

Introduced by: Lee Foley, City Manager
Date: January 12, 2010
January 25, 2010
Action: No Action Taken (*See
Resolution 10-17*)
Vote:

CITY OF BETHEL

Resolution # 10-01

CITY OF BETHEL PRIORITIES FOR THE FFY 2011 UNITED STATES CONGRESSIONAL 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 reviews its congressional funding priorities and approves a resolution identifying those priorities for use by the President of the United States of America and United States Congress in development of the federal budget;

WHEREAS, the City carefully evaluated important projects and ranked them herein according to the City's funding needs;

WHEREAS, the Alaska congressional delegates, Congressman Don Young, Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Senator Mark Begich, will accept funding requests from municipalities, like the City of Bethel, if received on or before February 19, 2010;

#1 New Bethel Fire Station

WHEREAS, obtaining \$7 million in federal funding for a new fire station is the number one priority for the City of Bethel;

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 assists regional villages when requested by supplying trained personnel, equipment, and supplies, e.g., in 2006, Bethel firefighter/EMTs 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;

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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 protocol, 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 has ready to use: high-tech communication equipment, laptop computers, planning rooms, and overnight accommodations for extended stays by local, state, and federal personnel;

WHEREAS, the essential nature of the Bethel Fire Station is compromised by its failing structural condition, including rotten top wall plates, damaged siding/plywood, wall studs damaged at bottom (most over 60%), roof trusses and sheathing, rotten beams under the four-bay garage foundation, and water-damaged electrical fixtures;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel was awarded \$1,200,000 in 2008 from the State Legislature to repair or replace the fire station roof and would like to use this money to help pay for a new building;

#2 Bethel River Bank Stabilization Project – Phase II
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WHEREAS, Port of Bethel projects requiring assistance, oversight, and direction from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, must receive funding from a congressional appropriation in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers greatly assisted the community of Bethel when it constructed the Eastern Addition Seawall, a 1,200 linear foot wall protecting residents and property, including the Small Boat Harbor;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed Phase I of the Bethel River Bank Stabilization Project in 2007 when it deposited basketball sized rocks at the base of the seawall to reduce scour and hold the pipe piles in place;

WHEREAS, the Bethel River Bank Stabilization Project – Phase II entails the replacement of tiebacks, steel rods that are welded to a group of ten pipe piles as a set and anchored 54 feet back to "deadmen," frozen in the permafrost;

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WHEREAS, Andrea Elconin, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager spearheading the project, publicly stated that upon completion, the project has a useful life of fifty (50) years;

WHEREAS, the Bethel River Bank Stabilization Project – Phase II is expected to cost \$4,000,000;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel is committed to provide 25% of the project costs or an expected \$1,000,000 to the project from its dedicated seawall maintenance account, per the funding requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers needs \$3,000,000 in the FY 2011 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill to complete the Bethel River Bank Stabilization Project – Phase II, a construction project in Bethel, Alaska;

#3 Bethel Aquatic Training and Health Center

WHEREAS, the need for a multi-use recreation facility that included 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 Consultants in 2005, identifies a swimming pool as the number one activity voted on by community members to include in the Aquatic Training and Health Center;

WHEREAS, the pool in the Bethel Aquatic Training and Health 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 friends come together to recreate and exercise, reduce the onset of diabetes, obesity, and other health problems, provide a venue for physical therapy, and provide special programs for seniors, youth, and people with physical disabilities;

WHEREAS, the City's Parks and Recreation Committee is a group of concerned citizens that meet once 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;

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WHEREAS, the Bethel Aquatic Training and Health Center is on track to be the first pool in Alaska to achieve silver LEED certification from the U.S. Green Building Council;

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, which has been accomplished;

WHEREAS, Architects Alaska, Inc. will complete the 65% design development portion and 100% construction-ready documents in fulfillment of the contract at a cost of approximately \$1,300,000 – a cost borne entirely by the City;

WHEREAS, the City requests that \$2,000,000 be put in the FY 2011 Capital Budget of the United States of America for the City of Bethel to pay for the first phase of construction of the new Bethel Aquatic Training and Health Center;

#4 Bethel Public Safety Building

WHEREAS, the Bethel Police Station is outdated, in poor condition, and in need of replacement;

