

City of Bethel, Alaska

Council Minutes

July 14, 1998

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Bethel City Council was held on July 14, 1998, at 6:30 p.m. in the Log Cabin, Bethel, Alaska. Mayor Agnes Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

There were present:

Mayor Agnes Phillips	Dario Notti
Antone Anvil	Mike O'Brien
Carl Berger	Stanley "Tundy" Rodgers

comprising a quorum of the Council.

Absent:

Karol Sanchez-Pobrislo (excused)

Also in attendance were:

Bob Herron, City Manager
Gaye Vaughan, City Clerk

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Janet Athanas, Parks & Recreation Director, introduced the World Horizon volunteers. These kids came to Bethel for seven weeks from a variety of places, such as New York City, Colorado, and Connecticut, and range in age from 14 to 18. They have been working with the State Troopers, in the museum, the Tundra Women's Coalition, the Youth Center and other agencies in the community.

Mayor Phillips and City Manager Herron presented each child with a certificate of appreciation. There were also certificates for local volunteers from the Jr. ROTC, Biff Hulse, Elena Pleasant and Mike Roberts, who helped on July 4.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To approve the minutes of the regular council meeting of June 9, 1998.
SECONDED BY:	Rodgers	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion to approve the minutes carried by unanimous consent.
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APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

MOVED BY:	Rodgers	To approve the consent agenda.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

The consent agenda consisted of the following items:

Resolution #98-18: Accepting A Municipal Matching Grant for Renovation of the Braund Building (City Manager)

Bid Award – City Subdivision foundation Freeze Back Project Thermal Siphon (City Manager) (Recommendation: Sole Source to Arctic Foundations, Inc.)

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion to approve consent agenda carried by unanimous consent.
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Mayor Phillips noted that an Executive Session would be held concerning the courthouse lease, the oil spill settlement, and the City Clerk's employment agreement.

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To approve the agenda as presented.
SECONDED BY:	Anvil	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion to approve agenda carried by unanimous consent.
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MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Phillips announced the following:

- Revenue sharing from the State of Alaska for FY 1998 would be \$281,243.
- A reporter from the *Juneau Empire* would be in Bethel on August 6-7 to interview people regarding the Alaska Native Lands Claim Act.
- A luncheon will be held at the Anchorage Mayor's home on July 18. Mayor Phillips and Vice Mayor Rodgers would be unable to attend.
- She was a speaker at the Rural Empowerment Zone Training session on June 24.
- The Mayor noted it was again time to statewide transportation improvements plan. She wanted to make sure that Public Works was involved.
- The city will receive \$7280 for the Coastal Management Program.
- Alaska Municipal League is seeking nominations for Community Awards of Excellence. Bethel was a recipient last year for its Municipal Conference. Also the State Chamber is also seeking nominations for local chambers.
- The Alaska Conference of Mayors and the AML Board of Directors will meet in Sitka, August 27 and 28. Mayor Phillips will be unable to attend. Council Member O'Brien sits on the AML Board and will attend.
- She had received an interesting booklet regarding travel in Japan and indicated it would be nice for Bethel to have something similar.
- The Mayor attended the ground breaking for the new YKHC building.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Herron thanked all city employees, especially Police Lt. George Dahl and officers of the Bethel Police Dept. for their participation during the July 4th weekend. He also noted appreciation for the help of YK Correctional Center Supt. Rose Dominick and her staff. He further noted a job well done by Parks & Recreation Director Janet Athanas and her staff and volunteers. He was most impressed by the cleanliness of Pinky's Park at 8:00 p.m. on the 4th of July. He added it was because of kids like those from World Horizons.

In follow up on the cemetery fencing, it will require 750 ft. on the north side of the old cemetery to fence it off between the boardwalk and the Teen Center. Some of the older sections of the fence need repair. He noted that there was \$25,000 budgeted for both the old and new cemeteries. He will be seeking advice from Council as to the priorities.

Council Member Notti recalled a suggestion to cut down all or some of the trees. He felt kids would not be hanging out in the cemetery if the trees were cut.

Mr. Herron noted the new Hitachi 200, which was obtained in a trade for the 700, was sitting in front of the building prior to the meeting. He noted they were still waiting for a few parts and paperwork. He felt the city had gotten a pretty good deal.

The City Manager had met with Mr. Matthew Nicholai regarding the development of a future landfill next to the current landfill. He had recently visited the landfill and was surprised at the height of the current landfill and noted that there is only about 8 or 9 years left on this one. Calista Corp. is receptive to working with the City to develop the subsurface resources for a new landfill.

