

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 East Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska 99645 - 907-861-8683

Tim Hale, District 1
Stephanie Nowers, District 2
Dee McKee, District 3
Robert Yundt, District 4
Bill Gamble, District 5
Dmitri Fonov, District 6
Ron Bernier, District 7



Thomas Bergey, District 1
Kendal Kruse, District 2
Kathryn McCollum, District 3
Jubilee Underwood, District 4
Brooks Pitcher, District 5
Ole Larson, District 6
Ted Swanson, District 7

MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

JOINT ASSEMBLY/SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, March 26, 2024, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Edna DeVries.

II. ASSEMBLY ROLL CALL

Present: 5 - Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Tim Hale

Telephonic: 1 - Assemblymember Robert Yundt

SCHOOL BOARD ROLL CALL

Present: School Board Member Thomas Bergey, School Board Member Kendal Kruse, School Board Member Kathryn McCollum, School Board President Jubilee Underwood, School Board Member Brooks Pitcher, School Board Member Ole Larson, and School Board Member Ted Swanson.

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by School Board President Jubilee Underwood.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following persons spoke in favor of bonding for charter schools: Nicholas Abramczyk, Carl Chapell, and (First name indiscernible) Fonov.

The following person spoke to obscene library books and the Library Citizen Advisory Committee: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to the schools national testing and the school curriculum: Chris Tyree.

The following person spoke to libraries and censorship: Karen Lewis.

The follow person spoke to OR 24-039 and put herself forward as a candidate if adopted: Mary Robinson.

The following persons thanked the Assembly and School Board for the support of their charter school: Karen Olson, Alita Fonov, and Susan McCauley.

The following persons spoke to keeping the proposed school bond as one package: Drew McElvain, Elaine Ridlon, Molly Connor, and Jonathan Zeppa.

The following persons spoke to Moms for Liberty and code of ethics in the school system: Melissa Wilkins and Bruce Owens.

The following person spoke to the code of ethics in the school system and keeping the school bond together: Michelle Dempsey.

The following person spoke against property taxes going towards woke ideology and unions: John Miller.

The following person spoke to Moms for Liberty and trade school opportunities for kids: Bruce Owens.

The following person spoke to obscenity in libraries: Tressa Emlock.

The following person spoke in favor of breaking up the school bond package and concerns with bonding for maintenance: Ron Johnson.

The following person spoke to the funding plans from the Governor's Office and education policy: Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office.

VI. JOINT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Arctic Winter Games 2024 Proclamation (Requested by Mayor DeVries)

[24-047](#)

Proclamation in Recognition of the Planning and Leadership of the Arctic Winter Games

Mayor DeVries read a proclamation honoring the Arctic Winter Games Host Society for the Arctic Winter Games into the record.

Mayor DeVries read a proclamation honoring the Matanuska Susitna Borough School District for their the help they provided during the Arctic Winter Games into the record.

B. Superintendent Update (Requested by Administration)

[24-058](#)

Dr. Randy Trani, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District Superintendent, provided an update on student achievements.

C. Annual Budget and Bonding For Schools (MSB 2.12.075(A))

[24-059](#)

Dr. Randy Trani, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District, spoke to the budget and bonding for schools and major maintenance.

Katie Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations, reviewed the School Board's approved budget and the request from the Borough.

The meeting recessed at 8:42 p.m. and reconvened at 8:52 p.m.

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, SCHOOL BOARD, AND STAFF COMMENT

School Board Member McCollum thanked everyone for the great discussion and the good working relationship between the School Board and the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone for coming and said a prayer.

School Board Member Pitcher thanked everyone for coming and testifying. Stated how much he supports charter schools and encouraged others to do the same.

School Board Member Kruse thanked everyone for their work. Spoke to public charter schools and that she hopes to see more charter schools in the future.

Assemblymember Nowers thanked the charter school members who came to the meeting. Spoke to the success of the Arctic Winter Games.

School Board Member Bergey thanked everyone for their presentations. Stated he leaves the budget in the hands of the Borough.

Assemblymember Yundt thanked everyone for their comments. Spoke to the last three budget seasons, expanding charter schools, and school choice.

School Board Member Underwood thanked everyone for coming and shared her support for charter schools. Spoke to how good the School Board and Assembly work together.

School Board Member Swanson thanked everyone for their public testimony. Spoke to the bond and absentee by-mail voting.

School Board Member Larson thanked the Assembly for supporting major maintenance for schools. Spoke to the Arctic Winter Games, the facilities used, and networks available in the Borough to make the event possible. Spoke to his lack of faith in the STAR testing.

Assemblymember Gamble spoke to the importance of staying up to date with maintenance and a deferred maintenance plan.

Assemblymember Fonov thanked everyone for their presentations and staff for communicating with concerned citizens. Spoke to schools and encouraged parents to stay a guiding source. Thanked the School Board for their working relationship.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m.