

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



Tim Hale, District 1
Stephanie Nowers, District 2
Dee McKee, District 3
Robert Yundt, District 4
Mokie Tew, 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

TUESDAY, MAY 9, 2023

Budget Deliberations and Possible Adoption

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor Edna DeVries.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Robert Yundt, Assemblymember Mokie Tew, 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 Caleb Buist, Help Desk Specialist.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There was no one present who wished to testify.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION

[OR 23-023](#) 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, 2023, And Ending June 30, 2024; And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2023, Through June 30, 2024.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Yundt moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 23-023.

Amendment No. 1

**Capital Projects - Enterprise Fund - Public Works - Solid Waste
(Page 516 and 519)**

Assemblymember Tew moved a primary amendment to Capital Projects, Enterprise Fund, Public Works, Solid Waste by deleting the waste container replacement or refurbishment project in the amount of \$200,000.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

**Amendment No. 2
Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 61) and Education
Fund
(page 220 and 221)**

Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment as follows:

- * the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, Transfer to Education Operating (445.220) by striking \$77,846,459 and inserting \$72,846,459 in its place. This is a decrease of \$5,000,000;**
- * the Education Operating Fund by striking Transfer from Areawide (204.000.000.367.110) by striking \$77,846,459 and inserting in its place \$72,846,459. This is a decrease of \$5,000,000; and**
- * the Education Operating Fund by striking from Education Operating (204.000.000.406.1 00) \$271,210,626 and inserting in its place \$266,210,626. This is a decrease of \$5,000,000.**

Assemblymember McKee moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$5,000,000" and inserting "\$10,000,000" in its place.
The meeting recessed at 6:45 p.m. and reconvened at 7 p.m.

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, and
Assemblymember Fonov

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Yundt, and
Assemblymember Tew

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

Assemblymember Bernier moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$5,000,000" and inserting "\$8,000,000" in its place.

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

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

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Tew
Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate).

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

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Tew

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

**Assemblymember Bernier moved a secondary amendment by
striking "\$5,000,000" and inserting "\$7,000,000."**

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

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

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Tew

**Assemblymember Bernier moved a secondary amendment by
striking "\$5,000,000" and inserting "\$6,000,000" in its place.**

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

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

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Tew

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 3

Areawide Fund - Non-departmental (page 61) and Capital Projects (page 492)

Assemblymember Tew moved a primary amendment to the Areawide fund and Capital Projects with any other conforming changes as follows:

- * Areawide, Non-Department, transfer to 446.700, by increasing the appropriation in the amount of \$20,000; and**
- * Capital Projects - by inserting a grant for Big Lakes Lions Club in the amount of \$20,000.**

Assemblymember Yundt moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$20,000" and inserting "\$40,000" in its place.

The secondary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The primary amendment passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 4

Areawide Fund- Non-Departmental and Capital Projects/Grants (page 61 and Tab M)

Assemblymember Hale moved a primary amendment to the Areawide Fund and Capital Projects and make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

- * the Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 446.700, by increasing the appropriation amount by \$50,000; and**
- * Capital Projects by adding Bodenbug Compound in the amount of \$50,000.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 5

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental and Capital Projects/Grants

(page 61 and Tab M, pages 472, 499-500)

Assemblymember Hale moved a primary amendment to the Areawide Fund and Capital Projects/Grants and make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

*** Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 446.700, by increasing the appropriation in the amount of \$20,000; and
* Capital Projects/Grants - striking \$150,000 for Skeetawk Ski Area Development and inserting \$170,000 in its place for an increase of \$20,000.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Tew

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

Amendment No. 6

**Areawide Fund - Elections - 434.000 - IT Equipment
(page 68)**

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment by increasing 434.000 by \$50,000.

Assemblymember Fonov moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$50,000" and inserting "\$25,000" in its place.

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Tew

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 7

Areawide Fund Balance

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment by taking \$10,000 from the Areawide fund balance for the Alcantra Disc Golf Course for new disc golf baskets.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee

Amendment No. 8

**Capital Projects - Road Service Area Equipment/Vehicles
(Page 507)**

Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment to Capital Projects - Road Service Area Equipment/Vehicles, by striking "Vac Truck - \$315,000."

