

# City of Valdez

212 Chenega Ave.  
Valdez, AK 99686



## Meeting Minutes -Draft

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

7:00 PM

Regular Meeting

Council Chambers

## Parks & Recreation Commission

**REGULAR AGENDA - 7:00 PM****I. CALL TO ORDER**

There was no call to order on the audio/video recording.

**II. ROLL CALL**

There wasn't a formal roll call on the audio/video recording, but with video recording was able to see Commissioners and others that were present at the meeting.

Present: 6- Commission Member Amy Goold  
Commission Member Sarah Jorgenson-Owen  
Commission Member Pete Carter  
Commission Member Benjamin Rush  
Commission Member Brian Teale  
Commission Member Michael Britt

Also Present: 2- PRCS Director Nickolas Farline  
PRCS Office Manager Ann (Nikki) Duhamel

**III. PUBLIC BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Commissioner Amy Goold cleared up some confusion that took place in last month meeting on proper parliament procedures (Commissioner Goold was not present at the last Commission Meeting). Commissioner Goold stated she reviewed the public video recording of last month's Commission meeting, following her review of the Commission Meeting, Commissioner Goold reached out to Allie Ferko the Valdez Deputy City Clerk, and got some education for herself and in a couple of months Commission Members will be getting together for a more formal training on how Commission Meetings need to be ran. Commissioner Goold asked for three things to happen from her fellow Commissioners. First thing is to please raise your hand and wait to be called on by the Chair-person to ask any question or provide comments. Second is to keep things concise and on topic and the third thing is Public Business and Agenda Items will be kept to five minute speaking limit per person. Commissioner Goold explained why the time limit is important to stick with.

Commissioner Amy Goold invited anyone that has a non-agenda item to discuss to come up and speak. Commissioner Goold also asked that when you come up to speak to please state your name for the record and to also stand at the podium. She also reminded everyone of the five minute speaking time limit.

Citizen Matt Smelcer came before Commission tonight to publicly give thanks to Marci Roberson for the work she did helping with setting up the kids 120race track at the Pipe Yard, and to thank Director Farline and the Administration as well.

Commissioner Amy Goold thanked Matt Smelcer. Commissioner Goold asked if anyone else had anything for public business from the floor.

Citizen Ben Fagan came to speak about the Skate Park. Mr. Fagan noticed the smaller ramps from the Skate Park were removed this past summer. Mr. Fagan mentioned he has been chatting with a gentleman named Joey Martin that has his own skate park building business out of Portland. Ben Fagan

explained that Mr. Martin recently designed the skate park for Nike at their headquarters. Mr. Fagan said that Mr. Martin brought a group of pro-skaters to Alaska four years ago and is interested in speaking with people about building a skate park. Mr. Fagan stated that Mr. Martin would be willing to have discussions face to face or via Zoom, traveling is not seen as an obstacle for Mr. Martin. Commissioner Amy Goold asked if any Commissioners had questions or comments. Commissioner Pete Carter asked Ben Fagan if he had a way to be contacted. Mr. Fagan said he would pass that information on. Commissioner Britt mentioned that Mr. Fagan also has a Facebook page. Ben Fagan said that the name of the Facebook page he started is called Valdez Skate Park. Commissioner Goold asked Director Farline if it would be appropriate for Mr. Fagan to contact him on getting this to be put on as an Agenda Item at some point. Director Farline said that if there is enough interest from the Commission to bring it back as an Agenda /discussion item that would be great. Commissioner Goold said she would be open to suggestions after Mr. Fagan has more conversations with the staff. Commissioner Carter asked if the four head nods would work for this to be placed as an agenda item. Commissioner Jorgenson-Owen confirmed that is correct. Commissioner Carter then asked Mr. Fagan if Mr. Martin could have a presentation to present in a month. Ben Fagan stated he thinks so. Commissioner Goold said that it don't take four head nods, but it does take two head nods get something added as an agenda item. Mr. Fagan asked for the date of the next Commission Meeting. Ben Fagan said that he could have something together by the April Commission Meeting. Director Farline suggested to do a Zoom presentation to get the conversation started with Commission. Commissioner Amy Goold thanked Ben Fagan.

