

# CITY OF HOMER NEWSLETTER



VOL. III - ISSUE V | JANUARY 2024

## WHAT'S INSIDE?

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CITY MANAGER

# Happy New Year

From Homer City Hall

## HOLIDAY CELEBRATION

This year, the City of Homer celebrated the Holiday Season at the Elk's Lodge. We enjoyed the time together, relaxing and catching up over a delicious dinner catered by The Tickled Pear. Adding excitement to the evening, we had a prize drawing, with lucky winners leaving with smiles and surprises. Rob and Ralph showcased their stylish sneakers, adding an extra touch of flair to the holiday festivities. We are thankful for our team and look forward to what's to come in the New Year!



City Manager Rob Dumouchel and Ralph Skorski



Officer Tyler Jeffres and Erica Jeffres



Cheryl and Mike Illg



Amber Baldus and Samantha Cunningham

- Holiday Celebration
- Library Events
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- Homer Public Library
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- Harbor Expansion Study Update
- Hazard Mitigation – Risk Assessment
- Police Department
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- Meet City Staff
- Municipal Art Collection
- Stay Connected with City Council

Discover something new today and see the latest City project updates information! Learn about ways community members can get involved at City Hall and in the Homer community.

## Follow us on Social Media

- City Hall: [@cityofhomerak](#)
- Parks & Recreation: [@homerparksandrec](#)
- Homer Public Library: [@homerpubliclibrary](#)
- Homer Police: [@homerpolice](#)
- Fire Department: [@HomerVolFireDept](#)

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Newsletter

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# LIBRARY EVENTS

## VIRTUAL AUTHOR TALKS

Zoom in and listen to your favorite authors talk about their latest books. For a complete list of Upcoming Speakers, go to [libraryc.org/homerlibrary/upcoming](http://libraryc.org/homerlibrary/upcoming).

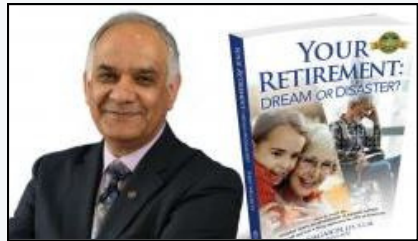
**January 10 at 4 pm**

Embrace Love in the New Year: A Heartfelt Conversation with **Rebecca Serle**



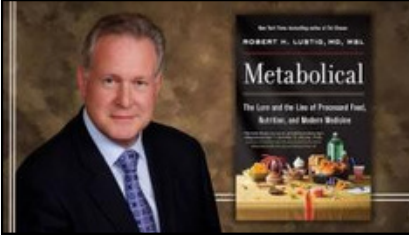
**January 23 at 10 am**

Your Retirement: Dream or Disaster? How to Avoid the Hidden Traps in Retirement Planning Advice  
**Rajiv Nagaich**



**January 30 at 10 am**

The Lure and the Lies of Processed Food, Nutrition, and Modern Medicine: An Author Talk with **Dr. Robert Lustig**



## SPECIAL & ONGOING EVENTS



### Councilmember Conversations

Noon to 1 pm, the second Tuesday of each month, September - May, at the Homer Public Library.

**January 9: Shelly Erickson**

CHECK OUT MORE LIBRARY PROGRAMS AND EVENTS



**Homer Public Library**  
500 Hazel Street - 907-235-3180  
[circ@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:circ@ci.homer.ak.us)  
[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/library)



# COMMUNITY CORNER

What's happening around the City of Homer

## Community Resource Connect

A one-day event with help for those facing financial instability, homelessness, or at risk of being houseless.

**TUESDAY, JANUARY 30 • 11AM-3PM**

### Community Resource Connect - Located at SPARC

Anyone in need of resources is invited to this **FREE** one-day event! All are welcome. FREE emergency gear, backpacks, comfort packs, food-to-go, sleeping bags, menstrual kits, winter gear, and more.

Get connected with over 20 local vendors offering resources related to food, employment info, health care and mental health, health screenings, and more.

