



## OUTGOING MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT - OCTOBER 8, 2024

**Land Issues.** We started out the Council year with three land issues:

- Public Access on the Hydro Road. The FERC dispute resolution between AP&T and the Olneys continues.
- Xunaa Borough Petition. Local Boundary Commission (LBC) staff submitted a report opposing the petition as currently written, followed by a hearing before the LBC in Hoonah. We are awaiting a written decision from the LBC.
- Gustavus Forelands Preserve. We were surprised to learn that The Nature Conservancy (TNC) had been in discussion with the Hoonah Indian Association regarding transfer of the Gustavus Forelands. 200 petition signatures and 100 letters were gathered to oppose the transfer, and at the Work Session to discuss the issue with TNC there were 75 people attending by Zoom plus a number of community members who attended in person. We have been assured by TNC that Gustavus will be included in any future discussions, and in August a Conservation Lands Advisory Committee was formed to discuss how we can preserve high value natural resources in Gustavus. It was one of those events that remind me with great affection and respect that beneath the tranquil waters of Gustavus lies a volcanic pool of community passion for protection of its shared natural resources.

**Airport Law Enforcement.** Also somewhat sudden and alarming was the notice from TSA that unless Gustavus provided a law enforcement officer at the airport, Alaska Airlines would be unable to fly here. . Kathy Leary worked zealously with both the State Delegation, Senator Murkowski's office, and AKDOT&PF who, along with the Dept. of Public Safety, provided funding and recruited officers,. We will again need to address this issue for the summer 2025 season.

**Grants and Projects.** I made a quick count of grants awarded, in progress, or in pursuit in areas of public health, safety and recreation, including: Crossett Foundation playground equipment and pathway; a Village Safe Water areawide septage study; The DRC Recycling Building and Improvements; a Cybersecurity Assessment of the City's technology equipment and processes; the National League of Cities Heat Pump Incentive Program; GVFD water tender and a truck and skid; a Ports Infrastructure Development Program float system design; Good River Bridge repairs and embankment stabilization; Safe Streets for All side path planning; and a Lucas compression device for CPR.



In September the Southeast Conference honored Gustavus as the 2024 Community of the Year "In Recognition of Exemplary Economic Resiliency, Vibrancy and Strength". The award was based on economic and workforce data along with comments from community members about the welcoming and productive nature of Gustavus.

**Additional Staff Recognition.**

- In completing the FY22-23 audit of City finances, Treasurer Ben Sadler achieved a seamless audit with no negative findings, a rare accomplishment.
- Ian Barrier, DRC Manager/Operator was also recognized for achieving a Waste Index score of 99% from the Solid Waste Program of the Dept. of Environment Conservation.

**Events.**

- In January we held a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the opening of the Salmon River Playground. Despite cold and snow that closed school later in the month, it was a joyous occasion celebrated with hot chocolate and a warming fire
- In April we celebrated the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the incorporation of the City of Gustavus. City Hall was a one-room structure which now serves as Council Chambers, and had no plumbing. The population of Gustavus was estimated at 450, and ADF&G published a report that we had twice as many moose as people.
- Councilmembers Rachel Patrick and Kyle Bishop inaugurated the Coffee with Council meeting with 25 community members. We look forward to resuming these meetings.

**Departures and Arrivals.** Thanks to Janene Driscoll, Kyle Bishop, Jim Mackovjak, Larry Platt, and LeAnn Weikle for their contributions to the City, and welcome to Sally McLaughlin, Susan Warner, Lucas Beck, Leah Okin, and Kenn Magowan.

**Things that made me laugh.**

- On Valentine’s Day a former DRC Manager/Operator participated by Zoom during a Council Meeting and forgot his microphone was on when he blurted out “steak and champagne”!
- One hot and sunny day there was an alarm raised that there was a naked man at the front door. the naked man was a former mayor who was working and had taken his shirt off. Bestill our beating hearts!
- A t shirt worn by [REDACTED] to a Council meeting bearing an [EXPLETIVE DELETED]opinion about farmed fish.
- A young constituent showed us how to float a balloon above the air purifier.



Thanks to all for an intriguing year as Mayor, especially the unflappable calm and generous assistance of City Clerk Liesl Barker. I’ll be returning as Vice Mayor this year and reminded of song lyrics “How can I miss you when you won’t go away?”

*Shelley*