Again Commissioner Amy Goold ask if anyone else had anything to discuss on non-agenda items. Seen none Commissioner Goold moved onto New Business.

#### IV. NEW BUSINESS

##### 1. [Portable Ice Rink Discussion](#)

Commissioner Amy Goold explained to her fellow Commission Members that this item is on the agenda for discussion to present their recommendations to City Council on whether or not a portable ice rink should be purchased and what the plan for storage would be.

**MOTION: Commissioner Pete Carter moved to place the Portable Ice Rink for discussion. Seconded by Commissioner Michael Britt.**

Commissioner Goold asked Director Farline for a briefing. Director Farline explained that the Commission doesn't have the authority to make the actual purchase, but their role as a Commission is to vote whether or not to purchase the portable ice rink, and what will be done for storage. Then have the Commission's recommendations presented to City Council. Director Farline said the cost for a 100ft. x 200ft. portable ice rink with shipping and a storage solution would be in the \$20,000 dollar price range. Director Farline again explained what the purpose of tonight's Commission Meeting is addressing on this matter.

Commissioner Amy Goold asked her fellow Commissioners if they have all had time to really check out the summery statement that was provided to them with the agenda item and if not, please take a moment to do so. Commissioner Pete Carter inquired if the location of the current ice rink is where a new ice rink would be. Director Farline said as of now yes, but there are other spots to potentially look at. Director Farline explained where the current ice rink sits, the parking lot was built to drain so the ground is not level and with that comes some challenges. Commissioner Carter also inquired how it would be staffed and ran. Commissioner Amy Goold asked to build off of Commissioner Carter's inquiry. Commissioner Goold was given the go ahead. Commissioner Goold was very frank that she was not happy to see this item come before her. Commissioner Goold's reasoning is, this is not the conversation that has been taking place for the last year, but a creation of a whole new Parks & Recreation facility that would need additional funding, extra time

and equipment from staff. Commissioner Goold also mentioned the other types of financial ramification that could potentially happen if the ice rink becomes a Parks & Recreation facility. Again Commissioner Goold expressed her frustration with the current item before her because it's not the conversation that has been happening for the last year. Commissioner Amy Goold shared that the conversations that have took place for the last year with Mr. Smelcer was that he intending to form some type of club or organization that would oversee maintenance and operations, but now Commission is being asked to create a new facility for Park & Recreation to manage. Commissioner Carter seen this item as they were just asking for Parks & Recreation to buy the rink and then someone else was going to look after it. Commissioner Goold then read aloud a section of the summery statement to clearly address what is being asked, and again expressed the ramification this would have on multiple departments throughout the city. Commissioner Sarah Jorgenson-Owen was also under the impression from past conversations that Parks & Recreation would buy an easy rink to help support Matt Smelcer with the ice rink, and he would have some type of third party group(s) for the maintenance and operations. Commissioner Jorgenson-Owen gave a brief history on how the Salmonberry Ski Hill first started off, and how Parks & Recreation was able to slowly take over the responsibilities of that facility. Commissioner Jorgenson-Owen don't see why the ice rink couldn't be done the same way. Commissioner Brian Teale asked if they are trying to replace the ice rink that was where the new fire station is now located. Commissioner Goold stated it was outlined in the Master Plan that we would explore a community lead and operated temporary ice rink. Commissioner Goold feels that has been fulfilled this winter. Commissioner Amy Goold emphasized that right now we might have the funds to buy an ice rink, but the maintenance and the operations of this ice rink will require additional funds. If those funds are not provide by the city then some other things within the department will take a hit. Commissioner Goold communicated different ramifications that could possibly happen if Park & Recreation was to take on an ice rink facility. Commissioner Goold doesn't feel this is the organic end result of the conversations that Commission has been having. Commissioner Carter mentioned surveys and the numbers are overwhelming for support of an ice rink. Commissioner Goold agreed and she doesn't want to sound like she isn't for the ice rink, she is, but just not having one ran and operated as a Parks & Recreation facility. Commissioner Teale would like to see the ice rink included in the feasibility study on the multi-purpose Recreation Center. Commissioner Teale feels an ice rink is really important to have in a winter town, he also mentioned Valdez is one of the few community's in Alaska that doesn't have an ice rink. Commissioner Teale brought up that there are several community's that are smaller than Valdez and they have more than one ice rink. Commissioner Teale feels strongly about needing a good path forward with having an ice rink, it's a great family activity/group sport. Director Farline gave some insight on how the ice rink operations could be done with assistants from the Parks Department. Commissioner Amy Goold stated she is stuck on the future ramifications and she also agrees with Commissioner Teale about having a path forward. Commissioner Goold thought commission was on the right path, so that is where her frustrations are coming from about tonight's agenda item. Commissioner Teale felt very excited to see this item on the agenda because in years past there has been a lot of support for an ice rink just City Council decided against it. Commissioner Teale also gave kudos on how well maintained the volunteers have operated the ice rink over the years, so he feels it has already been proven if there is an ice rink it can be maintained and will be well used. Commissioner Goold feels she wasn't giving enough time to think though all the implications before coming into tonight's meeting to make recommendations.

