

CITY COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, APRIL 8, 2003
7:00 PM - CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

- A. CALL TO ORDER: at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Cooper in Council Chambers.
- B. ROLL CALL, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM. Present: Mayor Cooper and Council members Fish, Pippel, Combs, Hanson, and Carrington. Council member Vanover's absence was excused. Also present: Fire Chief and Acting City Manager Dan Contini, Attorney Jack Snodgrass, and Recording Secretary Pam Whitehead. A quorum was established.
- C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA: The agenda was approved, as amended, without objection. Mayor Cooper made the following addition:
L1 – Amend Authorization of City Manager to Enter Into a Contract with CRL Services for Decommissioning and Removal of Ice Arena Equipment.
- D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE: led by Council member Hanson.
- E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS: The minutes of the regular meeting of March 25, 2003 were approved as corrected. Corrections included:
pg 3, item K2, insert word to read: Key **Bank** Plaza;
pg 4, item K3, correct punctuation: \$52.600 to \$52,600;
pg 5, item M1, 1st paragraph, correct sentence to read "... "20-month term." He recommended ..."
pg 6, item M3, 2nd paragraph, correct March, 3003 to March, 2003;
pg 9, item M5, motion, correct word to read: "... removal of ice arena equipment in **an** amount ..."
pg 10, item M11, 2nd paragraph, correct punctuation from \$11.260 to \$11,260;
pg 10, item N, 1st bullet, change "trials" to "trails";
pg 11, item N, 1st bullet, remove period, so sentence reads: "...repair pipes in the **Depot**;"
pg 11, item P, Mayor Cooper's comment: correct spelling of name to read: **David Cheezem**.
- F. CONSENT AGENDA:
1. Ordinance No. 603 – An Ordinance Regarding the Establishment of Neighborhood Parks and Providing a Method for Partial Funding Thereof. (First Reading – Set Public Hearing and Second Reading for April 22, 2003).
 2. Ordinance No. 604 – An Ordinance Amending Section 3.20.140 (Joint Purchasing) and Adding Section 3.20.150 (Misrepresentation and Fraudulent Claims) of Chapter 3.20 (Purchasing) of Title 3 (Revenue and Finance) of the Palmer Municipal Code. (First Reading – Set Public Hearing and Second Reading for April 22, 2003).

MOVED PIPPEL, SECONDED COMBS, to accept the consent agenda. MCU.

G. COMMUNICATIONS AND APPEARANCE REQUESTS: None.

H. BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT: None.

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

I. HEARINGS, ORDINANCES, AND RESOLUTIONS:

1. Public Hearing – Proposed Council-Initiated Special Assessment District for the S. Chugach St. Between E. Fireweed Ave. and E. Elmwood Ave. Street Improvement Project.

This is the required public hearing on the proposed Council-initiated special assessment district. The project will build a 28-foot-wide (back of curb to back of curb) paved street with rolled curbs. The assessment method is based on the average of the square foot area of properties and assessed values of properties.

Mayor Cooper opened the public hearing and asked for comments from the audience:

Chris Herberger, 723 S. Chugach, basically had more questions than comments. She wanted to know which side of the street the sidewalk would be installed. Mayor Cooper told her the west side, same side as the school. She raised concern about drainage, that as it appears now, there is no place for the drainage to go from their yard. Mr. Koch explained the roadway would be about ½-foot lower than her yard and the surrounding area, enough to take drainage to the ditch and storm drain system. Ms. Herberger also inquired as to payment plan. The Mayor informed she would have three years over which to pay the assessment. As she is the only homeowner that has a driveway on the subject street, she wanted to know how long she would not have access to it. Mr. Koch said it would not be more than one day.

Steve Unfreid, Board Member, Matanuska Christian School, read a letter from the Board. Matanuska Christian School is incorporated as a not-for-profit 503(c)(3) organization, which has been located at the Elmwood site for five years. They are on a very strict budget and have, over the years, tried to be good stewards of the monies received from their parents, all of which goes to educating and equipping their students in a safe environment. They support the City of Palmer in its endeavor for improvements by upgrading its roads, but at this time are unable to financially cover the cost assessed to them. Although they fear increased traffic and speed when the road is paved, their main concern was how to pay for it. Mayor Cooper informed the assessment could be paid over 20 years.

There being no others wishing to speak, the Mayor closed the public hearing at 7:19 p.m. and brought the matter back to the council.

2. Resolution No. 1302 – Establishing a Street Improvement District for S. Chugach St. Between E. Fireweed Ave. and E. Elmwood Ave.

This resolution establishes the special assessment district for S. Chugach St. following the public hearing if the council wishes to proceed.

MOVED HANSON, SECONDED FISH, to adopt Resolution No. 1302.

Discussion and questions of Mr. Koch ensued with regard to the roadway's elevation and impact on the driveways. The width of the sidewalk will be 5 feet. Mr. Koch didn't think there would be much change or increase in the traffic.

