

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



Michael Bowles, 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 SPECIAL MEETING

6:00 PM

THURSDAY, MAY 7, 2026

Budget Deliberations and Possible Adoption

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, May 7, 2026, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Edna DeVries.

II. ROLL CALL

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

Telephonic: 1 - Assemblymember Michael Bowles

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Brown, Borough Manager.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three Minutes Per Person.)

There was no one present who wished to testify.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION

[OR 26-026](#) An Ordinance Appropriating Monies From The Central Treasury For The Borough Operating Funds, Enterprise Funds, Education Operating Fund And Capital Funds, Establishing The Rate Of Levy For All Borough Functions For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2026, And Ending June 30, 2027; And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2026, Through June 30, 2027.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 26-026.

Amendment No. 1

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65), Education Fund (page 187), and Capital (pages 373, 375, 391, and 449).

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Education Operating (445.220) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$1,560,662;**

*** decreasing the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Capital Transfer (446.700) appropriation by the amount of \$1,800,000 and eliminating the Talkeetna Elementary Roof Replacement Project; and**

*** the Education Fund, Non-Departmental by increasing both Transfers from Other Funds, Areawide (367.110) and Education - Operating (406.100) by \$1,560,662.**

Assemblymember McKee made a motion to have Katie Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations to speak to the body.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee

Assemblymember Bowles moved to reconsider the ruling vote on the motion to have Katie Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations to speak to the body.

The motion failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Sumner
- No:** 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 2

Areawide Fund - Community Development-Recreational Services (page 143).

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** The Areawide Fun, Community Development-Recreational Services (Division 129) (Glacier View) by increasing the total appropriation by the amount of \$140,000. This amendment would provide for utilities, insurance, an on-call employee and other costs associated with acquiring and maintaining the facility.**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Amendment No. 3

Areawide Fund - Animal Care and Regulation Division (page 82).

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

***the Areawide Fund, Animal Care and Regulation Division by decreasing the appropriation for temp wages and benefits by the amount of \$33,390.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee

Amendment No. 4

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65) and Capital Project (pages 371 and 384).

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment and any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Transfers to City of Wasilla Planning (449.205) by decreasing the appropriation by the amount of \$100,000.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Amendment No. 5

Budget Ordinance-Section 18 E-911, Areawide Fund - Department of Emergency Services - Telecommunications Network (page 126), and E-911 Fund (page 179).

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment and any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

- * in Section 18 of the Budget Ordinance amend the E-911 surcharge from \$1.00 to \$1.50;**
- * the Areawide Fund, Department of Emergency Services - Telecommunications Network-Other Contractual (100.160.126.429.000) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$73,742;**
- * the E-911 Fund-Enhanced 911 Surcharge Revenues (200.000.000.342.700) by increasing the amount by \$660,000;**
- * the E-911 Fund-Other Contractual (202.160.370.429.900) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$156,128, to fund call takes and dispatch for Fire and EMS; and**
- * the E-911 Fund-Transfer to City of Wasilla (202.000.000.449.200) by increasing the appropriation by \$403,115 for a grant to provide Alaska Department of Public Safety call taking.**

Assemblymember Sumner moved a secondary amendment to strike the first line, "in Section 18 of the Budget Ordinance amend the E-911 surcharge from \$1.00 to \$1.50," and to strike the third line, "the E-911 Fund-Enhanced 911 Surcharge Revenues (200.000.000.342.700) by increasing the amount by \$660,000".

Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone the amendment to the May 12, 2026, special meeting.

The motion to postpone failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate)

The motion passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 6 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 1 - Assemblymember Fonov

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 4 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Sumner

The meeting recessed at 7:51 p.m. and reconvened at 8:06 p.m.

Assemblymember Fonov moved to reconsider the vote on Amendment No. 2.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Amendment No. 2

Areawide Fund - Community Development-Recreational Services (page 143).

The primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** The Areawide Fun, Community Development-Recreational Services (Division 129) (Glacier View) by increasing the total appropriation by the amount of \$140,000. This amendment would provide for utilities, insurance, an on-call employee and other costs associated with acquiring and maintaining the facility.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Sumner

Amendment No. 6

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65) and Capital Project (pages 371 and 383).

