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## MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

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To: Mayor and City Council Members  
From: Erin Reinders, City Manager  
Date: January 26, 2021  
Re: City Manager Report

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**Strategic Planning:** As we have discussed previously, the in-person Strategic Planning facilitator is currently set to meet with the Mayor and City Council on Thursday, February 25 (9:00-3:30) and Friday, February 26 (9:00-1:00). Given the continued situation with COVID-19 as well as uncertainties with Risk Levels and related protective measures, I am looking for feedback on once again postponing this. If we were to hold this as currently scheduled, I wonder how many of you would feel comfortable participating in person.

**State Legislative Strategy:** Unalaska's State Lobbyist, Dianne Blumer, has provided a City of Unalaska State Legislative Action Plan (see the attachment), outlining the City's strategy for legislation representation and advocacy. This is especially important in times of COVID when we cannot be physically present in Juneau for the second year in a row season in a row. We will not be able have fly in this year so we need to be creative. The strategy is attached and Diane is open to receiving feedback and suggestions from Council. I am happy to pass those along to her.

**Geothermal PPA:** Again, we have been told by OCCP that they are now in the competitively bidding the power plant and resource gathering system. Bids are due the end of January. OCCP is working there the permitting process with the Army Corps of Engineers, and they plan to begin access road construction this spring. City Staff met with OCCP on January 15<sup>th</sup>. We learned that OCCP has filed to be a Public Utility with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA), which they would be required to do as they planning to sell power to the City. We will be providing public comment on this application with the RCA, and Brooks is assisting with that. Additionally, we learned that they have not submitted for DOE's non-recourse loan program as originally planned. They are looking into alternative funding options including USDA-Rural Utilities Service (RUS) financing. We have agreed to meet with OCCP monthly to keep everyone updated.

**DPW Snow Removal:** The Public Works Director provided the following information regarding their recent response to significant snow fall. The winter snows of this past week put up a ferocious fight but after an 'all hands on deck' call out, we prevailed. As of Wednesday the 20<sup>th</sup>, the streets, parking lots, and sidewalks are mostly clear and passable. After several days and nights of heavy snow, wind-whipped snow, snow drifts, and more snow, we finally had a reprieve with warm temps and clear skies. The DPW Roads crew was assisted by DPU (Water, Landfill, Electric) and 3 separate contractors (Bering-Shai, Moore Recycling, and Northern Alaska Contractors). We were concerned that warm temps and rain in the forecast might cause flooding but thanks to all of our snow removal efforts, that did not occur and drainage systems cooperated. Below is an overview of equipment and manpower working on streets, parking lots, and sidewalks.

The City's DPW and DPU crews had 19 pieces of heavy equipment running plus 4 snow blowers.

- DPW's equipment included: 4 dump trucks, 4 loaders, 2 graders, 1 dump truck with plow, 2 salt/gravel spreaders, 1 dozer (D7 at Landfill), 1 dozer (D4 at Captains Bay Road), and 4 snowblowers (Facilities Maintenance).
- DPU's equipment included: 1 loader (Water Division), 1 loader (Electric Division), 1 dozer (Electric Division), and 1 loader (Solid Waste Division).

Contractors were running 10 pieces of heavy equipment

- Bering-Shai's equipment included: 2 side dump semi-trucks and 3 loaders.
- Moore Recycling's equipment included: 2 loaders.
- Northern Alaska Contractors' equipment included: 2 off-road trucks and 1 loader.

**Airport Master Plan Update:** A virtual public meeting was held on January 21, 2021. Focus on alternatives and concepts to address needs associated with B-III type aircraft (like the Dash 8 and the Saab 2000). Generally speaking, to meet the B-III design requirements, the airport layout would need to change to accommodate object free areas and runway safety improvements. Focus is on 3 primary options for the runway improvements. One is to extend the runway to the Hog Island, the other is to extend the runway to the Dutch Harbor side, and the final options is the integration of an Engineered Material Arresting System (EMAS). The consultants are also exploring some hybrid approaches. They also reviewed some concepts of the terminal area and tried to work in some concepts for general aviation. The consultant team will now evaluate the practicability of the runway safety areas, look into refinements of alternatives, and an implementation plan. The Draft and Final Master Plan is expected in spring of 2021.

