

GLACIER CITY GAZETTE

VOLUME 1 / ISSUE 16

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, 2016

LOCALLY OWNED AND PRODUCED IN GIRDWOOD, ALASKA



History of the
Hand Tram: Part 1

Page 4



James Thornton / Special to the Glacier City Gazette

This photo was taken after an exhausting nine-hour day stalking rams above Windy Corner. He took the photo as the sun set on the horizon with the perfect light. He then faced a three-hour hike down in the dark and without water. He said it was the most difficult shoot of his life.

>> SEE MORE OF HIS PHOTOS ON PAGE 7

Mayor Explains Police Contract Process

By Marc Donadieu
Glacier City Gazette

No explanation was given when Whittier proposed a \$2,000 per day rate for interim policing Girdwood, an unexpected \$307 per day increase over the negotiated long-term contract rate. Whittier also proposed extending the Nov. 30 interim contract until Dec. 31.

If agreed upon, a long-term contract would begin Jan. 1.

With Whittier City Manager Mark Lynch and Public Safety Director Dave Schofield on vacation, the Gazette spoke with Mayor Daniel Blair to understand the lengthy negotiation process and the reasoning behind the \$23,946 interim rate increase.

Blair indicated that as a volunteer mayor he was not directly involved in the negotiations. He also said the interim contract was a last hour implementation before Lynch and Schofield went on vacation and expected negotiations to be completed at an earlier date.

"My first blush would be this," said Blair. "When I do a contract, and I engage a contractor, they always charge me more for less. In other words, if I just have snow removal for one day, it costs me a lot more than if I do it by the season. There's more risk involved because there's no obligation for Anchorage or Girdwood to renew [the interim] contract, so it's a separate contract."

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Special Meeting Reviews Police Contracts, Proposed Rate Increase

By Marc Donadieu
Glacier City Gazette

The Public Safety Advisory Committee met twice last week to discuss interim and long-term police contracts with Whittier. With copies of the contracts unavailable at the Oct. 3 meeting, committee members talked over the proposed per day rate increase in the interim contract.

At an October 7 special meeting, committee members reviewed line-by-line recent changes to the proposed interim contract and increased per day policing rate

Sam Daniel, Girdwood Board of Supervisors Co-Chair, announced at an

Oct. 3 meeting that Whittier proposed to raise the per day rate paid in the interim contract to \$2,000, which is above the verbally agreed upon \$1,693. An additional proposal included extension of interim contract dates from November 30 to December 31. Daniel said an email from Whittier City Attorney Holly Wells to Municipal Attorney Bill Falsey indicated a big financial change from Whittier without explanation.

"The City of Whittier proposes a \$2,000 per day rate for 78 days," Daniel said, "which would run from October 15 through December 31. The long-term contract would then begin January 1, 2017, assuming it is authorized and put into effect by the parties."

Daniel said Falsey wrote in an email forwarding the news, "I imagine the first question is going to be why the day rate of the proposed interim contract was higher than the prorated amount of the long-term contract."

Committee members raised the same question, but no justification was provided for Whittier's increase. The yearly cost of a long-term contract between Girdwood and Whittier is \$618,000, equating to \$1,693 per day, not \$2,000. The proposed addition of seventy-eight days at \$307 per day more would be at a rate of \$730,000 a year for policing.

See back page



Marc Donadieu / Glacier City Gazette

The Public Safety Advisory Committee held a special meeting in the GVF&R ambulance bay because the Community Center was unavailable due to the Health Fair. L to R: Committee Members Mike Opalka, Mike Edgington and Michelle Weston. Mandy Hawes was excused due to a work trip.

Hand Tram Annex?

Trail Icon to Feature in Service Area Shuffle

By P.M. Fadden
Associate Editor

Annexation of Winner Creek Trail's hand tram is one among three options under consideration with regard to the popular transit feature's future.

Examination of current Municipality of Anchorage [MOA] land boundar-

ies shows the Hand tram, regularly maintained by Girdwood Trails Committee [GTC], to be outside Girdwood Service Area and ineligible for work efforts or funding.

The realization, emerging less than one month earlier, has come to light as result of refreshed municipality legal focus upon Service Area boundaries in the wake of the recent Girdwood policing debate.

"The hand tram sits on HLB [Heritage Land Bank] land and has easement running to it, which is managed by the U.S. Forest Service," said Municipal Liaison to Girdwood Kyle

Kelley. "Since its inception, [the hand tram] has been built by the community and maintained through GTC, which works directly with Girdwood Parks and Recreation."

GTC Vice-chairman Brian Burnett is deeply involved in community and state trails issues. Burnett, who is listed to the Director's Board of Girdwood Nordic Ski Club and Alaska Trails, stated: "I see trail based recreation as contributing greatly to the quality of life in our community and a vital economic driver for our state."

"To my view there's really no scenario where GTC

efforts would be removed from the question of hand tram maintenance," he said.

Status of Service Area boundaries, hand tram positioning and subsequent permissible steps for tram maintenance came under scrutiny during the recent HLB agreement renewal process.

"We were renewing our agreement with HLB and it got sent to MOA legal department," explained Kelley. "Legal depart is really fresh right now on the boundaries of the Service Area because of the police issue, and upon reading where the hand



P.M. Fadden / Glacier City Gazette

Hikers look on as two tram users navigate the pulley-powered crossing.

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Alpine Air Almost 27

By Marc Donadieu
Glacier City Gazette

Alpine Air has been in business for nearly 27 years.

Based at the Girdwood Airport, the outfit offers a variety of helicopter services that have grown and changed over the years. Alpine Air President Keith Essex appreciates where his job takes him, whether it's a scenic excursion or charter work.

The Gazette caught up with the busy Essex, who first began flying in his teens, for an interview about his business and how it has progressed over the years.

"That was in Talkeetna where I learned to fly as a teenager," Essex said. "I moved down here from Talkeetna in 1986. I spent summers in Talkeetna for another five years after that and spent winters down here. I moved down here full time in '91."

Alpine Air initially began offering charters with fixed wing planes. Clients included climbers going to the Chugach Range and Alaska Ranges, skiers and sightseers.

