

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, February 13, 2019

At Wonder Park Elementary School

Present: Fred McLeary, Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Tammy Hanson, Jay Stange, Lisa & Frank McGuire, Renea Miller, James Smallwood, Forrest Dunbar, Alice Banks, Joshua Spring, Dan & Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Ed Leach.

1. Legislative report

Sen. Berta Gardner – no report

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - talked about the Governor's proposed budget and cuts. Senate has been having hearings daily. The house has been having informal hearings. Not a lot of legislation filed. Ed downloaded the new budget and it's difficult to determine specific cuts from that. The clearest document is the bill that was submitted for the legislators to authorize. Senior benefits was zeroed out. There were a lot of matching grants that were cut. Question of how much revenue lost with the matching federal grants - \$480 million lost.

Sen. Tom Begich - \$44 million sole source to Well Path, also another \$40 million in FY 2020, which violates the law. Governor is taking Alaska funds, stripping them down and sending them to outside interests. Marine Highway actually does return some revenue to the state. Contact has been made to privatize the juvenile justice. Anyone who loves this budget must hate this state. Clearly a sign that the Governor doesn't intend to govern. We need a simple majority to override the Governor's veto on these things. A split body would not give the votes that are needed. The education cuts in particular are pretty clearly in violation of the state constitution. The answer to the budget woes is removal of tax credits – even if a portion of the monies were returned, it would help fill the gap in the budget. Alaska is the most lucrative market for our oil companies – they could afford to give up some of their earnings and still make more than they do in the Lower 48.

Rep. Geran Tarr – no report

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – Public assistance looked to be flat. Important to the concrete impacts of the budget cuts, the ending of career and technical programs, schools closed across the state – specific elements of the proposed budget. We are slowly working our way out of a recession. Budget used was developed at UAA and would put us back another 30,000 jobs - the result of losing public and private sector jobs. We should be more efficient with government, but also need to consider the impacts of the cuts. Well Path has a pretty suspect history – only been around about 4 months with very dubious health and safety track records (deaths, law suits). API has been in a crisis situation for a long time. Bringing in short term expertise to turn things around would be a good idea, but privatizing is not. Obligates us to \$44 million in FY 20 - \$11 million more than was requested in the budget. There was not much transparency in the process of contracting that out. We are watching that closely. We set a new record of time used not being organized in the house. Alaskans sent a divided house to Juneau. Districts have different issues, so we have been trying to put together a bi-partisan coalition with middle of the road decisions. That is what they are aiming for. They need to bring a few more Republicans to join them. They haven't got formal committees yet either. They are holding out for what would be a good organization to protect public education, safety, economy. Question – Privatization of API and AK Marine Hwy and suspect with Well Path involved in affairs in Alaska (manages prisons as well) – wondering if they would be moving in that direction? Donna Arduin in states where she has reviewed budgets, typically involves a lot of privatization and cost shifting to local

governments. She focuses on the budget issues only and isn't concerned about how it falls out. Marine Highway is the "road" for much of Alaskan commerce. Given that we have a large fiscal gap, we can't afford to pay outside groups. Well Path is a for profit organization. She sees this as subsidizing an outside entity to provide services. It's really unacceptable.

Rep. Andy Josephson – no report

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – no report

Forrest Dunbar - If Governor's budget goes through, lots of people will lose their jobs. Assembly passed school bonds, parks, transit, public safety and also just passed ordinance that creates a fund used to clean up problem properties. A foreclosure list is being created of properties that the owner's and the banks have basically abandoned. Vacant properties have a very legal definition – a long term empty building and the city has increased the fees on these properties because they can become hubs for crime. Fire retardant ordinance - many of the chemicals used preclude elevated rates of cancer in children and firefighters. This will be looked at again at the next meeting. Couple other issues the Assembly will be discussing are tax abatement ordinance downtown and AWWU – regarding large housing development in Eagle River. The bond that passed had to do with reconstructing the drainage on Reka. Question regarding the problem houses and fines after so many calls – the fines get a reset button at the beginning of the year and so the neighborhood continues to deal with the problems. Can that ordinance be changed so they don't get the reset? A suggestion that perhaps after two years of reaching that level of calls, the reset button be removed. Forrest asked that an email be sent and will take a look at that ordinance to see if changes could be made. Question – when will the bonds be posted as they are possibly a little obscure to find. Will try to post in a more readily accessible location on the Muni page. Question – Update on sale of Chugach Electric? Not really anything to update right now.

