
City of Bethel, Alaska

City Council Minutes

February 23, 1999

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

The Regular Meeting of the Bethel City Council was held on February 23, 1999, at 6:30 p.m. in the Log Cabin, Bethel, Alaska. Mayor Agnes Phillips called the meeting to order at 6:37 p.m.

ROLL CALL

There were present:

Mayor Agnes Phillips	Dario Notti
Antone Anvil	Mike O'Brien
Joerene Hout	Karol Pobrislo

comprising a quorum of the Council.

Absent:

Stanley "Tundy" Rodgers

Also in attendance were:

Bob Herron, City Manager
Gaye Vaughan, City Clerk

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Bryant Schroeder, US Postal Service, addressed the Council by telling them that the current post office facility is too small. If expansion to the current building is not possible, they will build a new 20,500 sq. ft. building. He supplied the Council with diagrams of the proposed building and explained the public comment process, after which they will advertise for a new site. The new building could be complete in 2001.

In response to questions, Mr. Schroeder stated that they do not have a site in mind at this point.

Matthew Nicholai, WAVE Corp., introduced himself and Jim Clark, Peter Saunders, also of WAVE, and Greg Branch, architect. WAVE was created from the Calista 2001 plan. He proceeded to make a presentation of how WAVE came to be. It is owned by 16 Native corporations, Calista being one of the investors.

Jim Clark, stated that WAVE is purchasing buildings, warehouses and existing businesses. Currently WAVE is serving 124 villages in Alaska, everywhere but Southeast. The building proposed for Bethel will house a grocery store, lumber yard, food court, possibly a bank, etc. The second level of the building is planned for family entertainment; bowling alley, movie

theater. Companion business on the lot are being reviewed, such as car wash, gas station, restaurant and other retailers.

Peter Saunders, spoke about the WAVE fuel distribution.

Mr. Nicholai spoke again stating WAVE need help in lobbying for an airport expansion. A longer runway is needed to bring in larger cargo planes.

Greg Branch, architect on the project, spoke about the aesthetics of the facility. It will consist of ten acres and will be landscaped.

In response to a question, Mr. Branch stated the project will probably have a well for the main component and water will be delivered to the outlying buildings.

Discussion and questions continued regarding the WAVE project.

Jason Lee, Altman, Rodgers & Co., spoke to the Council about the FY 1999 audit. He also answered questions of the Council.

Peter Jacobs, stated he owns two rental houses that he currently cannot rent as he cannot afford to comply with the water/sewer requirements. Both dwellings contain "honeybuckets". He noted that his neighbor still has a honeybucket.

City Manager Herron stated that any property owner may be granted an extension if he is actively working on getting in compliance.

Council Member Hout stated it costs at least two years' worth of rent to upgrade to delivered water and sewer services. She felt the council did a disservice to the public with this issue. Owners like Mr. Jacobs have had to close their rentals leaving a shortage of housing for lower income people.

Discussion continued regarding water and sewer services.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To approve the minutes of February 9 and February 17, 1999.
SECONDED BY:	Anvil	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Phillips read the consent agenda items by title only.

Resolution #99-05: Accepting A Grant Reduction To The FY99 Alaska Coastal Management Grant Program (City Manager)

**Ordinance #99-04: Repealing BMC 5.16, Solicitations (Finance Committee)
(Public Hearing set for 3/09/99)**

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

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

Mayor Phillips announced the following:

She thanked Council Member O'Brien for chairing the last meeting. She was in St. Mary's and was glad for the chance to be a part of the meeting via teleconference. The Mayor noted the City Manager's request for vacation from March 22-26. She noted that she will be out of town on March 9. She suggested that the Council have only one meeting in March, on the 16th. There was no objection to changing the March meeting dates. Council Member Notti noted that he may be out of town on the 16th. Mayor Phillips stated that the Camai Festival organizers have requested a letter of support to be submitted with a grant application.

MOVED BY:	Notti	To have Clerk send a letter of support for the Camai Festival.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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She noted copies of a letter from Representative Kapsner was in the Council's packets. She also noted a letter from DOT about their web site and a letter about the fishery disaster.

Council Member O'Brien noted that Roger McKowan in Senator Hoffman's office has created a web page with links to other rural legislators' web pages.

