

# Mayor's Monthly Report

April 2026

**Spring is coming!** I've seen robins, heard juncos singing and am watching the snow *slowly* melt away. We just need a few more degrees of warmth and this past winter will become a distant memory!

**Xunaa Borough:** On Friday, February 27<sup>th</sup> Hoonah and the LBC filed responses to the appellate brief submitted by our attorney in December. The attorneys working on our appeal requested, and were granted, a 30-day extension to file the response brief, making our due date April 20, 2026. After that, the Court will hear oral arguments and then have up to six months to make a decision.

In the meantime, the city council has approved hiring consultant Kathie Wasserman to work with Gustavus, Pelican and Elfin Cove to perform a study to determine the feasibility of forming a borough with our three communities. This study will assess the ability to meet the LBC standards for incorporation, i.e. Relationship of Interest, Resources, Population, Boundaries and Best Interests of the State. The study will look at the different classifications of boroughs, the powers that a borough must adopt, the extent of local support, impacts on the communities, ability to provide essential services, tax revenue and other considerations as deemed appropriate.

**Staff Meeting:** The March staff meeting was spent finalizing the draft Travel Policy & Procedure. There was a lot of good input and discussion. Thanks to Vice Mayor Beck for all his help with this policy. The P&P is on the agenda for approval tonight.

**Overdue Congratulations to Liesl!** In December at the Alaska Association of Municipal Clerks conference, Liesl was awarded an Above & Beyond Award for fundraising efforts as part of her work on the Vendor Committee. We appreciate all you do *above and beyond* your work here for the betterment of Alaska's municipal clerks!

**Congratulations to the six GVFD volunteers** who spent two weeks in Fairbanks completing the skills training portion of their Firefighter I course; this is after working independently all winter to complete the online portion of the hybrid course. They completed the physically demanding skills training and all six passed the Alaska Practical Skills testing. Now they await the results of the State Firefighter I written exam. Thank you to Johan, Haley, Stephen, Lizz, Quinn and Sol – we greatly appreciate your time and commitment in completing the Firefighter I course. The Director of Fire Sciences at UAF reported that it was an honor to work with and train our firefighters; additionally, I received high praise for Johan's leadership and mentoring during the two weeks. We are proud of you, and of all our volunteers!

I'd like to take a moment here to highlight the extraordinary efforts put forth over the past few months by our **EMS Coordinator, Leah Okin**. Not only has she taught several weeks of classes, but she also helped coordinate and cover for the Interim Fire Chief's absence for training and has been

an integral part of the Fire Department's operations in assisting Johan in his role as Interim Chief with her knowledge and experience. Thank you!

**Mugs and Matters:** I've enjoyed visiting with folks at the Fireweed on Friday mornings. Please consider stopping by some week – there are no rules, and you do not need to have a concern or a topic of discussion. Stop and say hello, stay for a few minutes or the whole hour – I'd appreciate the opportunity to visit with more community members and to get to know one another better.

**Saturday Market:** We were tentatively planning another appearance at the Second Saturday Market in April. However, with several council members out of town in April, we are now planning on May 9<sup>th</sup>.

### **Other**

I spent time this past month on:

- Mugs & Matters at the Fireweed, Fridays at 11
- Worked on Policy & Procedure amendments
- Worked on updating the Long-Term Storage Use Agreement
- Weekly Zoom meetings with Kathie Wasserman & community leaders on feasibility study
- Gateway Communities meetings with NPS staff
- Leadership roundtable conversation with US Senator Lisa Murkowski and her staff
- Communications with members of the public
- ACoM training - Budget Session Reality Check
- Spoke with KTOO reporter several times regarding PFAS and septage issues
- Attended septage meeting with Kathy, CBJ personnel and others
- Worked on developing the budget with the Treasurer and City Administrator

*As always, community members, council members and city staff are encouraged to contact me if you have concerns or want to share thoughts or ideas.*

*Or join me at the Fireweed, Fridays at 11!*

*Sally McLaughlin, Mayor*