
City Council Minutes

City of Palmer, Alaska

Regular Meeting
August 12, 2003

A. CALL TO ORDER

A regular meeting of the Palmer City Council was held on August 12, 2003, at 7:00 p.m. in the council chambers, Palmer, Alaska.

Mayor Cooper 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:

Jim Cooper	Brian Fish
Steve Carrington	Tony Pippel
Kathrine Vanover	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

Motion carried by unanimous consent to approve the agenda with the following amendments:

Addition of item G.1. – Allan Ossakow, City of Palmer Finance Director
Deletion of item M. 3. – Ratify Professional Services Agreement Regarding
Application for Utility Service Area Expansion

D. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

E. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

MOVED BY:	Combs	To approve the amended minutes of the 7-22-03 regular meeting
SECONDED BY:	Hansen	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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MOVED BY:	Combs	To approve the minutes of the 7-28-03 special meeting
SECONDED BY:	Carrington	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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F. CONSENT AGENDA

G. COMMUNICATIONS AND APPEARANCE REQUESTS

1. Jessie DeVries – Handicap access within Palmer

Ms. DeVries explained that she has lived in Palmer for many years and has recently become handicapped and in a wheelchair. Ms. DeVries has observed areas throughout Palmer that are hazardous to travel in her wheelchair. It has come to her attention the sidewalk conditions. Many have been worn to gravel with cracks and elevation differences. She explained that it is easier for her to operate in the roads but doing so is unsafe. Ms. DeVries has also found it difficult when making the transition from roads that are constructed of gravel on to those of pavement. She stated that she has attempted to cross the railroad tracks and has almost tipped over doing so. Ms. DeVries explained that many businesses are not equipped with handicap doors and expressed her desire to bring these matters to the council's attention.

Discussion and questions from council followed. It was suggested that Ms. DeVries write down the areas that are damaged and forward the list to the City Manager, so that he may address the issue.

2. Allan Ossakow – City of Palmer Finance Director

Mr. Ossakow explained the Finance Department to be extremely busy. Recently the Department has hired a new accounting clerk and a temporary receptionist will begin next week. Mr. Ossakow is preparing for the State Fair and will be collecting sales tax from those vendors who are in arrears.

Discussion and questions from council followed regarding the amount of vendors who do not pay their sales taxes in a timely manner and measures taken to eliminate the issue.

Discussion ensued regarding the implementation of customers who wish to pay their utility bills with credit cards. Mr. Ossakow reported that due to GASB 34 compliance measures and the need to update current software, implementation is not possible at this time.

H. BOROUGH REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

I. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Ken Erbey – City of Palmer Council Candidate

Mr. Erbey introduced himself to the council and stated that he has been a member of the community for 26 years. He stated that with the exception of the Football Board, he has never held a public office. Mr. Erbey said that it is his desire to contribute to the community and it is his vision for the community to see responsible growth.

2. David Lundeen – HDL Engineer

Mr. Lundeen gave a status report on the following projects:

- Waste water treatment facility – the equipment storage building, fencing and the foundation have been installed and completion is slated for November.
- Headworks is operating, although there has been a problem with the metering.
- Lift Station Phase II will begin on August 13, 2003.
- Eagle and Gulkana were paved on August 12, 2003. Curb/ramp and driveway work will be continuing.
- Work on Valley Way is on schedule.
- Contractors on Evergreen Street accomplished 2 days of work in 1 day. Water pipe installation will begin on August 13, 2003. It is expected that the section from the Glenn Hwy. to the alley will be completed in two and a half weeks.
- The airport work has been completed.
- Waterline loop has been completed.

Discussion ensued regarding homeowner inaccessibility on North Valley Way and the desire for more notification and accessibility be provided on all future projects.

