

Mayor's Report for September 19, 2022 General Meeting

Drafted for deadline September 14, 2022

August and early September have been especially busy with public works projects. See also the report from City Administrator Kathy Leary as we work together on many items.

1. Library Bike Shelter Design Underway. The library bike shelter project is at 20% design stage by PND Engineers pending funding for the remainder of the design. With approval of the NCO for the remaining design and Fire Marshall review funding at the September meeting, I will issue the notice to proceed for design to 100%. I expect we will be ready to send the design to the Fire Marshall for review in October. We will also have a cost estimate on which to base an NCO for construction. We will issue a construction RFQ later this fall when funds are appropriated for construction.

2. Wilson Road Drainage Improvement Project Completed. Glacier Bay Construction, the winning bidder for this project, excavated 2053 feet of ditch along the east side of Wilson Road under Change Order 1 to the project. We have paid them for the work out of our appropriated funding for the project and have filed for reimbursement by FEMA under our agreement with them for mitigation funding. When those funds are received, they will be returned to our capital funding AMLIP account to be recycled for capital projects in the future.

3. Three Road Turnaround Projects Completed. Glacier Bay Construction completed construction of cul-de-sac turnarounds at Jensen Road, Spruce Lane, and Pleasant Avenue. The City directed the work using provisions of the existing annual road maintenance contract. These projects are major improvements for these roads, which had little or no space to turn road maintenance vehicles, or private vehicles for that matter, or to store plowed snow. We worked with adjacent private landowners to identify construction space in road easements that were too narrow for proper turning space. By making the best use of available easements plus driveway entrances we achieved good results allowing the roads to be plowed next winter. The contractor also cut brush and trees along road edges to provide help get plowed snow berms off the roads. Thanks to Glacier Bay Construction for fine work on these projects!

4. Grandpa's Farm Road Bridge Underway. Our bridge project at Grandpa's Farm Road is underway by Gustavus Construction Company, the successful bidder for the project. The 20-year-old failing culvert and crib wall at the crossing over Harry Hall Creek have been removed. The stream has been re-constructed to flow smoothly and attractively through the site without a barrier to fish passage. The glue-laminated, pressure-treated, Douglas-fir bridge package was manufactured by Western Wood Structures in Tualatin, Oregon. It shipped on schedule via Alaska Marine Lines and was brought into Gustavus on the Alaska Ferry by Frontier Freight. As of this writing the bridge sills are in place and the girders are being installed. When completed over the next week, this \$535,000 project, designed by Dowl Engineering and funded by US Fish and Wildlife Service, will be the first project finished in Alaska using money from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. We are grateful to our partners at US FWS, particularly Habitat Biologist Andy Stevens, for their confidence in the City of Gustavus and for full funding to get this done this construction season. We also are grateful to Senator Lisa Murkowski for her support of the Infrastructure Bill that made it possible. Thanks to Hank Lentfer and Kathy Streveler for generously allowing temporary detour road easements across their properties while the crossing is open. Thanks also to Paul Barnes and Melissa Senac, Chris Gabriele and Paul Berry for allowing work from their property edges as the stream was rebuilt. US FWS Hydrologist Franklin Dekker and Southeast

Alaska Watershed Coalition Director Rob Cadmus helped with stream work including trapping and relocation of hundreds of small fish from the work area to safe habitat upstream during the stream reconstruction. With this team effort Grandpa's Farm Road traffic will safely cross over, and fish will pass under, a fine timber bridge for many decades into the future.

5. Old Post Office Renovation Underway. Ample rain is encouraging the new grass that Gustavus Construction Company hydroseeded on the east side of the old post office building. Thanks to Kenn Magowen for mowing the grass on the west side. The building is already looking much better. Thanks to Wes Bacon-Schulte for meeting on Aug 25 with Kenn, Kathy Leary, and me on the site and advising us on procedures and opportunities for renovation of this historic World War II structure. Wes is a valuable advising resource as we move forward this fall and winter to renovate the building to accommodate Kenn's *Gustavus Bike Shop* with intent to open late spring of 2023. Thanks to City Administrator Kathy Leary for working to generate a lease arrangement for the building with Kenn. It will be great to see the former eye-sore renewed and repurposed to productive use. I've asked the City Council to consider possible new names for the renovated building.

6. Tong Road Culvert to be Installed. This FEMA-funded project will replace a flood-damaged culvert at the end of Tong Road and is scheduled to begin later in September when the Country Inn has closed. Glacier Bay Construction Co is the winning bidder on this project.

7. Public Works Project Management Boosted. The City has engaged local consulting engineer John Barry, PE, under contract to assist with project management for public works projects. John will be assigned project management duties for discrete projects using capital funding appropriated for those projects. John will help scope and plan assigned projects, coordinate with outside design firms when they are involved, feed information to contracted grant-writers, write bid documents, and oversee construction as the City's representative. His first assigned project is the Good River Bridge repairs, and his initial task is to review the reports from the State bridge inspectors and PND Engineers and advise the City Mayor and Council regarding the options presented for repairs. We are planning other projects such as DRC buildings, and drainage along Same Old Road for John's future assignments. With John available our capacity will expand to capture available federal infrastructure funding and apply it to improving infrastructure in Gustavus.

8. Tongass Federal Credit Union Meeting. We invited TFCU CEO Helen Mickel and VP of Operations Gracia O'Connell to Gustavus to explore possibilities for a micro branch here. On August 30, 2022, Kathy Leary and I met with them at City Hall for an introduction to Gustavus. Later, they met with interested business owners and individuals during their one-day visit. We have followed up with them to provide additional information since then.

9. Treasurer Resignation. Our City Treasurer, Eduarda Loggins, resigned on September 13, 2022, citing personal reasons. We are sorry to lose her from City employment and wish her the very best in future endeavors. Marine Facilities Coordinator Ben Sadler, who served our new City beginning in 2004 as our first City Clerk and Treasurer and who knows the QuickBooks accounting program, has generously stepped up to help assure that key financial functions, like purchase orders, checks, and financial transactions continue in a timely fashion. Phoebe Vanselow has agreed once again to advise us remotely as needed during a transition to a new Treasurer. The position announcement has been posted this week with closing set for September 30. We encourage all interested and qualified potential applicants to consider a career at the City of Gustavus in service to our community.

10. Statewide meetings. Thanks to City Administrator Kathy Leary for attending Alaska Municipal League meetings in Sitka and Anchorage to absorb details on infrastructure and other issues of importance to us. She networked with State and other municipal officials, grant-writers, and with Senator Murkowski in support of our City goals. Thanks also to City Council member Jim Mackovjak for attending the recreational facilities and trails conference in Haines in support of our goals for developing a bike path and other trails in Gustavus. He also spoke with Senator Murkowski about Gustavus issues, such as the Electrical Intertie.

11. Electrical Intertie. The City continues to encourage Alaska Power and Telephone and the National Park Service to finalize their commercial agreement as needed to startup the electrical intertie. The resolution the City passed in May helped break through issues that were slowing startup. NPS Chief of Maintenance Jake Ohlson expects shortly to clear the last hurdle regarding maintenance of the backup generators at Bartlett Cove. Let us hope Gustavus will be benefitting from lower electric rates and lower net carbon emissions very soon!

Mike Taylor
Mayor