"It started as an air charter service modeled on what had been going on in Talkeetna at the time," said Essex. "We started in 1991 up there, and then we would move it down here in wintertime. Girdwood was initially pretty slow in the early 90s. There wasn't very much going on at all."

In 2000, Alpine Air switched from fixed wing planes to helicopters, which offered more flexibility and flying possibilities.

"What changed is our reliability of operation," Essex said. "When we were operating fixed wing, there were a lot of days we couldn't operate because of the winds or weather when we can still operate with the helicopter. It has helped quite a bit."

Alpine Air does quite a bit of charter work for various industries throughout Alaska. Essex estimates about half of his flights are charters such as working with Alaska State Troopers for search and rescue, as well as fish and wildlife management with the Department of Fish and Game and utility work.

"Not only are we doing scenic flights, we're doing charter work, and some of that will include the Gulf of Alaska clean up from all of the trash and debris out there. We're involved in that every year. We work extensively on communications flights for cell phone towers and microwave sites. Then we refuel a lot of those sites because a lot of them need power generation."

Another big component of what Alpine Air does is work with trail crews to move staff, haul in supplies and haul in gravel or a boardwalk. In addition, the business transports maintenance equipment to the hand tram, hauls ropes in and out and takes the man basket back and forth.

For Essex, weather is one of the biggest challenges. The coastal climate with lots of moisture and wind can make for tough de-

isions when clients need to be picked up from the field.

"We've flown in 50 knots of wind before," Essex said. "We've landed in 50 knots of wind, but the air has to be reasonably clean to do something like that. There are times where we have had to deal with high wind, where we've had to deal with fog when we're trying to get to people. That's the nature of Bush flying, and you're always dealing with weather and then you're also dealing with people who want to get picked up. You're always balancing the two."

Essex also enjoys scenic flights Alpine Air offers because he gets to take in the gorgeous sights as well. He likes seeing the happy look on people's faces after a flight concludes.

"When you live in Girdwood, unless you fly, you don't realize how rugged and glaciated our backyard is. It's almost like going to a completely different planet. The roads take the path of least resistance, but we're not confined by that view with the aircraft. We can go into the rugged country. You'll leave Girdwood Valley, and straightaway you're in some pretty rugged country, and it's really dramatic."

Alpine Air offers three helicopter tours with different features, as Essex explained.

"Just to the northeast of here we have a series of very large glaciers in Lake George Valley," Essex said. "And from there we go into Prince William Sound. From the end of May to the end of August, we do glacier dog sledding with the Seavey family. They set up a training camp on Punchbowl Glacier, and we bring people up there for tours where they get to learn about dog mushing and the nuts and bolts of how it all works."

Essex said many people are very excited about hooking up a team and going for a dog sled ride on the glacier. It's a unique experience in a spectacular setting. He loves seeing the reaction people have after tour and hearing what the experience means for them.

He said the idea of the dog sledding tour came when he met a woman in Seward who was giving tours. She put Essex in touch with Dario Martinez, who was running a glacier tour nearby.

"He and I got to talking, and we decided we would do the same here," Essex said. "He bought Chugach Express, and we operated together five years or so. Then he decided it was too much for him and wanted to concentrate on his kennel and tours here."

Essex and his wife Deb have built a business that continues to develop in interesting ways, much as the town around it.

"It's funny, Girdwood from what it was back in the 80's to what it is now is almost unrecognizable from the amount of growth in the town. Our business has kept pace with the growth of the town. As the town has grown, we have grown."



Marc Donadieu / Glacier City Gazette

Alpine Air has a summer dog sledding tour on Punchbowl Glacier just above Girdwood. If you look closely, you can see the track from the tour.

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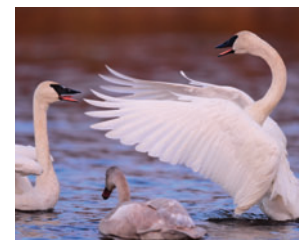
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The European black slug has established a foothold in...

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Alyeska at a Glance

With the daylight hours shrinking, fall leaves...

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Four Valleys Community School

Calling all Adults! This Saturday is a night just for...

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CORRECTION

The Sept. 28 Gazette article on Glacier Valley Transit should have said GVT estimates 75,000 riders next year, not 25,000. In two previous articles, GVT titles should have been Administration and Grants Manager Dawn Johnson and Operations Manager Sam Marshall.

This article was sponsored in part by
Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area.



DISCOVER THE STORY

Glacier City Gazette

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We cover the communities of Rainbow, Indian, Bird Creek, Crow Creek, Girdwood, Portage, Whittier, Moose Pass, Cooper Landing, Hope and South Anchorage.

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Email:
marc@glacierycitygazette.net

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1903
Girdwood, Alaska 99587

Marc Donadieu – Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

P.M. Fadden – Associate Editor

Marlene Buccione – Chief Photographer

SK Malone – Staff Writer

Matthew Bailey – Graphic Designer/Webmaster

Girdwood Health Fair



Marlene Buccione / alaskabymarlene

LEFT - Rotary members Jack Sprat owner Frans Weits and Ski to Sea owner Erin Eker hang out in the food tent provided for volunteers at the Girdwood Health Fair.
RIGHT - Volunteers work the hypertension table at the annual Girdwood Health Fair, sponsored by Girdwood Rotary.

Community Calendar

Oct. 15
 Adults Night Out, Challenge Alaska, 7 p.m. \$25 or two for \$40

Oct. 17
 Girdwood Chamber of Commerce Board Meeting 3-4 p.m.

Oct. 17
 Girdwood Board of Supervisors Meeting 7 p.m.
 Girdwood Community Center

Oct. 18
 Whittier City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., P-12 Building

Oct. 18
 Canned Food Drive @ The Merc under the Oso Loco Taco tent

Oct. 21
 Rotary Candidates Night, Girdwood Community Center

Oct. 24
 Municipality of Anchorage/
 Girdwood Board of Supervisors Joint Quarterly Meeting
 4 p.m., Girdwood Community Center

Oct. 25
 Canned Food Drive @ The Merc under the Oso Loco Taco tent

All events for the Community Calendar and Letters to the Editor for the next issue should be submitted by Oct. 22 to marc@glaciercitygazette.net.

