

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Alvin D. Osterback called the Aleutians East Borough Assembly meeting to order by teleconference on September 10, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mayor Alvin D. Osterback	Present
Chris Babcock	Present
Carol Foster	Present
Warren Wilson	Present
Josephine Shangin	Present
Paul Gronholdt	Present
Brenda Wilson	Present
Denise Mobeck	Present

Advisory Members:

Dailey Schaack, Cold Bay	Present
Samantha McNeley, Nelson Lagoon	Present
Tom Hoblet, False Pass	Absent

A quorum was present.

Staff Present:

Roxann Newman, Finance Director
Tina Anderson, Clerk
Anne Bailey, Administrator
Mary Tesche, Assistant Administrator
Ernie Weiss, Natural Resources Director
Charlotte Levy, Assistant Natural Resources Director
Glennora Dushkin, Administrative Assistant
Laura Tanis, Communications Director

Adoption of the Agenda:

CHRIS moved to adopt the agenda with the addition and second by BRENDA.

Addition:

New Business, Discussion of video-conferencing and ways to increase public participation.

Hearing no more the agenda is approved.

Conflict of Interests:

Mayor Osterback asked for any potential **Conflict of Interests** to discuss. There were no conflicts on agenda items.

Community Roll Call and Public Comments on Agenda Items:

All Assembly and staff were participating by teleconference from their individual locations, for the purpose of following the mandates of social distancing and protecting the public health. Also broadcast on KSDP radio.

The Communications Director, Laura Tanis, will read any Public Comments submitted by e-mail.

There were no public comments.

PRESENTATIONS

GCI, Dan Boyette and Jennifer Samuelson:

Dan Boyette and Jennifer Nielsen, with GCI, provided a presentation on fiber optic, AU Aleutians project. Mr. Boyette said they submitted a grant application mid-April with U.S. Dept. of Rural Service, for \$25M. GCI received support from AEB, other government entities, businesses, government health, and education along the Aleutian Chain; and support from State legislature representatives; and from the Alaska congressional delegation. He expects to hear from Rural Utilities Service soon as to who received funding. If the \$25M is received, GCI has full authorization from Liberty Media to move forward. GCI will spend \$35M of their own money on the project. If we do get approved, the project could start in 2021, initiating service in Unalaska and Akutan in the 3rd quarter of 2022, others following that.

DAILEY asked about Cold Bay and Nelson Lagoon. Mr. Boyette said route is on southside of the Peninsula, Kodiak to Unalaska, crosses to the north side at False Pass going to Unalaska. False Pass would require a branching unit in front of False Pass. Cold Bay extension could come out of King Cove facility. Working to get False Pass and Cold Bay back in scope for initial project. If fail to not have it back in scope, it can be added as an additional phase after initial phase.

One of the other things in scope for the six communities to receive service on route is fiber to every home and business in the community. Previously was discussing wireless network in communities, but the service would be better served with fiber access network to every home and business facility in the community. Williams Communications is contracted to work on the required local permits.

Mr. Boyette said in the business case, is upgrades and improvements to cellular LTE, if not better in all the communities. We haven't done anything with cellular or wireless network yet. The AU budget will allow communities to receive cellular upgrades with additional towers and equipment upgrades to LTE speeds.

Mayor Osterback asked if there is a Plan B, if fiber optic funding doesn't come through. Mr. Boyette said, if we don't get the grant, we will revisit and figure out what we need to do to upgrade the cellular network.

WARREN asked whether they would provide landline service, if fiber optic is brought in. Mr. Boyette said GCI is not planning to do local service. Cellular, internet and video service with fiber optic, but no local service.

WARREN asked about the location of cable. Boyette said initial study and undersea survey has been done and cable will be on the continental shelf, so not too deep. Locations to come ashore have also been identified.

