

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
Robert Yundt, 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, JANUARY 2, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, January 2, 2023, 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: 4 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov

Telephonic: 3 - Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Robert Yundt, 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 Ms. McKechnie, Borough Clerk.

V. SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

A. Mayoral Proclamation in Recognition of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's 60th Anniversary

[24-015](#) Proclamation

Mr. Brown played a video celebrating the Borough's 60th Anniversary.

Mayor DeVries read a proclamation honoring the Borough's 60th Anniversary into the record.

VI. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

- [24-007](#)
- A. Special Meeting Minutes: 11/14/23
 - B. Election Certification Minutes: 11/21/23
 - C. Regular Meeting Minutes: 11/21/23
- 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

Mayor Carter Cole, city of Houston, reported on the activities of the city and spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 24-002.

2. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

There were no reports 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.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

There were no reports provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

There were no reports provided.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

Mr. Brown reported that the Borough has qualified for its 33rd consecutive year of receiving the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the annual comprehensive financial report. Requested to schedule a strategic planning session for Saturday, February 17, 2023, at 9 a.m. at Station 6-5.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection.

Mr. Brown noted that there are a number of road service area contracts that are going out to bid soon. Stated that he would like those contracts in place prior to the start of the budget cycle.

Tom Adams, Public Works Director, reported on different ways that road service area contracts could be awarded and managed.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no report provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[24-005](#)

1. Abbreviated Plat: 12/06/23, 12/13/23,
2. Butte FSA Board of Directors: 10/26/23
3. Enhanced 911 Advisory Board: 10/10/23
4. Fishhook Community Council: 11/06/23
5. Greater Palmer Consolidated FSA Board of Supervisors: 11/21/23
6. Joint Central Mat-Su and West Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors: 10/09/23
7. MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission: 04/20/23, 10/19/23
8. North Lakes Community Council: 11/16/23
9. Planning Commission: 10/16/23, Resolution Nos. 23-37, 23-38
10. Platting Board: 11/16/23
11. Point MacKenzie Community Council: 08/10/23, 10/12/23
12. Susitna Community Council: 11/02/23
13. Sutton Community Council: 06/28/23, 09/27/23
14. Tanaina Community Council: 11/28/23
15. Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board: 03/08/23, 09/13/23, 11/30/23, 11/01/23, Resolution No. 23-01

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

There were no informational memorandums provided.

VIII. SPECIAL ORDERS

A. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (MSB 2.12.081; Three Minutes Per Person.)

There were no persons to be heard.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[RS 24-002](#)

A Resolution Approving The Changes Needed To Update The Fiscal Year 2025 Schedule Of Rates And Fees, To Be Effective July 1, 2024.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Jeff Smith, Solid Waste Division Manager, 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 Hale moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 24-002.

Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment to IM 24-002, by adding a rate change for Solid Waste, Scrap Metal, Line 431, as follows:

- * Scrap Metal - per ton: add the word "Commercial" to read: Scrap Metal - Per ton - Commercial \$75; and**
- * by inserting Scrap Metal - per ton - residential - \$0.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

[RS 24-008](#) A Resolution Adopting The Fiscal Year 2025 Capital Improvement Program.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Kim Sollien, Planning Services Division Manager, 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.

Assembly Hale moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 24-008.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-001](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating 2022 August Mat-Su Flooding Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$25,600 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management.

RS 24-001: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Road Repairs Within The Borough As A Result Of The 2022 August Mat-Su Flooding Disaster.

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 Hale moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-001 and Resolution Serial No. 24-001.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-002](#)

An Ordinance Approving Transfer Of Interest Of The Susitna Heights Subdivision Park To The City Of Houston For The Purpose Of Dedication For A Public Park.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Eric Phillips, Community Development Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of the land transfer: Mayor Carter Cole, city of Houston.

The following persons spoke in opposition of the land transfer: Christian Setera and Charles Baker.

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

Assemblymember Hale moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-002.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-004](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$225,000 Of Revenues From Fiscal Year 2024 Non-Areawide Major Repairs And Renovations Reserve For Animal Care Facility Improvements.

RS 24-003: A Resolution Setting The Scope Of Work And Amending The Budget For The Animal Care Facility Interior Improvements And Mold Remediation Project.

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 Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-004 and Resolution Serial No. 24-003.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-005](#)

An Ordinance Approving Land Classification Of A Borough-Owned Property As Reserved Use Land For The Purpose Of An Emergency Services Facility In The Talkeetna Area.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Eric Phillips, Community Development 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 Hale moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-005.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-006](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$315,780 In Fiscal Year 2024 Community Assistance Program Funding.

RS 24-004: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Community Assistance Program; And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into Agreements With 20 Unincorporated Communities Within The Borough.

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 Hale moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-006 and Resolution Serial No. 24-004.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-008](#)

An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.145, Annexing Parcel No. 52778000TOOC Into The West Lakes Fire Service Area No. 136.

RS 24-007: A Resolution Finding The Annexation Of Parcel No. 52778000TOOC Into The West Lakes Fire Service Area. No. 136 Serves The Public Interest.

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. 24-008 and Resolution Serial No. 24-007.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

C. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three Minutes Per Person.)

The meeting recessed at 8 pm reconvened at 8:10 p.m.

The following person spoke to concerns with a group that is opposing vacancy appointments to the Library Board and to concerns with pornographic books in Borough libraries: Jackie Goforth.

The following persons spoke to concerns with on-going book challenges and spoke in opposition to Adam Jenkins being confirmed to the Library Board: Marian Charles, Melinda Dale, Steve Jenkins

The following person spoke to concerns with pornographic books in Borough libraries and to the need to protect children from pornography: Karen Harris.