Whittier Public Safety Building



Photos Courtesy of Moe Zamarron

Work continues on Whittier's new Public Safety Building. The lot was recently paved and the sidewalks were poured.

Live Music

SILVERTIP GRILL
 All shows 8:00 - 11:00 p.m.
 Oct. 15 - Jon Dykstra

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 Oct. 13 - Lulu Small
 Oct. 20 - Up a Mountain
 Oct. 27 - TBA

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 Oct. 28 - Lez Zeppelin
 Oct. 29 - Lez Zeppelin

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The History of the Hand Tram: Part One

By Marc Donadieu
Glacier City Gazette

Crossing Glacier Creek on the hand tram in Girdwood is an invigorating and mildly exhausting experience.

While many people have enjoyed the journey over Glacier Creek in the hand tram, few of them are aware of the history behind it and how it came to be. It's a story of determination, perseverance, and countless hours put in by many volunteers. The five-year process of getting funding, creating a design and constructing the popular conveyance is also the history of the Girdwood Trails Committee, a subcommittee of the Girdwood Board of Supervisors.

Construction began in 1996, and the site finally dedicated in 2001. There were four volunteers in particular who were actively involved throughout the whole process, and they are known as the "Core Four" for their many contributions. They are Tom Yeager, Dave Wilson, Robbie Frankovich and Norman Starkey.

The Gazette interviewed each man separately for an overview of the ambitious project and why it succeeded. Yeager was interviewed while hiking from Crow Creek Road to the Winner Creek Trail hand tram. Wilson was interviewed via phone from Vail, Col. Frankovich was interviewed in his Girdwood home, and Starkey was interviewed at Girdwood coffeehouse The Grind. The interviews are the foundation for this three-part article series.

The original idea was to build a bridge over Glacier Creek to connect trails in Girdwood Valley so hikers could go through a loop instead of an out and back. Many years ago, and below the hand tram location, miners built a bridge that no longer stands. Building a new bridge was given serious consideration until the remnants of 1995's Typhoon Oscar quashed any thought of it.

"The genesis of this idea was Typhoon Oscar back in 1995," Yeager said. "It had been an intention and a dream for a lot of years to reconstruct the old bridge that the miners would take across Glacier Creek, which was wiped out. I remember back in the mid-70s when you could still see remnants of the abutments on both sides of the creek where the miner's bridge was. My original intent was just to rebuild or replicate that old bridge, which is actually down in the canyon."

Remnants from massive Eastern Pacific storm Typhoon Oscar had left heavy rainfall. Yeager had visited the potential bridge site to see what was happening.

He was in awe of what he saw in a close up view. "As typhoon Oscar was winding down, I came back here with a climbing harness and carabineer and went out on the old cable that spans the creek. This was really cool. The hydraulic force coming through that narrow canyon was just phenomenal, so I hung there, first above the boiling maelstrom for like half an hour, just taking it all in. "It was incredible. It was loud and violent. A couple times



Photo Courtesy of Girdwood Trails Committee
Norman Starkey (L) and Tom Yeager (R) work on the timber frame for the hand tram.

a minute large boulders were being washed down. The water was murky. You couldn't see anything. Every time one of these large boulders hit the creek bed, it sounded like a cannon going off."

The storm's runoff had taken away what remained of the old mining bridge. Yeager quickly realized that a bridge crossing was not the way to go.

"So I'm hanging there thinking, 'You know what Yeager, there's no way a bridge can survive down there. That bridge is a really dumb idea.'"

Another reason for not building a bridge across the top of the canyon above Glacier Creek is due to the great size of the snow load it must be able to carry. After contemplation of what could not be done, somebody suggested what could, and the old hand tram in McCarthy was given as an example of what was possible.

"I was always a fan of the old hand tram that got you into McCarthy," Yeager said. "It was built by the locals; nothing fancy. They used tire rims as shivs, and slack rope, but it was really neat."

After a Trails Committee meeting decided a bridge across Glacier Creek at that location would be futile, the idea of building a hand tram across the top was raised as an alternative to connect trails throughout Girdwood Valley. In 1995, Yeager was given permission to write a grant for Gov. Tony Knowles' program called Track, a grant program for trails



Photo Courtesy of Girdwood Trails Committee
The rebar gets set up in anticipation of cement to form the hand tram's base on the Crow Creek side.

projects. It was Yeager's first time writing a grant, and it was rejected.

Yeager researched grant writing, and his second attempt was successful. The Trails Committee received an initial \$50,000 from the state, which allowed the hand tram project to proceed. Now the Trails Committee and its many volunteers had to follow through and deliver.

"In retrospect," Yeager said, "I think one of our best assets was our naiveté. We didn't know what we were getting into. We didn't fully appreciate the scope of the project. We had no idea what the challenges were going to be. We just went blindly forward. Had we had a better idea of what was in front of us, we probably would have said no way in hell."

This article was sponsored in part by Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area.



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SATURDAY
Oct. 15-Eggs Benedict • Oct. 22-Chimichanga

SUNDAY
Oct. 16-Calzones • Oct. 23-Enchiladas

MONDAY
Oct. 17-Taco Salad • Oct. 24-CLOSED

TUESDAY
Oct. 18-Spaghetti & Meatballs • Oct. 25-CLOSED

.....
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FROZEN IN TIME:

A look back at the week that was...

By P.M. Fadden
Associate Editor

Monday, October 10 – The Panama Canal opens in 1911.

Tuesday, October 11 – NASA’s Challenger shuttle crew member Astronaut Kathryn D. Sullivan becomes the first American woman to walk in space, 1984.

Wednesday, October 12 – Captain Christopher Columbus and crew, aboard Crown of Castille vessel Santa Maria, encounters the Bahaman archipelago of San Salvador in 1492. The now immortalized mariner had intended to land at Japan.

