
City of Bethel, Alaska

City Council Minutes

May 19, 2004

Special Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Bethel City Council was held on May 19, 2004 at 6:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers, Bethel, Alaska.

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

ROLL CALL

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

R. Thor Williams	Michael O'Brien
Dave Trantham	Hugh Dymnt
Hugh Short, Jr.	Andrei Jacobs
Stanley "Tundy" Rodgers	

Excused absence(s):

Unexcused absence(s):

Also in attendance were the following:

Bob Herron, City Manager
Amanda Byington, City Clerk

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Willy Keppel

- Support for Teen Center
- Read letter from Margaret "Tootsie" Guinn in support of the Teen Center
- Comments about the budget allowing for road through the Donut Hole

Agnes Phillips

- Support for YKHC take-over of the Senior Center
- Concerned about funding for ONC, YKHC has more Medicaid availability

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AND REGULAR AGENDA

MOVED BY:	Jacobs	To approve the consent agenda and regular agenda for May 19, 2004
SECONDED BY:	Williams	
MOVED BY:	Rodgers	To remove Item B: Budget Work Session
SECONDED BY:	Trantham	
<i>Mayor Short responded that it would be good to let the community know what is going on.</i>		
VOTE ON MOTION	Amendment to motion fails 2-5 (Dymnt, Williams, Jacobs, O'Brien, Short)	
VOTE ON MOTION	Main motion passes 5-2 (Rodgers, Trantham)	

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Short's report included the following:

- Spoke about the letter of support for the Parks and Recreation Department
 - No discussions have happened regarding any closing of the Parks and Recreation Department or the Senior Center. The discussions so far have only been transition and have not included non-funding of any particular department.
- Mayor Short would like to appoint Scott Bailey to the Finance Committee and Frank Neitz to the Public Works Committee.

Concurrence from Council

MOVED BY:	Trantham	To confirm Scott Bailey appointment to the Finance Committee.
SECONDED BY:	Dyment	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion passes unanimously
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Concurrence from Council

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To confirm Frank Neitz to the Public Works Committee
SECONDED BY:	Dyment	

Rodgers: Mr. Neitz is a pilot with little knowledge of Public Works affairs. Mr. Keppel is knowledgeable in the budget and in road making, he is general construction worker and knows how to do the things that are needed on the Public Works Committee

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion fails 2-5 (Williams, Trantham, Rodgers, Jacobs, Dyment)
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MANAGEMENT TEAM'S REPORT

City Manager Herron's report included the following:

- Kuskokwim Consortium Library funding request
- Proposed legislation for the Port Authority
- New model for Alaska fisheries policy
- Personnel matter
- City Manager travel status

Comments

Vice-Mayor Williams asked the City Manager to look into a report that he got about minors drinking at a Parks and Recreation activity at the Teen Center. City Manager Herron responded that he would speak with Janet Athanas and staff, as well as the police, to confirm or deny the report.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Senior Advisory Board – Council Member Trantham stated that the Board held a Special Meeting on May 6. He then went through the amended Senior Advisory Board By-laws. Louise Charles, Senior Center Director, answered questions regarding the Alaska Commission on Aging from Council member Dyment. She then spoke to the Council about the by-laws of the Alaska Commission on Aging not superceding the BMC. Mr. Trantham then spoke about a resolution in support of full funding for the Senior Center.

Parks and Recreation Committee- Council Member Jacobs reported that the committee has met twice since the last Council meeting on May 7 and May 18. The committee generally discussed the budget, and has worked on a resolution for full funding for the Parks and Recreation Department. Thanks to John Sargent for his attendance at the last meeting and the good information he gave.

Planning Commission – Council member Rodgers reported that the committee met on May 13, he was unable to connect via teleconference. He referred to the agenda in the packet. They are scheduled to meet on the second Thursday in June.

Port Commission – Vice-Mayor Williams stated that the commission met on May 17. There was no quorum, but they did discuss Port issues. May 26 is the next scheduled meeting.

Public Works Committee – Council Member O'Brien said he had a chance to attend the meeting. Resolution #04-12 was the main topic. He then spoke about the resolution from the committee. The committee recommended passage of the ordinance, but did voice some concerns. He then spoke about the sub-committee set up for dust control. He recommended to the sub-committee to take notes and he will keep the Council and the community informed. One suggestion from that sub-committee was to have the police enforce the speed limits.

Public Safety and Transportation Commission – Council Member Dymont reported that there was no quorum. He then asked about openings on the board. City Clerk Byington explained the process of declaring a vacancy.

Finance Committee – Mayor Short reported that the Finance Committee has had a lot of meetings mostly pertaining to the budget and increasing revenue sources for the City of Bethel.

- Re-write of Ordinance #04-03: Dumpster Ordinance - kept non-residential classification; removed requirement for non-residential customers to have a dumpster. Every non-residential customer with a triplex or larger will be required to pay a \$45.00 garbage fee.
- They directed Rob Strahan, Finance Director, to come up with an ordinance to equalize water and sewer rates for both hauled and piped service so both are paying their fair share to quit operating in a deficit.
- Request the City Council to put a referendum on the ballot this October to increase Sales Tax by 1%. They had lengthy discussions on this matter. Mayor Short then spoke about the projected revenue from the increase.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Item A – Resolution #04-16: A resolution of the Bethel City Council acknowledging Orutsararmiut Native Council's commitment to assume the operations and responsibilities of the Senior Services Department, Eddie Hoffman Senior Center and Chrissie Shantz Adult Day Care on July 1, 2005

MOVED BY:	Jacobs	To approve Resolution #04-16: A resolution of the Bethel City Council acknowledging Orutsararmiut Native Council's commitment to assume the operations and responsibilities of the Senior Services Department, Eddie Hoffman Senior Center and Chrissie Shantz Adult Day Care on July 1, 2005
SECONDED BY:	Rodgers	

Vice-Mayor Williams commented on the positive position of the City letting ONC know that we really do want this transfer, and we want it as smooth as possible

Council Member Dymont stated that it acknowledges ONC intent and it assigns a lot of tasks to ONC and to the City to make sure this process is as smooth as possible.