Citizen Matt Smelcer clarified that what is on tonight's agenda is not what he suggested in the last meeting. What Mr. Smelcer did suggest is a conversation. This not something he wanted to have pushed on anybody. Mr. Smelcer said at the last meeting he requested to have a possible sit down meeting. As of right now Mr. Smelcer said there is a beautiful ice rink to use for the 2021 season. Mr. Smelcer asked Commission is they are aware of the amount of man power it took to

make the ice rink happen. Matt Smelcer then noted it only took one man (himself) a couple nights a week. Mr. Smelcer doesn't understand where all the bureaucracy over a sheet of ice is coming from. Mr. Smelcer feels there needs to be a work session of some type to give Commission more clarity on the matter. Matt Smelcer pointed out he has had the ice rink operational for the last eight years, and has also put on community events with and without Parks & Recreation. Mr. Smelcer feels that the agenda item before Commission is more of a starting/talking point. Mr. Smelcer doesn't feel the Commission should have to vote on this right now without further discussion. Commissioner Amy Goold thanked Mr. Smelcer. Mr. Smelcer also added that he feels five minutes isn't enough time to have a proper conversation. Commissioner Amy Goold said she recently has reviewed past meeting recordings and in the past meetings Mr. Smelcer has said he would get some kind of formally organized club or group. Mr. Smelcer stated he didn't not say that. Commissioner Amy Goold asked Mr. Smelcer to please go back and review past meetings because that is what he has been saying. Mr. Smelcer then agreed that he must have said that. Commissioner Amy Goold asked that Commission be presented with a formal roster of volunteers, something that shows a real group of people dedicated to the operations of the ice rink. Mr. Smelcer agreed that if he would do what Commissioner Amy Goold is asking it would help Director Farline justify the expense. Commissioner Carter mentioned the need for recording the number of users. Mr. Smelcer thanked Commission for their time and asked to please further the conversation with him.

Citizen Tommy Kimberlin came before Commission tonight to support Mr. Smelcer and the ice rink. Mr. Kimberlin gave kudos to Mr. Smelcer for all the hard work and dedication he has for the ice rink. Mr. Kimberlin appreciates all the work Parks & Recreation does for the community. Mr. Kimberlin feels having an ice rink is a huge asset to the community. Tommy Kimberlin feels if everyone was to come together it would all work out for the better. Mr. Kimberlin stated there is a ton of people willing to volunteer and if that needs to be presented in a public form it can be done. Commissioner Amy Goold thanked Tommy Kimberlin and asked if any other Commissioners has questions or comments for Mr. Kimberlin.