J. HEARINGS, ORDINANCE AND RESOLUTIONS

Item 1 – Resolution No. 1314 – Amending the City of Palmer Fiscal Year 2003 Budget

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To adopt resolution no. 1314
SECONDED BY:	Fish	

Allan Ossakow, Finance Director explained the purpose of the resolution and the funds received from the State of Alaska.

Discussion ensued regarding the added staffing level to the Library. Concerns were presented regarding the matter in which the item was presented in the resolution. It was suggested that when changes in staffing levels are requested that a presentation be made to council.

Discussion followed regarding the Tsunami Warning Center building, water meters and seizure funds.

Mr. Ossakow explained the Ice Rink Enterprise fund and the process of establishing the fund. For clarification, Council requested total columns be added to further resolutions.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 2 – Resolution No. 1315: Accepting a Grant of \$147,172 from the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, For the Acquisition of Snow Removal Equipment for the Palmer Municipal Airport

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To adopt resolution no. 1315
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 3 – Resolution No. 1316: Accepting a Grant of \$61,795 from the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for Palmer Municipal Airport the Phase II Taxiway Construction and Runway Improvements Project

MOVED BY:	Pippel	To adopt resolution no. 1316
SECONDED BY:	Fish	

City Manager Healy explained the State share and Rick Koch’s work on the project.

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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K. BIDS

L. OLD BUSINESS

M. NEW BUSINESS

Item 1 – Grant Request from STOP Overpopulation of Pets, Inc.

Mayor Cooper explained the grant request of \$5,000 from STOP Overpopulation of Pets, Inc. and the purposes of the money.

Council Member Pippel requested information on City of Palmer’s animal control powers and stated that the City of Palmer does not have the task of ensuring that animals be spayed and neutered.

Discussion ensued regarding the budget line item of \$3,500 for animal control, Wasilla's animal control and the City of Palmer's police officers completing animal control for Palmer.

MOVED BY:	Combs	To postpone the Stop Overpopulation of Pets, Inc. request of \$5,000 to the 2004 budget cycle
SECONDED BY:	Vanover	

VOTE ON MOTION	Motion carried by unanimous voice vote.
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Item 2 – Discussion of Offer to Trade Property – Tract A-2, Patterson Subdivision

Mayor Cooper gave an overview of the property trade offer.

City Manager Healy explained the land value and encumbrances of the property. He stated that an appraisal would be required and the appropriateness of the City of Palmer and LDGJ splitting the cost of the appraisal. City Manager Healy stated his interest of receiving a proposal from LDGJ with added development costs.

Discussion ensued regarding the possible uses for the property including locations for soccer fields and the ice arena. Also discussed were the development costs that have already been expended on the City's portion of the property.

Council direction –City Manager Healy consider the viable options of the property and to judge if the offer to trade property is in the City's best interest.

Item 3 – Ratify Professional Services Agreement Regarding Application for Utility Service Area Expansion – removed from agenda by council

Item 4 – Discussion of City of Palmer Building Needs

Mayor Cooper explained the reason for the discussion item and stated the necessity of the City to look at viable options for more office space for increased levels of staffing.

Council Member Carrington encouraged the council that when considering options, to identify the communication and technology needs and the infrastructure that will need to be accommodated to meet those needs.

Council Member Pippel stated the appropriateness of Council to consider the need for library expansion, the needs of the Fire Hall, golf course and the need for office space in City Hall. He further stated that specific needs are driven by funding sources and all options should be considered. He also spoke of the importance of public monuments, whereas the City Hall building is important as a monument, it is could be equally as important as commercial property.

Council Member Combs reiterated the need of the City buildings. He stated that a plan should be put into place to identify priorities.

City Manager Healy stated that he would begin an informal audit to identify needs and would review the budget for funding identification.

Discussion ensued regarding the funding sources and grant options.

N. CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Manager Healy highlighted the following items from his written report:

- Well house expansion

- Glenn Highway intersection expansion
- Valley Hospital
- The extension granted to the City of Palmer by the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA) for additional comments and the intention of the City of Palmer to submit a competing application.
- Large Retail Establishment Ordinance
- The Variance Ordinance which has been reviewed by the Planning and Zoning Commission
- The current Wage Study
- Woods Air Service remediation
- Annexation – the necessity to update the Comprehensive Plan and Utility Plan
- Vacation – Out of the office the week of August 25, 2003

Discussion ensued regarding the letter written by City Manager Healy to John Duffy, Matanuska-Susitna Borough City Manager regarding the “Proposed Triad/Valley Hospital Water and Sewer Service Study” and the completed analysis.

O. CITY CLERK’S REPORT

Janette Persinger, City Clerk highlighted the following items from her written report:

- The Clerk’s Institute held in Seattle.
- The status of identification of voters in the annexed area by the Division of Elections.

P. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

1. Angela Brister: Senator Ogan’s Office

Ms. Brister introduced herself to council and stated that as an aid in Senator Ogan’s office she has been attending council and assembly meetings on behalf of the Senator. Ms.

Brister stated that as time permits, she will be attending City of Palmer Council meetings.

Q. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Vanover thanked Mr. Ossakow for his presentation and stated her readiness for the Eagle St. project to be completed. She commented on the Pioneer Home and the need for the facility to remain as the Pioneer Home and not a Veteran’s Home. She gave the City a newspaper from 1951 which she found at the School District Office regarding sales tax.

Council Member Carrington commented on the manner in which the Council packet was presented and stated that he would try using the binder and would have additional feedback at a later date.

Council Member Fish stated his agreement with proposed annexation boundaries and encouraged the City to move forward. He suggested that a preliminary plan be made for the ice rink facility and City Hall building.

Council Member Hanson expressed his discouragement over the removal of Chugach St. from the list of projects to be completed this year and suggested that as contracts are being awarded for road improvements that greater consideration be given to homeowner accessibility. Council Member Hanson voiced his support of further annexation and stated his concern over utility costs and needed revenue sources and suggested that Council re-evaluate the additional costs. Council Member Hanson stated that he was discouraged to discover that during the completion of the

Wage Study, the organizational and job description portion has been minimized. He thanked Mr. Ossakow for his presentation.

Council Member Pippel commented on the costs of the annexation study and the status of the Veteran's Home. He stated that Senator Murkowski would be in Palmer to address the issue of a Veteran's Home and requested a tour of the sewer facility. Council Member Pippel suggested that Senator Murkowski be given a tour of the sewer facility and further suggested that an invitation be extended to reporters and to the Triad Corporation as well.

Council Member Combs stated that he believed that the Wage Study would include job descriptions. He commented on the annexation issue, stating that it is necessary to have a long range plan for providing utilities to those in the proposed annexation areas but believes that although it is not possible to complete the task immediately, it is feasible to establish priorities.

Requested by Council Member Combs and second request made by Council Member Pippel to place a resolution on the August 26, 2003 agenda asking that a unified trademarked slogan for the City of Palmer be adopted and be used on all correspondence, used in promotion and utilized with the official seal.

Mayor Cooper stated that he was pleased that Angela from Senator Ogan's office was in attendance and announced that Congressman Young would be meeting with the City of Palmer on Friday, August 15, 2003 at 9:45 a.m. Mayor Cooper read a card from Darlene Patrini, the recipient of the 2003 Good Neighbor Award. He highlighted a flyer regarding an upcoming leukemia and lymphoma fundraiser to be held on September 12, 2003. Mayor Cooper gave a overview of a meeting that he attended regarding the Veteran's Home and stated that the City Manager's evaluation is due in September and will be placing the item on the agenda for the September 9, 2003 meeting. He further stated that he will be leaving for one week to Seattle and read a portion of a letter from a citizen requesting that when the ice rink facility is built that a shuffleboard course be added to the facility.

R. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 10:27 pm.

APPROVED THIS 26th day of August 2003.

For a signed copy – contact the City Clerk.