

**Officers** *(Term Expires EOY)*

Pres. – Chuck Homan (2025)
V. Pres. – Cliff Cook (2024)
Sec - Camilla Hussein-Scott (2024)
Treas. – Sean Murphy (2025)

Directors *(Term Expires EOY)*

Dir. Pauline Tise (2025)
Vacant (2024)
Dir. John Rathert (2025)

EAGLE RIVER COMMUNITY COUNCIL

12001 Business Blvd. #170
Eagle River, Alaska 99577

Minutes

December 14, 2023
6:30 – 8:30 PM

Call to order at 6:30 PM.

Establish Quorum: Established

Attendance: Sean Murphy excused absence

Approval of Agenda: Approved

Approval of Minutes: Approved

Membership Introductions**Reports**

- Treasurer Report: \$65
- Parks & Rec – Pauline Tise:
 - Meeting was canceled for December
 - 2024 Capital Improvement Projects were approved by email.
- Road Board – Chuck Homan:
 - October Notes:
 - Non-grant Capital Improvement Funding available is 1.6 million. Please let the board know of any project requests.
 - Traffic mitigation Grant funding for the Eagle River Central Business District balance is 4.8 million. The original grant amount was 6 million. The staff is looking into what projects we can do with the funds.
 - The board is contacting a vendor to prepare a proposal for writing a request for grant funding.
 - Eagle River Town Center Conference room audio video system upgrade: The board was asked if it would participate in funding a portion of the expense for upgrading the system. The board requested a proposal on what the contribution would be used for and the audio/video system that is being purchased.
 - November Notes:
 - To date this winter, plowing teams have completed three full plow outs and 4 partial plow outs.
 - Completed first peeling, wingback, and blowback. Hauling has begun.
 - All equipment is up and running, including four sanders and two pickups with sanders. Four graders and 14 pickups for plowing.
 - Capital Improvement projects discussed for 2024.

- Election of officers: Matt Cruickshank Chair, Blake Merrifield Vice Chair, Lee Hammermeister Treasurer.
- Snow berm removal complaints from an individual, and the issue has been discussed at length with the road board.
- Each plow out costs the community approximately \$22K, to remove driveway berms will more than double the costs of snow plowing in our neighborhoods.
- Advisory Board – Sean Murphy; Alt. Camilla Hussein-Scott
 - Nothing to report
- Federation Community Councils – Cliff Cook
 - Cliff Cook:
 - October meeting:
 - Budget discussion
 - Housing Summit was a success
 - ASD is working on a budget
 - Guest speaker from UAA talking about the housing crisis impacting the local economy.
 - Hope project provided a naloxone administering training; attendees in person or via Zoom got certification. ERCC can invite a speaker to provide training at a future CC meeting. projecthope@alaska.gov.
 - November meeting:
 - Snow removal was an issue; visit the Muni website for updates. Please call to request sanding or gravel in sections of roads. They are very receptive to the calls.
 - ASD update: snow days are now remote learning days; there is a report that only 10 % of students attend remote learning days.
 - The FCC manager retired this summer, and they are looking for a replacement. The position changed from a temporary to a full-time director's position.
 - The budget was approved in November.
 - The next meeting is January 17th.
 - Comprehensive information on the website: <https://www.communitycouncils.org/>
 - Eagle River website: <https://communitycouncils.org/servlet/content/11.html>

Guest Speakers

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Assembly/Legislative Updates

- MOA Assembly update – (Kevin Cross, Scott Myers)
 - Kevin Cross:
 - Met with the Department of Transportation, AMATS policy advisor, asking the state of Alaska to allow CER to locally control snow removal for some of the main roads, such as Eagle River Rd. back to the ER Nature Center. Sometimes, that road goes 5-6 days without clearing. Discussed this topic with the Eagle River Valley Community Council.
 - The assembly passed the budget, and Eagle River Chugiak did well.
 - \$150K additional funding reoccurring for the Senior Center and
 - \$80K for the Volunteer Fire Department for EMS equipment.
 - \$200K is in planning to update the comprehensive plan. The Advisory Board will have to meet to decide how they want to do that. The last update was in 2006, but it hasn't changed much since 1998. The great news is that CER got \$200K for this year and another \$200K for next year.
 - Artillery road project funding was challenging but passed with the support of other assembly members
 - Other legislation is a proposal to allow drive-throughs for marijuana stores.
 - There is a resolution for the ASD regarding BSA funding.

