

Introduced by: Lee Foley, City Manager
Date: January 13, 2009
Action: Passed
Vote: 6-1

CITY OF BETHEL

Resolution # 09-03

CITY OF BETHEL READDRESSSED PRIORITIES FOR THE FY 2010 STATE OF ALASKA LEGISLATIVE FUNDING CYCLE

WHEREAS, the Bethel City Council is a seven-member body elected by resident voters of Bethel to act in the best interest of the community;

WHEREAS, the Council annually sets state legislative priorities and communicates those priorities to the Governor and Alaska State legislators in its effort to secure funding for important projects;

WHEREAS, in light of the current economic environment and relative low price of oil per barrel, two Bethel District legislators recommended that the Bethel City Council readdress Resolution #08-13 that set FY 2010 City of Bethel State legislative priorities and develop an updated resolution that contains combinations of cost-effective projects that cost less in total;

WHEREAS, the priorities established herein are deemed to be of equal value and vital to the well-being of the community and municipality of Bethel;

WHEREAS, a summary of the City of Bethel's priorities and amount of funding requested for each priority is given in the following table:

Priority	Request
1. Bethel Public Safety Building – Police and Fire Departments	\$14,994,000
2. Multi-Use Recreation Center	\$1,052,025
3. Dust Control	\$300,000
4. Energy Improvements and Upgrades	\$359,375
5. Bethel Wind Power Project	\$199,888
6. Community Dividend or Revenue Sharing	SUPPORT
7. Public Employees Retirement System and Teachers Retirement System	SUPPORT
8. Expanding Power Cost Equalization Program	SUPPORT
Total	\$16,905,288

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1. Bethel Public Safety Building – Police and Fire Departments

Fire Station

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Department responds to 1,000 calls for assistance a year, of which about 800 are for emergency services and up to 200 are fire-related;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Department responds once a week to a real fire emergency;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Department assists regional villages when requested by supplying trained personnel, equipment, and supplies, e.g., in 2006, Bethel responded to the Hooper Bay fire and was immediately given the command role;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Department relies on the Fire Station as a base of operations for all emergency and non-emergency services it provides;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Station serves as a regional training facility that offers courses in fire suppression, emergency medical services, search and rescue, national incident management system, first aid/CPR, and equipment use;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Department relies on the Fire Station to protect its fire trucks, ambulances, communication equipment, hazardous materials response equipment, life-saving search and rescue equipment, computers, medical supplies, and full-time and volunteer Firefighter/EMTs who occupy the building 24 hours a day;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Fire Station serves as the Emergency Operations Center for the community of Bethel and contains high-tech communication equipment, laptop computers, planning room, bunk beds, and apartment;

WHEREAS, two engineers, four construction companies, and one certified building inspector have examined the Bethel Fire Station and determined that a new building may be warranted due to rotting beams under the four-bay garage foundation, weakened walls due to moisture intrusion, and rotting roof trusses and sheeting, broken sheetrock, and water-damaged electrical fixtures;

Police Station

WHEREAS, in 2007, the Bethel Police Department received 15,688 calls for service and is currently working 1,262 cases;

WHEREAS, fourteen sworn officers, five dispatchers, and one administrative assistant are compelled to serve the community of 6,000 from a makeshift conglomeration of three 30-year old buildings, called the Bethel Police Station, that is cold, cramped, and smells of sewer;

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WHEREAS, exit interviews completed between October 2004 and March 2005 revealed that the insufficient condition of the police facility was the number one reason why Bethel police officers and dispatchers resigned from their positions, contributing to the Bethel Police Department's high turn over rate;

WHEREAS, the Public Safety and Transportation Commission recognizes that the Bethel Police Station needs a larger evidence room, better building security, greater armory storage capacity, interview and training rooms, holding cells, office space, exercise room with lockers, heated garage bays for vehicles, and evidence gathering area;

Bethel Public Safety Building

WHEREAS, to achieve economies of scale and stretch out State of Alaska dollars, the City of Bethel will combine the need for a new Fire Station with the need for a new Police Station and design and construct the Bethel Public Safety Building;

