

Sponsored by: Council member Rodgers  
Action: Failed  
Vote: 2-Yes (Miller, Rodgers) 5-No

**RESOLUTION #97-31**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF BETHEL, ALASKA, GIVING DIRECTION TO THE  
BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT**

WHEREAS, There is not a clear mission statement as to how the Bethel Police Department can best serve the citizens of Bethel; and

WHEREAS, As a result of not having a clear direction as to purpose, some citizens feel as though the police are more interested in arresting and jailing than service and community relations; and

WHEREAS, The Bethel Police Department has many excellent employees and officers, but each must understand that they are public servants, with the highest duty to serve citizens. Each officer is accountable to the citizens who ultimately pay their salary; and

WHEREAS, The Bethel Police Department has had waves of migrations -- migrants moving into the town, with little vested interest in the health of the community -- only to leave after a short period of time of service. All employees of the Bethel Police Department must view themselves as members of the community -- not as outsiders with a badge; and

WHEREAS, There are currently several pending complaints against one or two officers. As representatives of the city, council members have forwarded these complaints to the department but not received adequate responses. Although complaints are expected, the council, as representatives of the people, also expect answers. A new level of communication needs to be instituted between the police department and the community; and

WHEREAS, a mission statement would help all employees of the Bethel Police Department understand their roles, responsibilities and what the community expects.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the City Council of Bethel, Alaska, that the following mission statements be enacted by the Bethel City Council, to give direction as to what the community expects from the Bethel Police Department.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be given to the Chief of the Bethel Police Department, with direction that each employee and officer also be given a copy.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Bethel Police Department be encouraged to adopt the recommendations in such statement, with the understanding that oversight may be enacted in the future if such recommendations are not carried out.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 24TH DAY OF JUNE, 1997.

ATTEST:

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Agnes L. Phillips, Mayor

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L.J. Warren, City Clerk

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## MISSION STATEMENT GIVING DIRECTION TO THE BETHEL POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Bethel Police Department must be interested in the common good of the community. All officers must feel as though Bethel is their home, their community, and have a vested interest in the health and welfare of the region.

All officers must understand the reasonable expectations and feelings of the community. All officers must be trained and directed to find alternative solutions to arrests. All officers must understand they are public servants.

The chief must understand the priorities of the community, and the types of crimes that the community feels are problems. The chief must provide a professional level of law enforcement to the bush, without impersonal and non-responsive employees and officers.

Officers must be instructed in the area of discretion vs. the power of the badge. Officers must be given independence to act and see that the innocent party is protected, but must also remember they are accountable to the community that pays their salaries.

The department must function as a part of the community, not as an outsider, with some hidden agenda, and no sense of direction from supervisors or within the department.

The department needs to communicate with other agencies and the community itself. Communication will help the department gain direction, serve the community, develop good relations, and ultimately give the community the sense of protection it feels it is paying for and wants.

Communication between the Bethel Police Department and Bethel community is one of the most important responsibilities of the Chief of Police. The chief of police must learn about and understand the community. Semi-monthly or monthly meetings are recommended between:

### The District Attorney's Office and the Chief of Police

- To relay problems with cases
- To see what areas of training are needed for the line officers
- To provide direction to line supervisors
- To ensure a good working relationship between the two organizations

### The School District and the Chief of Police

- To relay problems involving gangs, drugs, and other unlawful juvenile offender problems.
- To offer a plan of action to resolve, not ignore, juvenile problems
- To offer education to the students by police officers
- To offer assistance to the school from the police department.

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The Adult Jail, Juvenile Detention Center and the Chief of Police

- To aid and assist each other during the booking process
- To help complete booking in a timely manner allowing the officer and jailer to return to duty, patrol, etc.
- To share in training that can be utilized by both organizations
- To ensure that both organizations work with each other and enable them to strengthen weak areas

The Alaska State Troopers and the Chief of Police

- To aid and assist each other for the common good
- To provide training utilized by both organizations
- To maintain a good working relationship

The City Council and the Chief of Police

- To address problematic areas of contention for resolution
- To address specific areas of concern felt to need special attention To help both organizations better understand why decisions are made
- To help both organizations focus on the common good regardless of the projected outcome.