

City Council Minutes
City of Palmer, Alaska

Regular Meeting
September 14, 2004

A. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on September 14, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

Mayor Cooper called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

Kathrine Vanover	Brad Hanson
Tony Pippel	Steve Carrington
Ken Erbey	John Combs
Jim Cooper	

Also in attendance were the following:

Tom Healy, City Manager
Jack Snodgrass, City Attorney
Janette Persinger, City Clerk

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- Removal of item F. 7.
- Move F.6 from consent agenda to M.7.

D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Erbey.

E. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Item 1 – August 24, 2004, Regular Meeting – The amended minutes were approved by the council.

Item 2 – September 7, 2004, Special Meeting – The minutes were approved as presented.

F. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Introduction – Ordinance No. 635: Regarding Chapter 2.58 (Personnel Regulations), Amending Subsection C and E of 2.58.200 (General Provisions), Amending Subsection E of 2.58.240 (Probationary Period); and Repealing Subsection E of 2.58.310 (Holidays with Pay); of Title 2 (Administration and Personnel)
2. Introduction – Ordinance No. 636-Z-68: Ratifying the Recommendation of the City of Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Concerning an Amendment to the Zoning Map Instituted By the Commission to Rezone Tax Parcel 17N02E04D021 From R-1, Single Family Residential District, to AG, Agricultural

3. Introduction – Ordinance No. 637-Z-69: Ratifying the Recommendation of the City of Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Concerning an Amendment to the Zoning Map Instituted By the Commission to Rezone Tax Parcel 17N02E04D005 From R-1, Single Family Residential District, to R-2, Medium Density Residential
4. Introduction – Ordinance No. 638-Z-70: Ratifying the Recommendation of the City of Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Concerning an Amendment to the Zoning Map Instituted By the Petitioners to Rezone Tax Parcel 17N02E04C008 From R-1, Single Family Residential District, to C-L, Limited Commercial
5. Introduction – Ordinance No. 639-Z-71: Ratifying the Recommendation of the City of Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Concerning an Amendment to the Zoning Map Instituted By the Commission to Rezone Tax Parcel 17N02E04D024 and 17N02E04D026 From R-1, Single Family Residential District, to C-L, Limited Commercial

G. COMMUNICATIONS AND APPEARANCE REQUESTS

H. BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

J. HEARINGS, ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

K. BIDS

L. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1 – Determination of Written Appeal Initiated by the Property Owner Concerning a Map Amendment

MOVED BY:	Vanover	To postpone the determination until the next regular meeting
SECONDED BY:	Combs	

City Attorney Snodgrass requested that the decision be postponed so that the pre-annexation agreement, staff report and the Planning and Zoning minutes be before the council.

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 2 – Authorize Administrative Assistant Position – Community Development

City Manager Healy explained the requested administrative position and stated that the position would support the Community Development department and provide some administrative support to the City Clerk. He explained the responsibilities of the Community Development Coordinator and stated that the administrative assistant would allow the Community Development Coordinator to perform the substantive duties of community development.

Council Member Hanson inquired as to what further advantages have been gained by the Building Department given the fact that the Planning and Zoning Commission responsibilities now lie with the Community Development Coordinator. He stated that he would like to see the organization functions of each department and explained the flat organizational style.

Council Member Carrington stated that he would much rather see the City emphasize Information

Technology and place a full-time, permanent staff person in that area.

Council Member Pippel stated that the time for the staff additions are during the budget season. He voiced his concerns over the City's organizational structure and stated that he doesn't question the need for the additional employee but stated that the organizational structure should be addressed first. Council Member Pippel voiced his concerns over where a new employee will work within the building. He asked that the issue of a new employee and the present state of the building be addressed as a whole. He suggested that a temporary person be hired to assist the Community Development Coordinator.

Council Member Combs stated that he prefers a presentation of the overall organizational structure before the addition of staff. He stated that perhaps overall efficiency has been achieved within the Building Department because of the work load reduction.

Council Member Vanover asked that a comparative analysis be completed to show how the duties within the Building Department have changed.

Mayor Cooper stated that he would like a list of items that are not being completed to quantify the position.

Item 3 – Approve Salvation Army Request for Grant Funds

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To approve \$2,500 grant funds out of the council contribution fund
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

Mr. Hughes of the Salvation Army explained that the after-school program has just begun its operation for the fall. He stated that 50 students are registered, 80% of those are from the Palmer Middle School, with an average attendance of 30 students per day. Mr. Hughes explained that the program works by obtaining grants to enhance the activities and stated that the program relies on volunteers. He stated that the Salvation Army is working with area schools to advertise the program to parents.

M/M by Combs to amend the main motion to increase the amount to \$5,000.

Seconded by Vanover. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 4 – Approve Utility Extension Policies

City Manager Healy reviewed his memo and explained the Title 3 provisions. He stated that the provisions are only applicable within the City's boundaries and explained that currently there is not a policy governing areas outside the municipal boundaries.