TelAlaska, Roger Meeks:

Roger Meeks with TelAlaska provided a presentation on services provided and future packages. He said TelAlaska took over the network for AEBSD. Engineering and construction teams got to work, even with pandemic, travel challenges, and quarantine rules. Earth stations erected in Akutan and False Pass and all working in time for start of school. We also were able to work with the AEBSD to help with some internal network needs, for local Wi-Fi to be able to be deployed, if needed, for virtual learning to students. All AEBSD services were up and completed by deadline, July 1 and should greatly improve the online experience.

Also, while a TelAlaska technician is in Akutan for maintenance, support is being provided to KSDP radio station in their efforts to get their signal out to Akutan and False Pass.

TelAlaska continues to look at opportunities not only with AEBSD but municipalities to provide affordable broadband. Broadband served by satellite is very expensive in rural areas. TelAlaska is looking at ways to drive those prices down providing inexpensive packages and greater packages. In the next couple of months, TelAlaska will move our residential internet packages to greater than a megabyte, not impacting the cost. Improvements will be across the board at no additional costs. Services going forward will be higher caps, higher speed, and lower monthly recurring rates. It's what we can do today to help, by bringing more higher quality internet to AEB.

WARREN said he likes what he is hearing about providing service up to one megabyte. Mayor Osterback asked how you get notified when you reach your cap. Mr. Meeks said you can check your usage on the internet during the billing cycle. It is an inexpensive platform that requires you to go to the site, no auto notifier.

DENISE asked, with the school getting TelAlaska service, whether it will affect the speeds of residential services. Mr. Meeks said the AEBSD gets a dedicated isolated service so will not have an effect on the local network. If poor services, contact TelAlaska.

CHRIS said when calling in on community wide problem, support always wants to walk you through modem troubleshooting instead of looking at community wide issues. CHRIS asked if the services are slower when there are more people online.

Mr. Meeks said we will be expanding the back haul, and peak hours does experience congestion at times. TelAlaska monitors that on a day by day basis. When we see the congestion is affecting the experience, will increase the backhaul of the service. We have done a good job as we can to provide service to customers. When we roll out our packages, we will roll out the adjustment to service.

PAUL said the cell phone service AT&T and TelAlaska, equipment seems to be less than stellar. There have been equipment issues. Mr. Meeks said the cellular that TelAlaska deployed is 2G and 3G network. He does not foresee building the network to 5G. If you don't have cell service where you normally do then feedback is necessary.

JOSEPHINE asked if you will be offering services in Akutan besides the School. Mr. Meeks said that is on their mind. They hope to get something in Akutan this year or early next year.

Minutes, August 13, 2020 Assembly Meeting Minutes:

MOTION

WARREN moved to approve the August 13, 2020 Assembly Meeting Minutes and second by JOSEPHINE.

Hearing no objections, **MOTION CARRIED.**

Financial Report – July (no monthly financial)

July Investment Report:
Report in packet.

CONSENT AGENDA

- Resolution 21-14, appointing election judges for the October 6, 2020 Regular Election.
- Resolution 21-15 appointing a canvass committee for the October 6, 2020 Regular Election.

MOTION

CAROL moved to approve the Consent Agenda and second by DENISE.

The Clerk explained that these are routine election resolutions appointing election judges and a Canvass Committee for the October 6, 2020 Regular Election. If someone is not able to serve, the Clerk is allowed to appoint a replacement.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Brenda, Paul, Chris, Josephine, Denise, Warren, Carol. Advisory: Samantha, Dailey.

NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED

PUBLIC HEARING

Public Hearing Ordinance 21-03, Amending Title 4, Elections to add provisions for increased voter accessibility:

MOTION

CHRIS moved to adopt Ordinance 21-03. Second by BRENDA.

DISCUSSION

The Clerk reviewed saying Public Hearing Ordinance 21-03 will allow Early Voting 15 days prior to the election to increase voter accessibility prior to Election Day. This will provide better social distancing and protect the public health, during this pandemic. The ordinance will also allow the clerk to appoint a high school student in good standing in a public, private or qualified home school program, 16 years old or older, and a U.S. citizen.

Mayor opened for Public Hearing. No public comments were received, Public Hearing closed.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Warren, Brenda, Denise, Chris, Carol, Paul, Josephine. Advisory: Dailey, Samantha.