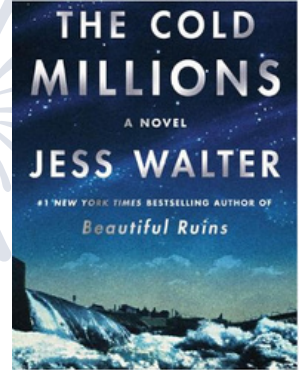
[Click Here for More Information](#)

### The Big Read

#### Kick-Off Event for the NEA Big Read 2024!

**Where: Alice's Champagne Palace**  
**When: January 19th, 6pm**

[Click here for more details!](#)



### Community Recreation

Do you want to stay active and connect with others in the community during the winter months!? There are a lot of options available through our Community Recreation programs. Short on gear? The Homer Public Library has a sports gear lending program. Find more info [here!](#)

- Soccer
- Youth Tumbling Classes
- Pickleball
- Cuong Nhu and Karate Program
- Basketball
- Community Inlet Winds Band
- Volleyball
- Volunteer Opportunities

[Click here to explore all that Community Recreation has to offer!](#)

# LIBRARY

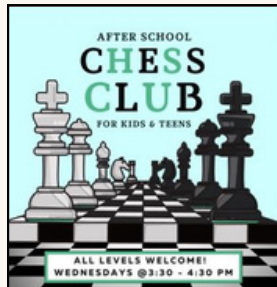
## AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES AT THE LIBRARY

### Stop Motion Animation with Legos!

Searching for a creative after-school activity for your child? Join us weekly at the Homer Public Library for engaging and educational activities designed for elementary-aged kids every Thursday from 3:30 to 4:00 pm.

**Next Event: Thursday, January 11, 3:30pm to 4:30pm**

**January/February:** Intro to Stop Motion Animation! In this series, you'll create a scene, then animate it using Legos. Learn to use Stop Motion Studio on the library's iPads. Please email Cinda if you have any questions: [cnofziger@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:cnofziger@ci.homer.ak.us)



### After School Chess Club for Kids & Teens

Meet your friends at the library to play chess! Improve your strategy, learn from mentors, and have fun. All skill levels welcome!

Ages 5 and up  
Homer Public Library  
Every Wednesday, 3:30 - 4:30 pm

**Next Event: Wednesday, January 3, 3:30 - 4:30pm**

# COMMUNITY RECREATION

## COMMUNITY INLET WINDS BAND 2024



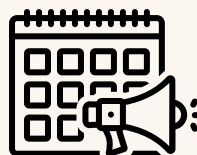
The Inlet Winds Community Band is restarting this spring. Don't forget to **sign up by February 6th!**

Who can be involved: Inlet Winds is geared for two groups of people.

- Adults with previous experience playing in band (to at least a high school level) who know how to read music. It's ok if you are a little rusty- We'll get into shape together!
- Advanced high school students by invitation or with director approval.

FOR MORE INFO  
Sign up through the link below  
by **February 6, 2023!**

[Community Inlet Winds Band 2024](#)



### LOOKING AHEAD

Spring Concert  
**Saturday April 13 7:00 PM**  
Homer High School Mariner Theatre

# CITY HALL

## HOMER, THE BABY OPOSSUM, ARRIVES AT OREGON ZOO

Last month, a baby opossum named Homer arrived at the Portland Zoo in Oregon, safe and sound. Homer has been on quite the adventure in his short life!

Earlier this year, Homer's mom, an opossum known as Grubby, stowed away in a cargo container bound for Homer, AK. When the container was being unloaded, Grubby made a run for it and escaped the crew who tried to trap her. She was able to evade wildlife officials for a couple of months. During that time, she gave birth to at least 5 babies (joeys), whom residents affectionately referred to as 'grublets.'

Finally, in May, Grubby and her joeys were captured and re-homed to the Alaska Zoo in Anchorage. Homer and his siblings will be sent to different zoos, and Grubby will remain at the Alaska Zoo.

Homer is adjusting to his new home and the caring staff. As he acclimates, he will soon have the opportunity to meet visitors. This interaction aims to educate and connect children with an animal they may not encounter in their daily lives, creating a deeper appreciation for wildlife.



**DID YOU KNOW?**

Opossums are considered invasive in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest as they are a threat to native species.



