
City of Bethel, Alaska

Public Safety & Transportation Commission

January 12, 2004

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Transportation and Commission was held on January 12, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. in the city hall conference room, Bethel, Alaska.

Chairperson John Hastie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

John Hastie	John Dickens
Charley Chung	Tom Fazzini
Brad Kehoe	
Hugh Dyment	

Ex-Officio member present were the following:

Howard H. Morris, Chief of Police
Linda Solomon, Recorder

EXCUSAL OF ABSENT COMMISSION MEMBER

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To excuse Don Poe and Michael Cho due to work commitments.
SECONDED BY:	Kehoe	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

Kevin Murphy brought to the commission's attention a "scam" by a taxi driver that happened about a month ago on the road to Hageland Aviation. Friend's car was parked and cab driver could see the car from a distance but deliberately ran into the parked car. Police Department did a good investigation and found no fault with either one due to road conditions. Cab driver then brought an estimate of \$800.00 and wanted to be paid right away. Not knowing what to do, the owner of the parked car paid the cab driver. After talking with spouse, owner of parked car tried to stop the check written to the cab driver. Cab driver heard of the check being stopped and returned a second time with another estimate for \$2,400. Both parties talked with police regarding this issue and officer found old and new damage to the cab. Officer interviewed another cab driver who stated that that cab driver needed money real fast and told him that this was the fastest way to get money. Mr. Murphy is hoping that two things happen with this incident: 1) taxi cab's permit be taken away completely; 2) driver permit also taken away. Chief Morris asked Mr. Murphy to meet with Andrew Steele, Taxi Cab Inspector, and give the information to him.

Frank Mazzaro stated that he does not get all information mailed out to cab companies and would like to know if information could be mailed to him directly. Chief Morris informed Mr. Mazzaro that it is the cab company's responsibility to distribute information to all drivers; at this stand point we are not going to mail out information to 86 individual drivers. Chairperson Hastie mentioned that the ordinance indicates that on an annual basis renewals are between a certain window. The information goes out to the cab companies the way it is supposed to. Any special issues we can be handled through the media, public service announcements, both newspapers and to the cab company.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To approve the regular agenda.
SECONDED BY:	Kehoe	

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

MOVED BY:	Dyment	To approve the minutes of the regular meeting on 12/8/03.
SECONDED BY:	Dickens	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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CHIEFS' COMMENTS

Would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year and hope we have a great year. Everything has been really busy over the holidays – nothing real serious. Officers working really hard and staying really busy.

TRANSPORTATION INSPECTOR REPORT

Andrew Steele not able to attend meeting due to problems with broken water pipes. Mr. Steele asked Chief Morris to relate to commission that at this point he does not have anything to report.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To nominate John Hastie for chairperson.
SECONDED BY:	Fazzini	

No other nominations.

MOVED BY:	Kehoe	To close nominations for chairperson.
SECONDED BY:	Fazzini	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Fazzini	To nominate John Dickens for vice chairperson.
SECONDED BY:	Kehoe	

No other nominations.

MOVED BY:	Kehoe	To close nominations for chair person.
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SECONDED BY:	Dickens	
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VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.	
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COMMISSION MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Hugh Dymont wondered about Mr. Murphy's concern and if the commission has any power to revoke permits/licenses and should that happen if commission has the authority. The issue will go back to Chief Morris and he will make the decision on revoking or not. If something is proven then the driver should have the permit/license revoked because that is the only way to get owners to put pressure on their driver's not to do something illegal. If the Chief's actions is contested by the driver then there is an appeal process before this board at which time the commission has the authority to act on the issue.

Tom Fazzini would like assistance as to where to go with putting on agenda on committee that would handle food inspections for Bethel as the state is cutting funds. This will be putting our food industry at a disservice. Chief Morris suggested bringing to city council as a discussion item and let the council decide on what committee it will need to go before. Hugh Dymont recommended interested parties to attend council meeting to discuss this issue. Also wondering where the bike ordinance stands – Chief Morris stated that the ordinance is going through but waiting to get about 45 days prior to the Bike Rodeo and that way we've got the 45 day grace period to get everyone used to the ordinance. After the Bike Rodeo, the ordinance will be enforced.