NAY: None.

MOTION CARRIED

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 21-12, authorizing the mayor to negotiate and execute Amendment No. 4 of the Co-Sponsorship Agreement (CSA) with DOT/PF and City of Akutan.

MOTION

WARREN moved to approve Resolution 21-12 and second by DENISE.

The Administrator said AEB entered into a CSA with State of Alaska DOT/PF, and the City of Akutan, January, 2010 for the construction and operation of the Akutan Airport located on Akun Island. Per agreement, AEB agreed to provide the transportation link between Akun/Akutan for 20 years. The CSA has been amended numerous times.

Corps of Engineers recently authorized the Akutan Traditional Council (Tribe) to participate as a co-sponsor of the Akutan Navigational Project. Per amendment #4, the Tribe and AEB will be co-sponsors, to investigate the development of a breakwater and dock on Akun Island under the Tribal Partnership Program. CSA agrees to use \$1.016M and not more than \$200,000 for any additional match or costs, and extend the deadline to December 31, 2022. Funding sources available is \$4.38M for local match and all three parties in CSA have to agree to use.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Warren, Paul, Denise, Carol, Chris, Brenda, Josephine. Advisory: Samantha, Daily.

NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 21-13, authorizing the mayor to negotiate and execute a Tribal Partnership Program (TPP) cost share agreement between U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Akutan Tribal Council (Tribe) and AEB for the Akun Island Navigational Improvements Tribal Partnership Feasibility Study.

MOTION

BRENDA moved to approve Resolution 21-13 and second by WARREN.

Administrator said in order to proceed AEB needs to enter into a TPP Cost-Sharing Agreement with Corps of Engineers and Tribe. Corp will conduct the study using funds appropriated by Congress and funds provided by non-federal sponsors, and in-kind contributions in accordance with applicable Federal laws, regulations and policies. AEB shall contribute 50% of shared costs, projected at \$1.016M.

If approved, AEB will provide a letter to Army Corps approving Agreement and expressing interest in moving forward with the study and will be able to negotiate with the Corps and Tribe and execute the agreement and all necessary documents to initiate the study. Tribal President, Joe Bereskin, will also be working on these documents as well. Documents to go to the Corps tomorrow.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Chris, Paul, Warren, Denise, Brenda, Carol, Josephine. Advisory: Samantha, Dailey.

NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution 21-16, authorizing the mayor to negotiate and execute an agreement with Robertson Monagle and Eastaugh to provide legal representation in the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals to appeal the June 1, 2020 Alaska Federal District Court Decision by Judge Sedwick in Friends of Alaska National Wildlife Refuge, et.al. V. King Cove Corp. al.; in an amount not to exceed \$107,750.

MOTION

BRENDA moved to approve Resolution 21-16 and second by CAROL.

Administrator said Robertson Monagle and Eastaugh is requesting authority to provide legal representation to appeal the decision by Alaska Federal District Court Judge Sedwick. The committee consists of AEB, King Cove Corporation, Agdaagux Tribal Council, Belkofski Tribal Council, City of King Cove, and City of Cold Bay. Current litigation status, Judge Sedwick invalidated the King Cove Land Exchange Agreement. Each of the three parties, King Cove Corporation, Agdaagux Tribal Council, Belkofski Tribal Council; State of Alaska; and Secretary of the Interior, Dept. of Interior and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; filed a Notice of Appeal. October 25, 2020 is the scheduled date to file opening Brief, at this time.

Scope of work includes contacting Dept of Interior and Dept of Justice; drafting the Opening Brief and legal research to defend the legality of the Land Exchange Agreement; coordinating with State Dept. of Law; drafting Reply Brief to Appelles' Answering Brief; contingency for unanticipated work; and travel expenses, if necessary. Cost is \$107,750 and AEB will enter into a not to exceed agreement. Funding to come out of the King Cove Access Project grant.

DISCUSSION

PAUL asked whether there has been discussion on strategy, if there is a change in administration. Bailey said there has been discussions there is unknowns on what is going to happen in November on the federal election. However, not much discussion at great length, but will bring it up with the attorneys to get an answer.

