



**MAYOR**

Dianne M. Keller

**COUNCIL**

Howard O'Neil, Seat A  
Diana L. Straub, Seat B  
Steven Menard, Seat C  
Marty Metiva, Seat D  
Ron Cox, Seat E  
Mark A. Ewing, Seat F

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**WASILLA CITY COUNCIL  
MEETING AGENDA**

WASILLA CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS

Wasilla City Hall, 290 E. Herning Avenue, Wasilla, AK 99654 (907) 373-9090

**SPECIAL MEETING**

**5:15 P.M.**

**MARCH 9, 2006**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

**II. ROLL CALL**

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Matters Of Interest With Employees Pursuant To WMC 3.90.020.

1. Employee Comments

**V. MAYOR, CLERK, AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

**VI. RECESS**

**VII. COUNCIL/CLERK'S OFFICE STAFF MEETING**

**VII. ADJOURNMENT**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Wasilla City Council was held on Monday, March 9, 2006 at the Wasilla City Council Chambers, Wasilla, Alaska. Mayor Dianne M. Keller called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Council Members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Howard O'Neil, Seat A, Deputy Mayor (arrived at 5:24 p.m.)
- Ms. Diana Straub, Seat B
- Mr. Steve Menard, Seat C
- Mr. Marty Metiva, Seat D
- Mr. Ron Cox, Seat E
- Mr. Mark Ewing, Seat F

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Kristie Smithers, City Clerk
- Ms. Jamie Newman, Deputy Clerk

**III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Mayor Keller invited Scott Neel, Museum Registrar to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

**IV. NEW BUSINESS**

A. Matters Of Interest With Employees Pursuant To WMC 3.90.020.

1. Employee Comments

MOTION: Council Member Straub moved to allow employees as much time as they need to address the council.

Discussion followed.

MOTION: Council Member Menard moved a primary amendment to limit comments to a maximum duration of thirty-minutes per employee.

GENERAL CONSENT: The primary amendment passed without objection. (The primary amendment was deemed final on the main motion and allowed to stand.)

Mayor Keller noted that no written information was presented by employees prior to the meeting.

Mayor Keller invited testimony from employees.

Police Officer Cecil Dickerson:

- questioned the status of the employee position reclassification project;
- stated that the current pay structure is not implemented fairly; and
- stated that newly hired officers earn more money than officers that have been on staff for three to six years.

Discussion moved to the council and questions were asked of Officer Dickerson.

Mayor Keller spoke about the reclassification process and how it differs from the evaluation process.

Police Sergeant Ken Conn:

- expressed concern with the sergeant, investigator, and lieutenant being grouped in the same salary grade, although, the duties of these positions differ; and
- noted that during the last evaluation process all shift supervisors met to evaluate employees.

Police Officer Chris Watchus:

- expressed concern with new officers earning more money than officers that have been employed for sometime;
- thanked the council for implementing the education incentive program; and
- noted the city's salary administration plan appears to be flawed.

Discussion moved to the council and questions were asked of Officer Watches.

Police Officer Don Ridge:

- stated that the city's salary administration plan prevents long-term employees from receiving earned merit increases (newer employees are eligible to receive larger merit increases);
- thanked the council for implementing the education incentive program and encouraged the council to offer incentives to all employees;
- stated the city's salary administration plan is difficult to comprehend;
- questioned if incentive programs affect annual merit increases; and
- stated that one of the leading motivators of police officers is pay.

Discussion moved to the council and questions were asked of Officer Ridge.

Mr. Mike Rager, Code Compliance Officer:

- stated he currently earns less than \$22 per hour; and
- noted he was told he would make the same wage as the prior code compliance officer when offered the position.

Discussion moved to the council.

Police Officer John McNeal:

- shared his belief that the cost of labor does not keep up with the cost of living; and
- suggested that merit increases are disproportionate to the cost of living.

Discussion moved to the council and questions were asked of Officer McNeal.

Police Lieutenant Craig Robinson:

- shared information about the city's salary administration plan;
- spoke about the difficulty in retaining quality officers;
- noted his belief that the current evaluation process could be simplified;
- talked about a step system and compared it to the city's salary administration plan; and
- discussed the deputy chief position as he understands it.

Discussion moved to the council and questions were asked of Lieutenant Robinson.

Council Member Straub requested a copy of information previously distributed by administration that compared wages of city employees to other areas of the state.

