

Call to order

The January 28, 2002, regular meeting of the Seward City Council was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Mayor Edgar Blatchford.

Opening ceremony

Chief Chapman led the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Roll call

There were present:

Edgar Blatchford presiding, and	
Margaret Branson	David Brossow
Michael Calhoon	Stu Clark
Vanta Shafer	

comprising a quorum of the Council; and

Scott Janke, City Manager
Patrick Reilly, City Clerk
Christy Terry, Assistant City Clerk

Absent

Nathan Orr

Special orders, presentations and reports

Seward Teen Youth Councils: Teen Council, Junior Council & Youth Council: The Teen Council, Junior Council, and Youth Council presented the City Council with tee shirts and the City Council presented the TYC Councils with City of Seward pins. The following TYC Council Members were in attendance: Dane Melvin, Adam Wilkie, Chris Monier, Kylee Adelman, Tyler Armstrong, Cody Kelsoe, Bridget Burks, Caleb Adelman, Pattie Reimer, Michelle Buchanan, Julie Broughton, Tyler Haddow, Lee Yoo, Jennifer Glover, McKenna Larson, and Jennifer Anthony.

Borough Assembly Report. None.

City Manager's Report. **City Manager Scott Janke**, noted that this week there was a International Education Program called the Jason Project at the SeaLife Center. He reminded the Council they had been invited to a luncheon for the program on Saturday February 2.

Janke outlined for the Council the topics he covered in Juneau with the legislators. These topics included: healthcare, Spring Creek expansion, Marine Highway, Jesse Lee Home, and the

QNT Shellfish Hatchery. Janke hoped this would lay the foundation for the February 20 Juneau Legislative Reception.

He noted that the Yukon Fuel Project was still moving forward. On his return to Anchorage Janke met with the President of the Alaska Railroad to discuss on-going Seward issues such as: the lease site for Yukon Fuel and the downsizing of the amount of coal going to Korea.

Janke stated that during late February or early March there would be a town meeting on the North Forest Acre Levee that would include the regulatory agencies.

He mentioned working with DOT to limit delays on the 4th and Port Avenue project so that construction could begin this summer.

Janke noted that a Town Meeting needed to be set to discuss Resolution 2002-009, authorizing the City Manager to enter into Amendment No. 1 to the Lease and Operating Agreement between the City of Seward and the Sisters of Providence in Washington d/b/a Providence Alaska Medical Center by amending the termination notice from 24 months to 12 months and providing for operational losses above \$600,000 to be reimbursed by the City. The Town Meeting would be held at the Alaska SeaLife Center on the 13, 14, or 15. After discussion the City Manager was **directed to schedule the meeting for February 13.**

Janke informed the Council that he would be presenting Seward's Legislative Priorities to the Kenai Peninsula Borough on February 5 in Soldotna.

Janke concluded by inviting the Council to lunch with the two perspective City Engineers on February 4 and February 8. He had also invited the local private construction companies.

In response to Shafer's question, Janke stated that the repairs to Generator #4 were completed two weeks ahead of schedule. The Generator was moved to its site last week and would take a few days to get on-line. He clarified that Valley Detroit Diesel was still working on a suggested maintenance schedule and a list of appropriate spare parts and tools.

Other Reports, Announcements and Presentations.

Planning and Zoning Commission Applicant Jean A. Lewis.

Jean Lewis, 308 6th Avenue, stated she was here to discuss her application for the Planning and Zoning Commission. Lewis introduced herself by saying she was a 34 year Sewardite with 17 years experience working for the Alaska Court system and prior State jobs with Fish and Game and Job Service. Lewis stated that her children were raised and she now had time to devote to the Planning and Zoning Commission. She expressed her interest in the subject of planning and zoning.

Citizens' comments on agenda items not scheduled for public hearing and items other than those appearing on the agenda.

Flip Foldager, 34045 Johnston Road, spoke on Resolution 2002-010, which proposed a co-payment rate for the employees' health plan contributions. He noted that the co-payment was quite a lot of money to take out of employee paychecks, especially after the other policy changes included more out of pocket expenses. Foldager encouraged the Council to closely review the subject.

Norm Regis, 11484 Eagle Lane, spoke on Resolution 2002-010. He felt there must be alternate health insurance at a lower cost to the City and the City Employees.

Jim Collman, 609 4th Avenue, spoke on Planning and Zoning Resolution 2002-01, and objected to a private dock in Seward's public harbor. Collman noted that if this was allowed privatization would continue. He then spoke regarding Resolution 2002-010 and stated that hourly wage earners experienced an inequality with the exempt employees because everyone had the same amount taken out of their paycheck for health insurance costs.

Kari Atwood, 2506 Cedar Street, asked the Council to make sure the health care coverage purchased by the City was worth the cost.

