

A. CALL TO ORDER

A special meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on August 16, 2005, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

Mayor Combs called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL

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

Tony Pippel	Kathrine Vanover
Jim Wood	Brad Hanson
John Combs	

Also in attendance were the following:

Tom Healy, City Manager
Janette Bower, City Clerk

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Pippel.

D. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

E. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Item 1 – Discussion and Review of City of Palmer Staffing Needs

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To enter into the Committee of the Whole to discuss and review City of Palmer staffing needs
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 2 – Discussion and Review of Capital Project Priorities

Clerk's note: The council exited the Committee of the Whole without holding discussion on Item 2.

F. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1 – Possible Action Regarding Committee of the Whole Item No. 1 Subject Matter

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the City Manager to hire a Records Management Clerk in the current fiscal year for a period not to exceed six months at a rate of \$11.34 per hour
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the City Manager to create a Public Works Project Manager position and to hire an employee for the position in the current fiscal year
SECONDED BY:	Wood	

Council Member Hanson voiced his reservation to authorize the position due to the lack of justification regarding the need for the position.

City Manager Healy stated that he would be in conversation with Mr. Koch, Public Works Director regarding the pay range and job duties.

Primary Amendment #1 to Main Motion		
Moved by:	Wood	To delay action on item until discussion has been held with Mr. Koch regarding the wages of the position
Seconded by:	Hanson	

Vote on Amendment:	Motion failed by unanimous voice vote.
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Primary Amendment #2 to Main Motion		
Moved by:	Vanover	To delay action pending a clearly defined job description and options on pay range
Seconded by:		

Vote on Amendment:	Motion died with lack of second.
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Council Member Wood spoke of the worthiness of the position and voiced his trust in the City Manager and Public Works Director in their recommendation to create and hire an employee.

Council Member Pippel concurred with Council Member Wood.

Council Member Hanson voiced his understanding that the position would be responsible for the oversight of large projects and the Public Works Director's responsibility would be oversight of the day to day operations.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the city manager to create an Accounting Clerk I position and to hire an employee for the position in the current fiscal year
SECONDED BY:	Hanson	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the city manager to create an additional Dispatcher position and to hire an employee for the position in the current fiscal year
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the city manager to create a part-time Library Administrative Assistant position and to hire an employee for the position in the current fiscal year
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Wood	To authorize the city manager to create a Police Lieutenant position and to hire employee for the position in the current fiscal year
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

Council Member Wood explained the additional duties gained by the hiring of a Lieutenant.

Council Member Hanson stated that the primary duty of the Lieutenant appears to be interaction with other entities and jurisdictions. He recognized the importance of the interaction but stated that the described workload appears to be self-generated. He questioned the validity of an organization the size of the Department being so heavily weighted with supervisors. Council Member Hanson explained that the best organization is a flat organization.

Council Member Pippel voiced his understanding of the crime level in Palmer and stated that he does not view a large crisis related to crime at this time.

Council Member Vanover stated that she would hate to think that the City and individual departments are managed by a crisis only type of management style. She voiced her support of the position.

Council Member Wood spoke of line supervision and command structure style management. He stated that the Lieutenant would be directly responsible for internal affair investigations and that in essence, the position becomes an Assistant Police Chief in the absence of the Chief. He stated that while the Department is not overburdened by crime, it is quite busy. He explained the need to put a command structure in place to develop the future needs of the City.

Council Member Pippel asked of the current internal investigation procedures. City Manager Healy stated that the investigations are completed by the sergeants.

Council Member Hanson voiced his concerns regarding future police department staffing needs. Council Member Wood explained the department staffing and voiced his concerns regarding the response by a single officer for calls. He stated the likelihood that if the Department had been more adequately staffed, the previous tragedy involving the loss of an officer may have been avoided.

Council Member Pippel spoke of the lieutenant duties and the overall extent of Department funding in the budget.

Council Member Hanson responded to the comment about the loss of an officer by stating the likelihood that even if additional officers would have been on scene, the tragedy may not have been avoided. He spoke of the inherit risk of the position and current subsidies of assistance by the Alaska State Troopers. Council Member Hanson voiced his desire for the Department to return to a “community oriented” based police department and to increase community interaction.

Council Member Wood spoke of the lack of obligation by the Troopers to support the Police Department. He stated his belief that the Lieutenant will be on the streets from time to time and provided a description of the duties of the Lieutenant.

Mayor Combs spoke of a crime related incident and lack of response by the Police Department. He stated that the council does not hear of high crime levels and voiced the possibility that the crime rate is being kept down by the Department. He stated that there will be a future need for

the lieutenant position but questioned if the time is now. Mayor Combs spoke of available grant funds.

Council Member Hanson inquired of potential grant funds. City Manager Healy stated that there are grant opportunities available but stated that those opportunities must be based on the appropriateness to the Department. He spoke of the complicated nature of federal grants.

Council Member Hanson spoke of the ongoing staffing requests by the Department. He voiced his conditional support of the position and his desire for the police department to be in business of protecting people and the basics of police work rather than attendance at meetings. He voiced his desire to make decisions regarding the police department based on facts rather than emotionalism.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion passed by 4 -1 (Pippel) voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the city manager to create a Planner I position and to hire an employee in the current fiscal year
SECONDED BY:	Wood	

Council Member Vanover voiced her opposition to the position based on the lack of a clearly defined role and the lack of a resolution of the issues which currently affect the council and Community Development Department.

Council Member Hanson stated that he would like the roles in the Community Development Department to be clearly delineated.

Council Member Wood concurred with the opposition due to the lack of clearly defined role within the City.

City Manager Healy spoke to the issue of the technical duties and procedures of the Department. He urged the council to supply their input regarding the Comprehensive Plan. He stated that it is not everyday that the City takes on the issues that the Community Development Department accomplishes.

Council Member Pippel stated that he was unclear as to the duties of the Department and questioned the limits and boundaries of the Department. He spoke of his previous desire to hire a Planner. He stated that it makes him nervous to hire additional personnel when there are vague areas within an organizational chart. Council Member Pippel stated the need to obtain clear direction from the top down.

City Manager Healy stated that the office is a new and continues to evolve.

Council Member Pippel voiced his belief that the City is in the need of skilled Planner.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion failed by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 2 – Possible Action Regarding Committee of the Whole Item No. 2 Subject Matter

Committee of the Whole Item 2 and New Business Item 2 were rescheduled for September 6 at 7 p.m.

G. COUNCIL COMMENTS

H. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 10:58 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 23rd day of August, 2005.

/s/

John C. Combs, Mayor

/s/

Janette M. Bower, City Clerk