
MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Erin Reinders, City Manager
Date: December 28, 2021
Re: City Manager Report

Upcoming Deadlines: The following City deadlines are upcoming.

- December 31, 2021: Business License Renewal Deadline
- March 1, 2022: Business Personal Property Tax Return Deadline
- March 1, 2022: Senior Citizen Real, Disabled Veteran and Fire/EMS Volunteer Property Tax Exemption Application Deadline
- March 31, 2022: Senior Citizen Sales Tax Refund Application Deadline

COVID-19 Update: As of the drafting of this memo of we have no known active COVID-19 cases. However, on December 21, Karie Holtermann, the City's Lab Manager, reported that the viral load in the 24 hour sample at the plant ended earlier that day was positive for COVID-19. The sample from December 21 was 0.1 RNA Copies/mL. Viral copies are very low but the sample is once again positive, the first time in about a month. This information is found on the City's COVID Dashboard. According to the state's website, 74% of Aleutian West Census Area residents age 5 and up have received their first dose, 64% are fully vaccinated, and 15% have received their booster.

The last round of COVID-19 community wide protective measures, which Council has consistently adopted since March 2020, expire on December 31, 2021, when the local state of emergency to expires at the end of the year. The expiration of the state of emergency does not mean that COVID-19 is no longer with us. It continues to be a significant public health concern, but at this point we believe we have the tools in place to effectively respond. The Clinic continues to provide vaccinations, boosters and health care as necessary.

We have decided to retain one of the two isolation site buildings through the end of April 2022. This should get us through A-season and the uncertainties of the Omicron variant, and provide us this response tool if needed. The City will continue our increased sanitation efforts at the Airport, Community Center and Library. We will no longer have greeters at the airport to collect contact tracing information. At this point, the City will not report the number of cases, but the community's case data will be reported on the State of Alaska COVID website. However, IFHS Clinic is seeing if there is a less labor intensive way, compared to the past two years, to report the local case count moving forward. We plan to continue testing the wastewater influent as this is an important indicator for us all locally, and this information will be added to the City's COVID Dashboard. We will rely on IFHS Clinic to communicate to the City if the local health care system is at risk of becoming overloaded as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Mayor and I plan to have a call every other week with the Interim CEO of the Clinic, starting on January 11, 2022. If an emergency declaration is necessary in 2022, the declaration can be made by the Mayor or City Manager, subject to ratification of the City Council.

As a reminder, the two following emergency City Manager orders related to Mayor and Council will also expire at the end of the year:

- (1) Suspend the provisions of UCO § 2.20.025(D) prohibiting the addition of action items by amending the council meeting agenda; and

- (2) Suspend the provisions of UCO § 2.20.075 regarding council member participation in meetings by teleconference. Copies attached.

Fiscal Sustainability: City Council had an in depth discussion with APCM and City Staff on October 26 regarding a permanent fund. Key direction provided by Council included a \$40 million starting amount, moderate growth allocation, and a plan to begin distribution at the three year point (starting in July of 2024). Staff met again with APCM on Monday, November 8, 2021 to discuss our next steps. Since that time we have received sample ordinances and resolutions from APCM. Our City Attorney has drafted documents for City Council's use specifically. Jim Sharpe and I have reviewed these documents and are working to determine a path forward. Will need some follow up discussion with APCM and the City Attorney. We are also looking to identify further work needed, such as identify a custodian for a new Permanent Fund. We will then bring related items to Council for consideration and action. We hope to have something before you in late January or early February. We have not forgotten about the Emergency Fund, and are working on outlining that path forward as well. The Permanent Fund does, however, require more steps to set up so we are starting with that.

Airport Long Term Parking: Port Director Peggy McLaughlin facilitated a discussion with Council about the airport long-term parking on December 14, 2021. As a result, the airport long-term parking is being further reviewed and a detailed discussion is being prepared for future Council meetings. Included will be overview of the airport financial status, potential rates for long-term parking, and other revenue opportunities to be considered in lieu of long-term parking fees or in conjunction with parking fees.

Directives to the City Manager: There are two outstanding directives, both progressing as 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." A draft Cost-Benefit Analysis Report will be submitted to the City in mid-January. We will use this report to not only objectively define the benefit, but also define the project phases and scope for those phases.
- *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." This directive was issued after public comment by OptimERA representatives at the City Council meeting. Available space (that is not already leased or has an easement across it) is limited on Haystack, and OptimERA had previously requested a lease agreement in a place that was leased to another entity. The Planning Department has reached out to some of the telecom companies to discuss future leasing and update information between the City and lease holders. OptimERA has applied for a new lease atop Haystack that will lease the site on which they already have an antenna located. The lease was reviewed by the City attorney and has been forwarded to OptimERA for their consideration. OptimERA confirmed receipt we are awaiting their comments or signature.