

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, APRIL 1, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, April 1, 2025, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Mayor Edna DeVries.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney.

V. SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

[25-061](#)

Mayoral Proclamation in Recognition of National Second Chance Month
Mayor DeVries read the proclamation recognizing National Second Chance Month, into the record.

VI. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[25-050](#)

- A. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 02/18/25
 - B. Assembly Strategic Planning Meeting Minutes: 03/01/25
 - C. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 03/04/25
 - D. Joint Assembly/Planning Commission Meeting Minutes: 03/11/25
- The minutes were approved as presented without objection.

VII. 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.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

There was no report provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Mayor DeVries spoke to a map that depicts Federal land within the Borough. Noted that the map was requested by Representative Begich. Spoke to a push at the federal level to increase affordable housing.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

3. Safe Streets for All Presentation

Tom Adams, Public Works Director, provided a presentation regarding the Safe Streets for All plan, which is also known as the Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos noted that he will be out of the office intermittently for work and personal reasons. Stated that he will send a memorandum to the Assembly noting the exact dates.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule. Noted the Assembly had requested that a meeting be scheduled to receive the recommendation from the Waterbody Setback Advisory Board, which has since sunsetted; and recommended April 29, 2025, at 3 p.m.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection.

There was objection regarding the start time.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection to starting the meeting at 4 p.m.

There was no objection noted.

Ms. McKechnie noted that it was time to schedule the evaluations of the Manager, the Attorney, and the Clerk. Suggested May 20, 2025, at 4 p.m. for the Manager; suggested June 3, 2025, at 4 p.m. for the Attorney; and suggested June 17, 2025, at 4 p.m. for the Clerk.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[25-053](#)

1. Agriculture Advisory Board: 02/19/25, Resolution No. 25-01
2. Big Lake Community Council: 02/11/25
3. Butte Community Council: 01/08/25, 02/12/25
4. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 01/09/25
5. Library Citizen's Advisory Committee: 02/10/25
6. MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission: Resolution No. FWC 25-02
7. Planning Commission: 03/03/25, Resolution Nos. 25-01, 25-02
8. Platting Board: 02/06/25
9. South Lakes Community Council: 09/09/24, 10/07/24, 11/04/24, 12/02/24, 01/06/25
10. Susitna Community Council: 02/06/25
11. Sutton Community Council: 09/25/24
12. Talkeetna Sewer & Water SSA Board of Supervisors: 02/05/25
13. Willow Area Community Organization: 02/05/25
14. Waterbody Setback Advisory Board: 03/05/25, Resolution No. 24-01
15. West Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors: 02/10/25

The citizen and other correspondence were presented.

Assemblymember Nowers commented that within Mat-Su Fish and Wildlife Commission Resolution No. FWC 25-02, it speaks to a recent water temperature study of the water as it enters the Deshka River from adjacent groundwater seeps. Stated that she would like to have more information on that study at a possible joint meeting with the Commission.

Assemblymember Gamble suggested that the information be presented under the Manager's Report rather than scheduling an additional meeting.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection to hearing more of this subject under a future Manager's Report.

There was no objection noted.

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 25-075](#)

Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract For Bid No. 24-047B With Orion Construction, Inc. For A Final Contract Amount Of \$770,594.14 For The Animal Care Exterior Kennel And Site Improvements Project.

[IM 25-089](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Borough's Participation In A Grant Application Submittal To ICLEI - USA - Local Governments For Sustainability By The Alaska Sustainable Energy Corporation.

[IM 25-092](#)

Informing The Assembly Of A Grant Application Submittal Requesting \$450,000 From The Rural And Tribal Assistance Pilot Program For The Caswell Lakes Secondary Access Project.

The informational memorandums were presented, and no comments were noted.

VIII. 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 the need to install emergency fill station parking for fire trucks on the Glenn Highway and requested a letter of support from the Assembly: Tom Roberson.