John Dickens thanked everyone for being here tonight. Thanks also to the Bethel Police Department with on Officer Grimes' professionalism and compassionate in dealing with a patient. Question to Hugh Dymont on any word from the city regarding liability risk over Haroldsen Subdivision. Dymont met with city manager and there is no liability with Haroldsen Sub. Will meet again with city manager to find out if there is a way to improve road access and who is responsible for that.

Hastie observed a visual entertainment screen in the front seat of a cab. Chief Morris informed that it has been dually noted and dealt with. It is a violation of state law and all cab owners have been notified that it is a violation and if it happens again, citations will be issued and permits pulled.

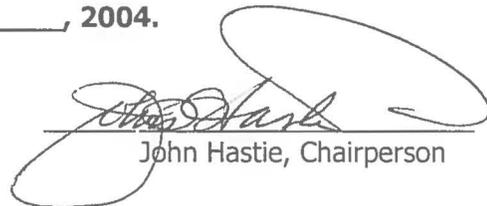
ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To adjourn meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Kehoe	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by a unanimous vote.	
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With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:36 p.m., January 12, 2004. Next meeting on Monday – 2/2/04 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved this 2 day of Feb, 2004.


John Hastie, Chairperson

ATTEST:


Linda Solomon, Recorder

City of Bethel, Alaska

Public Safety & Transportation Commission

February 2, 2004

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Transportation and Commission was held on February 2, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. in the city hall conference room, Bethel, Alaska.

Chairperson John Hastie called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

John Hastie	John Dickens
Charley Chung	Tom Fazzini
Brad Kehoe	Michael Cho
Hugh Dymont	

Ex-Officio member present were the following:

Howard H. Morris, Chief of Police
George Young, Fire Chief
Andrew Steele, Transportation Technician
Linda Solomon, Recorder

EXCUSAL OF ABSENT COMMISSION MEMBER

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To excuse Don Poe due to work commitments.
SECONDED BY:	Kehoe	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To approve the regular agenda.
SECONDED BY:	Kehoe	

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

MOVED BY:	Dickens	To approve the minutes of the regular meeting on 1/12/04 with quotations marks placed around the word "scam" under people to be heard.
SECONDED BY:	Fazzini	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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CHIEFS' COMMENTS

We took the issue of Food Inspection to the city council, the council sent back the issue to the commission to look at and see what we can come up with, if we have any suggestions on where it should go or what we should do with this issue. Commission members to come up with ideas and bring back to next meeting. One possibility would be if State does cut that position is to go to YKHC and ask if Environmental Health would be interested in taking over Food Inspection. The state should offer local municipalities some options if they are going to cut this position on how to proceed. Hugh Dymont to call Mary Sattler and Lyman Hoffman on what the chances are of this becoming a reality. Hugh Dymont to also call DEC to see what is in the works.

City Council also kicked back to Public Safety the issue of the impound lot to see what recommendations the commission may have and if the commission would like to go to private or public. Find out if Bob Sherer is still interested in developing an impound lot.

City Council would also like a recommendation on the new Police Department building from PS&TC because there will be a white paper done for the next council meeting.

It has been extremely busy with the police department. Will bring last years stats to next meeting for the police department with total call for service. Per capita BPD does more sexual assault cases in comparison to Anchorage PD. Hugh Dymont to bring statistics to Murkowski to support new BPD building.

BPD has been asked to increase the size of the department by about four. As soon as the figures are done, it will be brought to the city council. These positions will be completely funded by other entities. These positions will have primary responsibilities but BPD will be able to utilize them on the streets for about 25 – 40% of their time. TSA would also like an officer to be at the airport for every jet service which would be overtime for BPD; if the city council wants BPD to go forward with this, then a presentation will be sent to TSA with a figure to fund the two positions.