He advised that the new police chief, Bob Pettit, would be in town on Friday to interview the applicants for police lieutenant. He noted that all three finalists currently live in Bethel. In response to a discussion at the last council meeting regarding the hiring of an additional police officer, the police dept. found they could add another office without adding money to their approved budget. They are recruiting now and, at Acting Lt. Dahl's suggestion, a letter has been sent to 12 recent graduates of the police academy.

He advised that he needed to explain details of the courthouse lease and the oil spill lawsuit and seek guidance from Council during executive session.

The bids are about ready to go out for the new sewer and water trucks.

He reminded the Council of his report at the last meeting concerning broken windows at the Youth Center. He noted that Harry Faulkner, Jr., and Steve Walsh have offered to pay for the broken windows.

The Manager announced that on Wednesday, July 22, U. S. Secretary of Housing & Urban Development, Andrew Cuomo, would be in Bethel and the Mayor and Council are invited to a lunch at the Cultural Center to meet with him.

He noted that people come to Alaska, there are three places they want to visit; Anchorage because it's the largest city; Juneau because it's the capital; and Bethel. He did not understand why Bethel was so popular.

To follow up on that, he announced that the U.S. Census Director would be here in mid-August.

Mr. Herron pointed out that with the help of Jane Nesser, Janet Athanas, and Dave Trantham, a small park was being developed on the old library site. On both sides of the seawall pipe there will be parking. In the center will be a small park. Mr. Trantham is building flower boxes.

The code enforcement committee would like to wrap up their work and have one more meeting. They have asked the Council to introduce an ordinance to change the penalty within the sewer code. Currently they are pretty strong and it would be beneficial to the city to reduce them.

They have also asked the Council to mandate camlock access to sewer tanks. He noted that now employees are sticking the hose into three to four feet of sewage over and over all day long. He noted that new sewer tanks require camlock access.

The City Manager announced that Acting Police Chief John Malone would be chairing a meeting regarding the responsibilities of all area agencies on protective custody. Mr. Malone was able to gather this large group of experts and people involved with protective custody. He noted some of the people included in this meeting: Bethel Police Dept., Dept. of Corrections, YKHC, and the Mental Health Trust Authority. The front line person dealing with those taken into protective custody is the VPSO, Bethel police office or State Trooper. Mr. Malone has found out that there is no real coherent process in dealing with PC's. Hopefully people will come away from this meeting with a better understanding. He felt some of the agencies should be able to relieve the police, VPSO's or Troopers from being tied up all day with these protective custody cases.

Mr. Boyett from GCI called seeking funds to bring a two-day basketball clinic to Bethel. He is seeking \$5,000, \$2,000 of which has already been committed by Bethel people. He asked the Council if the City could assist in any way. He pointed out that this was done last year with the financial assistance of the North Slope Borough and Bethel was able to take advantage of that. The Borough is not doing it this year.

A discussion ensued with the suggestion of seeking funding from local organizations, and offering use of city vehicles. Council Member O'Brien stated he would look into Yute Air providing some travel assistance.

Mayor Phillips reminded the Council of the fish disaster meeting at the Cultural Center on Thursday, July 16, with the Governor's fish committee.

The Mayor also thanked the City Manager and his staff for the warm welcome shown to Governor Knowles on the 4th of July.

Council Member Anvil thanked Mr. Herron for taking action on the cemetery fencing noting that children have to be stopped from riding bicycles on the graves.

Council Member O'Brien noted that kudos were also to be given to the Police Dept. for the new traffic pattern at the airport.

City Manager Herron noted that those kudos belong to Lt. Dahl. It was totally his idea and he received a little resistance from a few cab drivers.

City Manager Herron advised the Council that due to the departure of the Port Director and the heavy workload placed on the port administrative assistant, he had authorized a budget modification in the form of a pay increase for her. Because of the salary difference between the former port director and the interim port director, there is money within the budget. This is a temporary position and the person currently in the position will be leaving early for college and training her replacement. There was no objection voiced by Council.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Public Works Committee

Council Member O'Brien stated there had been no meeting due to lack of agenda items.

Port Commission

Council Member Rodgers stated he had not been present at the last meeting, but it was primarily a review of the past year's activities. The next meeting will be July 20.

Senior Citizens' Advisory Board

Council Member Anvil stated the board would not be meeting until September.

Public Safety Commission

Council Member Anvil stated the Commission met on July 6, but he was unable to attend. He asked Chairman Tom Hildreth to give a report.

Tom Hildreth stated that due to the recent vandalism, curfew is again a topic with the Commission. He pointed out an error in the BMC regarding curfew. He recommended the Council consider raising the current curfew age from 16 to 18, noting that the recent happenings in Bethel were caused by 15 to 17-year olds. The Commission had already addressed traffic control signs such as street names, speed limits, children at play, etc., and asked that the traffic committee review the placement of these signs. The Commission would like to see the speed limit in residential areas reduced from 25 to 20. This would make it safer for kids playing in the area and lower the dust levels. He added that the Commission would be meeting August 5 and 31, and will soon have an alcohol beverage dispensary site report for the Council.

