
City Council Minutes

City of Palmer, Alaska

Regular Meeting
December 9, 2003

A. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on December 9, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Pippel called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

B. ROLL CALL, DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

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

Ken Erbey	
Steve Carrington	Tony Pippel
John Combs	
Brad Hanson	

Also in attendance were the following:

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

C. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented.

D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Council Member Hanson.

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Unanimous consent – to approve the minutes of the 11-25-03 regular meeting.

F. CONSENT AGENDA

1. Introduction – Ordinance No. 610-Z-55: Ratifying the Recommendation of the City of Palmer Planning and Zoning Commission Concerning Requested Amendment to the Zoning Map By Petitioners to Rezone Alaska State Fair, Inc., Tax Parcels D-9/D-10

G. COMMUNICATIONS AND APPEARANCE REQUESTS

1. Russ Boatright, Chief of Police – Palmer Police Department
Chief Boatright reported on the following items:
 - The Department is currently wrapping up outstanding budget issues;
 - Officer Gipson has been hired and due to his extensive background, will receive a shortened training phase;

- Stated that he is hopeful that with the expected report from the Borough, dispatch issues will be resolved. Supplemental questionnaires have been sent to dispatch applicants and further testing will be administered within the week. Stated that there have been problems with equipment installation in the Wasilla dispatch center and expects the Palmer dispatch center to continue dispatching for Wasilla well into the New Year.

H. BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

J. HEARINGS, ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS

Item 1 – Public Hearing - Resolution No. 1326: Adopting a Budget for City of Palmer, Alaska for the Fiscal Year Beginning January 1, 2004 and Ending December 31, 2004 and Appropriating Monies

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To adopt resolution no. 1326 with the following fifteen amendments
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

City Manager Healy explained the resolution and the topics discussed during the previous budget work sessions. Discussion ensued regarding the minimum safety margin that should remain in the General Fund.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Pippel opened for public hearing resolution no. 1326. There were no members of the public to be heard.

The following fifteen amendments were made to resolution no. 1326 (each amendment was made and voted upon individually):

#	Amendment	Amount	Motioned by	2nd	Action
1	Borough Grant re: Visitor Center Addition of income and expense item Fund 08.	\$16,828	Hanson	Carrington	Unanimous
2	Solid Waste Fund reduction due to decreased costs for new garbage cans.	<\$45,000>	Hanson	Combs	Unanimous
3	Remove purchase of FAA surplus grader – reduce transfer from General Fund to Capital Projects Equipment Fund (09) by \$40,000 and reducing Fund Expenditure (09) by the same.	<\$40,000>	Combs	Carrington	Unanimous
4	Reduce transfer from General Fund to Capital Projects Fund (08) regarding airport street improvements to new lease lots for \$80,000, and reduce (08) Fund expenditures by same.	<\$80,000>	Combs	Carrington	Unanimous
5	Amend the following capital improvements in the Airport Enterprise Fund: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquire property for runway 9 RPZ from \$220,000 in draft budget to \$500,000. • Install security fencing from Arctic to Evergreen Ave., north to FSS from \$100,000 in draft budget, increase to \$160,000 requested. • Grader in draft budget – change from \$250,000 to \$240,000 • Addition of new item for improvements to new lease lots at airport, original amount of -0- included in the draft budget. The airport items listed above should be funded at 93.75% Federal, 3.125% State and 3.125 City funding.	\$280,000 \$60,000 <\$10,000> \$95,000	Hanson	Combs	Unanimous
6	Information Technology (IT) consultant – 70% charged to the General Fund, 30% Water and Sewer Fund and Garbage Fund.	\$45,000	Carrington	Hanson	Unanimous