Therapeutic Court has a position that they would like BPD to get. 75% of their time would be dedicated to Therapeutic Court and 25% to the city. The funding would encompass pay for an officer and the benefits plus a vehicle.

Chief Morris met with AST and one thing that BPD has been doing for many years is that we answer their phones and dispatch for 16 hours a day to 24 hours a day on weekends and holidays and have not received payment for this service. Chief Morris brought this issue up with the Colonel and asked to consider paying for this service because we are getting taxed with all these calls. If not, we will have to re-evaluate this issue. If they would fund another dispatcher position (salary and benefits), it would make things easier for BPD.

Chief Young informed the commission that 2004 Homeland Security grant is being pursued. Still working with Chief Morris and a few of our other grants. Between our mutual grant with BPD, BLM, State of Alaska and YKHC, we are at the quarter million dollar mark this past year. We are still down one employee. I have been negotiating with a former employee who had held an administrative rank in the department and he is interested in leaving the guard and coming back to work for the city. The end result to Public Safety (police and fire department), there was about a \$300,000 budget cut across all budgets with several 10's of thousands of dollars cut from the police and fire department last year. This year the budget looks just as grim for the

budget. We are soliciting support to maintain our budgets but realize some cuts are going to have to occur in the city.

TRANSPORTATION INSPECTOR REPORT

Updated the commission on the taxi cab "scam" that was brought up to commission by Kevin Murphy. Mr. Steele had the two vehicles brought to the police department for photographs and examination. The investigating officer got in touch with the pick up driver the following morning on the phone and informed him that this was a civil case and BPD was no longer involved. Have not heard anything else on this case, I am assuming the parties are sorting it out.

BPD has received a complaint regarding fare charge from a river cab. In the ordinance, there is no fare regulations for river cabs. PS&TC may be able to regulate fare from Bethel city limits but not from outside of Bethel.

OLD BUSINESS

None.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

COMMISSION MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Hugh Dyment informed the commission that the city council kicked back the issue on the impound lot to come up with a recommendation if the city should open an impound lot or should we conduct business with a private entity. Hugh had talked with Bob Sherer and he is still interested in the business of an impound lot. Mr. Sherer's intent is to live at the warehouse and install 24 hour cameras and has already put in a fence. A good starting point is to get a Request for Proposal from Mr. Sherer on how the procedural steps of how he envisions who the towing services would be, how transfers of fees would be handled. In the event that an individual loses vehicle under state law of abandonment, notifying individual, post in paper. If individual does not come for vehicle then the vehicle would be auctioned. Need to look at what provision does Mr. Sherer need to maintain an impound lot to be certified by the city for liability reasons. Do we need to have an ordinance in place to regulate impound lots – Chief Morris to get answer and bring back to commission. We would call for a fenced yard, lighted premises, cold/heated storage and cameras. City council went with cab companies going back to taped dispatch, but PS&TC needs to do an ordinance or go with what we have since taped dispatch was in place before. Need for support for the police and fire department and city council responds to amount of people coming to support a cause.

Tom Fazzini wanted to know where the Bike Helmet ordinance is at. Chief Morris stated that it should be on the city council agenda at the next meeting for first reading.

John Dickens wanted to talk with commission on the essential functions of the municipal government. My thoughts are the fire and police departments are absolutely the most important of the city government. I have watched the police department and I am extremely pleased with their performance. I have also watched the fire department and we are really lucky that young people of this caliber are coming to work here for probably some of the lowest pay scales of the municipal emergency workers. Mr. Dickens is going to support the fire and police department's budget.

In closing, John Hastie would like to take up John Dickens' comments and mesh with what Mr. Young had said about what we could forecast for the budget. We should at least put the city council on notice that if we have to save money and maintain a levels of service that we look at the privatization of water, garbage, sewer and roads.

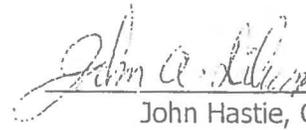
ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY:	Dyment	To adjourn meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Dickens	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by a unanimous vote.
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With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m., February 2, 2004. Next meeting on Monday - 3/1/04 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved this 5th day of APRIL, 2004.

