

A. CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on December 7, 2010, at 6 pm in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

B. ROLL CALL

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

Brad Hanson	Kevin Brown
Ken Erbey	DeLena Johnson
Edna DeVries	Kathrine Vanover
Richard Best	

Also in attendance were the following:

Douglas Griffin, City Manager
Michael Gatti, City Attorney
Janette Bower, City Clerk

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Hanson.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Rick Erickson, Palmer Little League Softball:

- voiced his intention to rebuild the softball league;
- spoke of the availability of fields in the future;
- commented on the need to improve the ball fields by the Dorothy Swanda Jones Building to meet the current safety requirements;
- expanded on the needs and state of the fields;
- asked for City and Borough support for improvements; and
- disbursed paperwork concerning the dollar figures required to update the fields.

E. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1 - 2011 City of Palmer Budget (Action may be taken by the council following the committee of the whole)

- a. Committee of the Whole

MOVED BY:	Best	To enter into a committee of the whole to discuss the 2011 City of Palmer budget
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:	No:	
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson
Brown	Hanson	Vanover
Best		

The council entered into the committee of the whole at 6:08 pm and exited at 7:19 pm.

MOVED BY:	Vanover	To place a \$50,000 budget line in the non-department budget line to cover leave accrual expenses
SECONDED BY:	Brown	

Council Member Hanson:

- inquired of the process for accessing the budgeted funds; and
- stated the council did not need to approve each expenditure.

Kelli Veech, Director – Department of Administration:

- explained funds would first be expended from the affected individual department's salary line item and then the non-departmental funds; and
- expanded on non-lapsing funds.

Council Member Vanover:

- stated the money should be moved to the location where it would be spent to more accurately reflect the cost of running the department; and
- commented on the need to inform the council of any transfers.

Council Member Best:

- referred to the need for department accountability; and
- asked if an account could be established to "grow" the actual liability.

Mayor Johnson:

- expanded on the theory and process of non-departmental use.

Council Member Erbey:

- supported the concept of setting up a reserve account.

Council Member Brown:

- summarized the discussion of non-lapsing funds.

Council Member DeVries:

- expressed concern regarding the actual funds available for transfer.

Discussion ensued regarding establishment of a "sinking fund" with yearly contributions to ensure the fund become fully funded in the future. The council chose to continue the discussion during the December 14, meeting.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: FAILED by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:		No:
	DeVries	Erbey
	Brown	Hanson
	Best	Johnson Vanover

MOVED BY:	Erbey	To eliminate the cost for food at council meetings at the cost of \$1,800, by reducing line item 01-02-10-6044
SECONDED BY:	Best	

Primary Amendment #1 to Main Motion		
Moved by:	Vanover	To amend the motion to reduce the line item by \$1,000
Seconded by:	Best	

Vote on Primary Amendment #1: Motion carried by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:		No:
Best	Erbey	Vanover
Brown	DeVries	Hanson
Johnson		

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:		No:
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson
Brown	Hanson	Vanover
Best		

MOVED BY:	Best	To eliminate the additional .10 FTE for the Deputy City Clerk
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:		No:
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson
Brown	Hanson	Vanover
Best		

MOVED BY:	Johnson	To categorize the manager's \$5,000 discretionary line item – 01-01-05-6069
SECONDED BY:	Best	

Primary Amendment #1 to Main Motion		
Moved by:	Vanover	To amend the motion to reduce the line item by \$1,000
Seconded by:	DeVries	

Council Member DeVries:

- stated she did not want to tie the Manager's hands; and
- spoke of the council's responsibility to review the financial information provided to them.

Council Member Erbey:

- expressed the need for briefings regarding the expenditure of funds in the line item.

Council Member Hanson:

- reiterated the need to trust the Manager and allow the Manager to spend money on needed items.

Mayor Johnson:

- commented on the historical data concerning the over expenditure of funds in the discretionary line item.

