



City of Homer

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Office of the City Manager

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Memorandum

TO: Mayor Wythe and Homer City Council
FROM: Katie Koester, City Manager
DATE: November 30, 2016
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report – December 5, 2016

Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Tsunami Workshop

The Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management is interested in Homer hosting the 2017 State Tsunami Workshop in April. They are looking at the weeks of April 10th or April 17th and are in contact with Islands and Ocean about using their Seminar Room. This conference will likely bring 20-30 emergency managers from across the state to attend. In addition to providing a boost to our local economy, it will be an excellent opportunity for locals to learn more about tsunami preparedness.

Emergency Management Roles and Responsibilities for Mayor and Council

Do you know what your role is as a Councilmember in the event of a major disaster? Do you know the difference between a liaison officer and a public information officer and how they each interact with you? Councils and mayors have a lot of decision making authority in the event of a major disaster, and sometimes you are required to make rapid and costly decisions with incomplete information. Mayor Zak has requested a worksession on emergency management roles and responsibilities for Mayor and Council, scheduled for February. Chief Painter is working on getting the State of Alaska Director of Emergency Management to facilitate the worksession.

Graduated Linear Rate Structure Implementation One Year Out

In October the City Council passed Resolution 16-112 implementing a new graduated linear rate model for the Port and Harbor. The billing software that the Port and Harbor uses cannot accommodate the new rate structure. The 2016 budget appropriated \$30,000 for the Port and Harbor to work on new software. The Port and Harbor has hired a consultant to assist with drafting a request for proposal for new custom software that will not only exactly meet the City of Homer billing needs and provide ongoing support, but serve as a model for other ports and harbors in Alaska and possibly become a commodity we can sell to other communities (as more communities transfer to a linear rate model, the need for more complicated and custom software will increase). Port and Harbor will ask Council for authorization to move forward on an RFP for billing software, and a budget appropriation to cover the increased cost, at the next council meeting (January 9). The Port and Harbor will not be able to implement the new rate structure until the software is complete, potentially delaying implementation for one year. A time frame for implementation and cost estimate will be

included in the ordinance requesting moving forward on software upgrades at the next Council meeting.

Alaska Municipal League Travel Report

I attended the Alaska Municipal League winter conference the second week in November. It is a great opportunity to network with other community leaders and learn about statewide issues. During the Alaska Municipal Management conference, I was impressed with the number of City Managers who are in the process of port and harbor expansion projects or have just completed them. To gain more knowledge of HOW these communities were able to be successful with their projects, I have signed up for the Port and Harbor Committee. I attended worksessions on topics such as homelessness and opioid abuse and am looking forward to sharing with our community what other communities are doing to address these epidemics. Alaska Municipal League is always an interesting, relevant and rewarding trip. More than any other professional development, it is an opportunity to interact with other Alaskans about Alaskan issues. See 2017 AML priorities attached. These and 2017 resolutions can be found online at www.akml.org

Enc:

Alaska Municipal League State and Federal Priorities



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ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

FY 2017 STATEWIDE PRIORITIES

- **LEGISLATIVE ADOPTION OF A SUSTAINABLE BUDGET PLAN**

The Alaska Municipal League supports a Legislative adoption of a sustainable budget plan that does not rely primarily on cuts, but on new sources of revenues. We feel that the leaders of our State must immediately adopt changes that stop the bleeding that we are currently experiencing. Despite the cuts experienced this last year by local governments, municipalities must continue to provide basic and essential services. The Alaska Municipal League stands behind their updated FY 2017 Sustainability Plan and encourages the Legislature to quickly take action. As more responsibilities are passed down to the “political subdivisions” of the state, municipalities must be given the tools to provide for themselves.

- **REVENUE SHARING (COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE)**

The Alaska Municipal League realizes that the State is in a fiscal crisis. We have attempted to work with the Legislature through the decrease of Revenue Sharing by half. We cannot agree to the ending of Revenue Sharing, however. As our Revenue Sharing goes down and as the State continues to cost shift to municipalities, many local governments will find themselves in the position of closing their doors. The current \$30 million is a small part of the yearly state budget. With the recent loss of Timber Receipts and the potential loss of PILT, a sustainable and predictable allocation is necessary for municipal budget purposes. This money allows for the provision of basic local services and as a means to keep taxes down.

- **PERS/TRS**

The Alaska Municipal League recently fought back a proposal by the Alaska State Legislature that would have seen municipalities acquire a larger percentage of the PERS/TRS unfunded liability. The PERS/TRS system is the legal and moral responsibility of the State, as it is THEIR program. Municipalities simply pay an amount set by the State in order to be participants in the plan. We do not provide retirement benefits; we do not have a say in any of the fiduciary decisions. AML and its member municipalities will hold fast to the previously agreed upon 22% of salary towards the pay down of the unfunded liability.



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ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

FY 2017 FEDERAL PRIORITIES

- **SUPPORT PILT AND SRS**

The Alaska Municipal League supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates municipalities for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries. The Alaska Municipal League also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and school.

- **PROTECT MUNICIPAL BONDS**

The Alaska Municipal League supports preserving the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes and the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure and development. Provisions like the tax exemption for municipal bond interest have been part of the federal tax code for over 100 years, helping finance trillions of dollars in public works projects.

- **PRESERVE MUNICIPAL INTERESTS IN “WATERS OF THE U.S.” REGULATIONS**

The Alaska Municipal League believes that local streets, gutters and human-made ditches should be excluded from the definition of “Waters of the U.S.,” under the federal Clean Water Act. The Alaska Municipal League calls on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the new rule and rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

- **PROMOTE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES IN SURFACE TRANSPORTATION IMPLEMENTATION**

The Alaska Municipal League will work to ensure that the new surface transportation law is implemented to reflect municipal priorities, including allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision making authority, prioritizing investments that increase safety, as well as continuing to urge Congress to resolve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.