City Manager Healy explained that the following basic guiding principals:

- Those that cause the cost will pay the cost.
- Rates will be established by a different class of users.
- Rate establishment for connection to the line and a user fee.
- The connection fee is based on a one-time charge and is an estimate of a demand on the system.

City Manager Healy stated that thus far, an exact rate has not been established. He explained the similar agreements with MEA for service to the ice arena. He stated that it would be appropriate to discuss the exact details of rate establishment with the rate setting consultant during a work

session.

Council Member Hanson asked how the policy will affect future subdivision development. Discussion ensued regarding connection to subdivisions and the costs to the subdivision developer.

Council Member Hanson stated the importance of focusing on the user fee. Discussion ensued regarding time limits for hook up fees.

City Manager Healy stated that he received a letter from another utility within the service area requesting connection to utilities. Discussion ensued regarding the existing systems within the City's existing utility service area.

Item 5 – Southwest Utility Extension Design and Construction

City Manager Healy provided a status report of the project and highlighted the following items:

- The accelerated costs – the City has made it very clear that there are significant risks with the accelerated schedule and stated that the risks are the hospital's to assume. The estimated acceleration costs are approximately \$1 million;
- The constraints of the railroad and the realistic projection of the accelerated schedule;
- A monthly meeting schedule has been established, the next meeting will be held next week;
- He has met with the engineers to determine if any measures can be taken to gain time to meet the accelerated schedule and stated that the major concerns are obtaining easements and the railroad alignment issue. City Manager Healy stated that once the alignment issue is finalized, the design can move forward more easily. He stated that there is a time constraint with easement obtainment and that the City has the ability of eminent domain but must go through the court process. There are approximately 20 – 40 easements that need to be obtained;
- Explained his intent to begin the pre-qualification process with the contractors including notification of area conditions and allow the contractors to examine the area before winter;
- The engineers are working on pipe estimates and a bid will be placed for procurement of pipe;
- A request has been made to the DEC for a waiver of the 10 foot rule; DEC has declined the request but has asked that more specific information be provided regarding the constraints in the area. A review has been requested with the department director and the requested information is being gathered;
- Explained his meeting with the engineer regarding splitting the project and bidding it in separate segments in an effort to accelerate the project.

Item 6 – Authorize Extension of Records Inventory and Disposal Project

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize an extension of the Records Inventory and Disposal Project
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

Ms. Persinger explained that the project is currently one-third of the way of completed and highlighted the areas which require completion. Discussion ensued regarding the involved timeframes and funds to complete the project.

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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N. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Healy reported on the following items:

- The Finance Director has announced his retirement effective December 31, 2004. City Manager Healy has reviewed the job description and will begin advertising within the week;
- Highlighted the budget schedule;
- Airport project – the FAA has agreed to allow the City to pave the gravel streets, discussion ensued regarding the status of the airport streets and fencing at the airport;
- Ice Arena – all of the steel is in and is in the process of being put in;
- The meeting with FAA next week regarding future airport projects;
- The next council meeting a resolution will be before the council regarding nominations for the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan;
- Attended a commuter rail meeting, the group consensus was to consolidate the Valley and Anchorage plans;
- The golf management RFP's are due on September 17, 2004.

O. CITY CLERK'S REPORT

Janette Persinger reported on the following items:

- Highlighted the election season and process;
- Explained the support the requested Administrative Assistant would have provided to the Clerk's office;
- Stated that the website continues to progress and a user-group is being formed to assist cities with website development.

P. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Guy AlLee

Mr. AlLee stated that the planning workshops have been outstanding and the persons who arranged them should be commended for their efforts. He stated that the acoustics in the Depot are absolutely horrible.

Q. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Combs highlighted his work schedule, stated that it was a good meeting and he was glad to be in attendance.

Council Member Carrington stated that the acoustics at the Depot are horrible and stated that the Fair went well.

Council Member Vanover stated that she was glad that the Records Retention program has begun and explained a records request at the School District office.

Council Member Erbey stated that the workshops have been good and that the City will benefit from them. He stated that he thought it was amazing that after the breakout groups came back together, the groups had identical ideas and concerns. Council Member Erbey thanked the State Fair and Alaska Railroad for their invitation to participate in the inaugural ride. He stated that the ride was wonderful and explained the improvements along the rail. He reported that he has received a large amount of comments from the residents of Eagle St. reporting an increase in the amounts of persons speeding.

Council Member Pippel reported that the United Way Campaign has begun in the Valley and stated that the Valley's goal is \$1 million. He recommended that each individual become donors and requested that the City cooperate with the United Way's efforts.

Mayor Cooper reminded the council of the special meeting and asked that the council revisit the Neighborhood Park ordinance and suggested that developers be made to include green space. He highlighted the schedule of the October meetings and explained that the election certification meeting will be held on Monday, October 11, 2004. Mayor Cooper stated that the City will reap benefits from increasing the grant amount to the Salvation Army.

S. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 28th day of September, 2004.

_____/s/_____
Jim Cooper, Mayor

Janette M. Persinger, City Clerk