Vote on Primary Amendment #1: Motion carried by unanimous voice vote
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Yes:	No:
Erbey DeVries Vanover Hanson Brown Johnson	Best

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote
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Yes:	No:
DeVries Brown Best Erbey Hanson Johnson Vanover	

MOVED BY:	Brown	To reduce line item 01-01-05-6029 by \$4,000 for the Christmas Party
SECONDED BY:	Best	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote
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Yes:	No:
DeVries Brown Best Erbey Hanson Johnson Vanover	

MOVED BY:	DeVries	To reduce line item 01-01-05-6098 by \$45,000
SECONDED BY:	Best	

Discussion ensued regarding the retention of funds to pay for lobbying activities by the Manager, Mayor, and council.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote
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Yes:	No:
DeVries Brown Best Erbey Hanson Johnson Vanover	

MOVED BY:	Johnson	To reduce the Board of Economic Development (BED) to quarterly meetings and to direct that the code be amended to reflect the change
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

Primary Amendment #1 to Main Motion		
Moved by:	DeVries	To make the quarterly meetings effective June 1, 2011
Seconded by:	Vanover	

Vote on Primary Amendment #1: Motion carried by 5-2 roll call vote					
Yes:			No:		
Best	Erbey	Vanover	Brown	Hanson	
DeVries	Johnson				

Council Member Best:

- stated that the provided information did not offer the actual costs, such as staff time;
- expanded on the creation of the BED and the tasks of the BED; and
- cautioned against the de-funding of items mandated by code.

City Manager Griffin:

- spoke to the overall costs associated with the Board of Economic Development.

Council Member DeVries:

- commented on the items the BED were tasked with accomplishing.

Mayor Johnson:

- spoke of input from the BED regarding public notices and meetings.

Council Member Brown:

- spoke of the elimination of the subcommittees;
- commented on the need to continue meeting monthly to move forward with the work that would have been accomplished by the subcommittees;
- stated the Board's work would come to a halt with the establishment of the quarterly meetings;
- expanded on the process of a code change;
- suggested the code change come forward and discussion held as a policy issue, and to cut the funds at a later date; and
- spoke of the de-funding of items required by code.

Council Member Hanson:

- spoke of the significant policy change and the need to discuss the issue; and
- commented on the need to confer with the BED.

MOVED BY:	Brown	To postpone the item until after policy discussions had been held including discussion of a code amendment
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

VOTE ON MOTION TO POSTPONE: Carried by 6-1 voice vote					
	Yes:			No:	
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson	Best		
Brown	Hanson	Vanover			

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: POSTPONED

MOVED BY:	Vanover	To eliminate funding for the Parks/Recreation Manager as offered by the city manager – “An employee will be appointed Acting Librarian and given Ice Arena management as well as budgeted at Level 10. Other duties will be reassigned to the Public Works and Community Development Departments”
SECONDED BY:	Best	

Council Member Best:

- inquired of the effect of grant funding regarding an acting librarian.

City Manager Griffin:

- provided a summary of his discussion with an official regarding the title of Acting Librarian and the lack of interference with grant funding; and
- spoke of the City's upcoming discussion regarding Library funding and plan to approach the Borough regarding reinstatement of funds.

Council Member Hanson:

- inquired of state assistance received by the city.

Director Veech:

- responded to the question of grants received; and
- spoke of the public assistance library grants received.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote					
	Yes:			No:	
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson			
Brown	Hanson	Vanover			
Best					

MOVED BY:	Best	To direct the city manager to bring back to the council a code amendment to include the duties of grant compliance and to maintain the Public Safety Director position at a level 13
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

Council Member DeVries:

- inquired of who held the primary responsibility for grants coordination;
- referred to the Public Works organizational chart and the Public Works Director's comments regarding grants controls within the public works department; and
- stated she did not have an issue with adding to the Public Safety Director's duties but wanted to ensure there were no duplication of duties.

City Manager Griffin:

- commented on the grants administration process; and
- spoke of the need for additional level of oversight.

Council Member Brown:

- emphasized the need for further oversight of grants.

Mayor Johnson:

- spoke of the need for detailed oversight.

Jon Owen, Director – Department of Public Safety:

- expanded on his experience with special conditions of grants and grant compliance.

