

Bear Valley Community Council
Minutes – March 8, 2023

Call to Order, Announcements and Introductions

The regularly-scheduled March 8, 2023 meeting of the Bear Valley Community Council (BVCC) was called to order by Council Chair Cheri Lipps at 7:05 pm. The meeting was held via Zoom videoconference. Chair Lipps announced a quorum of nine community council members present along with a number of guests.

Legislative, Assembly, School Board and JBER Updates

South Anchorage Assembly member and Chair Suzanne LaFrance was represented by her staff member, Kurt Parkan. Mr. Parkan provided an update on pothole repair and urged citizens to report potholes via the MOA “hotline” at 907-343-MEND. He reported that the Assembly approved a 160-hour Parental Leave Benefit applicable to MOA employees that are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement. Mr. Parkan also reported on the status of the Port Modernization Program for the Port of Alaska, stating that the Assembly and the MOA are lobbying the state legislature for additional funding. He stressed that no property tax funds were being applied to the Port, as it is self supporting through an enterprise fund. The next Assembly meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 21, 2023.

State Senator and Senate President Cathy Giessel provided her legislative report and reminded attendees that her weekly newsletter would be coming out the following day (Thursday.) She advised that the legislature is actively working on increasing educational funding and also discussed Gov. Dunleavy’s carbon offset and carbon sequestration bills. Sen. Giessel reported that she has sponsored a bill for a new defined benefit retirement plan for state and municipal employees and stated that the legislature has received many reports that the public sector is experiencing significant difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees due to the existing non-competitive benefits package.

Anchorage School Board member Andy Holleman was unable to attend, as he was participating in another conflicting meeting. JBER Liaison Joy Boston has a recurring Wednesday evening schedule conflict this spring and was unable to attend.

Guest Speakers

Chair Lipps introduced Anchorage Fire Department Captain Herman of the Rabbit Creek Fire Station as guest speaker. Captain Herman stated there are two bond proposals on the April municipal ballot that pertain to AFD and urged votes in favor of each: A fire protection capital improvement bond and a general public safety bond. Taken together, these are intended to fund upgrades to the APD and AFD radio network, the construction of new fire-breaks on the Anchorage Hillside, and AFD training in urban / wildland fire suppression. Capt. Herman urged attendees to review portions of the MOA strategic plan relevant to fire prevention and suppression issues, found at www.muni.org/departments/fire. Capt. Herman echoed the statements by Sen. Giessel and said that AFD is having issues with recruiting and retaining staff due to non-competitive benefits available to public-sector employees. He also discussed the “pulse point” smartphone app, which he stated provides users with alerts for AFD operations as well as potential CPR response needs in a user’s area.

The second guest speaker introduced herself as Amanda from the Girl Scouts of Alaska. Amanda spoke enthusiastically of the benefits of the Girls Scouts program, stating that 90% of female astronauts and 78% of female US Senators were former girl scouts. Amanda discussed the 6th grade girl scout troops at Bear Valley Elementary School and Goldenview Elementary, stating that roughly 174 girls in south Anchorage are active participants in girl scout programs. She urged community support for the Girl Scouts of Alaska through cookie purchases

throughout the month of March, and said that the scouts are happy to become involved in community projects. Amanda also described the Girl Scouts “Empower Her” digital fundraising program, which assists with the cost of sending girl scouts to summer camp.

The next guest was Roger Marks with the Glen Alps Road Service Area. Mr. Marks discussed Ballot Measure 6, a proposal for the creation of a Chugach State Park Access road service area. He described the purpose of the measure as providing a funding mechanism for LRSAs that have roads that provide park access to the general public but do not receive any additional funding for the increased road wear-and-tear, and referenced the Glen Alps and Rabbit Creek trailheads as examples. Mr. Marks urged a vote in favor of the proposal. BVCC member Conni Livsey mentioned that she has yard signs in favor of Measure 6 if anyone would like one.

Assembly Candidate Zac Johnson introduced himself and stated that he is running for the South Anchorage Assembly seat being vacated by Ms. LaFrance, who is not running for re-election. Mr. Johnson provided an overview of his public service background and his goals for serving on the Assembly.

Although previously announced, there was no guest speaker from the Revive Alaska organization.

BVCC Officer and Committee Reports

BVCC Treasurer Angie Pinsonneault provided her report, stating that the BVCC checking account remains at approximately \$900. She is working with Alaska USA FCU to have the \$5 monthly account fee waived (and prior fees reversed) since we are a non-profit organization.

BVCC Vice Chair Kaitlyn Jackson reported on the monthly Federation of Community Councils (FCC) meeting, stating that there were no new items relevant to the BVCC. BVCC member Walter Yankauskas provided a brief report on the meetings and ongoing activities Firewise program. BVCC Chair Cheri Lipps announced that John Butler of the Anchorage Police Department hoped to attend BVCC meetings beginning in April.

LRSA Updates

There were brief reports from our two LRSAs. BV LRSA Chair Bill Ennis said he remains pleased with their service provider and stated that with significant recent snowfall and in anticipation of spring thaw, the LRSA had spent roughly \$8,000 pushing snow back from the road margins. RCVH LRSA Chair Verne Pomraning reported that the roads in the View / Heights service area were in good shape at the moment.

Approval of Minutes

Chair Lipps requested a motion approving the minutes of the February 2023 meeting. Minutes are available in the Zoom chat. It was moved and seconded (B. Ennis, V. Pomraning) to approve the February minutes, and they were approved without objection.

Other Business and Adjournment

Ms. Lipps announced that the next meeting will occur on April 5, with potential speakers to include a representative of the Best Beginnings literacy program. There being no other business, it was moved and seconded (C Livsey, D. Lipps) that the meeting be adjourned. Chair Lipps thanked attendees and speakers and concluded the meeting at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Constance Livsey
BVCC Secretary