

DRAFT

CITY FINANCE COMMITTEE

Rob Lewis, Chairperson
Thor Williams, Vice-Chairperson
Dan Lienburger
Oly Olson
Hugh Short Jr., Council Rep.
Robin Thompson
Helen Venes

FINANCE DIRECTOR
Robert Strahan



City of Bethel
Regular Finance Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 23, 2003

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Rob Lewis convened the meeting at 6:33 p.m. in the City Council chambers at the Bethel City Hall.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: Lewis, Lienburger*, Olson, Short, Thompson, Venes, Williams
Absent: none
Other Attendees: Robert Strahan, Finance Director; Laurie Walters, Asst. Finance Director
(*Arrived at 6:35 pm)

III. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Lewis opened the nominations for chairperson. Rob Lewis was nominated by Olson and Williams. No other nominations were made and the nominations were closed.

Vote: Voice vote to elect Rob Lewis as chairperson. Lewis elected as chairperson.

Chairperson Lewis opened the nominations for vice-chairperson. Williams was nominated by Olson and Thompson was nominated by Venes. Nominations were closed.

Vote: Voice vote for Williams (4), voice vote for Thompson (3). Williams elected as vice-chairperson.

III. PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Bob Graham-concerned about cost to customers for extra calls (water delivery and sewer evacuation services) when services cannot be provided the first time a driver tries to deliver a service, and has to come back due to obstructions in the driveway, frozen pipes, etc.

Mr. Graham presented a handout to the Committee with his suggestions for improvements (attached as part of the official minutes) and proceeded to go over his ideas.

Committee members thought a number of the suggestions were good ideas. Committee member Short commented that the prevention suggestion was a good point and that the City

may be able to talk with engineers about the design suggestions. He also noted that he would be interested in seeing information on the financial implication of implementing and items under conservation and extra service points.

Finance Director Strahan expressed that conservation and extra services points were good concepts, but that means less revenue for the City at a time when the City needs additional revenues. He also noted that the prevention suggestion is already in progress.

Committee member Lienburger asked about the charges relating to the extra call services and how much is to cover City's costs and how much is meant to discourage customers from getting services off-schedule. Assistant Finance Director Walters noted that it is a little of both. She explained that it is difficult to justify having a driver go all the way out to Kasayuli Subdivision to deliver 200 gallons of water at a charge of \$18.00, when the call-out time alone for that employee will be twice that amount. Finance Director Strahan emphasized that often this type of request is after hours and does require someone who is off duty to go the shop to get a truck and make the delivery, and that it is a higher rate of pay when we have an employee do this.

Committee member Olson noted that he was still in favor of private enterprise for water, sewage and garbage services. Committee member Thompson questioned if that had ever been looking into. Mr. Olson stated that he was still trying. Mr. Thompson expressed interest in what kind of proposals may be submitted if the City did go to privatization.

Committee member Williams commented on the using lift stations networked off the FAA sewer line to improve the City's services and cut down on cost of running the trucks so far. There was further discussion on whether or not the FAA sewer line could handle any additional volume, because of the size of the line. Another comment made by Committee member Thompson was to install large holding tanks for each subdivision and then do the pumping to the lagoon during off-peak hours.

Committee member Olson suggested reviewing the water and sewer ordinance at a later date to see if the committee could come up with other ideas for improvements or changes. In the meantime, Committee member Short requested that Finance Director Strahan look into the financial impact of implementing the conservation and extra call suggestions presented by Mr. Graham.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion: M/M by Short, 2nd by Williams to approve the agenda as presented.

Vote: Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

V. OLD BUSINESS

ITEM A: ORDINANCE #02-31 An ordinance amending sections of chapters 13.04, 13.08, 13.12 and 13.16 of the Bethel Municipal Code regarding water and sewer services (Lewis)

FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Chairperson Lewis stated that he had put this back on the agenda because Council had made changes since it was first reviewed by the committee, and he thought the committee should take one more look at it.

Committee member Short requested that Finance Director Strahan quickly review the history of the ordinance for the benefit of the new members.

After the review given by the Finance Director, Committee member Venes commented that she found the language regarding a customer not in good standing having to pay for their changes to services a little odd. Finance Director Strahan expressed his thoughts that good customers should be rewarded, but didn't feel that the City should reward those who do not pay their bill. Ms. Venes noted that other water and sewer companies dealt with poor paying customers through late fees and penalties.

Committee member Williams recalled a discussion at a previous committee meeting when a former member pointed out that if you have piped services, you never have to pay for changing your service, because whether you are out of town on vacation or doing laundry for an entire village outside of Bethel, you get a much or as little as you need. Hauled customers, however, are being charged for extra services and for changes to their services. Mr. Williams stated that the committee found this to be a great inequity between the two service types and voted "no" on the ordinance.