Finance Committee

Mayor Phillips stated the Committee did not meet this month.

Planning Commission

Council Member Notti stated there were only 4 members present at the June 11 meeting. The next meeting was held on July 9. Mr. Notti had been unable to attend that meeting.

Transportation Commission

Council Member Berger stated the Commission will meet on July 17. He noted that there are still three vacancies.

Parks & Recreation Committee

Council Member Sanchez-Pobrislo was absent and no report was given.

OLD BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion – Conflict of Regular Council Meeting of August 25, 1998, Primary Election (Mayor at request of City Clerk)

Mayor Phillips noted that due to the August 25 primary election, the City Clerk has requested that the regular council meeting scheduled for that date be changed. Without objection, the Mayor stated the meeting would be held on Monday, August 24.

City Manager Herron said the administration would attempt to have no items for that agenda, thereby eliminating the need for a meeting.

Discussion - Utility Benefit – City Employees (City Manager)

City Manager Herron asked the Council why the employees should receive money in their paycheck to cover the water/sewer benefit which amounts to approximately \$216 per employee. He noted that about one-half of the 85 to 90 city employees do not receive the benefit as they live in apartments or housing where the utility is included in their rent.

Council Member Rodgers said he understood that all employees were to be treated equally.

Finance Director Robinson pointed out that this was one benefit the city could offer perspective employees that YKHC or the state could not.

Council Member O'Brien had no problem with employees receiving the benefit, only with the disparity of it, where one employee is receiving 1500 gallons of water and another receiving 500 gallons.

City Manager Herron has directed staff to do a pilot project in metering water. The new water truck will be equipped with a meter.

Council Member O'Brien felt metering would be good for everyone on the system.

After discussion, Mr. Herron stated his administrative decision would be to suspend the action and let it be an item for discussion in the next APEA negotiations.

Discussion - Request from Lisa Powell regarding disposal of property at old fire hall. (City Manager)

City Manager Herron related that Ms. Powell has possession of the building until July 20. If it is not moved by that date, possession reverts back to the city. She would like to buy the property the building sits on. His recommendation to the Council was to not sell the land.

Council members agreed with Mr. Herron, noting that the well on the property is worth more than the land.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Berger pointed out an article which appeared in the *Seattle Times* regarding tourism in Bethel. He noted that nine travel agents from Anchorage visited Bethel the previous week and then went on to other villages. They were here a total of two days and each one spent \$200 to \$500. Bethel is becoming attractive to visitors.

Council Member Notti noted that the Camai Dance Festival cannot be scheduled a year or more in the future in order for tourists to schedule trips to Bethel. He said they have to wait until school is back in session and the school administration lets the committee know when the school is available for the festival. He asked that a request be made to LKSD so the committee and community would at least know the dates of the festival for the following year.

Mr. Notti also thanked Harry Faulkner, Jr., and Steve Walsh for their work in the community.

Mayor Phillips thanked the City Manager and City Clerk for being able to cancel the second council meeting in June. She appreciated the break in the schedule. She also thanked the council and city staff for the hospitality shown to visitors. Ms. Phillips also expressed appreciation to Teddi Wintersteen for her committee work involving the hiring of a new police chief.

Council Member Anvil thanked the City Manager for working on his request for cemetery fencing. He noted that in the past, his requests were not always followed up on. He announced that he would be in Greenland from July 22 to August 1 and asked to be excused from the next council meeting.

Council Member Rodgers thanked the City Manager in his selection of a new police chief. He also thanked Acting Lt. George Dahl for his work.

Council Member O'Brien said "Yeah, Bob". He told of his visit with an elderly couple visiting Bethel from California and how impressed they were by the friendliness of the people.

Council Member Notti stated he would be unable to attend Hovercraft Committee meetings in the next few months due to time constraints. Council Member O'Brien stated he would attend in Mr. Notti's absence.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOVED BY:	Rodgers	To recess into executive session to discuss negotiations of court house lease, settlement of oil spill law suit and city clerk's contract.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous consent.
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The Council took a short break before beginning the Executive Session at 8:10 p.m.

The Council reconvened the regular meeting at 8:50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To adjourn the meeting
SECONDED BY:	Rodgers	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous consent.
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With no further business to come before the City Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:52.p.m.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 28th DAY OF JULY, 1998

ATTEST:

Agnes L. Phillips, Mayor

Gaye J. Vaughan, City Clerk

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