
MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Erin Reinders, City Manager
Date: September 14, 2021
Re: City Manager Report

Upcoming Deadlines: The following deadlines and events are coming up.

- Wed. September 15: In person early and absentee voting begins at City Hall
- Tues. October 5: Unalaska General Election, in person voting at City Hall, polls open 8am to 8pm
- Fri. October 8: Canvass Committee Meeting to count absentee & questioned ballots, 10am at City Hall
- Wed. October 20: Second Half property tax payments due

COVID 19 Update: On September 1, 2021, Unified Command finalized the update to Unalaska's COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan. Changes were necessary due to the wide availability of vaccines for COVID-19 and new information learned about the virus. There are now four levels outlining thresholds of risk associated with overwhelming medical facilities: Low, Moderate, Substantial and High Risk. Based on past City Council feedback, the risk levels are now associated with the number of active cases which are community acquired, travel acquired, and/or household acquired. Once the risk level is elevated, it will remain for two weeks, at which point the level will be reassessed. The Response Plan also identifies recommended protective measures associated with each risk level. The general purpose of the plan is to provide guidance to individuals for their personal decision making; to organizations as they make operational decisions; and to the City Council as it considers Community Wide Protective Measures. We also have Unalaska's COVID-19 Dashboard up and running, which includes information related to our Waste Water Surveillance.

Utility Credits: The PCE was reinstated on the August utility bills with a rate of .1153. The ARPA credit will be a total of \$1,950 per PCE eligible residential customer spread over 3 months, meaning \$650 per month. This has already begun and is the same method as used with the CARES Act Utility credit.

Fiscal Sustainability: As you recall, City Council has requested criteria for use of the rainy day fund and triggers to assist with the City's overall fiscal sustainability. The Interim Finance Director and I reached out to the financial advisors from Alaska Permanent Capital Management (APCM) to see how they might assist in this effort and other efforts to better address our fiscal sustainability. More recently, this topic came up in the Strategic Planning Sessions with Council. APCM will be working with Council over the course of two work sessions (on September 13 and September 14) to discuss the strategy for the Rainy Day Fund and other investments with APCM, including the potential for a Permanent Fund to help supplement our revenues. This supplemental component is even more important given recent fisheries announcements.

Crab Closures and Reductions: The Bristol Bay Red King Crab will remain closed for this season, and things are not looking good for Bering Sea Snow Crab. At this point, we are estimating about a 500K hit to the budget for the Bristol Bay Red King Crab closure. If the Bering Sea Snow Crab is reduced by 50%, we are looking at a hit of about \$1.2 million. So, at this point we are looking at an estimated \$1.7 million impact. Although we can't really identify the specific impact this will have on port related revenue, in general, this typically negatively impacts Wharfage revenue, and positively impacts dockage revenue. Frank Kelty, our Fisheries Consultant, continues to monitor the issue and all our lobbyists have been notified as well. Thank you to Jim Sharpe and Frank Kelty for their work in getting these estimates together.

Federal Lobby Efforts: As previously communicated, Sebastian O'Kelly with City's Federal lobbyist team was available to meet with City Council members and the Mayor on Monday, August 30. The Mayor and I had an informative visit with Seb and took him on a tour of the community, highlighting many of Council's priority projects including Captains Bay Road. We expanded our group to include the Deputy Utilities Directors to review some of the challenges that the City might encounter as we prepare for and transition to geothermal so we can all be thinking about related opportunities and support that might exist.

As you recall, Council focused in on the later suggested dates for a potential three day federal lobby trip when we discussed this at the last Council meeting. Brad Gilman says he needs four weeks lead time to plan for the trip. **Focus in now on the following dates and I am looking for feedback from council as to the preferred time frame:**

- November 29 – December 2
- December 6 – December 9

As a reminder, Brad and team will do their best to try and fill up the schedule but there is continued uncertainty as to the potential to meet in person and what the requirements might be. Seb indicated that they would work to set up both in person (where possible) and Zoom type meetings, which could be successfully adapted if the trip has to be canceled. Brad also suggested bringing proof of vaccination, and purchasing refundable tickets in case the trip is canceled.

I plan to begin a discussion with Council on the Federal priorities during the September 28 Work Session. Council will then hear from Seb, adopt the priorities via resolution, and approve travel for the Lobby trip on October 12. Seb has suggested that with the return of earmarks, that we add more capital projects than we have in recent past. I will be getting Brad and Seb's feedback as I work to prepare items for Council's consideration.