Committee member Olson questioned how someone who already has limited resources will be helped by having to pay more to decrease their service, which only compounds the problem. Mr. Olson added that he would like to see the title of the ordinance changed to reflect the topic of the changes.

Committee member Short noted that the intent of the ordinance was to create a system that was fair and that everyone was aware existed.

Motion: M/M by Olson, 2nd by Thompson to send Ordinance 02-31 back to Council with the recommendation that they pass it.

Vote: Voice vote. Motion passed, yes (6), no (1).

VI. NEW BUSINESS

ITEM A: REVIEW OF MID-YEAR BUDGET MODIFICATIONS

At the request of Chairperson Lewis, Assistant Finance Director Walters explained each budget modification being requested.

Committee members expressed concern about the items in the requested budget modification, specifically the additional \$200,000 spent on gravel. Committee member Short thought he remembered Administration saying the additional road work that Council discussed could be done within the original FY03 appropriation.

Discussion ensued about how a \$200K expenditure could happen without Council's approval or even being aware of it. Several members questioned the policies and procedures relating to the budget and expenditures in excess of approved appropriations.

Other discussion followed about whether this would mean that the gravel appropriation for FY04 would be reduced by \$200,000, but several committee members were quick to discount that idea, because roads are the biggest public topic and that is exact where the \$200K went.

Motion: M/M by Williams, 2nd by Olson recommending that City Council look into an ordinance requiring the Council to be notified if any one budget line item goes over \$10,000.

Motion: M/M by Lienburger, 2nd by Short to *amend* the motion to make such an ordinance, if adopted, effective July 1, 2003.

Vote: Voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Roll call vote. Amended motion passed unanimously.

Motion: M/M by Williams, 2nd by Olson to recommend to Council on the budget modification ordinance that they continue to be very conservative with the mid-year budget and to take out the pork where the pork can be taken out.

Vote: Roll call vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Finance Director Strahan questioned committee member Williams about the “pork” mentioned in his motion. Mr. Strahan emphasized that you can’t just look at the expenditure side of the budget, you also need to think of the revenue side, and take into consideration the cost of inflation. Mr. Williams defended his motion stating he realizes the need to look at both sides, but he doesn’t see the Council adopting an ordinance to increase sales tax one to two percent in the near future.

Chairperson Lewis called for a 5 minute break at 8:37 pm. The meeting was called back to order at 8:42 pm.

ITEM B: FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE FUTURE

Finance Director Strahan fielded questions from the members about some of the major issues discussed in his ten page memo regarding the state of the City’s finances and how prepared the City is to meet those challenges. A short discussion ensued.

One topic the committee discussed was the staffing shortages and difficulties in finding qualified applicants to fill those vacancies. Committee members recommended recruiting from the state colleges and temp employment agencies, and advertising in the Seattle, Portland, and Salt Lake, etc. newspapers. Other comments were made about possible grant monies available to further the education of the finance department’s current employees.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE MINUTES

Motion: M/M by Olson, 2nd by Williams recommend to Council that a fiscal note be attached to any ordinance or resolution so that Council knows what they are spending.

Motion: M/M by Thompson, 2nd by Williams to *amend* the motion to have the fiscal note only apply to non-budgeted expenditures.

Vote: Voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Roll call vote. Motion passed unanimously.

VIII. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Chairperson Lewis thanked the former members who served on the committee, Dave Trantham, Hal Jones and Irv Kreider, for their time on the committee. Mr. Lewis suggested a certificate of appreciation be given to the former members.

IX. FINANCE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS

Finance Director Strahan welcomed the three new members to the committee and acknowledged the positive contribution they made to their first meeting. He informed the committee that during the FY04 budget process he would be pushing very hard to get Council to look at the big picture and consider all the influences that affect a budget.

X. FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS

OLSON - none

WILLIAMS – welcomed new members to the committee and thanked them for their good ideas.

VENES – looking forward to working with everyone on the committee and thinks it is pretty interesting so far.

THOMPSON – thanked the committee for putting up with his uneducated comments tonight; it is a pleasure being on the committee. He is looking forward to seeing some revenue ideas and some expense options for the City. Also, he believes that the committee really can have an impact on the Council if the committee chooses to do so.

LIENBERGER – expressed his appreciation for the vote of confidence that people have bestowed upon him to join the committee and hopes he can live up to it. He requested that the committee have patience with him as he gets familiar with things.

SHORT - none

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: M/M by Williams, 2nd by Olson to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Vote: Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2003

Signature:

Rob Lewis, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Laurie Walters, Asst. Finance Director

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City of Bethel, Alaska Finance Committee Minutes

March 27, 2003

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Finance Committee was held on March 27, 2000, at 6:32 p.m. at the City Council chambers.

Olson called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Comprising a quorum of the Committee, the following were present:

Helen Venes
Oly Olson

Robin Thompson
Hugh Short, Jr.