Council member Pippel inquired why the assessment method of square footage/assessed value was chosen and why front footage was not considered in the calculation. Council member Hanson stated the method was chosen because it was the one which most fairly assessed the residents and the Christian School based on their relative usage of the street. Council member Combs noted that front footage would be more appropriate to consider when commercial establishments front the street. Council member Pippel felt it was worth pointing out that having the street fixed and paved is of more, every-day immediate benefit to the people who live on the street than it is to the school – less noise, better drainage, less dust; felt that a percentage for front footage should be considered as part of the 25% resident share. Further discussion followed regarding the assessment method.

Council member Combs recommended that payment schedules accompany LID assessment notices when they are sent out to the residents. Mayor Cooper agreed it was a good suggestion and he would see that it happened.

Question on Motion [adopting Resolution 1302]: MCU.

K. BIDS:

1. Equipment Storage Building and Fencing – Wastewater Project Phase III.

MOVED PIPPEL, SECONDED HANSON, to accept the bids of Lynx Construction, F-E Contracting, Inc., and Arctic Structure, and award the contract to F-E Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$308,000. MCU.

L. OLD BUSINESS:

1. Amend Authorization of City Manager to Enter Into a Contract with CRL Services for Decommissioning and Removal of Ice Arena Equipment.

Mayor Cooper introduced the item; reminded the council that at last meeting the “guessimate” for this work was approximately \$15,000. CRL came in with a bid of \$26,443, however, after meeting with Mr. Koch, a time and materials contract resulted which they don't expect to exceed \$20,000. In order to meet the deadline, CRL had to start work immediately, which the City authorized, however, the council must now re-authorize increasing the contract amount to \$20,000. Discussion followed.

Mr. Koch updated the council as to status of the purchase and provided a 4-page Attachment A listing the ice arena equipment and furnishings that are included in the sale. He explained that recovery of glycol from the system (worth about \$24,000), plus drums to put it in, wasn't considered in the original \$15,000 estimate; noted that glycol costs about \$400 a drum. He described further the negotiations leading up to Inlet Petroleum Company "donating" all 60 drums for storage of the glycol and recommended that a letter of thanks be sent by the Mayor or Manager. Mr. Koch called attention to the last page of Attachment A, itemizing additional concession stand equipment which is now included in the "extras" thrown in at no additional cost. He noted his excitement and feels the city has made an excellent deal, maximizing every dollar spent on the purchase.

Question on Motion [approving contract increase to \$20,000]: MCU.

M. NEW BUSINESS.

1. Authorize City Manager to Enter Into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for the Urban Revitalization Project (Environmental Document, Design and Engineering).

MOVED PIPPEL, SECONDED FISH, to authorize the City Manager to Enter into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT/PF) for the Urban Revitalization Project (Environmental Document, Design, and Engineering).

The Manager's memo notes that the draft Memorandum of Agreement in the packet addresses the first phase of this project, which is the environmental documentation work and the preparation of bid-ready plans and specifications. The construction phase of the project has been shaded out of Appendix B and will not be a part of this agreement. A subsequent agreement will cover the construction phase. The Manager recommends that the council approve this authorization in order to allow completion of the agreement. It will allow our engineer to prepare a proposal for the work which is expected to be presented to the council at next meeting.

Council member Pippel spoke in support; explained that DOT was unable to determine in a timely manner how they wanted to manage this grant money and it has been sitting around for months waiting for things to get worked out; pointed out that this is a positive step moving at least towards the next step; encouraged voting in favor. Brief discussion followed.

Question on Motion: MCU.

2. Approve Request to Mat-Su Borough to Place Projects on a Parks and Recreation Bond Ballot Question.

MOVED PIPPEL, SECONDED FISH, to approve the Manager's letter request to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to place projects in the sum of \$1.4 million on the Parks and Recreation Bond Ballot Question.

Mayor Cooper introduced the item; called attention to Mr. Healy's draft letter in the packet asking the borough to consider placing two Palmer projects, important to our community's recreational needs, in the bond package: (1) \$1.2 million for a portion of the Phase I construction cost for an ice arena in Palmer; and (2) \$200,000 for the construction of trails in Palmer. Brief discussion followed.

Question on Motion: MCU.

N. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT:

Chief Contini reported on:

- *City Manager Duties* – will be happy to see Mr. Healy return; expressed a new appreciation for what he does, having “walked in his moccasins” for a week;
- *See City Manager's written report in the packet re status of City Clerk's position and FYI information in the packet on the status of the Consolidated Dispatch;*
- *Status of Injured Firefighter, Todd Russell* – has made great improvements and is doing very well; noted he has a long road to recovery, but it is expected to happen. Brief discussion ensued. The Chief noted that Todd's medical bills and weekly paycheck will be covered;
- *Fire Department* – activity hasn't slowed down any; advised he will be back before the council asking for an increase to his budget; so far has had to pay out \$15,000 of his \$30,000 budget; said they had several grass fires and even a sod-roof fire this week.