Lori Pond delivering donations to Homer High



Zach Pettit delivering donations to Homer High



Renee Krause and Lori Pond wrap gifts



City Hall Christmas Tree

### SHARE THE SPIRIT

City Hall spread some holiday cheer this year through the Share the Spirit Adopt-A-Family program! We were honored to make a family's wishes come true by providing them with food, warm clothing, toys, and essentials.

You can also bring joy to our community through similar programs and by supporting local charities, helping build a more compassionate and connected community not just during the festive season but throughout the upcoming year!



# HOMER HIGH GOVERNMENT CLASS VISITS CITY HALL

The Homer High School Government Class visited City Hall on Tuesday, December 12th for a guided tour, followed by a Q&A session in the Council Chambers with Mayor Castner and Council Members Aderhold, Lord, Venuti, and Erickson. The students had an hour to explore the inner workings of local government, gaining insights into the daily operations of City Hall.



Ryan Foster, City Planner, speaks to students about the city planning process.

The Q&A session aimed to provide a firsthand understanding of the roles and responsibilities of local leaders, allowing students to ask questions and engage in meaningful discussions. The goal of this experience was designed to bridge the gap between classroom learning and practical civic engagement. Mayor Ken Castner emphasized, “Homer High grads are dispersed throughout the City. You need to participate, and that begins with talking and communication.” The teens were encouraged to care about the community and be aware of what is being discussed, as they are the future of Homer.



Homer High students attend a Q&A session with Mayor Castner and Council Members Aderhold, Lord, Venuti, and Erickson.

## 2024 ELECTIONS

As we step into the new year, it's never too early to start preparing for the upcoming elections! Stay informed about key dates, such as voter registration deadlines and election days.




Register to vote or update your voter registration!

- Visit the Homer City Clerk's Office at 491 E. Pioneer Avenue to fill out a registration form, or
- Conveniently register online at <https://voterregistration.alaska.gov>.

For additional details, contact the Clerk's Office at (907) 235-3130.






In 2024, we gear up for THREE upcoming elections!

 Save the dates:

- Alaska State General Election : **November 5**
- 2024 Kenai Peninsula Borough Regular Election: **October 1**
- 2024 City of Homer Regular Election: **October 1**

Polls open at 7 am, close at 8 pm

### Important Deadlines

-  Voter registration/update: September 1, 2024
-  Absentee In-Person Voting: Starts September 16, 2024
-  Absentee By-Mail App Deadline (City): September 27, 2024
-  Absentee App Deadline (Borough): September 24, 2024
-  Absentee by Electronic App Transmission Deadline: September 30, 2024

# PORT & HARBOR

## PACIFIC MARINE EXPO IN SEATTLE

Port Director Bryan Hawkins recently attended the Pacific Marine Expo in Seattle, sharing a booth with Homer Marine Trades. The expo spotlighted Alaskan coastal communities. The Homer booth stands out because it represents our thriving marine commercial support industry.

During his visit, Bryan joined the Cordova Harbormaster for a day trip to Anacortes, touring the Transpac float manufacturing operation. Witnessing the floats during their various stages of construction, physically interacting with the materials, and acquiring knowledge about the intricate engineering involved in these harbor float systems was truly remarkable and helps us in our planning for future float replacement projects.



Bryan Hawkins and Jen Hakala of the Homer Marine Trades Association working Homer's Pacific Marine Expo booth.

Events like the Pacific Marine Expo highlight local industry strengths, foster community collaboration, and address crucial topics such as vessel maintenance and sustainability. Attending these expos is an important investment in the growth and success of the marine trade sector.

## ANNUAL BOARD MEETING FOR THE MARINE EXCHANGE OF ALASKA



Bryan Hawkins, Port Director, attended the Marine Exchange of Alaska annual board meeting.

Port Director, Bryan Hawkins, serves as the President of the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators (AAHPA) and represented AAHPA on the Marine Exchange of Alaska (MXAK) board this past month. Both organizations collaborate closely to support maritime transportation in Alaska.

The Marine Exchange of Alaska (MXAK) tracks commercial vessels in Alaskan waters. One of their primary functions is the exchange of vessel information, which serves as a critical resource for vessel owners, fleet managers, families, and state and federal authorities. The Exchange acts as a 24-hour vessel safety and security watch keeper, ensuring the timely availability of accurate and relevant information including vessel tracking, communication services, and weather and ice information.

Attending their annual board meeting offered valuable insights. The collaboration opportunities allowed for the exchange of information and the advancement of Homer's critical projects and priorities.



# HOMER HARBOR EXPANSION



## STUDY UPDATE



**Join us Monday, January 22 at  
City Council's 4 pm Worksession!**

Ronny McPherson and KC Kent of HDR will provide an overview of the Baseline Conditions Report they are completing. The report uses new and existing field data along with existing studies, to model the waves, tides, storm surge and analyze sediment transport in the study area.

Understanding the existing marine and coastal physical processes is one of the important first steps to get done before moving into alternatives development. This information, together with data from the geophysical investigation and environmental review, is instrumental in informing the design process; it allows the project development team to tailor designs to the specific conditions of the proposed site to best meet project objectives. The information also serves as a reference point to compare the relative effectiveness of the alternatives harbor design.

Homer City Council will also discuss the progress of the study and introduce an Ordinance to commit additional match funds at their Regular meeting on January 8, 2024, which begins at 6 pm.

Mark your calendar

6 pm Monday, January 8, 2024



4 pm Monday, January 22, 2024



Cowles Chamber, Homer City Hall  
491 E. Pioneer Avenue in Homer



or via [Zoom!](#)

For more information go to: [www.homerharborexansion.com](http://www.homerharborexansion.com)



**QUICK  
TIP**

## PORT & HARBOR BILLING ABBREVIATIONS

What does that stand for? Are you looking at your harbor bill or receipt and can't figure out what the description means? Here's a breakdown of those cryptic abbreviations that will make you a pro in no time. Click this link to see a list of abbreviations and what they mean. [Port & Harbor Billing/Charges Info](#)



# FIRST RESPONDERS CLASS



Sammantha Cunningham leading the ETT training class.

During the final week of November, Port & Harbor staff from operations, maintenance, and the fish dock participated in a 40-hour Emergency Trauma Technician (ETT) training and certification. The training was led by Homer EMS coordinator Samantha Cunningham and organized by Deputy Harbormaster Aaron Glidden.



Isaiah Nevak, Kurt Read (as the 'patient'), and Rose Riordan

The ETT course is primarily for professionals requiring advanced medical skills beyond basic first aid and is specifically designed for those without immediate access to professional emergency services. This training equips individuals with essential skills for a rapid response in critical situations.

Successful completion of this training course is mandatory every two years. The training provides our Port & Harbor staff with essential skills to respond effectively to emergencies when necessary.



Del Masterhan and Thomas Gilbert participate in rescue training, which involves loading a stretcher onto a pulley and lowering it down into a boat.



## HOMER HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN

### RISK ASSESMENT

The City of Homer has thoroughly evaluated natural disaster risks and devised strategies to safeguard lives and property. A hazard impact risk assessment predicts how hazards may affect the community, aiding in prioritizing risk reduction actions.

The 2022 Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) specifically assessed risks in Homer, focusing on land, the population center, and critical facilities like emergency services.

With a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved plan in place, the community is eligible for nonemergency disaster assistance, including funding for risk reduction projects outlined in the plan.

As a resident of Homer, we want you to be aware of the potential risks and inform you of the plan in place to ensure everyone's safety.

#### Risks Assesed

Climate Change

Earthquake

Erosion

Flood

Landslide

Severe Weather

Tsunami

Volcano

Wildfire



Find the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan on the City's website: [City of Homer Local Hazard Mitigation Plan](#)



# POLICE DEPARTMENT

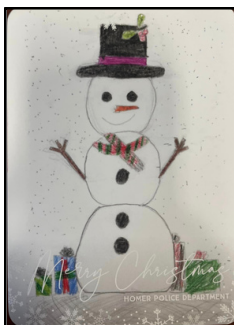


## CHRISTMAS CARD CONTEST 2023



Homer Police Department with Christmas Card Contest participants, Aubrey and Kyra.