Excused absence(s): Dan Leinberger, Rob Lewis

Also in attendance were the following:

Robert B. Strahan, Finance Director

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PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY:	Venes	To approve the minutes of the regular meeting on January 23, 2003.
SECONDED BY:	Thompson	

Changes:

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

MOVED BY:	Thompson	To approve the agenda
SECONDED BY:	Venes	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Item A — Discussion Item: None

NEW BUSINESS

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Item A — Discussion Item: Olson had questions from the June 30, 2002 City Audit concerning administration overhead policy, employee benefits, depreciation, setting aside funds to purchase capital and make the public more aware of the Enterprise Fund's interactions and understanding of revenue and expenses.

The Finance Director gave an overview of the Enterprise Fund elements of expense and revenue. Discussion and questions from the committee ensued.

Item B— Discussion Item: The Finance Director discussed issues to increase revenues. Examples on the agenda included City owned liquor store, aggregate water and sewer rates, hauled water mileage fee and landlords responsible for water and sewer rates of their tenants.

The Finance Director discussed the reasons for the revenue and asked the Committee how to move forward with new revenue streams or increase rates. Discussion and questions from the committee ensued. The Committee spoke about goals, developing a revenue plan, water and sewer and other feasible studies, etc. The committee discussed a planning tool, business plan or procedure that should be professionally created from research and presented to Council. Short suggested that the City could bring in a consultant that could help with gathering the research because none of us really have any time for extensive research.

MEMBER COMMENTS

Member Olson: none

Finance Director: Revenue

Member Thompson: Would like to see the committee be serious about its tasks, so we do not waste our time.

Member Venes: Believes that we should have goals for revenue and a plan explaining how we will achieve our revenue goals. Committee discussion ensued.

Member Short: none

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY:	Thompson	To adjourn the meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Short	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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With no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 24 DAY OF April, 2003.

Rob Lewis, Chair

Robert B. Strahan, Finance Director

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DRAFT

CITY FINANCE COMMITTEE

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III. ELECTION OF CHAIRPERSON AND VICE-CHAIRPERSON

Chairperson Lewis opened the nominations for chairperson. Rob Lewis was nominated by Olson and Williams. No other nominations were made and the nominations were closed.

Vote: Voice vote to elect Rob Lewis as chairperson. Lewis elected as chairperson.

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Vote: Voice vote for Williams (4), voice vote for Thompson (3). Williams elected as vice-chairperson.

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IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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Vote: Voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

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Vote: Voice vote. Motion passed unanimously.

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X. FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBER'S COMMENTS

OLSON - none

WILLIAMS – welcomed new members to the committee and thanked them for their good ideas.

VENES – looking forward to working with everyone on the committee and thinks it is pretty interesting so far.

THOMPSON – thanked the committee for putting up with his uneducated comments tonight; it is a pleasure being on the committee. He is looking forward to seeing some revenue ideas and some expense options for the City. Also, he believes that the committee really can have an impact on the Council if the committee chooses to do so.

LIENBERGER – expressed his appreciation for the vote of confidence that people have bestowed upon him to join the committee and hopes he can live up to it. He requested that the committee have patience with him as he gets familiar with things.

SHORT - none

XI. ADJOURNMENT

Motion: M/M by Williams, 2nd by Olson to adjourn the meeting at 9:15 p.m.

Vote: Voice vote. Motion carried unanimously.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS _____ DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2003

Signature:

Rob Lewis, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Laurie Walters, Asst. Finance Director

54

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March 27, 2003

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

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ROLL CALL

Comprising a quorum of the Committee, the following were present:

Helen Venes
Oly Olson

Robin Thompson
Hugh Short, Jr.

Excused absence(s): Dan Leinberger, Rob Lewis

Also in attendance were the following:

Robert B. Strahan, Finance Director

DRAFT

PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOVED BY:	Venes	To approve the minutes of the regular meeting on January 23, 2003.
SECONDED BY:	Thompson	

Changes:

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

MOVED BY:	Thompson	To approve the agenda
SECONDED BY:	Venes	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Item A — Discussion Item: None

NEW BUSINESS

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Item A — Discussion Item: Olson had questions from the June 30, 2002 City Audit concerning administration overhead policy, employee benefits, depreciation, setting aside funds to purchase capital and make the public more aware of the Enterprise Fund's interactions and understanding of revenue and expenses.

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MEMBER COMMENTS

Member Olson: none

Finance Director: Revenue

Member Thompson: Would like to see the committee be serious about its tasks, so we do not waste our time.

Member Venes: Believes that we should have goals for revenue and a plan explaining how we will achieve our revenue goals. Committee discussion ensued.

Member Short: none

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY:	Thompson	To adjourn the meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Short	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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With no further business before the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 24 DAY OF April, 2003.

Rob Lewis, Chair

Robert B. Strahan, Finance Director

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