

# 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 4, 2025

## I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, February 4, 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:** 5 - Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

**Excused:** 1 - Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers

**Telephonic:** 1 - Assemblymember Tim Hale

## 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, a member of the audience.

## V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

There were no minutes of preceding meetings.

## VI. REPORTS/CORRESPONDENCE

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

### **1. Reports From Cities**

There was no report provided.

### **2. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District**

There was no report provided.

### **3. State of Alaska**

Mr. Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office, reported on the status of Governor Dunleavy's budget and other legislative actions.

### **4. Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau**

Casey Ressler, Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau Executive Director, reported on the activities of the Bureau to promote tourism.

## **B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues**

Mike Brown, Borough Manager, reported on most recent meeting.

### **2. Assembly Public Relations**

Mayor DeVries spoke to HB80, entitled “An Act relating to minimum standards for residential buildings; relating to construction contractors and residential contractor endorsements; establishing the Alaska State Residential Building Safety Council.” Noted that she is unsure if it has a companion bill or not and opined that it is important to keep track of its status. Related that she received public comments about Big Lake Road Service Area No. 21, which she has requested that the Clerk share with the Assembly.

## **C. MANAGER COMMENTS**

### **1. State/Federal Legislation**

### **2. Strategic Planning Issues**

### **3. Fiscal Year 2024 Audit Presentation**

[25-026](#)

#### Auditor Report Handout

Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, introduced Steve Wadleigh of Altman Rogers & Co.

Steve Wadleigh of Altman Rogers & Co., presented the Borough's Fiscal Year 2024 audit.

[25-029](#)

Terra Energy Presentation (separate presentation from the audit)  
Jason Motyka and Chad Schleusener of Terra Energy, provided a presentation on clean coal.

### **D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS**

Mr. Spiropoulos congratulated the Finance Department on a successful audit.

### **E. CLERK COMMENTS**

Ms. McKechnie reported on the upcoming meeting schedule and coming budget meeting dates.

### **F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE**

[25-019](#)

1. Big Lake Community Council: Resolution No. 25-001
2. Butte FSA Board of Supervisors: 11/14/24
3. Greater Willow RSA Board of Supervisors: Resolution 24-01
4. Joint Central Mat-Su & West Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors: 10/14/24
5. Library Board: 11/12/24
6. Local Emergency Planning Committee: 10/16/24
7. Midway RSA Board of Supervisors: 10/09/24
8. Planning Commission: 12/16/24, Resolution No. 24-33
9. Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: Resolution No. 24-01
10. Trapper Creek Community Council: 11/21/24, 12/19/24
11. Willow Area Community Organization: 12/04/24
12. West Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors: 12/09/24

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

### **G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS**

There were no informational memorandums.

## **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 persons spoke to concerns with filling member seats if road service areas are amended to five members, to concerns trying to fill three member boards, and to concerns with unintended consequences that could occur if membership is increased: D.J. McBride, Shawn McBride, Steve Edwards, and Clark Smith.

The following person spoke to the possibility of the Borough offering recycling options for cooking oil that could be turned into biodiesel: Travis Friesen.

The following person spoke to concerns that the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee had not met since October of 2024 and to concerns with books that they are currently reviewing: Jackie Goforth.

The following person opined that the Borough needs an Employee of the Year award: Tom Robertson.

The following person spoke to concerns with pornography in Borough libraries and to concerns that children are being targeted with inappropriate books: Linda Spohn.

The following person spoke to concerns with the administration of road service area contracts and urged the Assembly to put the Big Lake Road Service Area contract out for rebid: Moke Tew, former Assembly Member.

The following person thanked staff and the Assembly for fine turning the timber harvesting process and opined that it works perfectly. Spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-017: Andrew Traxler.

The following person stated his appreciation of the Terra Energy project and spoke in opposition to the Borough funding bus transportation: Mark Spohn.

The following person spoke to the possibility of alternative ways of advising the public of Borough board vacancies: Carson Hellman.

The following person spoke in support of clean coal and to his varied service on many different boards: Scott Lindholm.

The following person spoke to concerns that the Terra Energy coal project does not have adequate funding, nor customers to sell their product to: Margaret Stern, Susitna River Coalition Representative.

**B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)**

[OR 25-014](#) An Ordinance Reappropriating \$90,000 From The Project Management Division Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget, \$7,849.21 From Settlers Bay Road/Parking Lot Project, And \$4,287.19 From Alcantra Field No. 4 Repair Project; And Extending The Date Of Completion For The Project Funding To June 30, 2026, For The Public Works Project Management Software Purchase And Setup.