WHEREAS, when first responders share common areas of a building, camaraderie develops that can be invaluable when deploying assets, utilizing resources, cooperating with each other, and more effectively assisting each other during mutual response calls;

WHEREAS, the City has land ideally suited to construction of a new public safety building —it is located in the center of town on a high point outside the flood zone;

WHEREAS, the essential nature of the Bethel Fire Station and Bethel Police Station and the services the emergency responders provide require that \$14,994,000 be included in the FY 2010 State of Alaska Capital Budget for the City of Bethel to fund its new Public Safety Building;

2. Multi-Use Recreation Center

WHEREAS, the need for a multi-use recreation facility that includes a swimming pool has been expressed by the community of Bethel in numerous community plans since the early 1970s;

WHEREAS, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta region experiences one of the highest drowning rates in Alaska—largely because residents and visitors live near the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, engage in boating and water play activities, do not know how to swim, do not know how to rescue individuals from the water, and do not know how to resuscitate victims;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel Multi-Use Recreation Facility Plan, completed by Agnew Beck Consulting in 2005, identifies a swimming pool as the number one facility voted on by community members to include in the recreation center;

WHEREAS, the pool in the Multi-Use Recreation Center would provide the following benefits to any of the YK-Delta's 26,000 residents: allow children and adults to learn how to swim, provide courses to certify lifeguards, provide a place where families and

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friends come together to recreate and exercise, reduce the onset of diabetes, obesity, and other health problems, and provide special programs for seniors, youth, and people with physical disabilities;

WHEREAS, the Recreation Center Committee is a group of 12 concerned citizens formed in November 2007 that meets twice a month to assist in the development of the multi-use recreation center, make recommendations to the City Manager, and assure that the project design, construction, operation, and maintenance costs are affordable;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel signed a contract with Architects Alaska, Inc. in January 2009 and agreed to pay \$390,933 for the architects to complete the 35% schematic design by July 31, 2009;

WHEREAS, with Bethel City Council approval, Architects Alaska, Inc. will complete the 65% design development portion and 100% construction-ready documents in fulfillment of the contract at a cost of \$1,052,025;

WHEREAS, the City requests that \$1,052,025 be put in the FY 2010 State of Alaska Capital Budget for the City of Bethel to use to accomplish the 65% and 100% portions of the architectural design and engineering services needed for the project to be construction-ready;

3. Dust Control

WHEREAS, the community of Bethel lies 330 miles downriver from the source of the Kuskokwim River and sits on land composed of a thin layer of top soil and tundra vegetation, and thousands of feet of sand, silt, and sandy silt;

WHEREAS, airborne dust emanates from all of Bethel's sixteen miles of dirt roads and road shoulders between the months of April to September;

WHEREAS, airborne dust rises from all of Bethel's seventeen miles of paved roads because light sand blows onto the road from the dirt shoulders and surrounding area and one study revealed that airborne dust from pavement is finer than dust from dirt roads, and therefore potentially more dangerous to humans, because car wheels act to grind down the particles;

WHEREAS, airborne dust causes, aggravates, and perpetuates severe health problems, including asthma, sinusitis, bronchitis, and can scar the lungs and reduce their capacity to take in and let out air;

WHEREAS, individuals have moved to Bethel only to experience life-threatening respiratory ailments triggered by dust inhalation and had to be "medivaced" to Anchorage and relocated to safer communities;

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WHEREAS, the City of Bethel actively manages dust on its dirt roads to the best of its ability by hydroseeding roadsides, applying calcium chloride and sodium chloride to dirt roads, and depositing gravel, but cannot solve the problem on a city-wide basis without financial assistance;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel needs \$300,000 for the purchase of calcium chloride, sodium chloride, hydroseed, and gravel to continue its efforts to reduce dust in the community of Bethel and this amount should be included in the FY 2010 State of Alaska Capital Budget for the City of Bethel;

