

A. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on November 22, 2005, at 7 p.m. in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

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

B. ROLL CALL

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

Brad Hanson	Tony Pippel
Jim Wood	John Combs
Larry Hill	Kathrine Vanover
Ken Erbey	

Also in attendance were the following:

Don Contini, Acting City Manager
Jack Snodgrass, City Attorney
Janette Bower, City Clerk

C. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Erbey.

A recess was called at 7:02 for the purpose of attending the Appreciation Ceremony for the Palmer Volunteer Firefighters. The presentation was made by Representative Gatto. The meeting reconvened at 7:30.

D. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

1. Approval of Consent Agenda
2. Minutes of Previous Meetings – *the minutes were approved as presented.*
 - a. November 8, 2005, Regular Meeting
 - b. November 15, 2005, Special Meeting

E. COMMUNICATIONS AND APPEARANCE REQUESTS

1. Pat Kilmain – Palmer Library Director

Ms. Kilmain reported on the following items:

- Library continues to be busy;
- Valley Hospital Grant – the grant has been used to hire personnel from Cooperative Extension; the emphasis of the grant is nutrition;
- Friends of the Library has replaced all of the older chairs with new chairs by selling the chairs to the public as memorials;

- On December 2, a Polish dinner will be held at the Moose Club, funds will be donated to the Friends of the Library;
- An administrative assistant has been hired, highlighted the duties of the assistant;
- Friends of Library will decorate the library next week;
- Discussion ensued regarding the duties of the administrative assistant;
- Discussion regarding the events the Library will be involved in during Colony Christmas ensued.

F. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

G. PUBLIC HEARINGS

Item 1 – Public Hearing (1 of 2) – Resolution No. 05-042: Adopting the Budget for the City of Palmer for the Fiscal Year 06, Beginning January 1, 2006 and Ending December 31, 2006 and Appropriating Monies (IM 05-100)

As required by the City of Palmer Charter (Section 6.3 b), a public hearing was held on the Fiscal Year 2006 Budget. There were no members of the public to be heard.

H. BIDS

I. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

Item 1 – Action Memorandum 05-117: Authorize City Manager to Enter Into a Professional Services Agreement with Northern Economics, Inc. for an Economic Impact Analysis of Annexation Options

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the City Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with Northern Economics, Inc. for an Economic Impact Analysis of annexation options
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

Council Member Pippel spoke of the previous annexation study completed by Northern Economics and expressed his pleasure of their retainment for the new work.

Council Member Hanson asked of the cost for the previous economic impact study. Ms. Sara Jansen, Community Development Coordinator, stated the cost as \$20,000.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 2 – Action Memorandum 05-122: Authorize City Manager to Enter Into a Joint Purchase Agreement Utilizing the Municipality of Anchorage Contract with Alaska Truck Center for the Purchase of a New Truck Cab and Chassis in the Amount of \$73,743 per Palmer Municipal Code 3.21.240

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the City Manager to enter into a joint purchase agreement utilizing the Municipality of Anchorage contract with Alaska Truck Center for purchase of a new truck cab and chassis in the amount of \$73,743 per Palmer Municipal Code 3.21.240
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

Council Member Pippel spoke of his conversation with Mr. Rick Koch, Public Works Director regarding the cost and need for the vehicle.

Council Member Hanson spoke of the equipment fund and indicated use for the transfer of funds for the vehicle purchase. Mr. Dean Baugh, Finance Director, explained the reappropriation of funds within the 2005 fiscal year and the actual vehicle purchase within the 2006 fiscal year. Council Member Pippel asked of the appropriation in the current fiscal year. Mr. Baugh explained the vehicle's delivery in 2006. Council Member Pippel asked that the 2006 capital budget accurately reflect the correct funds to purchase two vehicles.

Council Member Vanover asked of the ability to reserve encumbrances to reflect the funds. Mr. Baugh explained the transfer procedures.

Council Member Hill asked that an explanation regarding the need for two vehicles be provided by City Manager Healy and Mr. Koch during the November 29 special meeting.

Council Member Hanson inquired of the five year capital improvement budget.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 3 – Action Memorandum 05-123: Authorize City Manager to Amend the City of Palmer Utility Service Regulations to Include Reduced Utility Fees for Disconnected Water Service

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the City Manager to amend the City of Palmer Utility Service Regulations to include reduced utility fee for disconnected water service
SECONDED BY:	Wood	

Council Member Pippel expressed his pleasure regarding the promptness of administration to address the issue.

Council Member Hanson applauded the administration for the timeliness of addressing the issue. He voiced his disagreement with the minimum usage levels to eliminate the shut off/turn on language and spoke of the need to continue services to address boiler issues. He spoke of the ability of a computer system to administer a lower rate. Council Member Hanson stated that any policy implemented should be simple.

Council Member Pippel spoke in favor of utility vacation rates. He offered the following suggestions to improve the policy: an enhanced computer system and establishment of a minimum usage rate. He stated that due to the small amount of customers who would use the vacation status, monitoring could be conducted by the utility clerk. Council Member Pippel spoke of the need to establish a fair and reasonable vacation rate. He expressed the unreasonableness of a system in which the public works department would physically go to each residence to turn off and on the water.