ROLL CALL

YEAS: Chris, Carol, Warren, Paul, Josephine, Denise, Brenda. Advisory: Samantha, Dailey.
NAY: None

MOTION CARRIED

MOTION CARRIED

OLD BUSINESS

Cod Fishery Update:

Natural Resource Director, Ernie Weiss, said a Groundfish Plan Team meeting happening now and was able to listen to AFSC, Steve Barbeaux, during the break.

Resource Assistant Director, Charlotte Levy, said Plan Team meeting happening now, and in reviewing Barbeaux presentation, there is new information on marine heat wave in 2020, similar to the Blob, 2014-2016.

Cod increased in 2020, and study showed some of the highest density. Long line survey catch numbers for 2020 raw catch numbers were higher than 2019, but lower than 2018. Fish & Game 2020 survey shows abundance is low. There were very few small fish. All of the fishery catch much lower in 2020 than 2019. The by-catch stock is mixed. They did produce some preliminary groundfish data, however, Barbeaux said new data will not be used this year, but rolling over to 2021 so Total Allowable Catch will be the same, which may close federal fishery and allow a small state fishery, yet to be determined.

Weiss said the default position of the Plan Team is to roll over last year's specs. The NPFMC agenda will be discussing specs and surveys for 2021, hoping all surveys are covered since 2019 surveys were missed.

PAUL asked Levy if that was the State survey you are referring to, was that August survey on groundfish and crab you were referring to. Charlotte said yes, but does not have crab information available. Weiss said it takes a while to assimilate that to get information together.

NEW BUSINESS

Aleutians East Borough Strategic Plan Quarter 2 Update:

The Administrator said in packet is the Strategic Plan for quarter two. Some items moved to next cycle because of Covid. A lot has been accomplished in fisheries due to Natural Resource Dept.

Two items completed in their entirety is Sand Point School grant application and Sand Point and Akutan harbor float systems grant applications, to state and federal level.

Discussion – Salmon Disaster Declaration:

Mayor Osterback said the Resource Dept. has a draft resolution. There are percentages to be placed in. Ernie Weiss said, in discussing concerns over communities' economic downturn, all salmon species down on the South and North side of the Peninsula. The draft resolution assumption is it will be a South Peninsula only disaster declaration request. He will review the number of salmon, lower weight/size, and price. Looking for Assembly direction and then will come back in October. There is no deadline for disaster declaration.

Mayor Osterback asked the Assembly if this is something we should be pursuing.

PAUL said we can consider taking action next month, once season is over.

CAROL supports pursuing it and to discuss with fishermen.

Discussion video-conferencing and increasing public participation:

PAUL suggested looking into video conferencing and to allow better public participation.

CAROL and CHRIS felt the internet speed is too slow for video. CHRIS asked if the public can dial in to GCI. The Administrator said she will look into the cost of additional lines and will also continue to look into more options.

Mayor Osterback said most communities will have a lot of time lag.

JOSEPHINE said GCI is up to 50 lines just not sure on the cost. She said, in Akutan, it is \$25 per gigabyte so would not be able to use video.

PAUL said he has attended video conference meeting with 40 plus attendees, but does also have an upgraded internet package. Feels it is worth trying.

BRENDA said she uses video conferencing daily and has been able to use her personal internet.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

Administrator's Report in packet. Highlights below:

Covid-19 Update:

September 2, six people tested positive, all nonresidents and were immediately placed in isolation to keep the public protected from the virus. EAT doing a great job.

The Emergency Assistance & Economic Stimulus Grant Program was released on September 1, 2020. Have received 49 applications, and paid out \$13,400 to residents, so far. Continually going through applications, as we receive them.

\$150,000 appropriated to the Non-Profit & Civic Organization Relief Grant Program. In draft form, but will get out to the public September 15. Program will award up to \$10,000 prorated to all qualified applicants.

Submitted the August CARES Act funding report to the State per grant agreement yesterday \$153,416 on CARES Act expenditures.

