



**City of Gustavus**  
P.O. Box 1  
Gustavus, AK 99826

February 6, 2024

Robert Chambers  
USDA Rural Development  
800 E Palmer-Wasilla Highway, Suite 201  
Palmer, AK 99645

Dear Mr. Chambers,

I am writing on behalf of the City of Gustavus to support the Gustavus Community Center Stormwater Project. The City of Gustavus, through its Endowment Grant Fund, has long supported the Community Center: for site preparation in FY16; for foundation construction materials in FY18; kitchen and lavatory plumbing in FY19; and improvements to the art gallery foyer in FY20.

Most recently, the City Endowment Grant funded handicap access improvements to the Community Center in FY22. The contractor, however, has stated that they will not construct the handicap access ramp to the front door until gutters are installed over the front entry, and downspouts are installed to carry the water away from the handicap parking area. The Community Center was granted a one-year extension on its Endowment Grant pending USDA funding for the gutters, but unfortunately time is running out.

The City of Gustavus Strategic Plan states that the City will support "volunteer organizations that provide needed community services." The non-profit Community Center is uniquely suited to provide needed services that the private sector cannot; for example, during a pandemic, the Community Center is the only space in town that can provide socially-distanced services such as voting and vaccination clinics, and thanks to a USDA grant in 2019, the Community Center is able to provide food and shelter for up to 100 disaster victims while they await evacuation. We affirm that funding of the Community Center will have no adverse impact on other community facilities providing similar services.

The Community Center has proven its commitment to the people of Gustavus in providing a location for elections, the annual Health Fair, and a forum for the prevention of sexual abuse. It is well supported by the community as well in its social activities engaging students, artists, musicians, scientists, and the elderly (in lunch and social engagement). The City of Gustavus Endowment Fund grants demonstrate our commitment to the non-profit Community Center, which so ably enhances the quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors. We are honored to offer our support for the grant in the hopes that we can ensure the continued success and safety of the facility for our community.

Sincerely,

Shelley K. Owens  
Mayor of Gustavus