4. Energy Improvements and Upgrades

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel owns and uses 20 buildings to provide its services to the public, many of which are 30 years old, were constructed without regard to energy efficiencies, have been severely battered by the weather, and have suffered damage as a result of shifting and sinking due to thawing permafrost;

WHEREAS, the City's Public Works building needs styrofoam insulation sprayed underneath the floor of the building, CDX plywood applied to cover the insulation, and the exterior completely covered with tyvek;

WHEREAS, the cost for insulating the City's Public Works building is \$300,000;

WHEREAS, the City's Recycling Center building needs a new foundation comprised of foam, gravel, and sand, and must be placed on top of that foundation;

WHEREAS, the cost for constructing a new foundation for the Recycling Center and leveling the building on its new foundation will cost \$59,375;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel requests \$359,375 to make energy improvements and upgrades to the City Shop and Recycling Center buildings,

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel's Property Maintenance Division is funded annually and will be responsible for maintaining the buildings, once the energy improvements and upgrades are made;

5. Bethel Wind Power Project

WHEREAS, Bethel is the largest community in western Alaska and is the economic hub for 26,000 people living in 56 surrounding villages;

WHEREAS, Bethel Utilities Corporation is a privately-held utility in Bethel that provides electricity to residents through the use of 30-year old diesel generators that produce approximately 13 kilowatt hours per gallon of fuel consumed;

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WHEREAS, the cost of electricity to Bethel consumers continues to rise as the price of diesel fuel rises and is crippling Bethel's economy;

WHEREAS, A wind data study completed by the Alaska Energy Authority for Bethel in 2006 revealed that Bethel has a viable Class 4 wind resource, making it suitable for wind energy development;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel, on behalf of the community, actively sought solutions to its high energy costs when it applied for and was awarded a grant in the amount of \$400,000 grant from the Alaska Energy Authority and Denali Commission to fund 50% of the cost to purchase, install, and operate a 100 kW wind turbine;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel pledged \$200,000 toward the wind turbine or 25% of total costs;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel requests that the remaining \$200,000 (25%) be included in the FY 2010 State of Alaska Capital Budget for the City of Bethel;

6. Community Dividend or Revenue Sharing

WHEREAS, a Community Dividend or Revenue Sharing arrangement is needed to provide financial assistance to all communities in Alaska, especially rural villages that lack a tax base and many of the revenue-generating alternatives found in hub communities;

WHEREAS, the Council supports the efforts of the Alaska Municipal League to instill a Community Dividend or Revenue Sharing program;

7. Public Employees Retirement System and Teachers Retirement System

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel offers the Public Employees Retirement System as a benefit to its employees and has a vested interest in its sustainability;

WHEREAS, the Council supports the efforts of the Alaska Municipal League to improve the Public Employees Retirement System and the Teachers Retirement System with one or more permanent solutions;

8. Expanding Power Cost Equalization Program

WHEREAS, according to the Power Cost Equalization (PCE) guide, "the PCE program was established to assist rural residents at the same time state funds were used to construct major energy projects to assist more urban areas;"

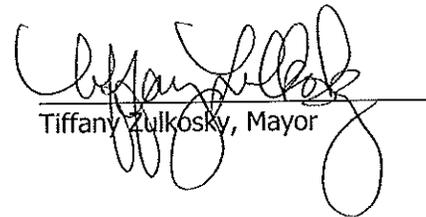
WHEREAS, in general, rural areas experience a higher cost of electricity relative to their urban counterparts;

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WHEREAS, if PCE were expanded to include businesses which provide goods and services to rural areas, the businesses would have an incentive to pass on energy savings to consumers in the form of lower prices;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bethel City Council, as elected representatives of the community of Bethel, readdressed Resolution #08-13 that first established the City's FY 2010 priorities, and decided on the priorities and funding requests contained herein for the FY 2010 Alaska State Legislative funding cycle and encourage the Governor and State legislators to approve this funding request in its entirety;

ENACTED THIS 13th DAY OF JANUARY 2009 BY A VOTE OF 6 IN FAVOR AND 1 OPPOSED.


Tiffany Zulkosky, Mayor

ATTEST:


Lori Strickler, City Clerk