

Eagle River Valley Community Council Meeting  
Wednesday, January 10, 2024 6:30pm  
REGULAR MEETING  
Alpenglow Elementary School  
MEETING MINUTES – Approved February 14, 2024

Call to order by Julie Jessen at 6:34pm. Quorum was established.

Webpage: Federation of Community Councils

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

**Approve Minutes:** Motion to approve December 13 meeting minutes by Tom Roth; seconded by Ruth Armstrong. Approved by unanimous vote.

### **Representatives' Reports**

#### **AK Senator Kelly Merrick**

- Legislative session begins January 16. We are already organized into committees and ready to get to work.
- Top priority to put together energy package. LNG is high area of concern. Governor has energy package planned as well.
- House and Senate are working together better than last year.
- As Senate Finance Committee member, Ms. Merrick is only representative from Anchorage area. Ms. Jayme Jones is Finance Aide.
- Capital budget request system – Artillery Road interchange is high priority for us.
- Work on bills is underway addressing how to mine minerals in Alaska instead of purchasing from other nations.
- There are several opportunities to meet with Senator Merrick in early March.

#### **AK Representative Jamie Allard**

- Representative Allard has sponsored midwifery and deaf/hard-of-hearing bills. Working on Girls in Sports bill.
- As co-chair of Education committee, would like to meet one-on-one with constituents vs. group meetings.
- Working with DoT to re-allocate funds from Dimond Rd. project to Artillery Road interchange.
- Working with DoT to have contract for McKenna (local contractor) do snow removal of state roads in our area if state can't handle it.

#### **School Board Report – Carl Jacobs – no report**

#### **Anchorage Assembly Report – no report**

- Mr. Mark Littlefield announced that he was chosen as mayor's representative to Parks & Rec. However, he will resign this position as he plans to run for Anchorage Assembly to represent our area.
- His position as our alternate representative for Chugiak-Eagle River Parks & Rec. Board is now vacant.

### **New Business:**

#### **ASD School Funding**

Jim Anderson, ASD COO

- Last year's heavy snow fall was very challenging. School district and mayor's office are working very closely together to get as many students in school as possible.
- Academies of Anchorage is biggest initiative this year. Links to community sponsors established. Next year freshman will choose pathway to college credit or career path of their choice.
- Elementary schools switched to 'old style' cafeteria food instead of packaged foods.
- Budget situation is very challenging. There is fund balance but have large deficit.
- District needs ~250 new teachers each year; most coming from upper northwest. UAA graduates ~100/year.
- All fifth graders moving to middle schools next year. Anticipate larger 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes.
- 2016 – last time base student allocation (BSA) from state was increased.

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- 2015 – last time state transportation funding was increased for schools. Running \$5.5M deficit this year that must be covered to continue bus service.

Questions to Mr. Anderson:

- Is it possible the Legislature will override Governor's veto of increase in BSA? Requires 75%; very unlikely.
- Bond this year? Yes \$65M April bond-primarily to secure vestibules in elementary schools and repair school roofs.
- Some costs will be increased next year to increase revenue (e.g. school fees).
- Many changes will take place next year – Academies at high schools; move 5<sup>th</sup> graders to middle school; start time changes and switching younger students to early start times; many teachers approaching retirement. Can we handle so much change at once?
- How are we trying to retain good teachers? Nationwide there is teacher shortage, especially special ed. We must recruit teachers in February-May. If we must pink-slip teachers this year due to lack of funding, it will be very difficult to recover because teachers then tend to leave the state resulting in additional vacancies when they are called back.
- Joint Resolution from Anchorage Assembly/Anchorage School Board requesting significant increase in BSA (>\$600/student). There are some concerns about this resolution as a lower 48 inflation rate was used which is a little higher than Anchorage's rate.  
<https://files.constantcontact.com/32b07d0b001/3d180171-6a59-495d-aa46-a2580615e9c9.pdf?rdr=true>
- Federation of Community Councils sent email regarding joint resolution above to all councils. Rabbit Creek and Rogers Park have approved it and requesting support from other councils. We will address this next month after everyone has a chance to review it.

### **Matanuska Electric Association, Inc.**

Sabrena K. Combs, [Sabrena.Combs@mea.coop](mailto:Sabrena.Combs@mea.coop) Office: 907-761-9284

Community & Employee Engagement Coordinator

- Eklutna Hydro project provides water to Anchorage and cheapest power source at 6 cents/KWH.
- When sold to municipality, agreement that in 25 years, a Fish and Wildlife Plan was due to governor; due this year. Public is invited to participate and provide input on the plan draft. Various meetings are scheduled and can attend any time. In Eagle River, Thursday, January 18, 2-4pm or 6-8pm. See <https://eklutnahydro.com> for draft plan, more information & additional meeting dates.  
This will affect us and likely increase electric rate. There are many parties and competing interests in this matter. Please participate and give public comment.
- Go paperless on your bill and receive a one-time \$10 credit.
- Capital projects include equipment upgrades for Briggs Substation on Hiland Rd and moving additional lines underground.
- Scholarship applications due March 20 for \$25K.
- Electric vehicle owners- a level 2 charger will be provided to you for free if you allow MEA to use your usage data.

### **Homelessness Task Force Update - Ken McCarty**

Mr. McCarty provided the following update post-meeting:

- Mr. McCarty continues to be frustrated when chair Felix Rivera establishes deadlines to explore homeless shelter options and schedules town hall meetings but then cancels the meetings and task force meetings at the last minute.
- In our community (from APD) is there are no problem issues regarding homelessness.

### **Emergency Preparedness**

Dean Cox

- Does anyone have a copy of old emergency plans for ER?

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- Kevin Cross shared previously that funding was requested to update Chugiak-Eagle River Comprehensive Plan. Emergency plans could be included as part of that effort.
- Discussion on need for designated places for people to gather, stopping points vs. egress points, helicopter landing spots. These need to be established, placed on a map and shared.
- Muni. holds quarterly emergency management meetings. Representative Allard offered to connect Mr. Cox with Brian Fisher, state-level emergency planning lead.
- Gathered names of individuals to create a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team). Mr. Cox will contact Michelle Torres, the State CERT coordinator, to schedule our first training session.
- Anyone interested in joining these efforts can contact Mr. Cox or Ms. Julie Jessen.

### **Eagle River Valley Community Council Elections**

- The alternate position for CER Parks & Rec. is now open. Jared Goecker volunteered. Motion by Tom Freeman, seconded by Ruth Anderson for elect Mr. Goecker to this position; Passed unanimously.

### **ERVCC Meeting Location Change**

- Volleyball practice is held in gym adjoining the multi-purpose room, so future meetings may be held in school library.

Old Business:

### **Eagle River Community Patrol - Cliff Cook**

- Patrols were conducted 16.5 hours, covering 28 miles.
- Mail theft continues to be a big issue. Track your packages. Challenging road conditions with heavy snowfall.
- Community Patrol assisted with traffic control at the 2023 Polar Plunge for Special Olympics. Event had about 800 jumpers.
- Report all crime to APD on 311 (or 911 if emergency).

### **Committee Reports:**

**Platting** - Nothing to report.

### **Chugiak/Eagle River Parks and Rec Board – Ruth Armstrong**

- Budget has been established with 75% allocated to operations and 25% to capital improvement projects. A balance fund exists that can be used to supplement operations funding if needed.
- Chugiak pool repairs have begun. It will be closed 3-4 weeks. Hope to open again temporarily in spring and then close for 6 months beginning this summer for major repairs.
- Mirror Lake bike path upgrades are planned.
- \$100,000 has been allocated for park improvements. A survey will be done of all ER parks to identify upgrades and repairs.
- New director for CER Parks & Rec is Kelly Jorgeson who started this role on January 6.

**Federation of Community Councils** – Tom Freeman – No meeting held in December.

### **Education - Tom Roth**

- Mr. Roth offered to invite speakers to address the school district topics discussed at meeting (e.g. high school academy directors, upcoming school bond)

**Chugiak/Eagle River Advisory Board - Julie Jessen** – no meetings held.

### **CBERRRSA (Road Board) – Crystal Kennedy**

- We've already exceeded the budget for snow removal due to heavy snowfalls.

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- Snow hauling began in November. This usually isn't required until February.
- Roads are to be cleared within 72 hrs. in our area. Usually done within 48 hrs. Schedule (which roads are cleared first) varies from one snowfall to next.
- If you experience issues with snow removal, call the ER Streets & Maintenance office to request their help.

**Adjourned 8:25pm.**

**Next Meeting February 14, 6:30pm at Alpenglow Elementary School, 19201 Driftwood Bay Dr, Eagle River**

ERVCC Board Members (Term Expiration) President: Julie Jessen (2024); Vice President: Tom Roth(2024); Education: Tom Roth(2024); Parks & Rec: Ruth Armstrong(2026)/Jared Goecker-Alt(2026); C/ER Advisory Board: Julie Jessen (2024)/Jared Goecker-Alt(2025); Platting: Pete Panarese (2024); Federation of Community Councils (FCC): Tom Freeman (2024)/ Joy Webb-Alt (2025); Road Board: Crystal Kennedy (2025)/Arlene Rasic-Alt (2024); Secretary/Treasurer: Joy Webb (2024)