Carter Cole, Director – Department of Public Works:

- expanded on the duties of the grants and contract coordinator; and
- spoke of the job duties of the Quality and Projects Controller.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote			
Yes:			No:
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson	
Brown	Hanson	Vanover	
Best			

MOVED BY:	Best	To eliminate funding for the special assistant position at a level 11
SECONDED BY:	Hanson	

Discussion ensued regarding the validity of the motion and the fact that the position no longer existed within the City.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: FAILED by unanimous voice vote				
Yes:		No:		
		DeVries	Erbey	Johnson
		Brown	Hanson	Vanover
		Best		

MOVED BY:	Best	To downgrade the Assistant City Manager (Level 13) to Special Assistant to the City Manager (Level 11)
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

Council Member DeVries:

- inquired of discussions held with the affected employee.

City Manager Griffin:

- spoke of the direction provided by the council on December 4, 2010; and
- expanded on his thought process to address the direction provided by the council.

Council Member Brown:

- spoke of the PERS issue surrounding the elimination of positions.

Council Member Hanson:

- commented on the positions created outside the scope of the Pay Plan.

Discussion ensued regarding the manner in which the Assistant City Manager position was created and the authority to create the position. The council questioned how many other positions were created without a council approved amendment to the Pay Plan.

MOVED BY:	DeVries	To postpone until the December 14, 2010, meeting
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MOTION TO POSTPONE: FAILED by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:	DeVries Brown Best	No: Erbey Hanson Johnson Vanover

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: FAILED by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:	DeVries Brown Best	No: Erbey Hanson Johnson Vanover

MOVED BY:	Brown	To instruct the attorney and manager to report back to the council at the December 14, 2010, council meeting concerning all positions at the City of Palmer which currently exist but not authorized in the 2010 Pay Plan
SECONDED BY:	Best	

Primary Amendment #1 to Main Motion		
Moved by:	Brown	To include a report on all new positions and classifications in 2011
Seconded by:	DeVries	

Vote on Primary Amendment #1: Motion carried by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:	No:	
Best Brown Johnson	Erbey DeVries	Vanover Hanson

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote		
Yes:	No:	
DeVries Brown Best	Erbey Hanson	Johnson Vanover

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To add a full-time Public Works operator back into the budget and reduce the number of temporary hours to 2300
SECONDED BY:	Best	

Council Member Hanson:

- commented on the work environment at the City of Palmer; and
- spoke of the need for full-time operators as opposed to part-time operators.

Council Member Brown:

- spoke of the lack of work for the operator and the need for temporary employees.

Mayor Johnson:

- spoke of the need to assure that employees are not afraid to lose their jobs after a number of years of employment; and
- expressed trust in the Manager in his ability to manage.

City Manager Griffin:

- expanded on the compromise proposed in his memo.

Director Veech:

- commented on the average rate of pay for the temporary employees; and
- stated the reduction of dollars by the proposed amendment as \$18,000.

Council Member Best:

- expanded on his experience with worker's compensation.

Attorney Gatti:

- referred to statutory rules applicable to injured employees; and
- expanded on the personnel rules and the process of recruitment.

Council Member Vanover:

- stated that the specific employee needed to be removed from the discussion; and
- commented on the process for moving salaries.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by 6-1 voice vote					
Yes:			No:		
DeVries	Erbey	Johnson	Brown		
Best	Hanson	Vanover			

MOVED BY:	Johnson	To maintain the current level of library fees
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

Beth Skow, Acting Director – Department of Community Services

- explained the increased fees and changes in classification;
- stated the overall increased fees as \$1000 per year; and
- explained the cost and process of rebinding books and described the process as not being cost effective.

Mayor Johnson:

- spoke of the principal of the fee increase.

Council Member Vanover:

- supported the increased fees for room rental.

Council Member Brown:

- commented on the need for a fiscal note; and
- spoke in favor of the increased fees.

Council Member Best:

- inquired of process of book binding.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: FAILED by 1-6 voice vote				
Yes:		No:		
Johnson		DeVries	Erbey	Best
		Brown	Hanson	Vanover

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To add \$4500 to the Sister City line item
SECONDED BY:	Best	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION: Carried by unanimous voice vote				
Yes:			No:	
DeVries	Erbey	Best		
Brown	Hanson	Vanover		
Johnson				

Discussion ensued regarding the painting of city streets.

Discussion ensued regarding policy direction discussed on Saturday, December 4, 2010.

F. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the council, the meeting adjourned at 9:58 pm.

Approved this eleventh day of January, 2011.

DeLena Goodwin Johnson, Mayor

Janette M. Bower, MMC, City Clerk