7	Assistant to City Manager – full year split – 40% General Fund, 30% Water and Sewer Fund and 30% Airport Fund. Advertising costs to be split in the same percentages.	\$63,061 \$3,500	Hanson	Carrington	Unanimous		
8	Police Department Assistant (Evidence Custodian/Records Management)	\$45,628	Pippel	Carrington	Unanimous		
9	Janitor position - \$47,852 less \$24,960 currently paid to the janitorial service – charged to General Fund	\$22,892	Combs	Hanson	Unanimous		
10	Additional seasonal worker – charged to General Fund Parks and Recreation expenditures	\$8,800	Pippel	Hanson	Unanimous		
11	Pay schedule revision of approximately \$120,000 to be spread through all applicable funds.	\$120,000	Pippel	Combs	Unanimous		
12	General Fund (01) transfer of \$50,000 to Capital Project Fund (08) and amend (08) as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park improvements expenditures from \$19,581 to \$39,581 - \$19,581 funded from existing proceeds transferred in fiscal year 2003, additional \$20,000 transferred in year 2004. • Bike Path/Pedestrian Walkway expenditures from \$20,600 to \$50,600 - \$20,600 funded from existing proceeds transferred in fiscal year 2003, additional \$30,000 transferred in year 2004. 	\$20,000	Combs	Hanson	Unanimous		
		\$30,000					
13	General Fund (01) transfer of \$50,000 to Capital Projects – Equipment Fund (09) and add an additional expenditure of \$150,000 for new sweeper for Public Works to be funded as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund (01) transfer of \$50,000 in 2004 to Capital Projects – Equipment (09) and \$100,000 to be funded by existing proceeds in Fund (09) from prior years. 	\$150,000	Pippel	Hanson	Unanimous		
14	Removal of the following capital improvements from the Golf Course Fund in order to leave at least \$50,000 cash for future contingencies and/or shortfall of future G.O. bond payments (principal and interest):		Carrington	Combs	Unanimous		
	Utility Vehicle					\$10,000	change to -0-
	Parking lot paving					\$30,000	change to -0-
	Rap cart paths					\$10,000	change to -0-
15	Medical premium reduction spread through all funds.	<\$72,000>	Pippel	Hanson	Unanimous		

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
----------------------	---

Item 2 – Public Hearing – Ordinance No. 608: Amending Section 17.80.025 (Report by Commission) of Chapter 17.80 (Amendments) of Title 17 (Zoning) of the Palmer Municipal Code

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To adopt ordinance no. 608 as amended
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

Mayor Pro-Tempore Pippel opened for public hearing ordinance no. 608. There were no members of the public to be heard.

Discussion ensued regarding the memo written by Council Member Combs.

M/M by Carrington to amend number 5 to read as follows: “The proposed change is consistent with the public welfare and does not grant a special privilege to the owner(s)”.

Seconded by Combs. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
----------------------	---

Item 3 – Resolution No. 1329: Accepting a Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant from the Alaska Department of Natural Resources

Removed at the meeting – the grant has been designated for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Item 4 – Resolution No. 1330: Establishing a Garbage Utility Rate for Large Volume Refuse Containers

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To adopt resolution no. 1330
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

City Manager Healy explained the resolution and the current lack of a large volume refuse container service rate. Discussion ensued regarding the process of large volume container service and the required equipment to provide the service.

Rick Koch, Public Works Superintendent explained the financial responsibility and provisions of the service and the provisions of the service.

Discussion ensued regarding service in the City of Palmer exclusive area and the opinion of the City's RCA attorney.

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
-----------------	---

K. BIDS

Item 1 – Snow Removal Services

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To accept the bids from Alco Construction, Skookum Construction and World Paving and award the contract to Alco Construction for an amount of \$625 per plowing event
SECONDED BY:	Hanson	

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
-----------------	---

L. OLD BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1 – Set Public Hearing for January 13, 2004, on Alaska State Fair Request to Consider a Zoning Map Amendment for Tax Parcel D-8

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To set a public hearing for January 13, 2004, on Alaska State Fair request to consider a zoning map amendment for tax parcel D-8
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

City Manager Healy explained the public hearing procedures and the proposed zoning map amendment. Discussion ensued regarding time frames and the proposed property.

Discussion regarding the need to adopt a transitional use ordinance, reclamation, conditional use process and appeal process followed. The council requested that the manager and attorney draft an ordinance to revise the code to allow the council to become part of the appeal process.

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
-----------------	---

Item 2 – Authorize City Manager to Approve an Easement to Matanuska Telephone Association on E. Outer Springer Loop

MOVED BY:	Combs	To authorize the City Manager to approve an easement to Matanuska Telephone Association (MTA) on E. Outer Springer Loop subject to reasonable conditions determined by the City Manager
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

With the confirmation of council, Council Member Hanson recused himself from the issue.