Robin Collman, Mile 6.5 Lake Drive, asked the Council to table the health insurance issue until more questions were answered during a work session.

Approval of agenda and consent agenda

Motion (Clark/Shaffer) Approve the agenda and consent agenda

Council added under Other New Business a verbal report from Kenai Peninsula Economic Development Representative Council Member Vanta Shafer.

Motion passed as Amended Unanimous

The Clerk read the following approved consent agenda items:

November 5, 14, 19, 26, December 10 and January 14 meeting minutes.

Non-objection to liquor license renewals for the Breeze Inn, Crab Pot, Harbor Dinner Club and Thorns Showcase Lounge.

Appointing Jean A. Lewis to fill a vacated seat on the Planning and Zoning Commission whose term will expire in February 2004.

Public hearings

Ordinance 2002-01, revising Seward City Code Section 3.60.025(A)(3), to allow for per diem (meal allowance) for travel on official business.

Notice of the public hearing being posted and published as required by law was noted and the public hearing was opened. No one appeared to address the Council and the public hearing was closed.

Motion (Clark/Branson)

Approve Ordinance 2002-01

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Unfinished business

Resolution 2002-006, supporting and urging approval of a \$500,000 Federal Funding request for the City of Kenai to fully equip and implement the Emergency Operations Center located in Kenai.

Following an introduction from Janke, **Fire Chief David Squires** stated that the City should support the City of Kenai's request because it would provide additional training opportunities in the Seward area. This would allow the City to recall staff getting trained in Kenai in the case of a local emergency. The current training location required employees to travel out of the state. He clarified that he would not recommend the Council support any resolutions making this the primary Emergency Operations Center for the Borough.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

New business

Resolution 2002-010, appropriating \$70,688 to cover the increase in health plan contributions for the Calendar Year 2002 Budget and establishing a City Employee co-payment rate for health plan contributions.

Motion (Brossow/Clark)

Approve Resolution 2002-010

Janke noted that insurance rates were rising astronomically. He reviewed the contract the City had with Willis of Alaska, Inc. Willis was unable to successfully secure a bid for the City's health plan. Janke outlined the changes in the policy the City was willing to review, but stated that these did not reduce the cost of the monthly premium. He stated the short fall in the budget was due to the fact the City budgeted for a predicted 15% increase, but the increase was actually 35%. Janke stated he had met with employees and no one was happy about an employee co-payment, but Janke noted the City could revisit this cost on a yearly basis and adjust the co-payment portion as necessary.

In response to Clark, **Director of Administrative Services Rick Gifford** stated it could be possible for the City to provide employees with only major medical, but they had asked Willis to solicit proposals for comparable insurance coverage. He noted that Willis had not received any proposals due to the high claim history the City had in recent years.

Brossow felt that not every insurance agency was contacted and not every avenue was investigated.

In response to Shafer, Janke stated that the 35% increase was due in part to the fact that APUIT had been holding the down the rate increases in previous years. Also 20% of the increase was due to Seward's experience rate.

Shafer noted her discomfort with asking the employees to start paying on such short notice and supported the issue being postponed.

Blatchford supported a postponement until after a work session.

After Council discussion it was **unanimously decided to hold a work session on the City Employees' Health Insurance Plan on Tuesday, February 5th.**

Amendment (Clark/Blatchford)

Postpone Resolution 2002-010 to the February 11, 2002 City Council Meeting

Amendment Passed

Unanimous

Resolution 2002-011, authorizing for disposal by negotiated sale, Lot 2, Block 1, Fourth of July Creek Subdivision, Seward Marine Industrial Center for no less than appraised fair market value, and authorizing negotiation of a connected easement.

Motion (Clark/Calhoon)

Approve Resolution 2002-011

Planner Rachel James stated the City had received this request to purchase this lease site. She noted that assessed land values had decreased significantly in this area. James reported that the request for a utility easement would have to be negotiated as part of the sale. She clarified that this would come back to Council for a Public Hearing and final approval of sale.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Resolution 2002-012, accepting a historic preservation fund grant in the amount of \$5,000 from the State of Alaska, State Historic Preservation Office, to complete an environmental assessment of the Jesse Lee Home property.

Motion (Brossow/Clark)

Approve Resolution 2002-012

Janke stated that Representative Ken Lancaster had worked on getting this grant for the City. Janke noted that the local match funds were minor and were rolled into the General Fund from monies set aside in last year's budget.

Motion Passed

Unanimous

Council took a ten-minute break beginning at 8:50 p.m.

Resolution 2002-014, authorizing the City Manager to negotiate the acquisition of U.S.S. 1931, approximately 30 acres of property generally located behind Two Lakes Park, on Marathon Mountain for City Park purposes.