Mayor Cooper reported on:

- *Consolidated Dispatch* – called attention to Mr. Healy's letter in the packet, which was in response to letter received from Wasilla Mayor Keller advising they will begin their voice dispatch police service on September 1, 2003. The manager's letter notes Palmer's concerns, one of which is our dispatch employees. Further discussion ensued re Wasilla pulling out of the service agreement and going on month-to-month through the end of the year. Council member Pippel pointed out that the rate charged should reflect the added expense of a month-to-month versus lease agreement. The Mayor thought that was a good point and said he would remember to bring it up.
- *City Clerk Position* – noted that it turned out the soonest all three of the applicants could be available at the same time would be April 29; therefore, the interviews have been scheduled for Tuesday, April 29, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. Another reason the date was pushed forward was because the Mayor will be in Juneau for an AML conference, April 22-24.

O. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION: None.

P. COUNCIL COMMENTS:

Council member Fish: commented that he was pleased that lines of communication are open concerning the land owned by the Palmer Hockey Association as a potential location for the ice arena. He also wished to thank all Council members, the Mayor, and City Manager, for helping in his learning process; noted that although he spends a lot of time listening right now, he expects to contribute more in the future; said he thinks a lot of good things are happening in the City and he's glad to be a part of it. Brief discussion ensued regarding the history behind the Palmer Hockey Association land.

Council member Carrington: commented that he has spoken briefly with our Librarian and is planning some public meetings at the library to gather comments as to what our citizens' think about the Palmer Library – whether they would want to: a) sell back to the borough; b) maintain it as is; c) build an expansion; or d) build a new building.

Council member Pippel: commented 1) on the nice letter received from the Boys & Girls Club discussing all the nice things they do, and making a specific request for funding; noted that as the City has contributed in the past, he asked that it be put on the next agenda for discussion; 2) he again encouraged that the City give our firefighters and public works personnel a thank you award of \$100-\$200; said he's not quite sure how to do it, but thinks it would be a highly appropriate thing to do; 3) noted that he got a lot of value out of the joint meeting of libraries, that it gave him an opportunity to meet some of the Wasilla council members; spoke to the MSB funding proposal; noted the purpose was to discuss the funding inequities of the library system between the borough and the cities; thinks the bottom line is that the city will perpetually have to be the junior partner and be willing to pick up the difference or suffer the cuts, because there doesn't seem to be any long-term solution to library funding; and 4) commented that he today attended a packed Wasilla Chamber of Commerce meeting at which there was standing room only because our own Mayor Cooper was the speaker; said he did a great job.

Council member Hanson: also commended the Mayor for doing a great job in his speech about Palmer to the Wasilla Chamber.

Council member Combs: 1) thanked Attorney Snodgrass for his work on the Neighborhood Parks Ordinance, encouraged council members to familiarize themselves in order to discuss any changes at next meeting; noted in the meantime he hopes to get around town to identify possible areas for neighborhood parks; 2) suggested the council's budgeted discretionary fund as a source from which to reward our volunteer firefighters and public works people who went beyond the call of duty during the windstorm; requested an agenda item for next meeting to authorize a \$5,000 distribution for such purpose; agreed with Council member Pippel that it is an appropriate thing to do.

Chief Contini: responded re the requests for remuneration, stating he thinks it is wonderful that the council is willing to do something for the volunteers. He explained, however, that he would have a problem trying to figure out how to fairly distribute any amount of money for the simple reason that Palmer didn't do it alone, that there were a lot of people involved – Mutual Aid included Central Mat-Su, Butte, Alaska State Troopers, and Forestry; some people contributed hours, some contributed days. The Chief suggested instead that the council remember its generosity and supplement the Fire Department budget when he comes before it with the numbers.

Mayor Cooper: 1) thanked council members who attended the Wasilla Chamber meeting to lend support for his speech; thanked Council member Pippel for his suggestions for the content of the speech; relayed that he praised council members, telling the chamber members that they are doing a phenomenal job for the City of Palmer; 2) spoke to article in the Golf Digest congratulating the Palmer Golf Course on being Number 1 in Best in the State ranking for 2003-2004; 3) spoke to House Bill 216 on petroleum product tax; noted that the bill, as proposed, eliminates the option of the municipality to tax fuel and fuel-related products or tax products going outside the city; pointed out, in rough figures, that gas and its byproducts account for about 13% of the city's sales tax revenues, which is pretty substantial; noted at this point the bill is being held in abeyance until more information is received from the city; commented that he is hopeful that this portion of the bill will be removed; 4) encouraged attendance at the MSCVB 10th Annual Wine Tasting & Travel Auction on Saturday, April 12; see invitation in the packet.

Q. ADJOURNMENT: at 8:20 p.m.

For a signed copy – contact the City Clerk.