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 9

**Areawide Fund - nondepartmental
(Tab B)**

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment to the areawide fund mill rate by reducing it by .025 mills, which will result in a \$329,903 reduction to the areawide unassigned fund balance, leaving a balance of \$1,000,000.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The meeting recessed at 8:01 p.m. and reconvened at 8:15 p.m.

Amendment No. 10

Solid Waste Enterprise Fund - Fund 510

(Page 411)

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment to the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund, by inserting funds in the amount of \$50,000 for the costs associated with removing junk vehicles from private property.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Yundt moved to set the mill rates at 8.396 areawide and .387 non-areawide.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

VII. VETO

A. Motion to Override Any Possible Mayoral Veto on Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Items (Ordinance Serial No. 23-023)

There were no vetoes presented.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENT

Mayor DeVries noted that the body has meetings scheduled for May 10 and May 11. Advised that the Clerk will cancel May 10 and keep May 11 in case reconsideration of the budget filed.

Assemblymember Fonov thanked the body for the experience. Thanked the Finance Department for the budget book. Stated that he tried to bring forward amendments that would benefit all residents and not just those in his district. Stated that he is looking forward to the next budget cycle.

Assemblymember Nowers stated that although she voted against the amendment for the disc golf course, that she has nothing against it. Commended the Manager and the Finance Director for providing the Assembly with stable fiscal planning. Spoke to the need to have a healthy reserve. Spoke to the way taxpayers will be impacted by road service area taxes. Noted that the Borough has many projects coming forward and that the budget provides a good foundation for that. Spoke to her appreciation of the hard work that goes into preparing a budget.

Assemblymember Yundt opined that the amendments were creative and important to communities. Noted that the mill rate increase over last year was minimal. Spoke to his appreciation of the body working together. Opined that last budget cycle was stressful and that this year was not. Thanked the School District for working with the Assembly to ease the burden on taxpayers.

Mr. Spiropoulos presented Mr. Brown with a mock 2.5-year service award, since he will not be present for his evaluation.

Assemblymember McKee spoke in support of amendments to the budget. Noted that she will not be filing any reconsideration. Stated that she is encouraged that her concerns about the School District will be heard and addressed.

Mr. Brown stated that he would like to have more meetings of the Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on school issues. Opined that the number of Assembly seats should be increased to make room for Assemblymember McKee to join and express her concerns.

Assemblymember Tew thanked Mr. Brown and staff for putting together a great budget. Opined that it should say something to the public about how good it is since it was adopted in the first night.

Assemblymember Hale noted that the budget is not typically adopted before

his birthday, which is May 11. Thanked the body for getting the work done as he would like to have his birthday off from work. Opined that a good and balanced budget speaks to the hard work of staff. Spoke in support of keeping the mill rate low. Thanked the body for their support of funds for cleaning up the Bodenburg compound. Opined that the best part of government is being able to help the community achieve its goals.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked the body for their hard work. Thanked staff for bringing forward a balanced budget. Said a prayer.

Mr. Brown spoke to the hard work of staff in making their budgets. Stated that he is glad the budget cycle is over. Spoke to his desire to create a comprehensive plan steering committee that would include a seat for an Assembly Member. Noted that the State Forester would be present to speak to the Assembly at the June 6 meeting instead of May 16, as he is unavailable.

Assemblymember Bernier queried if the motion to rescind could be moved as well.

Ms. McKechnie advised that at approval of the agenda a member could move to postpone it.

Assemblymember Tew queried if the Borough has staff that can talk about forestry sales and old growth timber.

Mr. Brown advised that the Borough has only one Forester. Noted that he would like the State to come and lend their expertise on the subject.

Assemblymember Yundt stated that he would make a motion to postpone the motion to rescind. Noted that the Borough's Forester would not be present on May 16 as he has a child that is graduating. Referenced a map on the wall in Assembly chambers that he asked Staff to create. Noted it is a map of the proposed timber sale area and that it is very informative.

Mayor DeVries thanked the body for the meeting. Thanked staff for all their hard work. Stated that she is proud that the body is professional enough to work together in spite of their differences.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.