

## Mayor's Report

General Meeting (November 13, 2023)

**Catching Up.** I've had a busy month coming up to speed on the work and activities of City Hall. I'm reminded of the description of ducks floating serenely on the surface of the water, but when you look below the surface you see all the paddling and churning that goes on underneath. Mike has left big boots to fill, and I have him to thank for the serenity of City Hall. I am also amazed and grateful for Kathy, Ben and Liesl for their patience and humor in helping me get adjusted. Lastly, I want to commend Mike for the excellence in his annual summary and monthly reports and his continuing leadership and support.

### 3 Issues.

- Last month Mayor Taylor told us about a directive from TSA requiring a law enforcement presence available for the airport in order to have Alaska Airlines come to Gustavus. DOT is responding to the confidential letter, and we are waiting on their response. This is a matter between the Federal and State agencies, but we have put out requests for an estimate of the fiscal impact this would have on the tourism industry and the City. We are not proceeding with pursuing the idea of a VPSO or other alternative until we hear from DOT. Sen. Kiehl and Rep. Story are also looking into the matter.
- Low level radiation in our scrap metal shipment (Kathy & Ben)
- I have been actively involved in the Issue about disputed public access on the spur road leading up to the Falls Creek Hydro. We've received copies of correspondence between the FERC and AP&T about the Hydro facility's licensing requirement to provide public access. I have received email correspondence and a phone call from the property owners, and have spoken with AP&T. I responded to the property owners and provided information to AP&T about the confrontations and obstruction to access. The matter is under discussion between the utility and the owners and we are prepared to respond with information if needed at the appropriate time.

### Good News.

- Playground equipment installation & Crossett Foundation funding grant (Mike & Kathy)
- Relocation of the steel float up Salmon River, and the wooden dock and skiff floats to the boat harbor (Ben)

### Goals for Future.

- **Transparency.** Rachel Patrick is a great addition to the Council and I look forward to working with her in implementing her vision for how City Hall can encourage more community input and communication. In August 2019 the Council passed Resolution CY19-17 to improve the practice of outreach by the City of Gustavus Council members. The resolution paused during the pandemic, but this is a good time to renew the discussion about how we can make it happen.
- **Incoming & outgoing City correspondence** is located on the kitchen counter in City Hall and available for anyone to see. Until and unless we can find a cost-effective way to share it with the community, I'll be providing a monthly report about letters, emails & phone calls we receive.

### Emails & phone calls.

- I've received communications concerning problems with **Hydro Road access** and encourage people to contact me about their experiences.
- **City's timing in moving the dock floats.**

Thanks to Ben, Larry, Elm, and Chris Hart from Western Marine for relocating the steel float up the Salmon River for the winter. Chris brought his boat over from Juneau and refused payment for his assistance but will be doing the needed repairs to the steel float. The wooden float and skiff floats were also moved to the Boat Harbor.

We received an email from a citizen who was concerned that the floats were moved on short notice during a time he wished to use them for hunting. We understand and regret he wasn't given more advance notice, but Ben himself was given one day's notice of when the floats could be moved. The City doesn't have the equipment to move the floats itself and must rely on outside contractors to move them. The citizen also made a compelling argument of having a float in place in the event of a natural disaster but when the City tried this two winters ago, storm damage broke the collars around the pilings. Without a breakwater it isn't safe to leave the floats in place. This is the normal time when the floats are relocated, and delay exposes the workers to the onset of fall storms, limited daylight, snow, and freezing spray.

**Council Projects.** I've asked to know what Council members areas of interest are and what they are working on. In the past Karen kept a list tracking our project activity we will be reviving it.

I'm interested in locating and reviewing our Plans and Policies and Procedures. In particular I'd like to see a master plan for area wide road maintenance for ditching and culvert installation. We respond well to emergencies and remediation but I'd like to see some future planning for more flooding events like the one that damaged property off of Wilson Road. I'm also interested in emergency planning for the community.

Shelley

Shelley K. Owens  
Mayor, City of Gustavus

### Great parking job!