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP): Mayor and Council are invited to attend a special Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) event on Saturday, September 25, 2021. Anticipated hours are 10am – 5pm and it will be held at the Burma Road Chapel. OC is the lead organizer locally. **Please let Michelle Price know if you plan to attend.** Public Safety Department Director, Chief Jay King, has been involved in related discussions for the past several months, and has provided the following:

In May 2021, Yulonda Candelario with the United States Attorney's Office for the District of Alaska reached out and informed me about the USAO training presentations that are to be offered in regards to Justice Department's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP) Initiative. She also mentioned the possibility of being able to participate in working with the local tribal community in an effort to develop a tailored Tribal Community Response Plan (TCRP) in furtherance of Savanna's Act. I immediately expressed my desire to be part of such an effort. I

forwarded the notice to all sworn DPS personnel and advised them of the upcoming training.

DPS then began taking part in several preparatory conversations involving USDOJ, APIA, UFD, Alaska DPS, and the MMIP Contractor. These conversations later (July 2021) included representatives from the community (OC, Q-Tribe and City Administration). Through our partnership with Alaska DPS, we have extended the training availability to VSPOs serving the surrounding communities. We have invited the VPSOs to participate in person here at the DPS Training Facility or via Zoom within their own community in cases where travel is a problem.

Deputy Chief Simms will represent the Police Department in assisting the development of the tailored Tribal Community Response Plan (TCRP).

Fireworks: Council only had enough funding budgeted to pay for one City sponsored big fireworks show this fiscal year. That show was the Independence Day show. I am in discussions with the Unalaska chapter of the Alaska State Firefighter Association regarding their interest in doing a show similar to what they did last New Year's Eve. The group will request financial support from the City, and a formal request may be presented to Council in the near future.

National Community Survey (NCS): The Planning Department is preparing the second National Community Survey for Unalaska. The results from this survey can be compared to those from the previous survey in 2017. Our goal is to do the survey every few years so that we can compare and track progress in addressing community needs. Planning Director Bil Homka as provided the following information:

We have finalized the survey questions for the NCS with Polko. Polko will begin mailing invitations later this month, and the data collection period for the mailed and online surveys will run September 23 to November 11. The results will be available in early December.

Environmental Assessment Grant: The Planning Department is working on an exciting grant opportunity. The following is an overview from Planning Director Bil Homka:

The US Environmental Protection Agency Community-wide Assessment Grant is a highly competitive three-year program, appropriate when a specific site is not identified and the applicant plans to spend grant funds on more than one brownfield site in its community. The Assessment Grants provide funding to seek contamination that was a result of the post and/or pre-war periods. Assessment Grants provide funding for a grant recipient to inventory, characterize, assess, conduct a range of planning activities, develop site-specific cleanup plans, and conduct community involvement related to brownfield sites. The City will request up to \$500,000 to assess sites contaminated by hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants (including hazardous substances co-mingled with petroleum), and/or petroleum. The Planning Department is issuing a RFQ/Dual Procurement opportunity for consultants to respond with proposals. There will be no cost to the city as the grant award covers the costs for administration.

Directives to the City Manager: There are two directives that are progressing, and one that has been recently completed. These are outlined below.

- *Cost Benefit Analysis for Captains Bay Road Project (March 30, 2021). Progressing.* The directive reads, “Implement a cost-benefit analysis for the proposed road improvements and utility expansion for Captains Bay Road.” Given the magnitude of the Captains Bay Road project, we are confident that this analysis will serve us well. Council approved Resolution 2021-56 to award a contract in the amount of \$234,019.75 for this analysis at the August 24, 2021 meeting.
- *Haystack Communications Site (July 27, 2021). Progressing.* The directive reads, “Start the process to terminate leases on Haystack for communications and work to upgrade and allow equal access to facilities for communications on Haystack with new leases.” I have asked the Planning Director to take the lead here. The Planning Department has long managed the leases on Haystack, and has been striving to improve the lease process and situation for years. Staff is presenting an update of the current complex situation on Haystack in tonight’s work session. We can then discuss next steps and receive further direction.
- *Nixle Alerts when Increase to High Risk Level (August 24, 2021). Completed.* We have worked into to our updated COVID-19 Emergency Response Plan that Nixle alerts be sent for special messaging, including when the risk level increases.