The Mayor continued by noting a letter from Alaska Housing stating that Bethel has no building code. A discussion on building codes ensued. There was also a letter from Senator Murkowski regarding the outer continental shelf. Lastly, Mayor Phillips noted a conference on Partnership for Rural Alaska to be held in Anchorage April 20 - 22.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Herron noted that department head reports were included in the council packets.

He spoke about his recent trip to Dallas to look at used trucks. He recommended that the Council approve the expenditure of \$178,000 to purchase three used trucks.

MOVED BY:	Hout	To authorize expenditure of \$178,000 to purchase three used trucks.
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SECONDED BY:	Notti	
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VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.	
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He noted that bids were opened on Feb. 10 for the dock fendering. He did not feel it was prudent to award the bid at this time and felt that bidding the project later in the summer may save up to \$100,000.

City Manager Herron announced that Brian Glasheen has started a recycling pick up project and has asked for \$80/month from the city for gas for his truck.

MOVED BY:	Hout	To reimburse Brian Glasheen up to \$80/month for gas for recycling pick up project.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.	
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Mr. Herron spoke about the request for reduced water/sewer for the alternative boarding school. He also asked about an ordinance to increase the rates for piped water/sewer noting that the rates are set by Council by ordinance.

He pointed out a letter from John Guinn and another from Lorin Bradbury regarding upgrades at the airport.

Council Member O'Brien noted that airport upgrade is currently being discussed at a much higher level.

The City Manager stated he would forward a packet to Paul Richards, city lobbyist, who has proven to be effective both with the legislators, state officials, and with our Washington, DC, delegation.

Council Member Pobrislo stated she was in favor of a single structure at the airport for passengers.

Council Member O'Brien noted that that concept would require a lot of demolition and new construction. He did not believe it would be feasible to have all the passenger traffic in one building.

The discussion on buildings at the airport continued.

STANDING COMMITTEES

Mayor Phillips noted there are vacancies on the Parks and Recreation, Transportation, Port and Public Works Commissions/Committees.

Transportation Commission

As Council Member Hout stated that the Commission has not met since the last Council meeting.

Parks & Recreation Committee

Council Member Pobrislo stated the Committee met the previous week to discuss the July 4th celebration. The committee will be holding a public form at the end of March which will be announced. The committee also discussed the consequences of youth using drugs/alcohol at the Youth Center. She noted that RFPs have gone out for erecting the playground equipment. They are also looking for a site to build a skateboard tube. Their next meeting will be March 16.

Planning Commission

Council Member Notti stated the Planning Commission met on February 11 and he was the only one to show up for the meeting. The next meeting is scheduled for March 11.

Finance Committee

Mayor Phillips stated the Finance Committee met on February 16. A motion had been made to give the 65 year old senior citizens a utility discount of \$50 in lieu of the sales tax exemption. The committee had recommended the repeal of BMC Chap. 5.16 dealing with solicitation since that was covered in the new business license chapter. She thanked the members of the committee for their work.

A discussion ensued regarding alternatives to the senior citizen sales tax exemption.

Senior Citizens' Advisory Board

Council Member Anvil stated that he had not attended the last meeting as he had been out of town. The next meeting will be March 3 at 10:30 a.m.

Port Commission

No report was given as Council Member Rodgers was not present.

Public Works Committee

Council member O'Brien stated the Committee had not met since the last Council meeting and the next meeting is scheduled for March 16.

Public Safety Commission

Council Member O'Brien stated the Commission also had not met since the last Council meeting. The next meeting will be March 1.

OLD BUSINESS

Ordinance #99-03: Amending the Adopted Annual FY 1998-1999 Budget (City Manager)

Mayor Phillips called for public testimony with no one coming forth to speak.

MOVED BY:	O'Brien	To adopt Ordinance #99-03.
SECONDED BY:	Anvil	

City Manager Herron stated that some of the modifications requested were explained at the last meeting. He added that the \$15,000 requested by the Clerk was available in other

department's budgets. He also noted that snow fences will be installed at the dock rather than cyclone fence. That will enable \$98,000 to be moved in their budget and small truck and a boat will be purchased for the Port.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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ANVIL Yes	HOUT Yes	NOTTI Yes	O'BRIEN Yes
PHILLIPS Yes	RODGERS Absent	SANCHEZ-POBRISLO Yes	6 YES 0 NO

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Ordinance #99-01: Amending the Sales Tax Code to Provide an Exemption for Senior Citizens (City Manager & Finance Comm.)