Council Member O'Brien gave thanks to City Council and too ONC for talking and agreeing to get this done. He believes that ONC does have access to grants that the City does not.

Council member Trantham asked ONC to prepare their own Resolution acknowledging their commitment to the City to take over this program.

City Manager Herron answered Councilman Trantham by saying that at the Joint Council meeting it was agreed that both council's would be preparing their own resolution in this regard.

Council Member Jacobs stated that the ONC members are aware of the resolution and the transfer and it is being talked about throughout the ONC Council Members.

Vice-Mayor Williams asked the City Clerk to forward the resolution to Alaska Commission on Aging to keep them informed of the plans for our Senior Program.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion passes unanimously
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5 Minute Break

Item B – Budget work session

Mayor Short passed out a plan that the Finance Committee had put together. He then went through and explained the plan in detail. After this, Mayor Short gave comments on some of the problems that have been brought to the committees' attention since this plan was put together.

Plan Proposal from the Finance Committee

- Fully fund Senior Services
- Fully fund Parks and Recreation
- Training and travel reduction
- Unallocated personnel reduction
- Transferred expenses from Enterprise Fund to the General Fund
- Obtained the goal of 200,000.00 draw per Council agreement

City Manger Herron gave projections based on the fuel and electricity increases. Took last years General Fund Expenses and if the same amount is used this year there will be an increase in the General Fund of \$70,000.00 and an increase in the Enterprise Fund of \$113,000.00. An additional \$182,000.00 for this year will need to be added to the expenditures for the up coming budget.

Mayor Short recommended the General Fund side of the budget be the focus for this meeting and concentrate on the Enterprise Fund tomorrow night. There was general concurrence to conduct the meeting as the Mayor suggested. Target goal for this meeting is to find \$132,000.00.

City Manager Herron then presented two scenarios that the administration has come up with to help with the budget crunch. These scenarios are calculated before the fuel increases.

1. Freeze 50% of annual increases, funding reduction of five months: General Ledger Analyst (Finance), funding reduction of six months: clerk (Finance), hiring freeze on all employees (except police/fire) for FY05: 8 vacancies x 25% = total savings of \$203,000.00.
2. Freeze 100% of annual increases, zero funding: Animal Control Agent (police), Funding reduction of five months: General Ledger Analyst (Finance), hiring freeze on all employees (except police/fire) for FY05: 8 vacancies x 25% = total savings of \$337,000.00.

Mayor Short gave some suggestions that were not listed in the City Managers scenarios. The situation of finding \$132,000.00 could be handled by 1. Removal of the animal control officer, 2. increase the Enterprise Fund to \$158,000.00, the amount of #3 move utilities to the Enterprise Fund.

Vice Mayor Williams asked what the Union position is if the city does not fund the step increases. City Manager Herron responded that the decision is up to the Council and the Union will not interfere.

Council Member Trantham suggested the City could reduce the small vehicle fleet and start using phone cards. He also suggested that cutting down on legal advice would save on attorney fees.

Council Member Dyment then directed the City Manager to look at economical and efficient phone saving options and return to Council with the options.

Council Member O'Brien suggested using the Alaska Municipal League legal services options more and ask for attorney advice less, since we pay into the AML anyway.

10 Minute Break

Council Member Rodgers left during the break.

Council Member Comments

Council Member Dymont spoke about inefficiencies of the Council sometimes, yet always seems to work through them. He feels proud to be part of the team. He feels as though the Council is in for a rough time due to the budget crisis and hope the Council keeps working together through all of it.

Council Member Jacobs concurred with Council Member Dymont comments about working together through the rough times that are ahead. He feels there was progress with \$200,000.00 compromises. The rewards were great. He thanked ONC for bringing tribal members to their conference in Bethel at the Cultural Center.

Council Member O'Brien thanked the City Manager for the scenarios that he presented. He feels that it means it has been under consideration and he appreciated that. He made comments about the flags being old and requested them to be replaced as soon as possible.

Vice-Mayor Williams spoke about his appreciation for YKHC's participation in Clean-Up/Green-Up. He was glad to see the house in front of the Tundra Restaurant has been condemned and the honey-buckets are being removed by the Public Works Department. He thanked them for their work. He then asked the Finance Director, Rob Strahan, about the up coming audit. Mr. Strahan responded to the Vice-Mayor by saying the firm is expecting to start on June 7, 2004 and will end around July13, 2004. They are expected to achieve 30 to 35 audits a week or more. Mr. Williams then wished Betty Twitchell a speedy recovery.

Council Member Trantham made comments about all the community information coming in, and he has passed on the input to the Mayor. He would like to see better communication with the citizens of Bethel. He recommended a press release asking for input from the community.

MOVED BY:	Williams	To use the free space in the newspaper to announce the budget ordinance and invite the public to speak at the public hearing on June 8.
SECONDED BY:	Jacobs	

MOVED BY:	Dymont	To include a insert in the next newsletter questioning the community
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

VOTE ON MOTION	Amendment to motion passes unanimously
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VOTE ON MOTION	Motion passes unanimously
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Mayor Short thanked the council and feels the council is tackling the issues and appreciates the opportunity to work together.

MOVED BY:	Jacobs	To adjourn the meeting at 8:40 pm.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion passes unanimously
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APPROVED THIS 8th day of June 2004.

ATTEST:

Hugh Short, Jr., Mayor

Amanda Byington, City Clerk