RS 25-009: A Resolution Amending The Budget For The Generator For Warm Storage Building, Settlers Bay Road/Parking Lot, Alcantra Field No. 4 Repair; Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Public Works Project Management Software Purchase And Setup.

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. 25-014 and Resolution Serial No. 25-009.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

[OR 25-015](#)

An Ordinance Authorizing The Borough To Issue Areawide General Obligation Bonds Not To Exceed \$117,639,400, In One Or More Series, To Finance The Cost, In Whole Or In Part, Of (A) The Acquisition, Design, Construction, Major Renovation And Renewal Of Educational And Related Capital Improvement Projects In The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, (B) The Construction, Additions, Improvements, Betterments, Repair, Reconstruction, Or Acquisition Of Public Roads And Pathways And Facilities Related Thereto In The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Together With All Necessary Equipment And Transportation Facilities Including Improving School Access, And The Acquisition Of Lands Or Rights In Lands In Connection Therewith, And (C) The Refunding Of Certain Outstanding General Obligation Bonds Of The Matanuska-Susitna Borough; Fixing Certain Details Of Such Bonds; And Authorizing Their Sale.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Cheyenne Heindel, Finance 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. 25-015.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Assemblymember Hale, 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.)**

There was no one present who wished to testify.

**D. CONSENT AGENDA**

**1. RESOLUTIONS**

[RS 25-010](#)

A Resolution Approving The Amended Scope Of Work And Budget For Lynda Lake Portage At Beaver Lake Road And Birch Creek Tributary At Mastodon Road Fish Passage Project.

[RS 25-011](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Sign And Submit Grant Applications To The National Fish Habitat Partnerships For Kings Lake At Sierra Street And Anderson Lake At Charley Drive Fish Passage Project; And To The National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration For The Wasilla Creek Tributary At Bonnie Drive Fish Passage Culverts Replacement Project.

## **2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS**

[AM 25-005](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 5 For Contract No. 22-104P(C) With DOWL, LLC. To Add \$355,624 For The Shaw Elementary Turn Lane Project To Expand The Traffic Study And Design Efforts To Include The Extension Of East Foxtrot Avenue And Birch Tree Charter School Projects; And Extend The Contract To June 18, 2027.

[AM 25-012](#) Award Of Proposal No. 25-034P To Orion Construction, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$825,000 To Design, Build, And Install Exhibits At The Gateway Visitor Center.  
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:** 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[RS 25-012](#) A Resolution Reaffirming The Borough's Commitment In Hiring Practices To Neither Discriminate Nor Favor Applicants Because Of Race, Religion, Color, National Origin, Physical Or Mental Disability, Age, Sex, Marital Status, Changes In Marital Status, Pregnancy, Or Parenthood.

**Sponsors:** Fonov

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-012.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

[RS 25-013](#) A Resolution Supporting The Goals And Objectives Of President Trump's Executive Order Unleashing Alaska's Extraordinary Resource Potential.

**Sponsors:** Sumner

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-013.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

There was no unfinished business.

## **IX. VETO**

There were no vetoes.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 02/18/25, Assembly Chambers)**

[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.

[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.

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for February 18, 2025.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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



## **B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

### **1. VACANCY REPORT**

[25-021](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Agriculture Advisory Board

Anthony West

Transportation Advisory Board

Jesse Peterson

West Lakes FSA No. 136

Dennis VauDell

Chase Trail Service Area No. 134

Mike Wood

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

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - Assemblymember Hale, 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)**

There were no referrals.

## **XI. RECONSIDERATION**

There were no reconsiderations.

## **XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Assemblymember Bernier said a prayer.

Mr. Brown stated that if any of the Assembly had an interest in going to Juneau, to please let him know so that it can be set up. Noted that his plan it to travel to Juneau on March 5th and then stay overnight and return on the 6th. Spoke to the excellent work that the Finance Department did in preparing for the audit. Thanked Ms. Heindel and her team for a job well done.

Assemblymember Sumner thanked staff and the public for attending the meeting. Advised the public that the Assembly does hear their testimony and does take their comments under advisement.

Mayor DeVries noted her agreement with Mr. Brown's comments regarding Ms. Heindel and the Finance Department. Opined that the body would be hearing of awards won due to the hard work of Ms. Heindel's team.

## **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session.

## **XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.