utilities has local people to provide support for this system.

Council member Pobrislo asked if the city has all of the necessary equipment for this system or will the city need to upgrade. Ms. Hoff said the equipment the city has will accommodate the demo project.

Council member Berger asked if this system would provide for portability. Ms. Hoff answered not yet that equipment would need to be purchased for laptop use.

Council member Drake addressed council member concerns in regard to city equipment. Council discussed the mechanics of the system. Council member O'Brien asked if United Utilities foresees wireless connectivity for everyone. Ms. Hoff explained that it is UUI's goal, but will not occur in the near future because of the high costs associated with wireless technology.

MOVED BY:	Drake	To accept UUI's proposal of a 6-month free demo for wireless service.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

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

Item A — Planning Commission Rules of Procedure

Council member Pobrislo said she did not have any more information at this time. She asked to place this item on the December 12 agenda for the next regular council meeting. Council concurred.

Item B — Alaska Municipal League Awards announced by Mayor Rodgers

Mayor Rodgers presented AML awards from the recent conference in Juneau. He presented an award to Howard Elliott, Port Director, for recognition of having been nominated as the municipal employee of the year. Mayor Rodgers also presented the 2000 Alaska Award of Excellence, honoring the best in local government innovation, that was presented to the City of Bethel at the AML conference in Juneau, in the category of community development for the Bethel Court Complex. Mayor Rodgers also presented an AML JIA insurance refund check that would be provided to the City, if the City renews its insurance with JIA.

Mayor Rodgers presented Council member Notti an award of appreciation for having served as Vice Mayor from October 1999 to October 2000.

Item C — Ordinance #00-26: Business License amendment

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To introduce Ordinance #00-26 and set the public hearing for December 12, 2000.
SECONDED BY:	Pobrislo	

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

Council Member Berger expressed his condolences to the Joe Chief Sr. family. He wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Pobrislo congratulated Howard Elliott for his AML award and said he does a good job. She also commented on the regional vocational training center that it is being planned for the Delta and that she sees so much potential for it in that with the police shortage, recycling center that will need to be manned, there is a lot of opportunity for a lot of individuals to have some vocational training so that employers can hire from within the Delta. She said the vocational training center is a good thing to have in Bethel, if it's done in the right way.

Council Member Notti gave his condolences to the Joe Chief, Sr. family. He congratulated Howard Elliott for his AML award and thanked council for his vice mayor award. He wished everyone happy holidays.

Council Member O'Brien gave his condolences to the Joe Chief, Sr. family. He said in keeping with the policy of the Mayor in recognition of volunteerism of people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for the city he would like to first recognize the city technology planning committee. He said due to a proposal from a local business, the city put together a technology task force to develop a networking plan that the city has needed for a long time geared toward where the city is headed with technology. He gave thanks and gratitude to the technology planning committee. He said there was an inordinate amount of time given from people around the community and people with the expertise to make sure this plan was developed. Council member O'Brien also made reference to the HP Digital Village program proposal for a technology grant in council member folders and thanked Colleen for her willingness to go above and beyond for putting together the proposal.

Council Member Drake said he was very impressed with the tax audit and would like to see an item on the next council meeting agenda under executive session about what has been done with the recommendations of the audit and also with conjunction to that a complete in-person report from the finance director regarding delinquent Port

accounts and tax collections. He also asked if the next time council goes to Juneau as a group, if a meeting with the DOT commissioner could be arranged and would it be productive, especially to talk about STIP. Manager Herron said he would ask to have a meeting arranged and said it is a good idea to meet with DOT.

Mayor Rodgers gave his deepest condolences to the Joe Chief, Sr. family. He wished a happy birthday to his granddaughter and to several friends. He also wished everyone a happy Thanksgiving.

Council Member Phillips gave her condolences to the Joe Chief, Sr. family. She also said she would like the city manager to introduce an ordinance that would amend the budget to increase police salary and offer bonuses.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	Moved to go into executive session to discuss negotiations in regard to collection of taxes owed by businesses to the City of Bethel.
SECONDED BY:	Pobrislo	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Council came out of executive session. Council directed the city manger to communicate their desires to the city attorney in regard to collection of delinquent accounts.

ADJOURNMENT

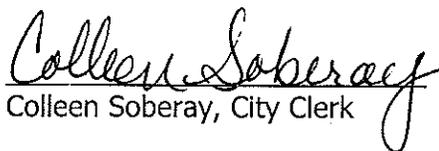
MOVED BY:	Phillips	To adjourn the meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Drake	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 12th DAY OF DECEMBER, 2000.

ATTEST:


Colleen Soberay, City Clerk


Stanley "Fundy" Rodgers, Mayor