

Mayor's Report – March 7, 2017

Since our last Council meeting on February 21:

- February 27th – March 3rd our City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Clerk, Community Development Director, Councilmember Needles and I all flew to Juneau to meet with our legislators, Senator Dunleavy, Representative Rauscher, other legislators and administration staff. The meetings were well received and we feel that much movement was made on many of the City's issues.
- When we met with Mike Lesmenn of DOT, we discussed the right of ways for VFDA, the possibility of extending the bike path to Keystone Canyon, Tail Gate's request, the Glacier Stream Bridge and future flood mitigation efforts, but most of the time was spent on Aleutian Trailer Park and what we were requesting and why. We were given good advice and contact information along with the statement that DOT wants to find ways to get to yes.
- The meeting with DNR was very enlightening. When we met with Ed Fogels of DNR, we discussed the Tail Gate request, Levitation 49's events and their positive work on the trails and at Worthington Glacier last summer, and gravel extraction in Glacier Stream. We were told that HB136 and HB 77 both were passed to allow municipalities more freedom to use the gravel especially in conjunction with flood mitigation. We thanked them for moving so quickly on approving the event permit for the Fat Bike Fest, and for working with DOT to quick claim the Aleutian land.
- The meeting with Michelle Hale of DEC brought us good news that the State was more than happy to let the City develop septic system regulations and then take over the oversight of installations. Regulation 18.18.72.280 is the current State regulation that has been looked over by a working group who have suggested changes to make this system more user friendly. These suggested changes still need to go through legal review and public comment before the hopeful adoption in September.
- We finally met with Department of Corrections commissioner, Dean Williams. We discussed the statutes put in place though SB91 and were told that there will be changes coming in bills passed this year, but the majority of the new statutes will remain. He is looking forward to working with Valdez on pretrial procedures. Both DOC and DEC are hoping Valdez can "be the poster child" for the state in these city/state partnerships.
- During the meetings with the representatives and senators we made sure to let them know we expect them to help work on and find a fiscal answer which needs to include new revenue before the session is adjourned. We got hopeful responses from them both on the budget issue. We talked about the Gas Pipeline and encouraged all of the legislatures we met with to look at the FERC comments we sent and understand why the Valdez route is the most economic and environmentally safe route. We also met with Representative Kreiss- Tomkins regarding the proposed trail, but discussed fiscal concerns too.
- The governor was out of town, but we did meet and had dinner with Mr. Hozey. We discussed the Gas Line route, and the budget. He said that everyone needs to keep telling the legislature to develop a fiscal solution that has to include new sources of revenue. He made a very good case to why an income tax would be the best avenue to achieve the solution.
- Mr. Needles and I also were able to sit in on the Oil & Gas Production Tax testimony on HB111 by the Oil & Gas consultant. His suggestions were very sound and hopefully the House will accept them and move forward with this bill.
- Valdez was windy and cold while we were gone, and we got the snow in Juneau. It is safe to say, our snow removal far outshines that of the capital city's.

Respectfully submitted,



Ruthie Knight, Mayor City of Valdez