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Transfer to Capital 415/425/430/435/440...(446.700) by decreasing the appropriation by the amount of \$50,000 and removing the project for the City of Palmer Airport Grant.**

Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone the amendment to the May 12, 2026, special meeting.

The motion to postpone failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 1 - Assemblymember Nowers
- No:** 6 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember McKee moved to reconsider the vote to postpone.

The motion to reconsider passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Fonov

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone to the May 12, 2026, special meeting.

The motion to postpone passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Fonov

Amendment No. 7

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65) and Capital Project (pages 373 and 391).

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Transfer to Capital 415/425/430/435/440...(446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$250,000 for Public Transit.**

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate)

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

**Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop
debate) for the main motion.**

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, and
Assemblymember Gamble

No: 4 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 8

**Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65) and Education
Fund (page 187).**

**Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment and to
make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:**

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Education Operating
(445.220) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of
\$1,587,697; and**

*** the Education Fund, Non-Departmental by increasing both
Transfers from Other Funds, Areawide (367.110) and
Education - Operating (406.100) by \$1,587,697.**

**Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone to the May 12,
2026, special meeting.**

**Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop
debate)**

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The motion to postpone to the May 12, 2026, special meeting failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 4 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Assemblymember Fonov called for the question (to stop debate)

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Amendment No. 9

Areawide Fund - Reconciliation - Reserves

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** To create an Areawide Fund Balance Reserve to potentially fund Meadow Lakes Elementary in the amount of \$2,066,401.**

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate)

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Assemblymember Nowers moved to continue Ordinance Serial No. 26-026 to May, 12, 2026.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 4 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Amendment No. 10

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65) and Capital Project (page 373).

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to Capital (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$25,000 for the Pike Youth Bounty Program.**

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Amendment No. 11

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 65), Education Fund (page 187), and Capital Project (pages 373 and 385).

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to Capital 415/425/430/435/440... (446.700) by decreasing the appropriation by the amount of \$75,000 and removing the project for the Firearm Safety Training Grant;**

*** adding \$46,000 to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District for a grant for Hunter Education and Firearm Safety Training opportunities at the seven high schools through after school programs, in the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Capital Transfer (446.700); and**

*** the Education Fund, Education Contribution (406.200) increase the appropriation of \$46,000 for a grant for Hunter Education and Firearm Safety Training opportunities at the seven high schools through after school programs.**

Assemblymember Bernier moved a secondary amendment to keep appropriation by the amount of \$50,000 for the Firearm Safety Training Grant for adults and to add \$50,000 to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District for a grant for Hunter Education and Firearm Safety Training opportunities.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Bowles, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Assemblymember Fonov moved a secondary amendment to keep appropriation by the amount of \$29,000 for the Firearm Safety Training Grant for adults with a \$25 deposit and to add \$46,000 to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District for a grant for Hunter Education and Firearm Safety Training opportunities.

The secondary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

The meeting recessed at 10:15 p.m. and reconvened at 10:27 p.m.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to reconsider the postponement of Amendment No. 6 to the May 12, 2026, special meeting.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone Amendment No. 6 to the May 12, 2026, special meeting.

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate) .

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The motion to postpone failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee
No: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

(Clerk's Note: Amendment No. 6 was back before the Assembly.)

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate).

The motion to postpone failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee
No: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee

Assemblymember Nowers moved to set the mill rates at 7.955 areawide and 0.16 nonareawide.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The main motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

No: 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Bernier

VII. VETO

A. Motion to Override Any Possible Mayoral Veto on Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Items (Ordinance Serial No. 26-026)

There were no vetoes presented.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENT

Assemblymember McKee spoke to the budget process.

Assemblymember Sumner spoke to the amendments made and the budget process and opined he is proud the budget.

Assemblymember Fonov thanked the directors and staff and spoke passing the budget in one night.

Assemblymember Gamble spoke to the budget and schools. Thanked the directors.

Assemblymember Bowles spoke to the budget.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to the City of Palmer and schools.

Mayor DeVries spoke to Deputy Mayor Bernier and a presentation she attended.

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to working with the School Board and tax cuts.

Ms. McKechnie noted the Assembly has until 5 p.m. to reconsider the budget adoption and that upcoming budget meetings will stay scheduled until the reconsideration period closes.

Mr. Brown thanked the Finance Department for their work on the budget.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone and spoke to the School District and Valley Transit advertising. Said a prayer.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:57 p.m.