Police Officer Jentry Crain:

- expressed concern with his timesheet being changed by Chief Savage without his knowledge; and
- expressed concern with the way overtime is calculated.

Discussion moved to the council and questions were asked of Officer Crain.

Officer Rick Manrique:

- thanked the council for listening to concerns brought forward;
- shared his law enforcement experience;
- stated the department is losing two officers due to pay and job dissatisfaction;
- talked about the investment made by the city in training officers;
- discussed the benefits of mentoring new officers; and
- encouraged the city to pay officers competitively in order to retain them.

Jamie Newman, Deputy Clerk

- shared information about the salary administration plan;
- questioned why police officers automatically move up a grade after one year of employment; and
- encouraged the council to treat all employees fairly.

Police Officer Tim Jesson:

- shared his experience in regard to the city's administration plan; and
- stated concerns have been brought forward in the past, however, they were not always followed up on.

Council Member Cox requested a recess. No objection was raised.

The council recessed at 7:15 p.m. and reconvened at 7:23 p.m.

Police Sergeant Ray Chmielowski:

- thanked Council Members Ewing and Straub for their interest in the community;
- conveyed his disappointment with the city not promoting from within for the position of deputy chief; and
- stated the department has qualified officers to lead the department.

Police Officer Ken Conn:

- commented on overtime concerns raised by Officer Crain;
- concurred with comments made by Officer Manrique; and
- spoke about the history of the salary administration plan.

Police Officer Don Ridge:

- commented on ways to improve the training budget;
- spoke in support of adopting a step increase pay system; and
- stated that with the hiring of a deputy chief the Wasilla Police Department is becoming a top heavy organization.

## **V. MAYOR, CLERK, AND COUNCIL COMMENTS**

City Clerk:

- commented on the history of the salary administration plan; and
- requested to reschedule the clerk's office and council staff meeting scheduled later this evening. (No objection was raised by the council.)

Mayor Keller:

- thanked employees for attending the meeting and sharing information; and
- commented on the salary grades and ranges and how positions are grouped together.

Council Member Ewing (comments continued on page 6):

- thanked everyone for attending the meeting;
- stated the council needs to take a serious look at the issues brought forward this evening;
- stated the council may need to consider a step system for pay increases; and
- noted that although the council can not make everyone happy the salary administration plan should be reviewed.

MOTION: Council Member Ewing moved to direct the clerk to work with administration to prepare a list of police department employees to include years of service on the force, prior years of service in law enforcement, current rate of pay, grade and or title, and cost comparison with the Anchorage Police Department.

Discussion followed.

MOTION: Council Member Ewing moved the previous question.

GENERAL CONSENT: The motion to move the previous question passed without objection.

VOTE: The main motion passed unanimously.

Council Member Menard:

- expressed concern with the deputy chief position;
- commented on his experience with compensation packages; and
- noted he attended a PERS and TERS teleconference with the Alaska Municipal League.

Council Member Straub:

- thanked Council Member Menard for taking the time to testify at the PERS and TERS teleconference;
- thanked employees for their candid testimony; and
- expressed concern about not promoting from within for the deputy chief position.

Council Member Metiva:

- thanked employees for attending the meeting;
- noted this is a challenging issue that will not be solved overnight; and
- congratulated Council Member Ewing on winning the dance contest at the Chamber of Commerce Musher's Ball.

Council Member O'Neil:

- thanked everyone for attending the meeting; and
- noted good comments were made this evening.

Council Member Cox:

- stated an evaluation process is always subjective;
- encouraged the council to bring forward concerns at any time;
- states all employees are a credit to the city;
- noted that perhaps the salary administration plan is too complicated; and
- talked about the need to balance budget constraints when considering salaries.

Council Member Ewing:

- stated that when the deputy chief resigns, he will assume the position of police chief, and his salary will be divided between all police officers in the form of a pay raise; and
- stated that assuming the deputy chief makes \$80,000 per year, all police officers would receive a \$2 per hour raise.

## VI. RECESS

No recess was taken.

## VII. COUNCIL/CLERK'S OFFICE STAFF MEETING


Clerk note: this staff meeting was originally postponed to the March 20, 2006 Regular City Council, however, was then rescheduled to the April 10, 2006 Regular City Council Meeting at 5:30 p.m.

## VI. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

  
DIANNE M. KELLER, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
KRISTIE L. SMITHERS, MMC  
City Clerk

Adopted by the Wasilla City Council on April 10, 2006.