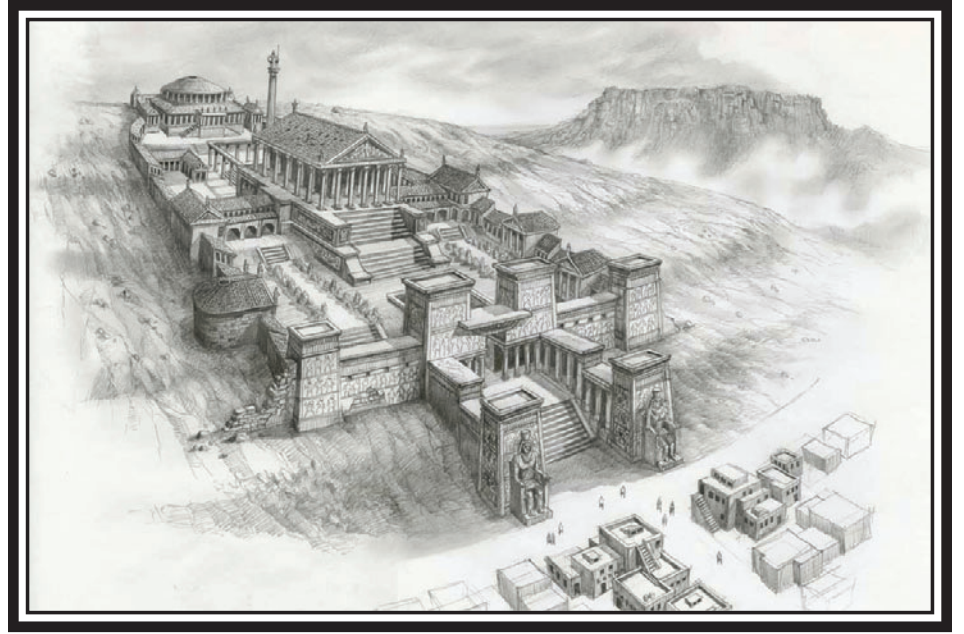
Thursday, October 13 – Alaska Proud: Alaska Pacific University, formerly known as Alaska Methodist University, is first dedicated at Anchorage, 1960.

Friday, October 14 – The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded to civil rights leader, Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr. for his advocacy of nonviolence, 1964.

Saturday, October 15 – The modern day cycle of months and dates is born when Italy, France, Spain and Portugal adopt the Gregorian calendar, name for Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. To complete the shift required that ten days be forever lost to history.

Sunday, October 16 – Bibliotheca Alexandria in Alexandria, Egypt celebrates its 2002 inaugural opening. The library and cultural center is a modern commemoration to the famed Library of Alexandria which was lost in antiquity.

These dates in history are happily brought to you by the Glacier City Gazette in the hopes that the current week is just as noteworthy. Cheers.



Courtesy Photo

Artistic depiction of ancient Library of Alexandria. Constructed in the 3rd century BC, the classical world’s largest library was believed to store over 400,000 scrolls until its mysterious destruction by fire.

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HEADLINE READS

3 top stories from home and away

By P.M. Fadden / Associate Editor

WORLD VIEW



Columbian President to Donate Nobel Prize Monies

Nobel Peace Prize recipient, Columbian President Juan Manuel Santos intends to donate the eight million Swedish krona prize purse (\$925,000) to the victims of his nation’s 52-year domestic conflict with FARC, an armed wing of the Communist party.

Santos, who recently signed a peace treaty with his FARC adversaries, hopes to end a conflict that to date has killed 260,000 and displace more than six million within Columbia, reports BBC World Service.

NATIONWIDE



International Accusation Further Clouds U.S. Election

The Obama administration said Friday it was “confident” that Russia was behind recently hacked emails pertaining to upcoming U.S. elections in an attempt to interfere with the process.

The announcement, referring to the breach of Democratic National Committee emails and the sites of other Democratic Party-linked organizations, marks the first time U.S. administration has officially accused Russia of hacking into U.S. political systems, reports CNN News.

FRONTIER FOCUS



Anchorage Health Plan Called ‘Unsustainable’

In a presentation before city Assembly members, Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz and deputies described two years of atypically high insurance payouts amidst rising health care costs as constricting employers, prompting the civic official to label the city’s current health insurance program as “not a sustainable model.”

Berkowitz revealed plans to examining new partnerships, health care models and re-launch of an employee wellness program with intention to minimizing higher out-of-pocket health care costs for city employees next year, reports Alaska Dispatch News.

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Happy Trails: Family hikes for all seasons

By P.M. Fadden
Associate Editor

The interlacing trail networks of picturesque Turnagain Arm are rife with four-season hiking opportunities.

Chugach National Forest, of which the Arm region is a portion, offers hundreds of trail miles showcasing flora, fauna, glaciers, gorges, rainforest, rivers, sea views, snow summits and abundant wildlife to a perennial, familial audience from around the world.

Though cautionary steps such as bear spray and bells are suggested, educational literature provided by the U.S. Forest Service does arm the informed with an array of trail details, including an 'easy' to 'more difficult' trek rating, clearly identifying route options appropriate to even the youngest, first time hiker.



P.M. Fadden / Glacier City Gazette

An autumn morning offers empty walking upon Winner Creek trail for this parent with child.

Here, the ready hiker also keeps a watchful eye for unearthened root structures as the gnarled, under foot limbs make for tricky terrain to the untested trekker.

the unprotected to both sun and wind exposure, so the prepared parental hiker packs in (and out) ample fluids, snacks and all-weather wear.



P.M. Fadden / Glacier City Gazette

Virgin Creek Falls is a hiking treat easily enjoyed by parents toting a chest-strapped child.

as one of Alaska's top ten trails.

The popular three and

riods, the trail's hand tram alone can see approximately fifteen hundred persons per day," estimated United State Forest Service Staff Officer David Ilse. "Locals are aware of that and know to visit during times when the crowds disperse."

Autumn's arrival heralds the likelihood of a private trail experience, and the pine-shadowed, earthen path winds a course easily traveled with small children. The brisk air temperature is off-set by sun-warmed, illuminating clearings, and the opportunity to bird spot offers ready educational, entertainment for hiking tikes.

Even passage aboard Winner Creek's iconic hand tram is child manageable.

