

Mayor's Report 12\_15\_2022

### **Alaska Municipal League Conference**

I attended the AML Conference last week. Some Assembly Members, Deputy Manager Deach, and Deputy Clerk Carr were also in attendance. I talked to a large number of government representatives from other communities concerning a variety of topics including housing shortage solutions, school funding, and day care, which is a topic the Alaska State Legislature is about to tackle.

The Skagway contingent also met with the interim CEO of AIDEA, Morgan Neff, after former CEO Alan Weitzner resigned a few weeks ago. We discussed AIDEA's assets on the Ore Dock, which will become the property of the Municipality in March when we officially take control of the port. Neff said he would help us gain early access to the area, which has been problematic up to this point.

### **Sales Tax Increase**

This is coming back to the Assembly but I don't see anything in the packet indicating the intent behind the tax increase, or an amendment clarifying when the increase would go into effect. Like most reasonable people, I am opposed to tax increases for the sake of increasing taxes. As I mentioned at the last Assembly Meeting, the increase needs to be postponed until 2024 at the very least because tour operators have already set their 2023 prices.

Without an explanation as to how revenues are going to be spent, I oppose this ordinance, which now seems rushed and poorly executed. There is no point in burdening staff with a spring referendum that will likely fail by an overwhelming majority.

### **Resolution 22-46R – Clarifying Process for Selection of Employees**

Thank you to Assemblyperson Bass for bringing this forward. I support it and feel like it's long overdue.

### **Minto Proposal for Ore Terminal**

I appreciate the fact that Minto reached out the MOS with this document as it clarifies their desire to ship ore through Skagway in 2023. We need to give them a clear answer swiftly but we should allow the community time to comment on whether they want the MOS to work with a third-party operator to maintain ore shipping operations in the short term.

My biggest concern is that multiple elected officials have repeatedly stated on the record that the ore loader is antiquated and needs to be replaced. If we use the ore loader now, it seems to contradict those statements. If the loader is truly beyond its working lifespan, it doesn't make sense to keep using it, in my opinion.

Also keep in mind that no sampling has been done under the ore loader, which means we don't know if there is any recent contamination (copper), even though there was an accident where ore material went into the water in 2017. If we use the facility before we sample, it may be impossible to know whether or not the contamination happened on our watch.

I recommend sending this proposal to committee so the community has time to weigh in.

**Clinic Interim Director Contract Amendment**

As a kindly reminder to the Assembly, please note that this discussion is about a contract amendment. The discussion should not revolve around any person or entity associated with the current contract.

**Happy Holidays to All**

I hope everyone enjoys the holiday season and the brisk weather that's about to come our way. 2023 is going to be a landmark year for Skagway – For the first time in our history we will control and operate our port. I also expect our busiest cruise season despite our many challenges over the past few years, we worked together as a community and are poised for prosperity and growth in the coming years.

As always, it's a privilege to serve with my fellow members of Skagway's Governing Body and THANK YOU to our incredible municipal staff for all of your hard work.