

# Mayor's Monthly Report

January 2026

Winter 2025-26 will remain in our collective memory for many years to come...and it is far from over! First was a long and very cold spell, unusual in its length and severity. It was beautiful, though, and the clear skies made the days seem longer than they actually were, a gift for this time of year. Thanks go out to all those who checked on their neighbors, assisted with frozen car doors and frozen pipes, jumped vehicles or provided rides, delivered fuel and propane at all hours, and generally made sure that everyone was safe and warm.

Then came the snow, which just didn't stop. We were woefully unprepared for the amount of snow we got in such a short time, and many lessons were learned by us as a city, as a community and individually. We are critically short of heavy equipment to efficiently move snow from 22 miles of road, and we do not have a good emergency preparedness plan in place. However, we are a resourceful and resilient bunch and by pulling together we got through it...for now. I again heard accounts of folks helping each other out in many ways. Residents were very responsive to our requests to stay put and maintained a positive and patient attitude. We truly have a community that cares for and supports each other, and I am thankful to live here.

Coordinating with Glacier Bay Construction and Fairweather Construction on snow removal efforts, working with department heads to monitor situations at city buildings and work sites, keeping City Hall open and cleared of snow, as well as keeping the community informed, consumed a large amount of my time, but it was all accomplished by having great working relationships, good humor and cooperation from all. Winter still has a few more months to throw whatever it wants at us...as I write this, we are experiencing heavy rains with more snow predicted.

**Xunaa Borough:** An Appellant's Opening Brief was filed in Alaska Superior Court on December 19, 2025. There will now be time for both Hoonah and the LBC to file response briefs and then the communities can respond to those. Hoonah has filed a Notice of Routine Extension and were granted a new due date of February 27, 2026; the due date to file our response is March 19. 2026. The next step will be oral arguments in Court and then the Court has up to six months to make their decision.

**Staff Meeting:** No staff meeting was held in December. The January meeting will take place on Wednesday the 14<sup>th</sup> and departments will be debriefing the snow event which will help to inform our emergency preparedness and to be better prepared in the future.

**Saturday Market Table:** We had a table at the December Second Saturday Market, displaying information about City projects and the Council, and we had various City forms available. Four council members spent time talking to folks and asking them to provide comments if they wished. This event was very successful, lots of people stopped to visit with us, and many expressed their

appreciation to us for being available. It was a great opportunity to meet more members of the community. We may want to do this again in February or March.

**Other:**

I spent time this past month on:

- Mugs & Matters at the Fireweed, Fridays at 11 (although I missed a few over the holidays and snowstorm days)
- Shoveled a lot of snow
- Attended and made welcoming remarks at the first annual Christmas tree lighting and carol singing at the Community Center
- Attended the Local Boundary Commission meeting to review their draft Annual Report to the Legislature
- Regular monthly meeting with Vice Mayor Beck
- Regular Friday meetings with the City Administrator
- Met with individual council members to review ongoing projects
- Met with Council member Hutton to review the ordinance amendment process
- Worked with Vice Mayor Beck on a Policy & Procedure for staff travel
- Working with Acting Clerk Morgan on meeting agendas and packets

*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*