With station spotters in place as precaution for safe transit, the panoramic hand tram crossing is made both easy and baby-friendly, an invigorating experience that sets the stage for child and parent's future expansion to enhanced trail routes.

Winter's approach will, indeed, soon shape area trail options, but the journeys shared upon the summer and autumn trails will nonetheless whet the appetites of both parent and child for future Turnagain Arm family trekking adventures.

Starting Out:

At two-tenths mile distance, Upper Virgin Creek Trail is a prime option for little ones ready to cut their trekking teeth.

Winding away from the Girdwood residential fringe, Virgin Creek Falls trailhead begins where Timberline Drive ends. The short, sheltered walk enters lush, rainforest foliage beneath a towering canopy of moss-trunked trees to access views of a fifteen feet waterfall tumbling to fill a gravel pool which feeds the running stream below.

The under-canopy atmosphere is often cool. The moist earth underfoot makes for good tracking conditions, and early morning trekkers might come upon fresh moose prints.

Finding Stride:

Portage Valley's heavily trafficked Trail of Blue Ice is an easy, segmentable hike through scenic surroundings on a wide, well-maintained trail.

At a one-way length of five miles, Blue Ice can either be enjoyed as a day-long excursion or partaken in much shortened portions—depending on weather or hiker comfort. Mountain views, twisting plank-ways, waterside strolling and plethoric vegetation set an immersive backdrop for families toting children of any age.

The paved to gravel footpaths offered by Trail of Blue Ice make for stroller, bicycle, ski or kidpack-friendly travel, though the passage's length does lend

"Autumn is the time when I take my family hiking. I mean, there's nobody out there. The trail is all ours."

— U.S. FOREST SERVICE STAFF OFFICER DAVID ILSE

Stepping Up:

Winner Creek Trail, according to United States Forest Service personnel, ranks high among state hikes and is often reported

one half mile trail is accessed from Girdwood Valley's Crow Creek Road or from Alyeska Resort and experiences heavy summer visitor volume.

"During peak summer pe-

This article was sponsored in part by Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area.



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Autumn's Glory



James Thornton / Special to the Glacier City Gazette
Photographer James Thornton had an exciting week in the field in various locations throughout Turnagain Arm, ranging from Potter Marsh in the day to photograph swans to Portage Valley at night to capture a vivid aurora. He truly caught the spirit of fall in Alaska.



Insight on a Hopeful Visionary

SK Malone
Staff Writer

It has been five years since Kristy Peterson and her family moved to Hope. During this time, she started a business, volunteered at the school and helped around the community. Kristy and her husband Travis Peterson also volunteer at the Hope Fire/EMS, where she is the secretary and he is the Interim Chief.

At the school, Kristy has started a 4-H program for the kids of Hope and the surrounding area. She also volunteers as the choir and drama club director. Kristy organizes and volunteers at many Parent Teacher Student Organization events. The most recent event she is organizing is the annual Halloween Carnival, which is on October 27th at the

Hope School.

When she first started her business, it was a little sewing and gift shop called Sumthin Extra. The goal in starting this business was to provide jobs to local residents and provide a service for the community. After about three years, Kristy revamped the shop, pulling out the sewing business and running it from her house. The shop was now a place where one could find fit snacks or drinks, hand-crafted gifts or art made by local residents, handmade clothes, and even hardware.

During this same time, Kristy started a food co-op through the Azure Company, where locals could order all natural healthy food and products so people could find these things in Hope instead of having to go out of town. Today the shop is

closed, although she still runs the food co-op.

I recently conducted an interview with Kristy to see what brought her to Hope, what she would like to see in our community, and what some of her future plans are.

What attracted you to Hope?

The option to live off the land. Travis and I were interested in homesteading, raising chickens and growing our own vegetables for years. Mainly it was the school and the options to volunteer in my community, which is much harder to do in a larger community.

Why did you start your business and what are your future goals?

I started my business because I wanted the abil-



Courtesy Photo

Kristy Peterson instructs kids as one of her many, varied roles in the community of Hope.

ity to help put food on the table, to help pay bills for my family and to help create employment options in my community. Our business plan in the future at this point is I just want to help bring healthy food into this community through the food co-op. It is why I started the food co-op, selling farm fresh eggs and fresh vegetables in the first place, to bring healthy food and products to community so that people wouldn't have to drive down the highway to get them as well as helping our community's economy.

What direction would you like to see the Fire and EMS department head?

At the meeting the other

"I want to see the community to be able to live their lives here not just sleep here."

- KRISTY PETERSON

to see for the future of this community?

What I would like to see for the future of this community is to be more sustainable, with the ability to be able to grow and provide food for our community, I'd like to see us be able to take care of our nutritional needs, and to see us be able to run our fire department efficiently while having a paid chief and EMS. To feed our community with our own gardens, chickens and farm raised food. So that way, our economy flourishes and our community is healthy, while we don't have to travel as much and without relying on services from outlying communities. I want to see the community to be able to live their lives here not just sleep here.

What I would like to see happen because 4-H is a national youth leadership program, possibly helping the kids become potential future leaders in our communities and their prospective endeavors.

What are your goals for 4-H and why did you start it?

I started 4-H so the local children could gain leadership knowledge as well as being part of a team, the knowledge of being able to grow food, create crafts, or take care of animals. My goals for 4-H are to give the kids backgrounds in agriculture, arts and crafts and animal husbandry. What I would like to see happen because 4-H is a national youth leadership program, possibly helping the kids become potential future leaders in our communities and their prospective endeavors.

If you would like to sign up for the food co-op, volunteer for the Fire or EMS department, volunteer or have donations for the Halloween Carnival or 4-H, please feel free to contact Kristy Peterson at (971) 241-5222.

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Black Slugs Invade Whittier



Marc Donadieu / Glacier City Gazette

The bigger slugs are about six inches long when stretched out.

By Marc Donadieu / Glacier City Gazette

The European black slug has established a foothold in Whittier. The invasive species, first appearing 30 years ago in Cordova, is spreading.

The U.S. Forest Service has started studying the shiny, black, slow-moving slugs to determine their population density and what possible effects they may have on native plants and the wildlife that eat them.