Jay Stange – NeighborWorks Alaska – wanted to make sure about a few things coming up for the council. The Russian Jack Capitol projects online survey has not been available for the last four years. The opportunity to submit these begins March 1 and closes May 31. In the past, Russian Jack capitol issues have been submitted directly to the assembly. If we would like to formalize our priorities via a survey, he can help with that. He also expressed appreciation of the Community Garden at Williwaw Elementary, and complemented Wonder Park's indoor gardening efforts.

3. Mayor's Report – George Martinez – handed out information about the alcohol tax. Mayor has proclaimed February as "Teen Violence Dating Awareness Month and today celebrated at City Hall – CPR Awareness Month. Fire Station on Bragaw is providing a free CPR class on February 17th.

4. School report – Tammy Hanson - Have applied for grant for attendance. Two staff went to conferences about attendance. Staffing is coming up soon – we kept our teachers but don't know about the future.

5. FCC report - James Smallwood Eric Croft came by and talked about re-districting to add an extra seat downtown. Russian Jack doesn't have a Next Door app but FCC are going to create those for all community councils. Could put meeting notice, picnic announcements on there. Code enforcement talked about removing vehicles. MOA may be able to allow code enforcements officers to enforce that. This will require a vote of the people. Residential property tax exemptions are available and due to apply by March 15th.

6. Anchorage Mushing District – Denis Hippert, Project Coordinator. This is a new project that Greater Anchorage, Inc is working on. They are the entity that runs Fur Rondy. They are raising funds through public and private donations in order to create a mushing district from C Street to E Street on 4th Avenue. Plaques will be placed about the history of mushing in Alaska, bronze inserts that will go along the sidewalks in the area to help fund it. The arch will go across 4th Avenue at D Street. The Rondy Store on 4th and D will also have a mushing museum. John Van Zyle created a poster will be for sale or available as part of the package for donations.

7. Disaster Preparedness – SOA Homeland Security & Emergency Management – Jeremy Zidek provided deck of cards that also provide safety tips during disaster, items for pets, stickers that provide information of what supplies are needed, brochures – one week ready, family emergency preparedness, plan and schedule. Recommended that we have 7 or more days of supplies. *My Emergency Plan* booklet that gives you the chance to have a conversation with your family about what to do in an emergency. Primary responsibility of Homeland Security in Alaska is emergency disaster preparedness and response. Alaska Shield 2019 is an exercise that will be held April 10 – 13 to prepare emergency personnel in the case of a terrorist or biological threat. There are an average of 70 – 80 events throughout the state annually that need response services (electrical, water, wildfires, sea storms, ice jams and flooding, earthquakes, landslides, volcano eruptions, etc) . They work with FEMA directly when they are needed. NOTE TO TRAVELING FISHERMEN: If there's halibut fishing nearby, odds are it's a tsunami potential area – something to keep in mind. Landslides within an area can also create tsunamis. Alaska Statute 26 is AK Disaster Act. Disaster Declarations are the vehicle that generate relief funding. Food, water, heat – whole list of items we should all have to be prepared and not have to try and gather the things in the middle of the disaster was discussed. Typically, just need to hunker down and ride out the earthquake. Securing items in your home or workplace that can fall over (bookshelves secured to the wall, hot water tanks, museum wax that will secure fragile items). It's good to take a look around your home. Knowing how to shut off utilities: water, electricity and gas. If you smell gas you should turn your gas off, if you don't smell gas, don't shut it off because the gas utility is required to come to your property to turn it back on. Get involved with American Red Cross, Salvation Army that can help you be better prepared and help you help others.

8. Healthy Alaskans – Lisa McGuire, Co- manager of Healthy Alaskans 2020. They are building Healthy Alaskan 2030 and you can complete the survey online – Dept of Social Services web page.

Russian Jack Springs Park Master Plan update and survey is available on the MOA - Parks & Rec web site. The next meeting is a Public Workshop on February 27th at 6 pm at Williwaw Elementary School, 1200 San Antonio Street.

Anchorage Caucus Meeting Saturday, February 23 at 10 am at the ASD Education Center, 5530 Northern Light Blvd.

Meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright