

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting  
Wednesday, February 8, 2023 6:30pm  
REGULAR MEETING  
Alpenglow Elementary School  
MEETING MINUTES – Approved March 8, 2023

Call to order at 6:33pm by Julie Jessen. Quorum was established.

Webpage: [Federation of Community Councils](#)

**Meeting documents are here:** <http://www.communitycouncils.org/servlet/viewfolder?id=4549>

**Meeting Minutes Approval:** – Motion by Pete Panarese; seconded by Tom Freeman to approve November 9 meeting minutes. Approved by unanimous vote.

### Representatives' Reports

Assembly Report – Kevin Cross

- **Accessory Dwelling Unit ordinance** passed Assembly. Significant housing shortage exists. 2% rental unit availability. Can add up to 40% of existing house square footage; max 1200 sq ft. Can be attached or separate structure.
- Residents must rely on their neighborhood covenants to prevent additions. Encourage “local enforcement” vs. Assembly taking responsibility. How to stop this? Engage general contractor who will look at deed restrictions; mortgage lender will also look at title restrictions.
- **Anchorage Building Safety Service Area expansion** to Chugiak/Eagle River. C-ER Advisory Board resolution against this; public sentiment against it. Would have to be voter-approved. Very unlikely to move forward.
- Bond proposals for April election under consideration. Property tax changes; expands senior /military discount.

### School Board Report – Andy Holleman (for Carl Jacobs)

- Superintendent plans to review school start times due to scientific support that students do better w/late start.
- Snow makeup days-looking at adding 30 minutes to school day to maintain current calendar.
- Budget deficit occurs in 2023-2024. Federal, state and COVID funding eliminated deficit this and past few years.
- Will budget deficit cause school closures? Unlikely to close schools at this point. This would reduce building costs, not personnel except principal, nurse, etc. Layoffs unlikely; attrition would reduce staff headcount.
- Assembly approved \$37M bond package. Smaller than last year’s failed bond. Focus on secure building entrances.

### New Business:

#### Anchorage School District Budget

Jim Anderson, COO (CFO for past 7 yrs), [anderson\\_jim01@asdk12.org](mailto:anderson_jim01@asdk12.org), 907-742-4369

- We have 5000 fewer students but no changes in facilities. Inefficiencies occur because used to have 3 classes at grade; now have 1. Previously had 100-150 staff vacancies; now have 400. Still working with 2016 base budget. School bus drivers significantly underpaid compared to tourism; tourism season extension into October and low pay contributed to school bus driver shortage. Anticipate continued reduction in student numbers because economy is not drawing young families into the area. State legislature may try to help with bi-partisan education caucus.
- Is there adequate time for you to work w/state legislators? Made this a priority over past 7 yrs.
- Deferred maintenance debt is now \$832M; will surpass \$1B next year. State withdrew funding support.

**Expansion of Anchorage Building Safety Service Area to Chugiak/Eagle River** – See Assembly/Kevin Cross above.

**Administration's Proposed Amendment to Accessory Dwelling Unit Regulations** – See Assembly/Kevin Cross above.

**Chugiak Eagle River Cemetery** – Tom E. Looney, Chugiak Community Council Secretary CER Cemetery Steering Committee, 907-242-7950 [looney@coffman.com](mailto:looney@coffman.com)

- Kevin Cross has been very helpful in moving this forward.
- Heritage Land Bank provided funds to hire Boutet Co. to investigate potential sites. Across from Eagle River High School is most desirable location; lowest cost due to existing infrastructure. HLB could grant this land cost-free to

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another municipal organization (e.g. Parks & Rec which now has cemetery responsibility). Would need Parks & Rec Board approval to proceed.

- Some federal grants are available to develop cemeteries. Anticipate about 7 years to develop plans. Design phase is next and then determine costs for development.
- Girdwood desires area-wide bond on April ballot for taxpayer-funded cemeteries in ER, Girdwood and Anchorage. City attorney objected to this approach.
- Mr. Looney would like community councils to re-appoint council representatives to Cemetery Committee. He will continue working w/Mr. Cross and return with options for community councils to provide resolutions of support.

### **Wildfire and Egress Kick off Meeting - Art Skoog/ Julie Jessen**

#### **Proposal for Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) in Eagle River Valley – Denis Allen**

- Attended training in Willow regarding Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). Would like to receive sponsorship by ERVCC to establish CERT in our council and solicit volunteers to participate/attend CERT training. CERT was developed by FEMA. Training involved 2 weekends (20 hrs) and was sponsored by Willow Fire Dept. Willow and Mat-Su Borough have well-developed CERT plans and may assist ER Valley in developing team.
- Previously this was Community Wildfire Protection Plan (25 yrs ago?). Need to rewrite and update the plan.
- Art Skoog and Julie Jessen have been attending Wildfire and Egress meetings. This is being driven by institute of Social & Economic Research (ISER, UAA.). Next meeting is January 23 on Bragaw St.
- Michelle Torres is driving efforts to train volunteer organizations to assist in case of disaster. (CERT). Ms. Jessen will ask her to present at a future ERVCC meeting.
- Next steps: Is there interest in establishing CERT in Eagle River Valley? Identify sponsoring organization (ERVCC?). Need at least 8 people to set up training class. Need leader to drive this effort.

### **Community Council Boundaries 10-Year Review**

<https://www.muni.org/Departments/OCPD/Planning/Projects/Pages/CommunityCouncilBoundariesReview.aspx>

- We may need a council representative to participate in boundary review.

Old Business:

#### **Eagle River Community Patrol - Cliff Cook (by Joy Webb)**

- Patrols conducted for 26.5 hours covering 130 miles. For the year of 2022, Community Patrol contributed 269 hours and driving 2098 miles.
- Helped at the 2022 Polar Plunge on Dec 17th with traffic control.
- Significant mail theft in December including entire cluster boxes around ER being ripped out with chains. Other cluster boxes outgoing mail slot was pried open which opens the entire box face exposing all the mail and parcel keys. Boxes were found in the Valley and a suspect is known.
- Post office was very busy during holidays as packages weren't being delivered due to weather and folks had to do a pickup. Parking there is a safety concern. Things are improving.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **CBERRRSA (Road Board) - Arlene Rasic**

- See link below for schedule/policy on plowing, berms, etc.  
<https://www.muni.org/Departments/operations/streets/Service/Pages/CBERRRSA-ChugiakBirchwoodEagleRiverRuralRoadServiceArea.aspx>
- Starner Bridge design is complete. Cost \$1.2M to bring bridge up to required standards (1 lane). Birchwood CC requests road board approve this project. Funds would come from district-wide funds, taking large percentage of funds for other maintenance CIP projects. Request our council's support. (confirmed)
- 2023 CIP maintenance projects include numerous drainage improvements. Suggest adding traffic study for Ptarmigan Rd. due to congestion and children's safety during Ravenwood School release time.
- Additional \$400,000 requested from fund balance transfer to complete plowing season.

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- Mill rate increase will be discussed at January meeting. 2021 contractor costs increased 35%. Mill rate has been 8.9-9.2% for past decade. Anchorage mill rate is 3 times higher than ours. Recommend increase from 0.91 to 1.0 or 1.1. Increase of 0.1 provides additional \$375,000. Request our council's support. (confirmed)
- Mark Littlefield will retire on May 1, 2023.

**Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board - Julie Jessen** – has not met recently. We need an alternate for this board.

**Education - Tom Roth**

- See Anchorage School District Budget (Jim Anderson) and School Board Report (Andy Holleman) above.

**Federation of Community Councils - Tom Freeman**

- New ordinance was proposed to increase vehicle exhaust noise penalty from \$100 to \$350/incident.

**Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Rec Board - Pete Panarese/Ruth Armstrong**

- Did not meet in December. Next meeting on Monday with topics including Beach Lake trail development and budget.
- Personnel changes will include additional staff members.
- \$60,000 approved for new scoreboards and batting cages at Loretta French Park with Arctic Group Softball organization commitment to cover more than half of the cost.
- \$12,500 approved for clearing Nordic trails at Beach Lake with 50% match from Nordic Ski Association.
- Determine status of capital improvement projects (CIP) and operations requirements.
- Chugiak Pool has been assessed for needed repairs. Extensive repairs are required; estimated at \$2.5M.

**Platting - Pete Panarese** – nothing to report.

Motion to adjourn at 8:37pm.

**Next meeting February 8, 6:30pm at Alpenglow Elementary School, Multi-purpose room.**

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: Julie Jessen (2023); Vice President: Tom Roth(2023); Treasurer: Ruth Armstrong (2023); Education: Tom Roth(2023); Parks & Rec: Pete Panarese(2023)/Ruth Armstrong-Alt (2024); C/ER Advisory Board: Julie Jessen (2023)/open-Alt (2024); Platting: Pete Panarese (2023); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2023)/Erik Gunderson-Alt (2025); Road Board: Crystal Kennedy (2025)/Arlene Rasic–Alt (2025); Secretary: Joy Webb (2023)