Barbara Lydon is a Ranger in Nellie Juan College Fjord Wilderness Study Area, which covers over 2 million acres in Prince William. As a participant to the ongoing study, Lydon is charged to collect and count black slugs before killing them.

The Gazette went into the field with Lydon to learn about the slugs, the study and to photograph the slimy creatures at close range. In pursuit of our prey, we set out for The Sportsman's parking lot and The Manor, locations where the slugs are known to be abundant. Lydon said the temperature of the crisp morning was a few degrees above when the slugs hunker down, so the odds were good we would find some.

It wasn't long before we found the first contestant, and it made quite the impression. The big black slug was chowing down on a dog turd, a behavior which some regard as a valuable community service. Feces are part of their diet as well as plants. A stick was used to separate the slug from its last meal before the sentence of death was pronounced. It was quickly dispatched with a thorough, squeaky squish from a boot.

Lydon explained the slugs' typical diet and how it could potentially impact the local ecosystem.

"They prefer seedlings," she said. "They eat vegetation, stems, fungi and moss. They could potentially have a negative impact on the ecosystem by changing plant diversity. Social and economic implications are two things to consider. They're an eyesore. You look at them feeding on dog feces. It's not pretty to look at."

Lydon's instruction to kill the slugs after finding them is part of a containment program to slow their spread and keep them confined. Eradication is not a current goal, but she encourages people to kill them when seen. If the slugs become well established, they are more difficult to control.

"They tend to be found in human populated areas and along roadsides," Lydon said. "They've been in Cordova for over 30 years. They're just starting to be reported and sighted in other places. We have confirmed sightings in Whittier, in Girdwood, in Chenega Bay, in Eshamy Bay and one of the hatcheries out in the sound has reported them."

Implications of the invasive species presence are unknown, prompting further Forest Service study and increased public awareness of the slug as a mollusk non-native to Alaska.

"There hasn't been a lot of research done on European black slugs," Lydon said. "As we learn more about them, nothing has been confirmed. We're trying to figure out why they've been in Cordova for 30 years and why they're just starting to pop up in other areas."

To gather data, Lydon and others set up transects or lined grids 100 meters long and 20 meters wide. Then the slugs within are collected, counted and later killed. Diverse areas are chosen to get population estimates and how far reaching they are. As elevation goes up, slug density goes down, which might be related to cooler temperature. The data is then analyzed to determine control measures.

Lydon described the slug disposal process used in remote areas of Prince William Sound. About 400 slugs were collected in two days and taken to the beach where they were salted and burned.

"What we've done out in the Sound is build a really, really hot fire in the tidal zone. We put these slugs on top, and it's completely disgusting. You see that slime trail right there? They start to exude this slime, and they start sliding out of the fire. They don't burn up and get crispy. They get kind of charred."

The slugs' slime is surprisingly strong stuff that is very difficult to remove.

"When we first collected these guys," Lydon said, "we put them in a five-gallon bucket. It was incredible. They created a

layer of slime like that, and you couldn't get it off. I had gloves on, and you can't scrape it off. I had simple green and scalding hot water trying to scrub off this stuff."

If slugs are found, or if you're out collecting them for disposal, the preferred method is to pick them up, salt them and burn them. Lydon also recommends squishing them, which is a faster method. She emphasized what not to do when killing slugs.

"What we don't want people to do is throw them in salt-water or freshwater or put them in the garbage or dumpster," Lydon said.

The City of Whittier is onboard with working alongside Forest Service to help with control measures and has issued a resolution. The Forest Service is also trying to initiate a spring program with Chugach School District.

"The teachers would like to be involved, and we've talked about going into the classrooms and talking to the school children and bringing them out here on field trips and doing what we've been doing with our other youth groups - setting up transects, getting an idea of the density of these populations and where they are at."

"When invasive species are first discovered is the time to



Marc Donadieu / Glacier City Gazette

A European black slug leaves behind a swath of slime after making a turn.



Photo Courtesy of U.S. Forest Service

Slugs ooze out of a plastic bag after being collected in Eshamy Bay.

make a difference," Lydon said.

If the affected areas are in the early stages of black slugs being reported, the Forest Service, field data in hand, can initiate control measures and make a difference to kill as many as they can.

"There's a concern of introduction and expansion," Lydon said. "What people should know is that they should be killing these slugs by either picking them up, salting and burning them or squishing them."

This article was sponsored in part by Kenai Mountains-Turnagain Arm National Heritage Area.



DISCOVER THE STORY

VOTE
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Senator Cathy Giessel: Effective Reliable Leadership

A few accomplishments from the past few years...

- **Girdwood Nordic Ski Trails**
- **Girdwood Pedestrian Safety Corridor reconstruction along the Alyeska Highway**
- **Girdwood road improvements and expansion**



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Alyeska at a Glance

By Shannon Markley
Special to the Glacier City Gazette

With the daylight hours shrinking, fall leaves filling the streets, the early morning frost and a full moon coming into view on the 15th, it just feels like Halloween is in the air. Join us at the Sitzmark this year for the return of the popular, all-female Led Zeppelin cover band LEZ ZEPPELIN! Get dressed up in most creative and creepy of costumes and join us for a rockin' time at the Sitzmark with this incredible New York City-based tribute band which have gained worldwide critical acclaim for the musicianship, passion and gender-bending audacity they bring to the music of Led Zeppelin.

Tickets for the show are available at TheSitzmark.com or pair it up with a Hotel Room Package which includes your night's stay and tickets for two to the show on either Fri., October 28th or Sat., October 29th. The Halloween Train will also be doing the slow roll on the tracks again this year, though this year the train will run both nights! Visit AlyeskaResort.com or call (907) 754-2111 for availability and reservations.

October also means it's time to get a little R&R after the summer bustle and before the start of ski season. Come join us for a night away during the month of October where The Hotel Alyeska will be offering the annual PFD special, with rooms starting at \$99 between October 10th and October 30th. Treat yourself to a much needed staycation, order some room service and indulge in the heated saltwater pool and Whirlpool.