Motion (Calhoon/Shافر)

Approve Resolution 2002-014

James directed the Council's attention to the letter written by Ken Allen requesting the City acquire U.S.S. 1931. She outlined the recommendations to acquire this land in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, Municipal Land Management Plan, and the Strategic Plan. James clarified that the trail encroachment had been solved this summer when the Boy Scouts developed on new trail on City property. James noted that the Planning and Zoning Commission had suggested looking for grants and other sources of funding to acquire this property.

In response to Shafer, James stated that the old evacuation route was wider and more accessible.

Clark spoke in opposition to Resolution 2002-014 because of budget constraints.

Shafer noted her desire to have a reliable evacuation route and requested funding sources be explored.

Branson questioned the property's value.

Blatchford noted the property's historical value, but was unable to support the resolution due to funding constraints.

Motion Failed

Unanimous

The Charter Option, LLC appeal of Planning and Zoning Resolution 2002-01 set for February 12, at noon.

City Clerk Patrick Reilly reviewed the Notice of Board of Adjustment Hearing provided in the packet. He noted that the parties had been notified and had all originally agreed to the time and date. Paul Carter later requested to postpone the hearing to another day later in the week.

Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District Representative Report. Council Member Vanta Shafer stated that James Carter was the new director of the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District. Shafer noted that Carter was very familiar with Seward's side of the Peninsula. Shafer stated that options were available to have workshops in Seward addressing future economic plans.

Informational items and reports

Department Monthly Reports.

Kenai Peninsula Borough Resolution 2002-010, authorizing the rental of office space in Seward for a branch borough office.

4th and Adams Street Park design.

Clark noted a conflict of interest because his wife, Carol Chaudiere, was employed by Wm J. Nelson & Associates. He also noted he worked on the computer graphics for some of the schematics.

Janke stated he was looking for Council's agreement in moving forward with the concept plans.

Carol Chaudiere, Landscape Designer, noted a few changes to the approved 4th and Adams Park design plan and how they had been incorporated. Chaudiere distributed the design plans and displayed a poster-sized rendition.

Branson noted her displeasure at the restrooms being located at the extreme Northwest corner of the lot because of its proximity to the restaurant next door.

Council agreed with the administration in moving forward with the bidding procedures for the landscaping of the Park.

Council comments

Brossow thanked everyone that spoke on Resolution 2002-010. He also thanked the staff working on solving the health insurance issue.

Clark complimented the Teen Center for their activities throughout the year. He also thanked Jean Lewis for her application and subsequent appointment to the Planning and Zoning Commission. He noted that he would be at the Legislative Reception in Juneau on February 20.

Calhoon welcomed Jean Lewis to the Planning and Zoning Commission. He stated that 50 feet worth of hair was donated, including his own during the Polar Bear Weekend to the Locks of Love charity event. Calhoon would be out of Seward from February 26 to March 12.

Branson encouraged everyone to watch the JASON Project on channel 20. She thanked the Teen Center for her tee shirt and noted that Mayor Blatchford was a former President of the Teen Council. She expressed her pleasure with Jean Lewis' appointment to Planning and Zoning.

Blatchford stated that Polar Bear Weekend was very busy and he enjoyed being a judge at the Furry Flurry. He shared that the Vice-Mayor had entered his family dogs and they were good sports.

Public comments

Carol Chaudiere, 1129 Cliff View Place, supported naming the 4th and Adams Street Park after the Phoenix. She noted the many nautical themes that could be incorporated into the design.

Randy McFarland, Mile 6.5, expressed his frustration with waiting for a slip in the Harbor for many years and then because of miscommunication he didn't pick up his certified letter informing him he was at the top of the list. McFarland then lost his placement and was moved to the bottom of the list. He would have liked a phone call.

Bob Valdetta, 528 5th Avenue, noted his appreciation for the Economic Development District Board of Directors and stated he had been trying to get them to focus on Seward for the past 20 years.

Jim Collman, 609 4th Avenue, stated that City employees did not get free health benefits, but worked for them as part of their salary package. He stressed that he would like City employees to not have to worry about health issues so they could keep their minds on their job to serve the public.

Council and administration response to citizens' comments

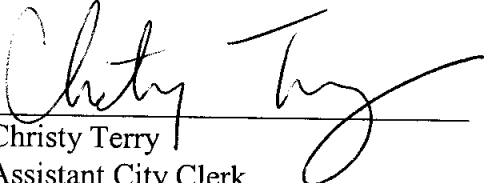
Clark noted he would be out of town for the February 11 City Council Meeting.

Janke noted that this year's Polar Bear Jump was mentioned on the Home and Garden Channel.

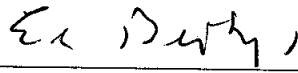
Calhoon requested Randy McFarland verify his contact number with the City. He also clarified that about 250 dollars was taken out of his wife's State of Alaska paycheck for health insurance.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.



Christy Terry
Assistant City Clerk



Edgar Blatchford
Mayor

(City Seal)