The following person spoke to concerns with how road contracts are administered: Dawn Harris.

The following person spoke in opposition the Rose Group contract, noted that the contract was to draft the libraries strategic plan, and to concerns with pornographic books in Borough libraries: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to concerns with the banning of books and in opposition to censorship: Mary Robinson.

The following person spoke to concerns with how the contract with the Rose Group was cancelled: Kathy Kysar.

The following person spoke to concerns with an application for a conditional use permit for earth materials extraction that is being proposed at Mile 128 on the Parks Highway: Randy Crosby.

The following persons spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 35-017: Linda Cline, John Strausenburg, Michael Leach, Jess Leach, Randall Sparks, Patricia Fisher, and Donna Massey.

The following person spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-017 and spoke to having attended the Library meeting the Rose Group attended: Ruth Wood.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 25-026](#)

An Ordinance Reappropriating \$122,108.95 From The Miscellaneous Capital Projects Fund To The Roads And Bridges Capital Projects Fund, To Acquire Right-Of-Way Property.

RS 25-022: A Resolution Amending The Scopes Of Work And Budgets For The Fiscal Year 2021 Permit Funding For Working In Alaska Department Of Transportation And Public Facilities Right-Of-Way, The Fiscal Year 2022 Right-Of-Way Management Of Acquired Parcels And The Fiscal Year 2019 Seward Meridian Parkway Phase II Project; Amending The Budgets Of The Fiscal Year 2021 Right-Of-Way Acquisition And The Fiscal Year 2022 Right-Of-Way Acquisition; Extending The Date Of Completion For The Project Fundings To June 30, 2027, For Right-Of-Way Acquisition Purposes.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Tom Adams, Public Works Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-026 and Resolution Serial No. 25-022.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-043](#)

An Ordinance Amending MSB 18.04.035(A), Port Commission Membership, To Add An Assembly Seat That Is A Non-Voting Member.

Sponsors: Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record and provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-043.

Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate)

The motion failed (required five votes) by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble

No: 3 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The main motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Fonov

[OR 25-045](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.024, Knik Road Service Area No. 17, To Provide For A Three Member Board.

Sponsors: Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mr. Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney, provided the staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-045.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

No: 1 - 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 meeting recessed at 7:50 p.m. and reconvened 8:04 p.m.

The following persons spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-017: Shawn McBride, D.J. McBride, and Steven Edwards.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

There were no resolutions on the consent agenda.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 25-028](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 5 For Contract No. 22-090P(A) With CRW Engineering Group, LLC. To Add \$269,557 For Right-Of-Way Mapping Services For The Tex-Al Drive Extension, Upgrade, And Pathway Project.

[AM 25-029](#) Approval Of A Contract Amendment To Contract No. 22-063P With Moffatt & Nichol To Extend The Completion Date To December 31, 2027, For The Design Pile Sleeve Protection For Port Mackenzie Project.

[AM 25-030](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-097P To Lounsbury And Associates In The Contract Amount Of \$174,935 For Midway Street Improvements Construction Management Services.

[AM 25-034](#) Authorization To Enter Into An Agreement With EMS|MC To Provide Medical Billing Services For An Annual Anticipated Amount Of \$150,000 For A Period Up To 5 Years With An Annual Cost Increase Of 10 Percent Based On Actual Billing Revenue. 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 25-031](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-113B To BSI Equipment, LLC. In The Amount Of \$408,719.32 To Purchase A Front-Loading Compact Truck. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM No. 25-031.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble

No: 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[AM 25-032](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-126B To Pacific Power Group, LLC. In The Amount Of \$101,955 To Provide Annual Generator Testing And Maintenance Services.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt AM No. 25-032.

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 25-033](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 2 For Contract No. 25-033C With Fugro USA Land, Inc. To Add An Annual Cost Of \$150,000 For Pavement Assessment And Analysis; And Requesting An Extension Of The Completion Date To June 30, 2027.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt AM No. 25-033.