The Homer Police Department (HPD) was thrilled to host a Christmas Card Contest again this year. Young Homer artists had the opportunity to submit vibrant Christmas card designs. The 2023 winner was Kyra (11), who drew a beautiful snowman! The runner up was Aubrey with a festive 'Crismis' scene showing a police officer with K-9 dog next to a Christmas tree. Great job girls!!



Snowman, by Kyra

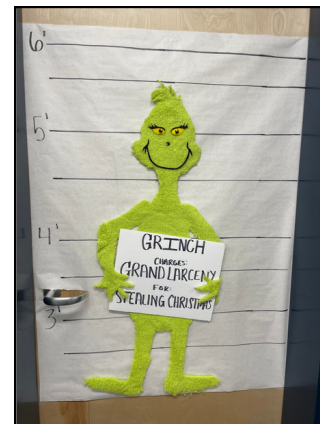


Crismis, by Aubrey

## DOOR DECORATING CONTEST

We saw a whole new side to our police officers and staff at HPD this year! They brought out their creative side with a door decorating contest. Winner gets bragging rights!

Our newest hire, Kaitlyn Dawson, won with the Grinch Door that leads into the jail.



The Grinch Door, by Kaitlyn Dawson



# FIRE DEPARTMENT

## NEW FIRE HOSES AT HVFD

The Homer Volunteer Fire Department (HVFD) recently acquired upgraded fire hoses. A total of 147 boxes, weighing 5,638 pounds, were unboxed by our awesome crew: Jaclyn Arndt, Paige Jones, Galina Orlova, and Barrett Moe!

This new supply replaced outdated hoses that no longer met National Fire Protection Association safety guidelines. The old hoses were made of extruded nitrile rubber, which would easily ice up in cold weather, making them slippery to handle and heavier. The new style of hoses performs better in cold weather and is easier for firefighters to maneuver. They have a rubber-lined polyester double jacket that does not freeze up and is two pounds lighter than the old hoses, enhancing grip, maneuverability, and reducing the risk of injury and fatigue for our firefighting crews. This significant improvement ensures that HVFD maintains a safer and more efficient fire response.



Barrett Moe and Paige Jones

Galina Orlova



In this section, we aim to keep readers informed about the latest developments in public safety in the community. Whether it's news about crime prevention, emergency preparedness, or updates on local law enforcement activities, we've got you covered. Our goal is to promote a safe and secure environment for all community members and visitors of Homer, and we believe that staying informed is a crucial part of achieving that. Read on to learn more about what's happening in public safety in Homer.

## HEATING YOUR HOME SAFELY

The cold weather has arrived, and we all want to stay warm! Remember to take a few simple steps to keep yourself and your family safe while heating up your home. Using heating systems safely is crucial in preventing accidents, fires, and health hazards.

### FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO STAY SAFE!

#### Heating Systems



**Keep the area around fireplaces, wood stoves, and space heaters clear, at least 3 feet around.**



**Schedule regular inspections and cleaning of heating unit and replace air filters regularly.**



**Ensure proper ventilation to prevent the buildup of carbon monoxide.**



**Never leave a heating unit unattended while in use.**

LEARN MORE



[StaySafe.org](https://www.staysafe.org)

[Red Cross Home Heating Safety Tips](#)



#### Be Prepared

**Educate family members, especially children, about fire safety.**

**Have an escape plan and practice the route.**

**Keep a working fire extinguisher in an accessible location, and make sure everyone knows how to use it.**

**Install smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home and test them monthly.**



# December Anniversaries

Thanks to the following staff members for your dedication, commitment and service to the City and to the taxpayers of Homer!

Mark Robl	Police	39 Years
Bryan Hawkins	Port	24 Years
Todd Cook	Public Works	14 Years
Sean Perry	Police	9 Years
Mike Zelinski	Public Works	9 Years
Josh Mershon	Port	4 Years
Regina Johanos	Library	3 Years
Jenna Luchaco	Public Works	2 Years
Del Masterhan	Port	2 Years
Matt Dominquez	IT	1 Year

# WELCOME



Greg Trail

Welcome aboard, Greg Trail! Greg is a Maintenance Tech I at Public Works who began his journey with us in July. Hailing from Homer and the surrounding area, he brings valuable experience from his previous work in the fishing industry.