Council Member Hill voiced his agreement with Council Member Pippel. He spoke of the RF monitors and the minimum usage as a mechanism to determine which customers are within the vacation rate category. He voiced the necessity for the customer to complete a form to accurately identify the dates they will be absent from the City. Council Member Hill spoke of the use of debit billing and the banking institution's recognition of an accurate bill. He spoke of boiler systems, in-floor heating and their need for water.

Mayor Combs voiced his concern regarding verification of the return of customers and the reflection of use through the meters.

Council Member Pippel spoke of the 1,400 residential utility customers and of the small percentage of those customers who would use a vacation rate. He stated that software can be written which can compare actual usage. He spoke of the City's possible obligation to notify customer's who are on vacation should there be excessive use of water. Mayor Combs explained the instance of broken pipes and the response by City employees.

Attorney Snodgrass expressed concern regarding the City employee's entrance on private property. He suggested that a low usage rate be established rather than a vacation rate. Discussion ensued regarding City employees entering private property without prior permission.

Council Member Pippel spoke in favor of Mr. Snodgrass' suggestion of a low usage rate and flat rate of garbage usage. Attorney Snodgrass spoke of the practicality factor of garbage rates.

Council Member Vanover voiced her agreement with the concept of a vacation rate and stated that the policy requires fine tuning.

Council Member Erbey explained the overriding concern of the citizen who contacted him regarding the garbage vacation rate. He spoke of the citizen's desire to reduce the rate in their absence.

Council Member Pippel spoke of the involved utility capital costs.

Moved by:	Vanover	To postpone action on action memorandum 05-123 to the January 24 meeting
Seconded by:	Pippel	

Mr. Baugh asked of the flexibility of the proposed rate and the discussion regarding an automatic rate without the requirement of signing up for the rate.

Council Member Pippel suggested that a lower rate be established to encompass the "vacationers" and the customers who have lower water usage.

Mr. Baugh asked of the desire of the council to establish a rate for approximately 20 customers. Council Member Pippel spoke of the utility rate study which may suggest a lower water usage rate.

Council Member Wood voiced his concern regarding the timeframe of the proposed vacation rate – would the rate be used once per year and what would the duration would be. Council Member Wood stated that the low rate usage could be the mechanism to continue to "pay for the utility".

Mayor Combs suggested a process to gain the input of the City Manager, utility and finance department.

Vote on Amendment:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion postponed.
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Item 4 – Action Memorandum 05-124: Authorize City Manager to Enter Into a Road Maintenance Agreement with the State of Alaska

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To authorize the City Manager to enter into a road maintenance agreement with the State of Alaska
SECONDED BY:	Erbey	

Council Member Pippel asked of the Chugiak St. project as listed in the action memorandum. Mayor Combs directed Council Member Pippel to the City Manager to answer the question.

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

K. NEW BUSINESS

L. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

Acting City Manager Contini reported on the following items:

- Thanked the council for their presence at the fire station tonight.

M. CITY CLERK’S REPORT

Ms. Bower reported on the following items:

- Reminded the council of the December 3, Christmas Party;
- Highlighted the website statistics as listed in the council packet;
- Underage Voting Campaign.

N. RECORD OF ITEMS PLACED ON THE TABLE

The following items were placed on the table:

- Special meeting notice;
- AML information;
- Financial documents from the City of Palmer finance department.

O. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Robert Kay stated that he has been in the area for a few months and lives just outside the City limits. He inquired of the allocated funds for the truck purchase for the public works department. He explained his move from Arizona to the Palmer area.

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Pippel spoke of the AML Alert and stated that the City should respond to the announcement. He explained the climate in Juneau in regards to the funding announcement.

Council Member Hill explained his conversation with Mr. Contini and Mr. Culver regarding the Palmer “donut hole” which had not been annexed into the City. He explained the property and suggested that the City begin snow removal operations in the area. He stated his intent to encourage the Borough to shift funds to the City and voiced the opportunity to provide good public relations for the City. He explained the public safety aspects of the property.

Council Member Vanover requested the address of the person who is responsible for the Christmas card program for the troops in Iraq.

Mayor Combs reported on the following items:

- Encouraged the council to attend the City Christmas party;
- November Neighborhood Watch meeting and future activities of Neighborhood Watch;
- Meeting with Mat-Maid CEO and campaign to raise funds for the Colony House Museum;
- Meeting with the Palmer Museum History and Art;
- Meeting with Senator Green and staff regarding capital improvement projects;
- Will meet with Representative Gatto, Representative Stolz and Senator Huggins on December 12;
- Meeting with Anchorage Daily News regarding Valley growth;
- Attendance at the Transportation Advisory Board meeting;
- Working with Palmer High Student Government to receive a quarterly report;
- Presentation of an Outstanding Citizen Award at the next council meeting.

R. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

APPROVED THIS 13th day of December, 2005.

/s/

Anthony J. Pippel, Mayor Pro-Tempore

/s/

Janette M. Bower, City Clerk