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. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[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.

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

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment to Ordinance Serial No. 25-017 by striking all references to the Caswell, Greater Willow, Greater Talkeetna, and Trapper Creek Road Service Areas.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale, and Assemblymember Gamble

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

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

No: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Gamble

X. VETO

There were no vetoes.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 04/15/25, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 25-040](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$7,500 From The Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation To Continue The Segalhorst Trail Improvements.

RS 25-032: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Segalhorst Trail Improvements.

[OR 25-041](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$50,000 From The Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation To Begin The Design Of The Jonesville Public Use Area.
RS 25-033: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Jonesville Public Use Area.

[OR 25-049](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$932,200 From The Alaska State Department Of Fish And Game, Sustainable Salmon Fund For Kings Lake And Anderson Lake Fish Passage Improvements.
RS 25-037: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With The Alaska State Department Of Fish And Game For Kings Lake And Anderson Lake Fish Passage.

[OR 25-051](#) An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$66,663 From The Talkeetna Flood Service Area Fund Balance To The Talkeetna Flood Service Area Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget.

[OR 25-052](#) An Ordinance Adopting MSB 15.24.030(B)(47), Matanuska-Susitna Borough Comprehensive Safety Action Plan.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for April 15, 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

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

[25-054](#)

Mayoral Requests For Confirmation
Library Citizens' Advisory Committee
Dorothy Denison, resignation
Transportation Advisory Board
Timothy Alley
Bogard RSA No. 25
Gary Hessmer, resignation
Lazy Mountain RSA No. 19
Robert Stone, resignation

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

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. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

There was no other new business.

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

[OR 25-050](#) An Ordinance Modifying The Intent, Notification, And Appeal Process For MSB 17.05, Essential Service Utilities.

Sponsors: Hale and Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Hale moved to refer Ordinance Serial No. 25-050 to the Planning Commission for a period of 90 days.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

XII. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Opined that five-member road service area boards will increase communication. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to her enjoyment of the Manager's Communications Improvement Report. Stated that she is excited to see all the changes that are coming. Noted that within that report there is mentioned that there will be a website working group. Queried the best way for that group to receive input from the Assembly.

Mr. Brown requested that should the Assembly have any input for that working group, to please reach out to him and he will ensure that they receive it. Stated that it would be incredibly helpful to him if the Assembly has questions about legislation on future agendas, if they could ask their questions in advance of the meeting. Opined that it is not reasonable to anticipate what staff members would need to be present at the meeting to answer questions. Stated that it would be helpful to him to know in advance of meetings and requested that support from the Assembly. Noted that a positive reaction from that would be, that if this occurs that it would facilitate more efficient Assembly meetings.

Assemblymember Gamble noted that there are a lot of vibrant personalities in the Meadow Lakes community and that he hopes to see the change in their road service area board be successful.

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to concerns with the length of time that Ordinance Serial No. 25-047 was referred to the Commission on Salaries and Emoluments. Stated that he would prefer that the report come back in a shorter time frame.

Assemblymember Bernier requested that a copy of the Borough's road service area manual be provided to the Assembly.

Mayor DeVries queried the Assembly's position on writing a letter of support for Tom Roberson in conjunction with his idea of emergency fire truck fill areas on the Glenn Highway.

Assemblymember Nowers stated that she would like to hear from Director Ken Barkley before a decision is made on that request.

Mayor DeVries noted that with the adoption of Ordinance Serial No. 25-017 that she will need to meet with the Attorney and the Clerk about the expanded membership for the Gold Trail and Meadow Lakes Road Service

Area Boards, because she was unsure if she could refer back to past applications received or need to start from scratch prior to making any appointments.

Mr. Spiropoulos advised that the Mayor does have the authority to consider past applications that have been received, as the question of who to appoint to vacancies is hers alone.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:27 p.m.