 VICE CHAIR
John Hastie, Chairperson

ATTEST:


Linda Solomon, Recorder

City of Bethel, Alaska

Public Safety & Transportation Commission

April 5, 2004

Regular Meeting

Bethel, Alaska

CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Public Safety Transportation and Commission was held on April 5, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. in the city hall conference room, Bethel, Alaska.

Vice Chairperson John Dickens called the meeting to order at 7:08 p.m.

ROLL CALL

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

John Dickens	Charley Chung
Tom Fazzini	Michael Cho
Hugh Dymont	

Ex-Officio member present were the following:

Howard H. Morris, Chief of Police
George Young, Fire Chief
Andrew Steele, Transportation Technician
Linda Solomon, Recorder

DRAFT

EXCUSAL OF ABSENT COMMISSION MEMBER

MOVED BY:	Chung	To excuse Don Poe, John Hastie, and Brad Kehoe due to work or other commitments.
SECONDED BY:	Cho	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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PEOPLE TO BE HEARD

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

MOVED BY:	Dymont	To approve the regular agenda with addition under New Business, item C.
SECONDED BY:	Fazzini	

C: Discussion of Senior Citizen Cab Rate

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

MOVED BY:	Dymont	To approve the minutes of the regular meeting on 2/2/04.
SECONDED BY:	Fazzini	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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CHIEFS' COMMENTS

Chief Morris informed the commission that the police and fire department is looking at another year of drastic cuts in the department budgets. Encouraged everyone that if you want to see services stay at current level; contact city council members and suggest alternative resources to look at. Both departments are looking at a minimum of 30-35% that we can pull funding from.

It was decided that Frank Mazzaro will be put on the mailing list to receive a copy of everything that is sent to the Public Safety Commission. Should any other permit holder want the same copy then they will have an opportunity to receive a copy.

We are very fortunate in the grants in getting more than last year. The only thing that was made very clear to us we have to be very careful not to surpland the budget.

Chief Young stated that the fire department has filled the vacant position with a fellow from Fairbanks who comes to us with State Certification and Fire Fighter/EMT/Fire Instruction and some hazmat experience.

Have finished up with the Homeland Security Grant and have received favorable first news back from the committee that we are in line possibly for couple hundred thousand dollars. We just submitted a grant to the Federal Emergency Management Association to purchase another piece of fire equipment.

TRANSPORTATION INSPECTOR REPORT

We have a major shift around with cab companies. We've lost 2 cab drivers and in the process of loosing a third. Next week the written test will start for the first half of the cab drivers which is 35 drivers listed.

Question arose of the \$125 renewal permit fee on a yearly basis and in April or September, 2004 whichever month you are testing is another \$125. The \$125 fee in April and September is for the written/driving test and everything that goes with it which happens every two years and if a cab driver fails the test then it is another \$25 each time to retake the tests.

Mr. Steele will have written answer out to all cab drivers by the end of this week.

SUSPENSION OF RULE

MOVED BY:	Dyment	To suspend rules to allow people in audience to be heard.
SECONDED BY:	Fazzini	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Frank Mazzaro asked if a copy of all information that is sent to PS&TC members be placed at the city office for cab drivers to pick up. Mr. Mazzaro stated that he paid a renewal permit fee of \$125 in December of 2003 and now has to go back and take a test and if test is not passed then does the city renege on their commitment on the permit? Mr. Mazzaro did not understand why permit renewal fee is paid in December and 4 months later coming back to take a written/driving test.

Thor Williams requested that one word be changed in ordinance in cab rates to state from "minimum" to "maximum" concerning fees for cab fares. Due to increasing of gas prices then the cab rates will probably increase.

The split in the cab drivers testing was done for Mr. Steele and the police department's benefit because it is a tremendous of testing done in December that it was overloading the department. Mr. Steele separated cab drivers into two groups with one group testing in April and the other group in September.