MOVED BY:	Anvil	To adopt Ordinance #99-01.
SECONDED BY:	Hout	

Council Member O'Brien felt that two council members have a conflict of interest in this ordinance as it is written where they would not have if it had been a part of the entire rewrite of the sales tax ordinance. He said that Council Members Anvil and Hout should be excused from voting on this issue.

Council Member Notti said a lot of issues come before the Council which affect each of them directly.

Council Member Hout stated that changing water and sewer rates affect all council members.

Council Member Anvil pointed out that once a person becomes a senior citizen, they usually don't stay with us very long. He noted that the community has recently lost four elders. The seniors are very important people for the Council to take care of and very important teachers for our young.

Council Member Pöbrislo said that the word that came up when she attended the seniors' meeting was "compromise". This ordinance is not a compromise, but rather it gives the seniors what they want. She stated that giving them \$50 off their water and sewer is equal to sales tax on \$1000 per month. She was in favor of defeating this ordinance and giving the seniors the water/sewer reduction.

Mayor Phillips spoke to the amount of funding the City currently provides to the senior citizens and that the number of seniors in the community is continually growing. She noted that the number will double by 2010.

Council Member Anvil stated the Council should not disappoint the elders. The elders want to keep their sales tax exemption and they should have it. He said a \$50 reduction in water/sewer service will be reduced to \$25 in a few years when the city decides it needs more revenue.

Council Member Hout in her water/sewer service would benefit her much more than the sales tax exemption would. She said this issue is seen by the seniors as how they are viewed by the community.

Council Member Pobrislo felt that the \$50 reduction in water/sewer service would represent a compromise.

MOVED BY:	Notti	To call for the previous question.
SECONDED BY:	O'Brien	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by a unanimous voice vote.
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Since the call for the previous question passed, the discussion ended and a roll call vote on the main motion was called.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion failed by a voice vote of 3 yes and 3 no.
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ANVIL Yes	HOUT Yes	NOTTI Yes	O'BRIEN No
PHILLIPS No	RODGERS Absent	SANCHEZ-POBRISLO No	3 YES 3 NO

Council Member O'Brien requested an ordinance be introduced at the next meeting regarding the \$50 reduction to water/sewer services for senior citizens.

NEW BUSINESS

Discussion Item – Stop Signs (Public Safety Commission)

City Manager Herron noted that the Public Safety Commission has requested that a third stop sign be erected at Watson's corner. His recommendation was to **not** request an additional sign from DOT. He did feel there should be a public discussion of this issue.

He handed out maps of Watson's corner and also of the corner of Ridgecrest and Alakeek.

The Public Safety Commission also requested a third sign at the laundromat. Again his recommendation was to say no.

He added that he and the Police Chief recommend that the AC/Post Office ingress/egress be either enter or exit only. The entrances to the parking lot on either side can remain enter/exit. The manager of AC stated he had no problem with this idea and would comply with the Council's recommendation.

Discussion continued regarding the AC/Post Office parking lot. This issue will be placed on the next Council agenda.

COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Council Member O'Brien sent condolences to the Carter family. Mr. O'Brien noted that he was raised by his grandparents and has a lot of respect for elders.

Council Member Anvil had no comments.

Mayor Phillips stated that being on the council is not easy. She wanted her votes to be for the betterment of everyone.

Council Member Notti thanked Yute Air and Hovercraft for providing hauling of the donated dog food to the villages for the mushers who had not caught enough fish to feed their dogs through the winter.

Council Member O'Brien added that that project had been wonderfully coordinated.

Council Member Pobrislo referenced the discussion on stop signs and asked that people use their blinkers. She felt additional stop signs would not be necessary if people followed rules of the road.

Council Member Hout stated she would be attending the State Chamber Board meeting in Juneau the first week of March. She had met with Senator Hoffman, Representative Kapsner and Paul Richards, the city lobbyist, during her last trip to Juneau for a March of Dimes meeting.

Mayor Phillips noted there was a funeral in Nightmute for Maxie Altsik.

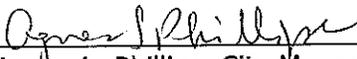
MOVED BY:	Pobrislo	To adjourn the meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Hout	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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ADJOURNMENT

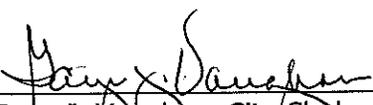
With no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 16TH DAY OF MARCH, 1999.



Agnes L. Phillips, City Mayor

ATTEST:



Gaye J. Vaughan, City Clerk