**Resource Analyst Position:** City staff is currently looking into what an expanded role of a Resource Analyst might look like if we were to resurrect this staff position. In the past this position, the focused on fisheries, but this role could be expanded to include other topics such as geothermal. Currently, we have a consultant assisting us with fisheries issues while the position itself is unfunded and unfilled. I have extended the consultant contact until the end of this fiscal year, which includes a requirement for the consultant to provide documentation on the related revenue projections process.

**Finance Director:** Finance Director Ed Keough is on island is in quarantine. Interim Director Jim Sharpe will be with us for the next couple of months assisting with onboarding Ed, wrapping up some projects, and handing off some of the projects. We are working together to ensure a solid transition for this critical position in our organization at this challenging time in history.

**Covid-19 Emergency:** The City of Unalaska remains in a state of emergency. City Staff is focused on providing public services, safely adjusting operations, responding to outbreaks and adapting to pandemic related regulatory changes. Incident Commanders (Melanee representing the Clinic and I representing the City) meet together weekly with the Mayor. City staff meets on a weekly basis to discuss any necessary updates. Unalaska Unified Command Stakeholder group meets on a monthly basis. This group includes representatives from USAFV, Industry, City, Tribe, School and the Clinic.

**Directives to the City Manager:** Two directives to the City Manager remain outstanding, both are being worked on by City Staff and required Council engagement:

- *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. This is still being worked on and we hope to bring forward the Ordinance in February or March.

- *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 discussed this with Council at the January 13, 2021 City Council Worksession. As a follow up, he is bringing forward a resolution to address the rainy day fund at the January 26, 2021 Council Meeting.

**Blumer & Associates**  
**Government Affairs and Lobbying Services**

**CITY OF UNALASKA 2021 LEGISLATIVE ACTION PLAN**

**Outline for 2021 City of Unalaska State Legislative Representation and Advocacy**

**1. During Legislative Session (January – April):**

- Lobbyist will be physically present in the city that the Legislature holds session
- Attend Alaska Municipal League Legislative Action Committee (LAC) meetings and provide legislative updates
- Monitor and track bills related to Local Government and the City of Unalaska (the City) issues
- Inform the Mayor and City Manager of changing regulations/ legislation pertaining to the city and recommend a course of action
- Provide Mayor, City Manager and City Council with a weekly written report on:
  - current events related to legislative activity
  - upcoming week's committee schedule
  - bill tracking with effect summary and status of amendments
- Provide support for relevant legislative committee meetings
- Prepare briefing papers, exhibits, PowerPoints and talking points for relevant bills
- Arrange testimony:
  - Coordinate with the Mayor and City Manager to identify individuals to provide testimony, both written and verbal, assist in preparation of testimony
- Advise the Mayor, City Manager and Council on possible suggestions for how to best move forward with legislation, Capital budget advocacy and issues related to the City
- Establish meetings with panels of legislators from the region (during and after session):
  - At least one meeting a year with the regional delegation
- Schedule meetings (during session and during interim) between the Mayor, City Manager, Council members and legislators/administrative officials, as necessary
- Create, organize and provide the schedule for annual fly-ins that include meetings with departments, the Governor's office and legislators, suggest that fly-in is held virtual this year
- Monitor Executive Branch regulatory changes related to the City
- Due to the issues surrounding COVID-19 and limited access to the Capitol, increased efforts will be made to communicate with Public Officials including:
  - Increased social media postings and communications
  - Local Government related Lunch and Learns to Elected Officials
  - Panel and group meetings via virtual platform
  - Offsite individual meetings with Legislators, Staff and the Executive Branch
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**2. During Interim (May – December):**

- Monitor interim activity that may lead toward relevant legislation or administrative policy action.
  - Arrange for communication between the City and Legislators on a year-round basis
  - Work with the Administration and Legislative Leadership (President, Legislative Committee chair and others) to:
    - Debrief the session and develop and/or modify plans for interim and next session, including:
      - Review and discuss bills of interest that did not pass and bills of concern likely to be re-introduced. Discuss strategies for addressing opposition or lack of awareness/priority.
      - Determine where legislator relationships need attention and develop an outreach plan. Determine need/relevance of regional meetings between the City and legislators and collaborate on convening.
      - Relationship-building with targeted legislators, stakeholders, legislative staff or others.
  - Special Session (if convened) – arrange meetings with affiliates and legislators to discuss emerging proposals and discuss potential sponsorship; contact legislative staff in advance offering assistance work sessions
  - Prepare and present on legislative matters and priorities annually to the Council
  - Bill signings: track and inform City Manager of signing ceremony dates and coordinate to ensure presence when appropriate
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