WHEREAS, a regional law enforcement center could serve the 5,665 residents of Bethel and the 26,000 residents living in surrounding Yukon-Kuskokwim villages;

WHEREAS, the Alaska State Troopers and Bethel Police Department would be the primary occupants in a regional law enforcement center;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Public Safety Building could serve as a regional training center for Village Public Safety Officers, Village Police Officers, Tribal Police Officers, Bethel Police Officers, Community Service Officers and 911 dispatchers;

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 reeks of sewage;

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 turnover rate;

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WHEREAS, according to Resolution #05-02, passed on June 6, 2005 by the Public Safety and Transportation Commission, 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;

WHEREAS, to achieve economies of scale and stretch out State of Alaska dollars, the City of Bethel will combine the need for a new Police Station with the need for a new Alaska State Troopers headquarters 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 emergency service provided by occupants of the Bethel Police Station and the Alaska State Troopers – Bethel Post building require that \$10,000,000 be included in the FY 2011 Budget of the United States Government for the City of Bethel to fund a new Public Safety Building in Bethel;

#5 Dredging of Small Boat Harbor and Channel Approach

WHEREAS, Port of Bethel projects requiring assistance, oversight, and direction from the United States Army Corps of Engineers, Alaska District, must receive funding from a congressional appropriation in the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act;

WHEREAS, residents who live along the Kuskokwim River will visit Bethel by boat to purchase goods and services, access government services, participate in educational opportunities, see family members and friends, and return to their village by boat;

WHEREAS, the Small Boat Harbor is used extensively by subsistence hunters and fishers as they exercise their rights to harvest fish and wildlife from the Kuskokwim River and adjoining streams, rivers, ponds, and riverbank access points;

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel sells out of boat slips annually as it works to provide sufficient space for personal watercraft on its five floating docks;

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WHEREAS, over the last ten years, the Small Boat Harbor and Channel Approach have experienced normal erosion and fill through runoff and deposits left by river currents;

WHEREAS, the increased demand on the Small Boat Harbor by local residents and villagers visiting Bethel necessitate dredging of the harbor and channel approach to insure that adequate room exists for users to operate safely, users do not run aground, damage their prop in shallow water, or at worse case become unusable;

WHEREAS, dredging of the Small Boat Harbor and Channel Approach will cost approximately \$2,000,000 and this amount should be included in the FY 2011 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act in the Operations and Maintenance section so that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can oversee completion of the project;

#6 Reconnaissance Study of Kuskokwim River Navigation

WHEREAS, the Kuskokwim River is the second largest river in Alaska along which 23 villages and towns are located;

WHEREAS, the community of Bethel, with a population of 5,565 people, is the largest town located along the Kuskokwim River and serves as the river transportation hub for Kuskokwim River villages;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for ensuring that the Kuskokwim River remains a viable navigable waterway;

WHEREAS, the Bethel Cargo Dock and Petro Port can only moor two vessels over 300 feet at a time, requiring vessels to moor and anchor in the river at large;

WHEREAS, barges, pilot boats, and large vessels over 300 feet long are finding it impossible or severely difficult to moor and anchor safely in the wide section of the Kuskokwim River in front of Bethel due to changing river characteristics, increased river traffic, and use of the river by larger vessels over the years;

WHEREAS, the amount of goods, supplies, equipment, vehicles, housing units, and fuel being shipped up the Kuskokwim River to Bethel, villages, and the Donlin Creek mine site have increased markedly over the last ten years as the Delta populations and economic activity have increased;

WHEREAS, City of Bethel administrators and Port of Bethel continually hear complaints about the lack of navigability of the Kuskokwim River from commercial fishers, subsistence users, sport fishers and hunters, and commercial boating operations;

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WHEREAS, a reconnaissance study of Kuskokwim River navigability will cost approximately \$100,000 and this amount should be included in the FY 2011 Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act in the Investigations section so that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can oversee completion of the project;

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NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bethel City Council, as elected representatives of the community of Bethel, hereby set and affirm six funding priorities for the FY 2011 United States Government Capital Budget and encourage the President of the United States and United States Congress to approve this funding request in its entirety.

ENACTED THIS 12th DAY OF JANUARY 2010 BY A VOTE OF _____ IN FAVOR AND _____ OPPOSED.

Eric Middlebrook, Mayor

ATTEST:

Lori Strickler, City Clerk