

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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

BOROUGH MAYOR
Edna DeVries

BOROUGH CLERK
Lonnie R. McKechnie, CMC

BOROUGH MANAGER
Michael Brown

BOROUGH ATTORNEY
Nicholas Spiropoulos



BOROUGH ASSEMBLY
Tim Hale, District 1
Stephanie Nowers, District 2
Dee McKee, District 3
Maxwell Sumner, District 4
Bill Gamble, District 5
Dmitri Fonov, District 6
Ron Bernier, District 7

MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

ASSEMBLY REGULAR MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, 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. ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Telephonic: 1 - Assemblymember Bill Gamble

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Tom Robertson.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

25-030

A. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 01/07/25

The minutes were approved as presented without objection.

VI. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

A. AGENCY REPORTS (MSB 2.12.082; Seven minutes per person)

1. Reports From Cities

There were no reports provided.

2. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

There was no report provided.

3. State of Alaska

There was no report provided.

4. Tanaina Community Council

Corine Hickey thanked the Borough for help with Heather Way clean up and showed a video.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

There was no report provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Assemblymember Fonov thanked the Tanaina Community Council for coming to the assembly meeting.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

There was no report provided.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no report provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie reported on the upcoming meeting schedule and noted the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District queried if April 4, 2025 would be an acceptable date for the Mat-Su Central School ribbon cutting ceremony. Noted that she has upcoming jury duty.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

25-032

1. Abbreviated Plat: 01/08/25
2. Big Lake Community Council: 11/12/24
3. Butte Community Council: 09/11/24, 10/09/24
4. Caswell Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors: 10/14/24
5. Local Road Service Area Advisory Board: Resolution 25-01
6. MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission: Resolution 25-01
7. North Lakes Community Council: 12/19/24, 01/23/25
8. Planning Commission: 01/20/25, Resolution 24-31
9. Talkeetna Community Council: 01/06/25

The citizen and other correspondence were presented, and no comments were noted.

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

- IM 25-046** Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract For Bid 23-108B, With JTA Construction, LLC, For A Final Contract Amount Of \$685,280.81 For The Snowshoe Elementary School Waterline Replacement Project. The informational memorandum was presented, and no comments were noted.

VII. SPECIAL ORDERS

A. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (You can speak under one of the audience participations on the agenda, but not both; Three Minutes Per Person.)

The following person spoke to concerns with election machines and the Safe Streets for All Program: Janice Norman.

The following person spoke to the election process: Tom Robertson.

The following persons spoke to the Library Citizens' Advisory Committee: Linda Spohn and Mary Rivetta.

The following person spoke to the proposed natural gas pipeline and upcoming North Lakes Community Council meeting: John Miller.

The following person spoke to a member of the Library Citizens' Advisory Committee comments and genders: Jackie Goforth.

The following persons spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-012: Cathy Harris and Richard Stoffel.

The following person spoke in opposition to ballot counters: Michael Alexander.

The following person spoke to the State of Alaska Division of Elections and election laws: Dave Johnson.

The following person spoke in support of electronic counting, libraries, and banned books: Ruth Wood.

The following persons spoke in opposition of Resolution Serial No. 25-017: Colin (Last name was indiscernible.) and Clark Smith.

The following persons spoke to Ordinance Serial No. 25-017 and Lynx Road: Mike Klawitter and Thomas Brewer.

The following person spoke to the Library Citizens' Advisory Committee and the marijuana industry: Karen Crandall.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

OR 25-013 An Ordinance Approving The Sale Of Certain Borough-Owned Real Property Acquired Through Tax Foreclosure For Delinquent Real Property Tax Years 2019, 2018, And Prior; And Not Needed For Public Purpose.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Jill Irsik, Land Disposal and Foreclosure Specialist, provided a staff report.

Mayor Devries opened the public hearing.

The following persons asked for an extension on their property taxes: Crystal Lockuk and Robert Galekovich.

There being no others who wished to testify, the public hearing closed and discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-013.

