

RESOLUTION NO. 21

A resolution requesting administrative and legislative action necessary to the future development of Bethel and its trade area.

WHEREAS, the City of Bethel has naturally become the administrative, trading, transportation and distribution center of the vast Kuskokwim and Lower Yukon area, because of its central location and its deep sea port, and thus has developed into one of Alaska's fastest growing communities, and

WHEREAS, the orderly development of Bethel is a requisite to the orderly economic, social and educational development of the peoples and the area which it serves, and

WHEREAS, this development of the area and its peoples is dependent in many instances on the extent of public services and facilities and

WHEREAS, many such services and facilities can only be provided by State administrative and legislative action,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Citizens of Bethel, through its Council, request the Governor of Alaska, the Honorable William A. Egan, and the legislative bodies of the State of Alaska that immediate and positive action be taken to provide those public services and facilities most urgently needed and necessary for the continuance of our growth and establishment of economic stability. Specific action is requested, but not limited to, those things hereinafter mentioned.

A first requisite is adequate roads within the community of Bethel. Freight, transportation and services dependent upon roads are adversely affected by the poor construction and conditions of all existing roadways resulting in an economic drain on the State, community and area. Development of secondary roads benefiting from Federal funds should be accomplished in the fiscal years of 1966-67.

A small boat harbor must be provided for the preservation of property necessary to the livelihood of the area. Such a facility is necessary to the subsistence fisherman, the commercial fisheries industry and the general commerce of the area. It is estimated that there are approximately 400 small boats being used in these industries, and these are in need of a safe harbor.

The local fishing industry is the largest source of income in the area from natural resources. It is estimated that fish harvested in the Kuskokwim drainage in 1964 provided in excess of \$500,000.00 in income and in addition the principal food source in the area is locally caught fish. Proper fishing practices for conservation and full utilization of this natural resource as well as proof necessary to negotiations with other nations is dependent upon information supplied by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game. The Department indicates it is inadequately funded and is now depending on two biologists working in the Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim areas. It is recommended that the Department be adequately funded for the establishment of a fisheries research station in Bethel under the direction of a qualified biologist.

Expansion of the airport facility is necessary to adequate and economic air transportation to Bethel and the area. An extension to the runway is required for the use of larger and more economical aircraft. The air carrier serving Bethel and the area has indicated the desire to provide more economical service if the necessary State facilities are provided.

The State Magistrate Court located in Bethel serves the entire area. Many hardships are imposed on the citizens of the area due to delays or travel to other courts caused by the limitations of services that can be handled by a Deputy District Magistrate. The Deputy District Magistrate is called upon to perform many of the duties of a full Magistrate but is not paid for this extension of duty nor able to render the actual decisions. To correct this situation, the Bethel Court should be under a full Magistrate.

It is recognized that due to remoteness and size that it is not practical to establish high schools in all the villages of this area, however, by demonstrations in the past the residents of the area have indicated their desire that a regional high school be provided in Bethel with the necessary boarding facility. They have further expressed their desire that this be a State operated desegregated school. Very few graduates of the Bureau of Indian Affairs elementary schools, now operating in the villages, have the opportunity to receive secondary education. Those few selected by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for transfer to other locations; Mt Edgecumbe High School, Wrangell Institute and Chemawa High School, must choose between being sent far from home and family and into a segregated school or doing without any higher education at all. The State of Alaska being cognizant of the needs of the students in this area and being responsible for the education of its citizens should accept its responsibility to these deprived peoples without further delay. The greatest potential resource of Alaska and the nation is its people, especially its youth. Unless the youth of this area is provided the opportunity to further its education, this potential will be lost, and these young people will be abandoned to a life of frustration and poverty, inevitably becoming a burden to society.

APPROVED this _____ day of _____ 1965, by _____AYES and _____NAYES

ARTHUR L. NICHOLSON
Mayor

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK