
MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Erin Reinders, City Manager
Date: December 15, 2020
Re: City Manager Report

Strategic Planning: The Strategic Planning meetings planned for the week of December 7-11, 2020 were canceled due to COVID. We are now rescheduling with the facilitator to coordinate with a trip we already had planned for supervisor training, assuming the local risk level is reduced by then.

Council members must determine the week this should occur. Please let me know what dates you will be able to participate in person from the following options:

- **Option 1: Feb 18 and 19**
- **Option 2: Feb 22 and 23**
- **Option 3: Feb 25 and 26**

Again, this process will help Council set goals and focus areas for the coming year that best address community needs and your vision for the future. With added focus, this will help us use our resources more effectively and sustainability, which is especially important as we begin budget preparation for the coming year.

COVID-19 Unified Command: The City of Unalaska remains in a state of emergency and is currently at HIGH risk level. In accordance with their plan, the school has transitioned to home based learning and the City further limited access to public facilities. The Unified Command continues efforts to improve our communications. Incident Commanders (Melanee representing the Clinic and I representing the City) meet together weekly with the Mayor. We also collaborate together on community wide mitigation strategies for City Council to consider. City staff meets on a weekly basis to discuss any necessary updates. Unalaska Unified Command Stakeholders are now meeting every two weeks, in addition to special meetings as necessary. This is the same group that has been meeting since the pandemic began and includes representatives from USAFV, Industry, City, Tribe, School and the Clinic. We continue to believe this is a sustainable approach, and one that can be adapted as the situation evolves.

CARES Act: The Finance Department continues to submit monthly reports as required. There has still been no extension on the federal level to the end of year deadline for the expenditure of funds. Our federal lobbyists are monitoring for the possibility of additional federal funds, but there is nothing approved at this point. We are on track to spend all the CARES Act funds in accordance with Treasury guidance and with the spending plan approved by Council. Interim Finance Director Jim Sharpe has provided a memo with an overview. ([Please see the supplemental memo following this report.](#))

Innovative Readiness Training (IRT): As we all know, the Tribe received the IRT's Assessment Report and passed that along to both OC and the City. Chris Salts with OC, Chris Price with the Q-Tribe and I have agreed to meet on a monthly basis, at minimum, in keeping with the MOU that all parties signed in August. We are developing a presentation to summarize the report, key recommendations and action items, and ideas for future IRT support applications. We met on December 4, 2020 to review a draft. Our ultimate plan is to share this with City Council, Tribal Council and OC's Board to garner their input and identify opportunities to work together.

Finance Director: The City continues working with Alaska Executive Search (AES) out of Anchorage to assist in recruitment efforts. We held a telephonic interview with an applicant on Monday, November 2, 2020. The planned onsite visit for the week of December 1, 2020 was canceled due to COVID. We are now developing a plan to move forward. We held a panel interview with the candidate on Thursday, December 10, and are scheduling virtual meet and greets with staff for Monday, December 14. We will then plan for a short trip out for the candidate and their spouse to at least see the island. Jim Sharpe continues to serve as Interim Finance Director, and is participating in meetings remotely and remains available for staff while off island.

Directives to the City Manager: Three directives to the City Manager remain outstanding, one of which is addressed this evening as described below and in the attached memo:

- *Options for Increased Tobacco Tax (11/27/18). Ongoing.* City Clerk, Marjie Veeder has worked with our city attorneys on this complex topic. City Council discussed the Tobacco Excise Tax Ordinance, as well as potential rates and funding dedication approaches at their November 10, 2020 meeting. The Clerk plans to bring the Ordinance back to Council for the January 12, 2021 meeting. Discussion on increased sales tax for some combination of tobacco, alcohol and marijuana will be paused for now, but may come up again as we look for ways to increase overall City revenues.
- *Fiscal Sustainability Plan and Policy (5/14/19). Ongoing.* Interim Finance Director Jim Sharpe began a discussion with City Council on sustainable long term planning at the December 12, 2019 Council meeting. He provided informational material for Council to review. Staff is proceeding in looking into this issue more, as described in a previous manager reported dated November 24, 2020 separately. The Interim Finance Director plans to discuss this with Council at the January 12, 2021 City Council meeting.
- *Bandwidth Analysis (11/24/20). Addressed.* Council directed the City Manager to identify the "cost to hire an independent company to measure the bandwidth delivered compared to the bandwidth promised under the contract from the internet provider to see if what is required under the contract is being delivered. This service should be extended to the Iliuliuk Family Health Services and the Unalaska City School District." IS Supervisor, Jacob Whitaker, provided a memo addressing what is outlined in Council's directive. Basically, software is capable of measuring bandwidth. The software tool our IS Supervisor used to measure the City of Unalaska's actual bandwidth was purchased for \$100. Jake used this information to work with TelAlaska, our primary internet provider, to communicate our degraded internet service in July – October this year and provide feedback as TelAlaska worked to address the issues. TelAlaska has acknowledged our degraded internet service and will be issuing us credits toward our monthly bills for the duration of our 3 year contract (June 30, 2021). ([Please see the supplemental memo following this report.](#))