Assemblymember Hale moved a primary amendment to Informational Memorandum No. 25-028 to strike TS46-17 and TS46-26 from the Tax Sale 46 Sale Listing until the 2025 Fall Sale.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

OR 25-017 An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25, Service Areas, To Provide For A Five-Member Board Of Supervisors For The Road Service Areas In Caswell Lakes, Greater Willow, Meadow Lakes, Gold Trail, Greater Talkeetna, And Trapper Creek.

Sponsors: Bernier

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mr. Brown provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-017: DJ McBride, Caswell Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors member; Harry Zola, Gold Trail RSA Board of Supervisors member; Stephen Edwards, Meadow Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors member; John Strassenburgh, Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors member; Shawn McBride; and Donna Massey, Trapper Creek RSA Board of Supervisors member.

The following persons spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-017: Andrew Traxler, Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors member; and Pat Daniels, Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors member.

There being no others present who wished to testify, the public hearing closed and the discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-017.

Assemblymember Fonov moved to postpone Ordinance Serial No. 25-017 to March 18, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

C. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (You can speak under one of the audience participations on the agenda, but not both; Three Minutes Per Person.)

The following person spoke to term limits and elections: Pat Daniels.

The following persons spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-012: Desiree Terry and Camilla Potts.

The meeting recessed at 8:13 p.m. and reconvened at 8:33 p.m.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

- RS 25-014** A Resolution Amending The Title And Scope Of Work For The Stryker Stretchers And Stair-Pro Chairs Project For Areawide Ambulance Service, To That Of Durable Medical Equipment.
- RS 25-017** A Resolution To Waive The Outdoor Use Permit Fees For The Cystic Fibrosis Foundation.
- RS 25-018** A Resolution Amending The Scope Of Work For The Veterinary Clinic Fiscal Year 2024 Equipment Replacements And Upgrades.
- RS 25-019** A Resolution To Waive The Outdoor Use Permit Fees For The Denali Arts Council And Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

- AM 25-013** Approval Of Change Order No. 1 For Contract No. 24-138B With Dirtworks, Inc., For East Devonshire And Oilwell Road Improvements Project, To Add \$6,877.68 And Extend The Final Completion Date To July 31, 2025.
- AM 25-014** Award Of Bid No. 25-108B To CGC Services, LLC For The Contract Amount Of \$267,444 To Supply & Replace A Boiler At Palmer High School.
- AM 25-015** Approval Of Contract Amendment No. 2 For Contract No. 24-060P With RESPEC, To Extend The Contract Completion Date For The Design Of Central Landfill Entrance Improvements Project From June 30, 2025, To February 28, 2026.
- AM 25-016** Award Of Bid No. 25-076B To BSI Equipment, LLC For The Contract Amount Of \$113,331 To Supply Steel Waste Containers.

AM 25-017 Approval Of Contract Amendment For State Lobbyist Services To Harris Consulting To Extend The Contract To June 30, 2026, In An Amount Not To Exceed \$80,400 Per Year.

AM 25-018 Authorization To Purchase A 6-Wheel Drive Semi-Truck With Stellar Hook Under Sourcewell Contract 032824-DAI From Trailer Craft For The Amount Of \$236,068.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to approve the consent agenda as read into the record by the Clerk.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

AM 25-011 Approval of the 2025 Road Service Area Road Improvement Project List.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM Serial No. 25-011.

Assemblymember Bernier moved a primary amendment to add N. Lynx Lake Road to the Greater Willow RSA No. 20 Road Improvement Project List in the amount of \$125,000.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

OR 25-012 An Ordinance Amending Title 25, Elections.

Sponsors: Fonov

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Fonov moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-012.