Wesley Breshears



# EMPLOYEE HIGH FIVES!

## WAY TO GO ANDREW!

Andrew Williamson just got his CDL license! He joined the Public Works crew as a seasonal employee for the operators from May to October 2022. He was rehired in 2023 as a full-time employee, starting out as an apprentice. With his newly acquired CDL license and on-the-job training, he has now become an Equipment Operator. Andrew is a valuable addition to the team, and we are glad to have him on board.



Andrew Williamson

## KUDOS TO SNOW PLOW CREWS



Snow Removal- Lead Mike Gilbert and operator- Jenna Luchaco

Kudos to the City crews who have been working hard to keep Homer roads clear and safe this winter season! These dedicated teams work tirelessly to clear the snow and ice, ensuring our safe travels.

Be sure to give them your support and be patient while they work through the snow clearing process, especially during heavy snowfall. They are an essential part of our community, and we are very thankful for them!

# CITY OF HOMER ROSTER

**Mayor** - Ken Castner (2024)

## City Council

Donna Aderhold (2024)

Jason Davis (2025)

Shelley Erickson (2024)

Storm P. Hansen (2025)

Rachel Lord (2026)

Caroline Venuti (2026)

## City Staff Leadership

Rob Dumouchel, City Manager

Melissa Jacobsen, MMC, City Clerk/Deputy Director of Administration

Mark Robl, Chief of Police

Bill Jirsa, Chief Technology Officer

Julie Engebretsen, Economic Development Manager

Elizabeth Walton, Finance Director

Mark Kirko, Fire Chief

Dave Berry, Library Director

Andrea Browning, Personnel Director

Bryan Hawkins, Port Director

Jan Keiser, Public Works Director/City Engineer

Ryan Foster, City Planner

Mike Illg, Community Recreation Manager

## Commissions and Boards

ADA Advisory Board

Economic Development Advisory Commission

Library Advisory Board

Parks, Art, Recreation and Culture Advisory Commission

Planning Commission

Port and Harbor Advisory Commission

# MUNICIPAL ART COLLECTION

Learn more about the municipal art collection at:

[www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection](http://www.cityofhomer-ak.gov/prac/city-homer-municipal-art-collection)



“Horses in a Winter Storm”  
Watercolor by Diana Tillion  
City Hall

## STAY CONNECTED TO CITY COUNCIL

Go to [cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council](http://cityofhomer-ak.gov/cityclerk/stay-connected-city-council) to find instructions on how to listen, provide testimony, and participate in the meetings via Zoom.

### UPCOMING MEETINGS

#### January

- |    |         |   |
|----|---------|---|
| 3  | 5:30 pm | <b>CANCELLED - Planning Commission Worksession</b>                              |
| 3  | 5:30 pm | <b>Planning Commission Special Meeting</b>                                      |
| 9  | 6:00 pm | <b>Economic Development Advisory Commission Regular Meeting</b>                 |
| 16 | 5:30 pm | <b>Library Advisory Board Regular Meeting</b>                                   |
| 17 | 5:30 pm | <b>Planning Commission Worksession</b>  |
| 17 | 6:30 pm | <b>Planning Commission Regular Meeting</b>                                      |
| 18 | 5:30 pm | <b>Parks, Art, Recreation &amp; Culture Advisory Commission Special Meeting</b> |
| 24 | 5:30 pm | <b>Port &amp; Harbor Advisory Commission Regular Meeting</b>                    |



## JOIN OUR TEAM

- Find current job listings for the City of Homer
- Sign up for Job Alerts
- Apply Online at: [cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs](http://cityofhomerak.applicantpro.com/jobs)

### ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER

The City of Homer Newsletter is published monthly. For questions or comments, please contact the Office of the City Manager at [citymanager@ci.homer.ak.us](mailto:citymanager@ci.homer.ak.us).

## City of Homer

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