- Community and Economic Development Committee overseas business and marijuana licensing. The building safety department lost \$15 million last year.
- Title 28 of the Muni election code was updated.
- The process for boards and commissions was also updated, as well as the language for sole source contracts. This ensures that all purchases and sales of the municipality are going to be available to the public.
- The Assembly is working on the park bond and the Port modernization plan.
- Snow fund will increase by 1.2 million dollars for 2024, an increase of \$600K dollars.
- Cemetery discussion: The area hasn't had a cemetery in 100 years, and the code wasn't consistent in determining whether maintenance responsibility was through the health or parks departments.
- Cemeteries are public for anyone in the community to access; unless they are private, you can't restrict the public from using them. This is why funding for the cemetery should go through an area-wide bond.
- However, through Assembly members Sulte and LaFrance, Eagle River Chugiak will gain control of the cemetery.
- The Chugiak Eagle River (CERAB) or community councils in our area need to assemble a cemetery board, and the Assembly will approve their assignments.
- There is momentum for Girdwood and Midtown to create an area-wide cemetery bond for around 8 million dollars. I heard that there are some deliberations on whether it is wise to bond, and some state funding might come in through Rep. Allard, but we have to wait and see.
- Requesting a bond for the CER alone next year will be more challenging, and joining the area-wide bond makes sense.
- Legislation is set in place; we want to figure out how to fund it, preferably through an area-wide (Municipality-wide) funding process, but the cemetery will still be under our control.
- Eagle River and Eagle River Valley Councils agree that a cemetery is needed, and representatives are in contact with Tom O'Malley from the Girdwood cemetery board to join the bond. With the knowledge that the CER area councils don't want bonds out here. However, all are in agreement that there is momentum from Girdwood, and we don't want to ignore that.
- The bottom line is that the cemetery expansion is a legislative priority for the Municipality of Anchorage in the Girdwood, Eagle River, and downtown area and that the Heritage Landbank has specifically stated that they designated the area alongside Wolf Den Drive (fka Yosemite Drive)
- Finally, keep in mind that just because the bond is passed doesn't mean that the funds need to be spent; it goes through the Bond Council and will only be billed out according to local control, and this is why we need a CER Cemetery Board with a fiduciary obligation to handle the funding.
- Legislative update – (Senator Kelly Merrick - Rep. Jamie Allard - Rep. Dan Saddler)
 - Rep. Dan Saddler:
 - 2nd Half of the legislature kicks off on January 16th. The newsletter is sent to everyone in the district. Sign up on the website if you are not in Rep. Saddler's district but want to read up on the updates.
 - There is a \$1 billion gap between revenues and expenditures due to the statutory full PFD proposed by the governor.
 - Capital is limited for education, public safety, and SNAP
 - The Federal Department of Energy offered a \$206 million grant the State of Alaska would have to match that 1:1.
 - The State may be looking at the possibility of a general obligation bond, which means that every region would have to get its own project.
 - There is a job classification study to see if there is a need to raise salaries and certain targeted state classifications to attract people to fill the jobs. Childcare subsidies are at the top of the list.
 - Prediction of energy shortage in the next few years, which can be costly to the state of Alaska.
 - Another issue is professional licensure by contract. It is challenging to attract workers and critical job classifications like nurses, so a new bill is being advanced that allows states to join an

Interstate contract that if somebody is licensed in another state, they can work in Alaska. This would increase labor supply issues.

- There is funding for many projects, but you can't find people to fill the positions.
- A new bill is underway to push for critical minerals that direct the state to inventory critical minerals, rare minerals essential for alternative energy.
- Another bill will be around constitutional rights to the submerged land underneath each navigable waterway.
- The state received about half a million dollars in assistive technology funds to help disabled people buy technology to make their lives easier.
- Modifying landlord-tenant laws for mobile home parks
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Presentation N/A

Community Updates

- Anchorage School Board update – (Andy Holleman)
 - Not present
- Eagle River Community Patrol update – (Cliff Cook/John Rathert)
 - 34 hours and 171 miles
 - Keeping an eye on Fire Lake, starting to get busy with ice fishing, but it has been quiet otherwise
 - There is trash out there; perhaps there is a need for another trashcan.
 - Mail theft is on the rise again. People are going into the cluster boxes during the holiday season.
 - Check your mail every day if you can.
 - Be moose aware.
 - A suspect was arrested because he dumped some mail at a local business parking area. The suspect bonded out; she is known in the area, and their activities go to the valley.
 - Vandalism is on the rise again; there were a couple of break-ins, a tree removal service, and they stole tools; one of the suspects was seen walking down the road with a chainsaw.
 - There was also a break-in at a vape shop at Mike's Meats by smashing a window; they were caught on video and created damages of \$10K.
 - Assisted in the Thanksgiving blessing in November, and hundreds of people were in attendance.
 - Going to assist with the Polar Plunge the upcoming Saturday at Goose Lake near UAA.
- Chugiak\Eagle River Library General – Update (Nancy Clark)
 - Not present
- JBER– (Joy Boston)
 - Not present

Old Business:

New Business:

- AO_2023-110_Short Term Rental Licensing
 - Short-term rental licensing and the assemblies will probably adopt an ordinance that all the Airbnb's and anybody renting their property out on a short-term rental will have to get a license from the city.
 - It looks like it's a two-year license. It's a 13-page ordinance with all kinds of regulations in it. Look for it online.
- People Mover bus Route R
 - The Public Transit Advisory Board, via Kyle Mielke, is asking the council to support a bus route realignment study for Eagle River, Route 92.
 - Part of the process is that it will go through the budget process, and then they request federal funding.
 - Resolution will be drafted for the next meeting.

- Nomination committee for the January election of Executive Board members.

Comments from Eagle River Community Council Membership/Guests

Upcoming Events

- *CBERRRSA Board of Supervisors* monthly meeting: December 18th.
- *Parks and Rec Board of Supervisors* monthly meeting: Every 2nd Monday of the Month, 6:30 – 8:30 PM. Room #170, Eagle River Library Building. (South Entrance)
- *FCC meeting: TBD*

Adjourned: 8:00 PM

ERCC Meetings: Every 2nd Thursday of the month, 6:30 – 8:30 PM, Room #170, Eagle River Library Building.
South Entrance.

Upcoming Meetings:

January 11, 2024, Executive Board elections.

February 8, 2024