Citizen Hope Van Der Meulen came before Commission to also support Mr. Smelcer and the ice rink. Hope Van Der Meulen brought up that all most 20years ago there was a big push to have a permanent type ice rink in the winter, but that still has not happened. Mrs. Van Der Meulen feels the ice rink is a great afterschool activity for kids to enjoy, and its more accessible then the Salmonberry Ski Hill. Hope Van Der Meulen feels this is an important asset for the community. She likes the idea of a portable ice rink, and maybe too have a covered area to have the ice rink placed under. Hope Van Der Meulen thanked Commission and emphasized the need for an ice rink. Commissioner thanked Hope Van Der Meulen.

Roxanne Murphy the Assistant Manager for the City of Valdez came to tonight's meeting to give some clarification to Commission as to why this item is being presented to the Commission. Ms. Murphy stated staff worked with the Smelcers to try and come up with options to move forward. The City of Valdez understands this is a priority for the community. Roxanne Murphy communicated the staffs hope is to have a club that would oversee the operations, but Mr. Smelcer communicated that would be complicated with all his current obligations. Ms. Murphy said the City Manager sees how important the ice rink is to the community and wanted to see this move forward, and the only option at that point was to have staff manage it. This is why the item on the agenda was presented to Commission as is. Ms. Murphy emphasized that this would still have to be presented to City Council and consider the budget. Roxanne Murphy thanked Commission for allowing her to speak and hope that she cleared up a lot of questions. Commissioner Amy Goold thanked Roxanne Murphy for the clarification.

Citizen Ron Hoffman came tonight to express his support of Mr. Smelcer. Mr. Hoffman has lived in Valdez since 1994. Mr. Hoffman stated the City has always provide an ice rink/hockey rink for

the community to use, back in the day Parks and Recreation would close the parking lot of the "Teen Center" (now known as the Recreation Center) and flood it. In 2003 the City had it moved to where the new fire station is being put in, and did all kinds of upgrades to make that possible. Ron Hoffman realizes having open ice in Valdez is hard to maintain. Mr. Hoffman gave kudos to Mr. Smelcer and how well he maintains the ice. Ron Hoffman also gave kudos to the Parks & Recreation Department for all they do. Commissioners thanked Ron Hoffman.

Commissioner Ben Rush personal gave thanks to Mr. Smelcer, Mr. Kimberlin, Mrs. Van Der Meulen, and Mr. Hoffman for coming and showing their passion for what they believe.

Commissioner Pete Carter feels Commission can move forward on some level. Commissioner Carter asked for some clarification on doing so. Commissioner Amy Goold feels this topic needs to be moved into a work session. Commissioner Amy Goold stated there will be a work session on April 13, 2021 at 6:00pm to 7:00pm after the work session the Regular Commission Meeting will take place.

Mr. Kimberlin asked Commissioners what they would specially like to see at the work session. Commissioner Amy Goold said to bring a list of names of the people that are committed to the operations of the ice rink. Commissioner Teale suggested to bring a sign-up/sign-in sheet to the ice rink to start showing the usage as well.

Mr. Smelcer came back up to thank all the people that came to show their support. Matt Smelcer said he is hearing Commission loud and clear on what they would like to see presented to them. Mr. Smelcer also asked Commission if they would consider adding the ice rink as a discussion item on the agenda for the April 13, 2021 Commission Meeting. Commissioners where in agreeance to have the ice rink on the agenda as a discussion item at the April Commission Meeting. Commissioner Britt gave some insight as to what he would like to see come from the work session.