While enjoying some much needed relaxation, don't forget to get those legs prepared for the ski season. Join the Spa at Alyeska's fitness staff in the Daylodge every Wednes-



Ralph Kristopher / Special to the Glacier City Gazette

Lez Zeppelin will play the Sitz on Halloween.

day & Sunday at 6 p.m., October 19th – November 20th for Ski Conditioning classes. Show up for single classes at \$15/session or take advantage of the punch passes available at a discount. Please feel free to visit our website or call the Spa at (907) 754-2550 for more information.

While you are down here enjoying a much-needed getaway or rocking it out for Halloween, be sure to purchase and pick-up your season pass. Alyeska Resort is current-

ly selling 2016-17 season passes at the early season rate, which includes up to \$100 of Powder Cache. When purchasing your pass prior to October 31st, this Powder Cache essentially turns your season pass into a debit card in which you can use at any one of Alyeska's outlets.

From dining outlets to gift shops, to hotel stays or the Mountain Learning Center, your powder Cache is there to use as you please throughout the winter season. Beat

the lines on opening day and get your pass today. Don't forget Season Passholders, you can add on a Sitzmark Music Pass for just \$100. This Music Pass gives you entry into every single Sitzmark concert all winter season long, including Halloween's Lez Zeppelin. With shows in the lineup such as Anders Osborne ringing in the New Year with a two-night set, Flowmotion, Young Dubliners, Leftover Salmon, North Mississippi All-Stars and more to be announced.

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Mayor Explains Police Contract Process

Continued from front page

Without direct knowledge of the situation, Blair said there could be a number of reasons for the increase such as staffing issues or purchases. Blair also indicated the contract process has been difficult because none of the participants have been through it before.

"Part of the frustration on both sides is that we're doing something new here," Blair said. "The administration is trying to mitigate the risk to the community of Whittier and yet be responsive to the community of Girdwood and at the same time run a municipal government. We're stretching ourselves a little bit. I hope it all works out."

Blair said that during the contract process Whittier had expended resources for attorney fees, administrative work and sending Chief Schofield to a multitude of meetings. He also said the three-way negotiation between Whittier, the Municipality of Anchorage and the Girdwood Board of Supervisors adds additional complications and compromises.

"We're trying to do a contract using the Municipality of Anchorage's contract code, which is not ideal for what we're trying to do. This isn't a tree-trimming contract. This is a contract for providing peace officers. It's engaging my resources, which I do for free, but they're engaging our city attorney and our city administration with our chief of police."

Blair lamented that a long-term policing contract could not have been signed sooner. "We've done all of this to be patient. If this had been a contract that was amendable to us and to Anchorage, we would have signed a contract. Had everything gone well, this [interim] contract wouldn't exist. I don't know the reason for the increase. I will say we would have been happy to sign the long-term contract."

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Four Valleys Community School

By Briana Sullivan
Special to the
Glacier City Gazette

Indoor Track Free for You and Me

Calling all Adults! This Saturday is a night just for you. Come as you are because we like you that way. A.N.O. Adults' Night Out! is this Sat., Oct. 15 at Challenge Alaska. Enjoy friends, tasty hors d'oeuvres and cool beer on tap from Midnight Sun Brewing Company. If you cannot make it, consider buying a ticket and revel in supporting FVCS, wherever you are.

Last article was loaded with new and upcoming classes, many of which are underway now. Soccer began last week with 61 registered kids for the six-week program. Two separate leagues are composed of four teams each, with teams playing each other on Saturdays. An additional Kindergarten soccer team meets once per week to play and develop soccer skills, with their Saturdays free to do other fun activities. Basketball begins immediately following the indoor soccer program. Register today.

The Girdwood School gym is transitioning into a recreation center feel each night of the week. With adult soccer on Monday evenings, basketball on Wednesdays, Tuesday and Thursday exercise classes, that leaves Friday nights for Junior High and High School gym games. The gym is alive with a heart-beating active atmosphere, and it will get even better this week.

The track is now open for free to all users. As you drop off kids for soccer and need to take a walk, catch a glimpse of your kid score the goal or critical pass while getting in out of the dark. Come step on the clean indoor track this month and next. Upon entering the school, sign a waiver form and get moving.

Did your child enjoy the assembly with guest Arthur Lee Land? If learning the technology of loop stations to create music sounds interesting, this workshop is perfect. Loop stations can be used with instruments

or just the human voice. Recording and multiplying one's own artistic ideas with this device offers limitless possibilities to budding musicians. Two Music Looping classes will be offered Nov. 13 for different age groups in the Community Room. Prior knowledge of music or experience with loop stations is not necessary for this workshop.

Learn the Thriller began last week, Halloween crafts is coming up, even pies in time for turkey day, plus painting and pottery classes are aplenty in the upcoming weeks. For Pre-School kids, Romp-n-Snore returned to the gym last Monday and Music and Move with Melanee begins Oct. 10 in the community room. Visit us online for a full list or explore the colorful and organized bulletin board outside our office next time you come to the Girdwood School. Do you have an idea for a class or would you like to organize one? Let us know. Locate us at fourvalleys.org

A Blast from the Past

What is our FVCS office? Our office represents the community school. "A community school is not a building. It is not an agency. It's not a school for kids only, for women only, or men only. It's an idea - an idea that works when people get involved. That idea is to provide ongoing educational and recreational opportunities for all ages, using the resources of our own community. To make this idea happen, we have to get involved, decide what types of programs we want, find our own teachers and open the doors to public facilities. We can do it!"

This quote is from the first edition of "The Local News" in January 1981; the very first days of the Four Valleys Community School. FVCS was publisher of "The Local News" from 1981-2000. Thirty five years later, we are still here and stronger than ever. Today we are the only community school left in Alaska. If you're a part of this community, you're a part of FVCS. We may be small, but we are mighty, and most important, we are



Erin Leighton / Special to the Glacier City Gazette
Chess club began Oct. 5 and continues Wednesdays through Dec. 7 right after school.

local. Pulling a piece of the statement above, the idea only works when individuals get involved. Get, stay,

and be involved. We are proud to have Girdwood, Bird, Indian and Portage in our DNA.



Erin Leighton / Special to the Glacier City Gazette
Soccer began last week with over 60 registered kids for the six week program. Thank you to all the volunteer coaches, who make this program possible.



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Hand Tram Annex?

Continued from front page

tram was they pointed out to us that it was outside Girdwood Parks and Recreation Service Area.”

“Any money put toward the hand tram would be essentially paid outside the Service Area, so technically we can’t spend money out there,” Kelley said of MOA legal’s advisement.

The current boundary, delineated at approximately half the distance to the Nordic Loop Trail, passes beyond new Arlberg Road development, classifying the hand tram’s location as outside the Service Area.

The observation raises a key point of emphasis with regard to upkeep of valley recreation facilities.

“The popularity of the tram and trail is beyond what many envisioned over 15 years ago when the facility was built,” said Burnett.

“The Girdwood hand tram connects a series of trails that form a nearly 20-mile loop along the valley floor,” he said. “Trail based recreation is important to the community and a well-managed trail system is a priority of the Girdwood Trails Committee. It is a key component of the community’s recreational infrastructure.”

Three possible outcomes to resolve the surprise issue and safeguard the vital valley feature are currently under consideration.

“We may be able to annex that parcel where the hand tram sits into the Service Area,” said Kelley. “Since nobody lives there, its small and associated with a trail that begins within the Service Area, legally, they may be able to allow annex in through Assembly action.”

Kelley went on state, “if we can’t do that, we have to put it to the voters in April to say; yes, we’ll annex in the hand tram so it can be maintained by Girdwood Park and Recreation or Trails Committee.”

“If that fails, the third option is: GTC engages a fundraising campaign, going all the time, to keep the hand tram going,” said Kelley. “Since GTC can work separately through Girdwood Inc. raised money can be put into a Girdwood Inc. account and from there pay bills to maintain the hand tram.”

“Maintenance routines will need to keep pace with traf-

fic and plans will need to be made to accommodate more traffic,” said Burnett. “Maintenance is not just limited to the tram. More traffic requires a more durable trail tread and more frequent trail maintenance.”

Grant monies fulfilling past hand tram funding requirements are nearing term completion. Cessation of said monies would leave a fiscal gap necessitating search for alternate financial avenues.

“It’s a legality which we’re trying to correct.”

– MUNI. LIAISON TO GIRDWOOD
KYLE KELLEY

“As long as I’ve been here we’ve had a recreation grant through the U.S. Forest Service,” Kelley said, “which has helped us to maintain and upgrade the hand tram.”

“That grant is essentially running out right now.”

“For 2017, we were going to have an appropriation of three thousand [dollars] to do our annual maintenance on the hand tram and, if we had any big emergency, we would switch funding around from a Girdwood Parks and Recreation budget to take care of it.”

“But in order to do that, we’re going to have to figure some things out,” Kelley said.

The hand tram topic will be a feature of the quarterly meeting with Municipality Manager Mike Abbott and resolution hopes are buoyed by the absence of residences near or around the hand tram position, a fact which implies that no persons receive new taxation resulting from changes to Service Area boundaries.

“The Municipality Manager is actually the one trying to figure out solutions on how to resolve it,” Kelley said. “He came up with the [annexation] idea and is now saying to legal: we’ve done this with other areas, how can we do this annexation with this area?”

“The good benefit is that we have an organized GTC,”



P.M. Fadden / Glacier City Gazette

Popular Winner Creek Hand Tram is recently discovered to rest outside current boundaries of Girdwood Service Area, a point now under careful MOA and GTC consideration.

Kelley said. “It’s a group of volunteers and residents and they’re able to raise money and they could make the hand tram one of their things to keep maintaining.”

GTC Vice-Chairman Burnett provided commentary strongly supportive of Kelley’s remarks.

“The GTC will continue to maintain the hand tram and continue to work with all involved to manage our trails and facilities for the benefit of Girdwood and all Alaskan trail users as well as for the benefit of the many visitors that are out for a hike on our awesome trails,” he said.

Special Meeting Reviews Police Contracts, Proposed Rate Increase

Continued from front page

“It would be interesting to get a rationale for why they increased it [per day cost] and why they increased the time frame, because we were under the impression it would be just through November. What this tells us is they’re not expecting to get a long-term contract in until December,” said committee member Mandy Hawes.

Anchorage Assembly approved the interim agreement on Oct. 4th as a “sole source contract award for a not to exceed amount a \$2,000 per day rate,” according to the memo Mayor Ethan Berkowitz presented to the Assembly. Assembly approval allows negotiations to proceed, yet GBOS is not locked into the proposed figure due to ongoing negotiations. A finalized contract would require signatures from the Municipality, GBOS, and Whittier.

Municipal Liaison to Girdwood Kyle Kelley said, “What the Assembly is agreeing to is to assign and allow for the money to be released for this.”

Apprehensions continue to be raised in the wake of proposed interim contract increase.

“My concern is the cost has jumped up with no apparent reason why or no justification to be seen,” said committee member Mike Edgington. “With the higher cost, there is the incentive to delay the long-term contract as long as possible. It’s costing us an extra \$10,000 a month at this rate.”

To get GBOS, the Municipality and Whittier on the same page and expedite the process, Daniel proposed a meeting of all the major representatives for round table discussion on remaining issues. He believes the meeting would generate much faster turnaround between the three parties. Daniel also would like to include Municipal Manager Mike Abbott to facilitate explanation of the Municipality’s perspective.

“I’m requesting that not just Chief Schofield be there but Holly Wells [Whittier City Attorney] and that Mark Lynch the City Manager be there,” Daniel said. “I honestly believe that a lot of the things being negotiated are things he is putting in and not what we discussed with Schofield.”

Despite the latest wrinkle in the extended process of finding a policing solution, Daniel is optimistic and believes an

agreement is within reach.

“I have to point out that in many ways this contract is a huge improvement going forward,” said Daniel. “Before we did not have a budget, and there were several things that

were missing in earlier drafts that we now have.”

“A lot of the things we’re not in agreement on are really not large issues,” he said. “I’m really hopeful we can dial in the rest of it.”

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