AEB Employee Policy is still in place and extended until September 30.

Continue to post updates on Facebook and AEB website, and continue to host weekly meetings with the communities and Eastern Aleutian Tribes.

Face Mask Campaign has been initiated. If you have a photo wearing a mask, send to Mary Tesche with a quote why you wear a mask.

Cold Bay Terminal:

Working with TSA on final design for their footprint, to function properly for better scanning and space use.

Also, discussions with Ravn Alaska on plans to get them in the terminal.

Bond Refinancing:

Informed that the Series Three GO Funding Bond sale was temporary postponed. Bond bank researching whether to move forward or not.

Strategic Planning:

Entered into contract with PGS and will be setting up meetings and will get information out to the Assembly on times for meetings.

Akutan Airport: U.S. Dept of Transportation requested proposals for EAS at Akutan, due on September 21. Contract to begin January 1, 2021. Maritime Helicopter and Grant Aviation are both interested in continuing services.

JOSEPHINE asked what the percentage per community of CARES Act stimulus grant applications received. Administrator said we have only received applications from Sand Point and King Cove, so far.

Assistant Administrator Report in packet. Highlights below:

Sand Point School DEED Grant:

Total funding request is \$3.9M, if funded 2022-23. Top five projects get funded so if top five will get funding in 2021.

Emergency Assistance and Economic Stimulus Assistance Grant:

Received several applications and if anyone has any questions can call or e-mail.

Communications Director Report in packet. Highlights below:

FY2020 Annual Report:

Annual Report went out to the residents, arriving in the region around September 3.

E-News:

Fish News and In-the-Loop continue to go out.

U.S. Census:

Deadline September 30. Benefits funding, important for people to participate in the Census.

Natural Resources Director Report in packet. Highlights below:

AEB Land Survey Projects:

Granted extension to McClintok Land Associates to finish the Sandy River and Bear Lake project surveys.

Board of Fisheries: No agenda change requests for Area M. Legislature has been having confirmation hearings on Board of Fisheries appointments. Make up of board is not looking favorable for us. Area M not on schedule until 2022, with board proposals due next year.

Crab Plan Team: Meeting next week.

Redistricting Board: Board is set and won't be able to do work until March. Will follow process.

Assistant Natural Resources Director Report in packet. Highlights below:

WGA2 Electronic Monitoring (EM)/EFP:

Pollock C Season went quickly, causing lots of quirks and problems due to round the clock deliveries. Setting up a lot of meetings with fleet and processors before D Season.

Attending the trawl EM meeting next week. Will have reports and making recommendation to the Council regarding the program.

NGA Fishermen's Data Portal:

Have been having meetings to sort through property clauses for software and code issues. Want to make sure AEB and fishermen have total and unobstructed access to the portal now and in the future. Making sure the ownership for all information is owned by AEB. Trying to get access for landings and ticket to do a trial run and see how the hot spots information is working.

Mariculture:

Due to Covid, currently a travel ban for AEB staff. Will be putting together a travel plan and re-discuss going out to do field work.

Lastly, University of British Columbia has a new discovery, a new species of kelp that has moved westward, into our region.

ASSEMBLY COMMENTS

WARREN said USDA is going to pay \$530M to fishermen for the 2019 trade war. He also noted the possibility of GCI proposed plan to connect Cold Bay to fiber optic through King Cove facility, by way of road.

Mayor's Comments:

Mayor Osterback said staff working is hard due to Covid and restricted to home working, which is stressful. It will be good when we get back to normal, have open meetings and people can sit and talk to one another. He said when the staff did a video conference it was good to see each other.

PUBLIC COMMENTS None.

NEXT MEETING DATE

Regular Assembly meeting is October 8, 2020.

Special Assembly meeting October 19, 2020, to certify the election.

ADJOURNMENT

WARREN moved to adjourn and second by JOSEPHINE. Hearing no more, the meeting adjourned at 4:58 p.m.



Mayor Alvin D. Osterback



Tina Anderson, Clerk

Date: 10/8/2020