City Manager Healy explained the request by MTA. Discussion ensued regarding planned activities by the City of Palmer and relocation of utilities.

M/M by Pippel to add the language: “subject to the reasonable conditions to be determined by the City Manager”. Attorney Snodgrass explained the requested amendment.

Seconded by Combs. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
----------------------	---

Item 3 – Authorize City Manager to Amend Agreement with Robert Stoller to Include Legal Assistance for Water, Sewer and Refuse Utilities, and to Remove the Not-to-Exceed Cost Limit

MOVED BY:	Carrington	To authorize the City Manager to amend the agreement with Robert Stoller to include legal assistance for water, sewer and refuse utilities and to remove the not-to-exceed cost limit
SECONDED BY:	Combs	

VOTE ON MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
-----------------	---

Item 4 – Authorize City Manager to Enter Into a Professional Services Agreement with Honchen & Uhlenkott, Inc., for Utility Service Area Consulting Services

MOVED BY:	Hanson	To authorize the City Manager to enter into a professional services agreement with Honchen & Uhlenkott, Inc., for utility service area consulting services not to exceed \$10,000
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

City Manager Healy explained that Honchen & Uhlenkott, Inc. is experienced in rate setting. City Manager Healy stated that a deficiency was identified in an assessment completed by the Department of Environmental Conservation for Palmer utilities because a rate setting process had not been completed. The study would also provide the Triad Corporation the assurance of fair rate setting procedures.

M/M by Council Member Pippel to add the language, “not to exceed \$10,000.”

Seconded by Hanson. Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
----------------------	---

Item 5 – Ice Arena Selection

MOVED BY:	Combs	To select A-2 Patterson as the site for the Palmer Ice Arena
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

City Manager Healy explained the agenda item. Discussion ensued regarding site selection before identification of a project budget.

City Manager Healy explained possible funding options and the phases of the project.

Rick Koch, Public Works Superintendent explained the costs of the phases and stated that the City currently has funding “in hand” for phase one. Mr. Koch further stated that the building would not house all amenities during phase one. Mr. Koch expanded on the costs for improvements on the building sites.

Discussion ensued regarding the possible sites and the accessibility of each site.

Discussion followed regarding bond monies and the designation of the bond funds. Stated was the need to focus on the ice arena project and in doing so, meet the desire of the voters.

Discussion regarding the total cost of the project and applications that will be made to outside funding sources followed.

VOTE ON MAIN MOTION:	Motion carried by 4 – 1 (Pippel) voice vote.
----------------------	--

N. CITY MANAGER’S REPORT

City Manager Healy reported on the following items:

- Triad Hospital’s joint venture was finalized on December 1, 2003;
- Highlighted the map of the utility contested and uncontested service areas and explained the areas granted to the City of Wasilla, stated that the pre-hearing conference would be held on January 21, 2004;
- Highlighted the federal appropriations bill passed; and
- Explained the reduction of the medical insurance premiums and stated that the health trust is healthy.

O. CITY CLERK’S REPORT

P. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Joe Lawton – State Fair

Mr. Lawton stated that the disputed gravel pit has been in operation for 20 years. Mr. Lawton addressed the concerns of extending the process to reach a decision on the State Fair’s request to rezone the property.

Q. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Combs complimented Mayor Pro-Tempore on the excellent job of officiating the meeting and stated that City Manager Healy did an excellent job with the wage study. Council Member Combs further stated that the council did a good job selecting the City Clerk and the public works department has been doing an excellent job during this winter season.

Council Member Hanson stated that the ice arena is a reality and asked that the administration identify additional funding sources for completion of the project.

Council Member Carrington announced that he will be on vacation during the December 23, 2003, city council meeting.

Council Member Pippel requested that the City Manager begin advertising for the Assistant to the City Manager. Council Member Pippel stated that he enjoyed the City of Palmer Christmas party and recommended that all council members attend next year. Thanked the council for all of their effort in the budget process and stated that the council reached a balance in meeting all municipal services.

Council Member Erbey had no comment.

Council Member Vanover was not in attendance.

Mayor Cooper was not in attendance.

S. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 9:56 pm.

APPROVED THIS 23rd day of December 2003.

For a signed copy – contact the City Clerk