Mr. Steele stated that any ordinances that pertain to taxi drivers are on show in the lobby of the police department.

OLD BUSINESS

- A) House Bill 378 under new business relates to the Restaurant Industry so these two items can go together. Mr. Dymont contacted DEC and talked with two people above western Alaska's inspector who stated that the inspector position is not being cut but to change how they do the inspections and increase the amount of civil fines. DEC asked if PS&TC could come up with a resolution to support HB 378. Understanding of DEC that inspector will come out if a number of complaints are received on a restaurant, etc PS&TC can pass a resolution in favor of an inspector to be stationed here in Bethel and send resolution to DEC and representatives for this area. . Linda Solomon to download HB 378 and send out to all members to review and discuss at next meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

- A) 4-way Stop at YKHC/Hospital Crossing: there was discussion in the past of building a walkway underground or an over pass. Originally the speed limit was reduced form 40 to 30 for that area. In the 05 budget the State D.O.T. Puff have slated to basically fix the Chief Eddie Hoffman highway and there is a joint venture with the City that the pavement that will be recycled will be used to pave Ptarmigan all the way to Tundra Ridge. The road is going to be wider and will have trails on the side for pedestrians. YKHC is looking at incorporating turn out lanes so that people going into the hospital would be out of the main flow of traffic. There would also be a turnout coming from the other direction going into the CHSB Building. A 4-way stop at that area may not work as well as the one at Watson's corner. There is no doubt that it is an area of consideration for safety. Another idea is to put in caution lights or a traffic light but that would be similar to a 4-way stop. Question if the PS&TC Committee can send a letter to D.O.T. voicing concern of the potential problem in front of the hospital and request that some action is taken. Decision made that Tom Fazzini will set up to acquire data of pedestrians crossing during the busiest time of the day between 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. and from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m for 5 working days. Chief Morris to develop letter to D.O.T. with information from Tom Fazzini for the commission's signature.
- B) Senior Citizen Cab Rate: The Senior Advisory Board has made a recommendation to the city council that we consider to allow taxi cabs to offer senior citizen fares to those with valid senior citizen tax exempt I.D. cards. Some members present would like to know if another citizen bus is going to be operated before fares are considered by tax cabs. The city council had only discussed this issue at one time

but no decision was made. Suggestion was to call cab owners to discuss this issue. Decision made to invite all cab owners to the next PS&TC meeting to discuss this issue.

COMMISSION MEMBER'S COMMENTS

Mr. Dymont is concerned about a need for a TORT reform both within the state and nationally. Have no opinion right now about the senior citizen fare. There is also people on limited incomes and the gap fares is also a concern.

Mr. Chung stated that the fare from Kasayuli fare is \$10 and takes about 30 minutes to run out there and back into town. Taxi cabs do not like to go out there and pick up one person when they can get 3 passengers in town and pick up \$12.00 within the ½ hour time. There is nothing that a dispatcher can do when a cab cannot make it out to Kasayuli Subdivision.

Mr. Fazzini: reminder that the Bike Rodeo is May 22 and will be going on the radio to publicize.

Mr. Cho: Question of when taxi cab companies can switch to recording dispatch. Chief Morris to check on when the transmission time was set for.

Chief Morris: Will try to make sure that all commercial vehicles start getting inspected after officers return from training beginning of May.

Mr. Dickens: With the increase of fuel and gasoline prizes and budget cutting; the sales tax may have to increase also. Will have to work hard with the ADHOC Committee to come up with more revenue. Mr. Dickens submitted information to the committee on the X-26 Taser that would prevent law suits, injuries, etc. Chief Morris informed the commission that BPD has 3 of the M-26 and two instructors and eventually hope to move in that direction.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED BY:	Chung	To adjourn meeting.
SECONDED BY:	Dymont	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by a unanimous vote.
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With no further business before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 8:46.m. Next meeting scheduled for Monday – May 3 at 7:00 p.m.

Approved this _____ day of _____, 2004.

John Hastie, Chairperson

ATTEST:

Linda Solomon, Recorder