



City of Gustavus
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Citizens of the City of Gustavus, Alaska

City of Gustavus Ordinance 2.10.010 (8) states that the mayor shall prepare and make available for public distribution an annual report on City affairs. The following is the report made by Sandi Marchbanks, serving her fourth term as mayor.

In the preceding nine months, the council and I have worked on a number of issues. Our first focus was on settling the use of the city gravel pits by community members who had filed a gold claim on the property in the winter of 2012. We were able to clarify a lease and a use agreement and those papers were signed in the winter of 2014. The respondents are presently able to use four of the ponds designated as fish habitat by the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife for the next five years. The lease can be renegotiated at that time.

We began an audit for fiscal year 2013 which has just been completed. The document is available at city hall if anyone would like to come in and read it. It will not be put on the city website. Deficiencies that were found with the city books have been rectified and Noel and I have begun eliminating or revising past practices. It has not been an easy task, but city staff is working hard to change old habits and learn the proper method of running a department in the city. City credit card use is being reevaluated and the council is working on policy for their future use. We have had two instances of a credit card being hacked in the past nine months. Noel's diligence in checking usage has prevented a crisis for the city. Because the state turned over the float facility to the city in September of 2013, we are now obligated to perform another audit for fiscal year 2014. That audit will begin August 8th and auditors will be present in Gustavus. A sales tax audit of local businesses was recommended by the auditors this winter and the council will need to determine whether that will be done. Presently, we have a few businesses that are non-compliant as well as a few that are in arrears with their sales tax returns, but we have collected nearly \$75,000 in past-due sales tax and have liens filed on two properties for non-compliance.

As you are well aware, winter was unkind to our float facility and as of this date, the only progress that has been made was the Saturday arrival of the two wood floats that will replace those destroyed in the January storm. There is still no word from DOT regarding a redesign or the re-installation of the breakwater float. I won't speculate on when or how this issue will be resolved. Brad and Jeff will try to install the two new floats on Wednesday, tide and weather dependent. Regulations, especially regarding overnight moorage and operator presence will still be in effect. Access to the farthest floats will again be available but that doesn't mean folks can tie up overnight. We have had two people fall in the water this season and every boat that stays tied to the floats decreases safe access to boats. People need to accept that we have a float facility for loading and unloading people, fish or goods, not a harbor. By ordinance, the city has to provide a presence at the two marine facilities and the council will need to eventually decide on how that presence will be provided. Long-time community members need to understand that Gustavus is no longer a community of 50 people and that folks who have

decided to make Gustavus their permanent or part-time home come with various ideas and attitudes, not all of which align with the old ways of doing things.

The beach bathroom is in construction. I am grateful to Elm, Shane and Sean for the clean-up of materials left over from the tank farm project as well as responding to the bid for constructing the facility. I am grateful to my son, Justin, for managing the project, as well as the support of the Beach Committee. The city has purchased bear-proof trash receptacles, originally recommended by Paul Berry, that will go on a concrete pad once the building has been completed. Those receptacles will ship on the 22nd of this month. As with the other services the community has requested through the years, we need actual people to clean and maintain the restrooms. The council has a job description in the works and we have provided funding for this position.

The road committee tackled the problem of last winter's flooding on Rink Creek road with ditch cleaning and culverts. They hope to continue some ditching in other areas, but will be restricted by the future of forest service receipt money that has to be used specifically for maintenance of city roads as well as a portion going to the fire department. We have not received further word on the replacement for the Rink Creek bridge, but the road committee ordered a temporary fix for the present bridge. Thanks to John, Aimee and Abigail for their diligence.

In the on-going culvert replacement project on Mountain View Road, the culvert at Spruce Lane will be replaced with a bridge by next spring. We also received a CIP grant for \$107,000.00 for another phase of the project. My thanks to Mike Taylor for managing this project.

We have set up individual accounts through Alaska Municipal League Investment Pool for the city departments to enable us to track grants and city funding better. The council continues to develop and implement policy for the city. We are working on policies that provide further clarification for personnel, purchasing and spending. We adopted a major revision to our Title 4.17 Contract and Purchasing, and we've redefined our ordinance for council participation.

The DRC has a new building, built with CIP money. The City has provided funding for Paul to heat and sheetrock that building and to begin a planning process for the future of the landfill.

The City provided funding for the fire department to purchase new turn-out gear. The department held EMTII and Firefighter 1 classes this winter and a CIP grant will be used to further refine the 911 radio system, making it HIPPA compliant. Dr. Vaught continues as our medical director and Airlift Northwest personnel will be coming in to work with the department as well. Lori Ewing, our new deputy clerk is providing administration support for the fire department and has been asked to become the HIPPA-compliance officer for the department. We have established a fee schedule and community subscription for ambulance service after many years of providing that service with no financial reimbursement to the department.

The library has upgraded computers and is in the process of completing a great deal of deferred maintenance, all with funding from the City.

We are still in pursuit of the land here at city hall. DNR has issued survey instructions and a preliminary decision on the four acres here at city hall but DNR is presently in debate as to whether or not the road that leads to Parkers is forest service land. We hope to have that matter clarified soon.

Regretfully, we have lost two council members, two city employees and one of the city's best friends, Peter McKay, this year. We have gained two great city employees though, who I have the great pleasure of working with here at city hall, and I truly appreciate Lori's and Noël's contribution. They go beyond their assigned duties to make things work efficiently here. I'm also grateful to have gained a new councilmember, Mike Taylor, who brings perspective and statesmanship to the council.

We are extremely fortunate that in the short amount of time we have been incorporated, we have been able to set aside money that we are now beginning to use **prudently**. I would remind everyone that it has taken us ten years to get to this point and if it is used imprudently, can disappear in an instant. We are told again and again by our friends at DCCED that we are not the norm in the state, that most Alaska communities of our size, incorporated far longer than us, would give anything to be able to provide additional money to their city departments, beyond yearly budgets, to repair, replace or update worn-out or faulty technical or office equipment and furnishings. I trust future councils to remember their fiduciary responsibility and keep Gustavus in good financial health.

The council election will take place October 7th and there will be four open seats. Our council needs people who care about this entire community, who will put aside personal agendas, and who will commit time to understand the many issues. The city council needs to be able to discuss and debate and then reach an agreement on how best to move forward. We have made great strides in ten years and I believe we're on a stable path. Still, a healthy government needs to be able to flex and change for the better and that will only be achieved when the community participates. It took more than seven people to vote in favor of incorporation. It's time for more people to step forward and work for the good of our community.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandi Marchbanks
Mayor, City of Gustavus