## V. REPORTS

### 1. [Directors Report](#)

Director Farline gave the Directors Report verbally. Director Farline said the feasibility study closed on February 8, 2021 with eight proposals that were submitted. There is a ranking sheet to evaluate the proposed applications by staff.

Director Farline then moved onto Parks Maintenance and stated they have been down one trail groomer for most of the winter. The big piston bully has been on the outs, and we think it needs a new hydraulic pump so that has come with its own set of challenges for grooming. Director Farline gave kudos to the Maintenance Department for still being able to get the job done with limited supplies. Maintenance has also built five snow bridges to access more trails, and with additional dog waste stations. The Salmonberry Ski Hill got new electrics banal, motor heated blankets, and equipment timers. Park Maintenance and Streets Department has built a sledding hill at HHES. Parks & Recreation Departments has been assisting with the Pipe Yard for the Mayors Cup Races.

Director Farline then switched gears and informed Commission on Hannah Haase becoming the new Aquatics Coordinator. He also gave Bridget Irish Kudo for her time managing/training Hannah for the position. Director Farline stated all the swim lessons that have been offered have all been filled to max capacity. For the month of January there was 154 activity hours at the pool for open swim with 737 participants. Director Farline switched to the Salmonberry Ski Hill and stated there has been about 20 hours of the Ski Hill being open and the participant count is at 223. Director Farline said the Ski Hill has been operated by volunteers and Parks & Recreation

Staff.

Due to Covid-19 the gym activities has had some challenges but Parks & Recreation is working really closely with school district to utilize any free gym time available.

Director Farline wanted to highlight the new program called Middle School Madness. This program is offered once a month from 7:30pm-10:00pm for 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade to participate in different activities with diner at the Rec Center. This has been a big step in moving forward with getting the Rec Center open again.

Director Farline asked Commission is they had any questions or comments. Commissioner Carter inquired about the hours and days the Salmonberry Ski Hill is open. Director Farline informed Commissioner Pete Carter that the Ski hill is open on Saturday & Sunday from 10am to 4:00pm.

Director Farline also mentioned there will be a Spring Break Camp from March 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Amy Goold asked if there were any other questions for comments or Director Farline. There being none Commissioners thanked Director Farline.

## **VI. COMMISSION BUSINESS FROM THE FLOOR**

Commissioner Jorgenson-Owen stated she has been having a great time at the Ski Hill and has been volunteering as well. Commissioner Jorgenson-Owen encouraged her fellow Commissioners to volunteer as well. One of the Commissioner inquired what all it takes to be a volunteer for the Ski Hill. Commissioner Jorgenson-Owen stated she has been a volunteer for many years and was not sure of what the current regulations are but encouraged the Commissioner to get in contact with Bridget Irish.

Commissioner Britt gave kudos for this month's Agenda. He feels that there is still some confusion as to how the Commission Meetings are to be ran. Example: what it take to get things added as an agenda item. Commissioner Amy Goold stated there will be in the near future a formal training on Commission Meetings. Commissioner Britt agreed with the five minute speaking limit, but also feels there should be some leeway to allow more time if needed. Commissioner Britt also likes the idea that if things are taking up to much time to schedule a Work Session.

Sheri Pierce the Valdez City Clerk informed the Commission that she is willing to do the training but she needs a commitment from the Commission that they will all be attending at the same time. Commissioners thanked Sheri Pierce.

Commissioner Amy Goold stated that if you allow one person to go over the speaking limit time the Commission would have to allow everyone to have a longer speaking limit.

Commissioner Carter asked who the new Commission member was. Commissioner Amy Goold stated that Carl Gressel will be joining the Commission.

Commissioner Rush thanked Commissioner Goold on how well she ran tonight's meeting. Commissioner Amy Goold thanked Commissioner Rush.

Commissioner Britt also thanked Sheri Pierce again for her time.

## **VII. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business Commissioner Amy Goold adjourned the Regular Commission Meeting at 8:27pm.