



# GOVERNMENT HILL COMMUNITY COUNCIL

c/o Community Councils Center • 1057 West Fireweed Lane, Suite 100  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Jody Sola, President

Stephanie Kesler, Vice President

Peter Partnow, Secretary

Susanne Dipietro, Treasurer

Bob French, FCC Representative

Pete Murphy, Greg Miller, Ron Clark, At-Large Board Members

## GHCC Meeting Minutes October 15, 2020 Meeting Minutes Submitted by Peter Partnow

Meeting conducted via Zoom was called to order at 6:31 p.m. by President Jody Sola.

1. **Introduction of Attendees:** Attendees identified via Zoom appearance and noted on the virtual sign-in sheet provided with these minutes.

2. **Approval of agenda:**  
Motion to approve agenda: Steve Gerlek  
Second: Bob French  
Motion unanimously approved.

3. **Approval of September 17, 2020 meeting minutes**

Motion to approve: Pete Murphy  
Second: Stephanie Kesler  
Motion unanimously approved.

4. **Legislative update:** **Senator Tom Begich** noted that due to the Supreme Court action, the deadline for compiling the Census ends today. As of a month ago, only about 50% of Alaska households had reported. Tom noted the recent Alaska Supreme Court ruling eliminating the need to have absentee ballot witnessed. He addressed issue of correction of incorrect information on absentee ballots and the opportunity to do so. Tom was complimentary of the actions of the Lieutenant Governor to address issues and have a fair election. Tom noted the locations of drop boxes and early voting locations. Discussion of issue if voter applies for absentee ballot and then decides to vote in person. Tom noted answers to various questions regarding voting can be found on the senate campaign web site. Finally reported on the disturbing rise in Covid 19 cases with fear that number may rise to 500 new cases a day within the next week or two.

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**Representative Zack Fields**, was represented by his aide Tristan Walsh who noted their office continues with efforts to help individuals and entities with questions needing help regarding CARES act funding, unemployment benefits, etc. Discussed status of processing of claims and remaining numbers of claims and funds under the CARES act.

5. **Assembly Update: Chris Constant** reported that he is coming up to speed on issues relating to the use of the defense fuel site, and that he desires to have use of that land consistent with the community's reasonable desires. Next noted the MLP "deal" will close in the next two weeks, and that as the result of his efforts on this issue, rate payers should receive a 5 to 6 percent reduction in electric bill early next year. Noted November 4 will be the first day of joint operation and that new information will be sought and need to be provided to join the new utility cooperative. Chris then referenced the municipal budget and that shortfalls in revenue cause by the pandemic through such things as reduced hotel and car rental income will be largely offset. Discussed issues relating to the resignation of the Mayor, the appointment process the assembly will follow, and the currently unresolved legal issues regarding whether there will need to be a special election or if the interim mayor will serve until the regular election next April. Finally pointed out some of the disruption and lack of security that has occurred at recent assembly meetings and efforts to insure safety and order at the assembly meetings.

Molly commended Chris for the job he has been doing on the Assembly.

6. **JBER Udate: Denny Hostetter**, a public affairs specialist at JBER referenced outreach efforts to identify and maintain areas of interest of residents of adjacent communities. Requested we designate a contact to communicate with him and to compile list of issues of interest. Stephanie Kesler voluntold Peter Partnow for that liaison position. Denny has provided to Jody the email address for contacting him. Susanne DiPietro raised question of some apparent road or trail construction activity she has observed while hiking. Tristan provided link to news article that had reported on that activity.

7. **Ballot Proposition 1:** Rick Phillips presented information regarding the Fair Share Act and reasons why he supports that proposition. Noted it would change the production tax on three existing oil fields, would address "ring" spending and would add transparency as to what the oil companies are making. Tom Brenan challenged Rick on his position. Discussion included whether the funding on the proposition was primarily from outside or local interests. Rick noted information regarding the proposition can be found at [investment.alaskafairshare.com](http://investment.alaskafairshare.com).

8. **Community: Judges on ballot—Zoe Lowery of the Alaska Judicial Council** shared screen displaying information regarding the Judicial Council and regarding its recommendation on judges up for retention vote at the November election. She played a short video addressing the retention election process. Noted that information about the various judges up for retention can be found at [knowyouralaskajudges.com](http://knowyouralaskajudges.com). Susanne DiPietro noted that Zoe had in fact designed the attractive and informative web site and further summarized what the Judicial Council does, noting its web site and Facebook page.

**Solar Farm on greenbelt/buffer—Steve Gerlek** addressed desire to communicate with the Port of Alaska and to see what we can do to speed things along. Steve Ribuffo noted the Port has some very preliminary ideas, but nothing in concrete, and that he desired to meet with Steve. They will communicate with each other in the near future and hopefully have some report at the next GHCC meeting.

9. **Treasurers report:** Suzanne DiPietro reported our bank balance at \$.2365.89.

10. **Business Reports: Alaska Railroad--Tim Sullivan** noted the season ended with disappointing passenger numbers—last year, in excess of 500,000 while due to the pandemic, the number was only about 30,000 this year. The budgeting process is underway, and with uncertainty regarding the pandemic, they need to plan optimistically for a good tourist season in 2021 but budget for the worst. Will Sola asked a question, now that there is increasing darkness, regarding the hooding of the lights on one of the racks. Tim indicated he would follow up

**Crowley: Greg Miller** reported it has been a quiet years with nothing to report.

**Port of Alaska: Steve Ribuffo** Shared a striking photograph of the new petroleum cement terminal noting the work was on schedule this year. Noted that next year, fendering, plumbing, equipment house, catwalks etc. is scheduled. The same contractor, Pacific Power and Marine will be doing the work. The ribbon cutting on the complete dock should be around this time next year. Steve just learned that there will be no port calls by Holland American at the Port next year. He believe the cruise ship port calls we have enjoyed having the last six or seven years of regular port calls will not occur in the foreseeable future. Bob French raised a question about the damage to the hedge at Nightingale Park. Steve was not immediately aware of this issue, but Stephanie Kesler reported she was aware of the issue as was Jim Yeager of the Port. No planting will be done this year, but the situation will be looked into next year.

9. **Committee Updates:** **FCC Update: Bob French** reports FCC is meeting next week so no report.

**Parks Committee: Bob French** reported not much to do with on set of winter, but anticipates we will have work to do next spring “to keep things at bay.” Jody reported she and several others had done some overview and were connecting with Steve Rafuse at the Muni. Jody hopes that will be an update next month. Bob noted the water line to the Commons has been installed.

10. **Community Comments:** Molly added that there was much information from both sides on the ballot propositions at [alaskaakcommonground.org](http://alaskaakcommonground.org)

**Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.**