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment to MSB 25.30.025(C) Section 5:

***striking the word "ask" and inserting the words "require" and "person claiming to be a" at the end of the third sentence to read: "Without proper authorization the election official is empowered to require a person claiming to be a poll watcher to leave the polling place."; and**

***inserting "In addition, if 2 election officials agree that a poll watcher is engaging in conduct other than as allowed by MSB 25.30.025(D), or engaging conduct prohibited by MSB 25.030.025(E), the election officials are empowered to require the poll watcher to leave the polling place." at the end of the paragraph.**

Assemblymember Hale moved a secondary amendment to MSB 25.30.025(C) Section 5 third sentence:

***striking the words " Without proper authorization, the"; "is"; and "poll watcher"; and**

***striking the word "official" and inserting the word "officials"; and
*inserting the words "are" and "person without proper authorization" to read "Election officials are empowered to require a person without proper authorization to leave the polling place."**

The secondary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment to MSB 25.30.025(A), (B), and (B)(1)(b):

***inserting the words "Additionally, one public member who is a registered voter of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough may be a poll watcher in each precinct and early vote count location." to the end of MSB 25.30.025(A); and**

***inserting the words "or a public member who is a registered voter of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to serve as a poll watcher" to MSB 25.30.025(B) to read: "(B) Candidates or organized groups designating poll watchers, or a public member who is a registered voter of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to serve as a poll watcher, shall:"; and**

***inserting the words "if any;" to MSB 25.30.025(B)(1)(b) to read: "(B)(1)(b) the name of the candidate, group, or organization the poll watcher is representing, if any;".**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment to strike all reference of counting ballots before polls close throughout the ordinance.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to suspend the rules and to extend the meeting past 10:00 and not to exceed 11:30 p.m.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The meeting recessed at 9:48 p.m. and reconvened at 9:58 p.m.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Fonov moved to postpone Ordinance Serial No. 25-012 to March 18, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

IX. VETO

There were no vetoes presented.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 03/04/25 Assembly Chambers)

- OR 25-016** An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$314,014 From The Big Lake Road Service Area Fund Balance To The Big Lake Road Service Area Road Improvement Projects List.
- OR 25-019** An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.150(C), Willow-Caswell Fire Service Area Board Of Supervisors.
- OR 25-021** An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$60,000 From The United States Fish And Wildlife Service, National Fish Habitat Partnership, For Coal Creek At Sushana Drive Fish Passage Replacement.
RS 25-016: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With The United States Fish And Wildlife Service For Coal Creek At Sushana Drive Fish Passage Replacement And Approving The Time Extension Of The Fiscal Year 2023 Areawide Budget Appropriation For Fish Passage Improvements Match Funds.

OR 25-022 An Ordinance Approving The Addition Of A New Regular, Full-Time Right-Of-Way Acquisition Officer (Project Employee) For The Pre-Design & Engineering Division Of The Public Works Department.

B. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 05/20/25 Assembly Chambers)

RS 25-020 A Resolution Removing All Board Members From The Big Lake Road Service Area 21 Board Of Supervisors.

Sponsors: DeVries and Gamble

Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for March 4, 2025 and May 20, 2025 respectively.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

C. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

25-031 Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Agriculture Advisory Board
Dylan Blankenship
Sharmin Oathout
Animal Care & Regulation Board
Destiny O'Daniel
Local Emergency Planning Committee
Gena Ornquist

Assemblymember Bernier moved to confirm the appointments requested by the Mayor.

The motion passed by the following vote:

D. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

There was no other new business.

E. REFERRALS (For Referral To The Planning Commission For 90 Days Or Other Date Specified By The Assembly)

There were no referrals presented.

XI. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Gamble spoke to the March 1, 2025, Strategic Planning Session.

Assemblymember Bernier said a prayer.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to the Heather Way clean-up and offered clarification to a member of the audience. Commented on the king salmon fishing and Federal leave offs.

Mr. Brown spoke to health powers funds and the March 1, 2025, Strategic Planning Session.

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the need for additional hand count officials to be able to count ballots timely.

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to Resolution Serial No. 25-002.

Mayor DeVries spoke to public testimony about the natural gas line and Lunch and Learn event.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:23 p.m.



Mayoral Signature and Clerk Attestment

For

February 18, 2025, Regular Assembly Meeting Minutes

(13 pages)


EDNA DeVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 04/01/25