The following person spoke to the need to increase recycling efforts within the Borough: Travis Friesen.

The following person proposed a policy for the book challenge policy: Karen Crandall.

The following person spoke to concerns with amendments to Ordinance Serial No. 23-080: John Sinclair, Director of Engineering for Matanuska Electric Association.

The following person spoke in opposition to Resolution Serial No. 24-005 and in opposition to banning books: Kathy Kysar.

The following person spoke in opposition to banning books in Borough libraries: Mary Blackman-Green.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 24-005](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Borough Manager To Sell, By Competitive Sealed Bid, The Susitna Parkway Salvage Timber Harvest.

[RS 24-006](#) A Resolution Amending The Budget For The Hazardous Trailer Home Removal From The West Butte Trailhead Parcel; And Amending The Budget And Approving The Scope Of Work For The Trails Construction Repair And Maintenance Project.

[RS 24-016](#) A Resolution Supporting Investing In School Choice And A State Education Fiscal Plan That Improves Educational Outcomes.

Sponsors: DeVries

[RS 24-017](#) A Resolution Establishing A State Legislative Priority Requesting That The Alaska Legislature Amend State Law Regarding Apportionment Of The Borough Planning Commission For Situations Where A Borough Has Delegated Planning Power To Cities.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 24-001](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 1 For Contract No. 22-090P(C) With HDL Engineering Consultants, LLC. To Add \$182,348 For Preliminary Engineering Services; And Approval To Extend The Contract To December 31, 2024, For The Engstrom Road To Trunk Road Connector Project.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Hale 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 Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[AM 24-002](#) Authorization To Revise The Solid Waste Division Annual Disposal Coupon From \$8 to \$25 In Fiscal Year 2024.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Hale moved to adopt AM No. 24-002.

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

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

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

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

Assemblymember Hale moved a primary amendment that the \$25 coupons will only be mailed to residential property owners, no duplicates will be mailed, and the mailing will be separate from the tax bills.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

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

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

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

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[OR 23-080](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.05 Essential Service Utilities By Providing Additional Processes And Standards For Approval.

Sponsors: Hale

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Yundt moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 23-080.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to postpone Ordinance Serial No. 23-080 to April 2, 2024

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

X. VETO

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 01/16/24, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 24-007](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 23.20.090(C), To Change The Requirement Of Preparing A Five-Year Harvest Schedule Every Three Years, To A Voluntary Schedule.

[OR 24-011](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating 2023 September Talkeetna Flooding Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$763,703.21 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management.
RS 24-009: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Susitna River Revetment And Trail As A Result Of The 2023 September Talkeetna Flooding.

[OR 24-012](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating 2023 September Talkeetna Flooding Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$20,692.50 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management.
RS 24-010: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Repairs To Moose Meadows And Sushana Roads As A Result Of The 2023 September Talkeetna Flooding.

[OR 24-013](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating 2022 January Mat-Su Windstorms Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$54,762.37 From The Federal Emergency Management Agency; And \$18,254.12 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management.

RS 24-011: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Damages To The Dorothy Swanda Jones Building As A Result Of The 2022 January Mat-Su Windstorms Disaster.

[OR 24-014](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating 2022 January Mat-Su Windstorms Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$36,839.03 From The Federal Emergency Management Agency And \$12,279.68 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management.

RS 24-012: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Damages To The Central Landfill As A Result Of The 2022 January Mat-Su Windstorms Disaster.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Hale moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for January 16, 2024.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

[24-006](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Agriculture Advisory Board

Misty O'Connor

Planning Commission

Richard Allen

Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board

Matthew Midgett

Greater Butte RSA No. 26

James Stocker

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

C. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

There was no other business.

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

There were no referrals.

XII. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember McKee stated that she wanted to respond to the comment about an elected official being sworn in on stack of pornographic books. Noted that the audience member who spoke stated that it was a stack of banned books, not pornography. Stated that she would like confirmation of that because if she is incorrect in her statement, she would like to correct it.

Assemblymember Yundt wished the body happy new year. Opined that a lot of great ideas have been generated regarding the dump coupon. Stated that it would be helpful if questions were asked of staff in advance of meetings so that meetings can be more efficient.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone that attended the meeting and wished happy new year. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember Hale noted that he has disagreed with Mr. Brown in the past about eliminating the dump coupon program. Noted for what it costs to do the coupons, that the program could be eliminated and free dump days enacted.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to all the issues that negatively impacted the two weeks of free dump days. Stated that she would support eliminating the coupon if there was an equitable way enact free dump days.

Assemblymember Gamble noted that the free dump days in District 5 were a huge success. Spoke to the long lines to get into the transfer station. Stated that there were a lot of junk properties that were cleaned up. Stated that he is not sure how to decide who deserves a free coupon and who does not, when it comes to finances. Spoke in support of finding a better way.

Assemblymember Fonov wished everyone a happy new year. Opined that there was a lot of good debate at the meeting. Stated that he supports finding a better way to do free dump days. Opined that the Borough needs to put technology to work to make it happen.

Mayor DeVries stated that he grandson is getting married this year. Related that the Assembly has a Deputy Mayor. Noted that she would like to designate an alternate person that could chair meetings should she or the Deputy Mayor not be available. Stated that she has requested that it be included on the next agenda.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION (For Matters, Which The Immediate Public Knowledge Of Would Clearly Have An Adverse Effect Upon The Finances Of The Borough; And Matters Which By Law, Municipal Charter, Or Ordinance Are Required To Be Kept Confidential; And To Discuss Matters Involving Consideration Of Borough Records That By Law Are Not Subject To Public Disclosure; And Discussion Of Matters Subject To Attorney/Client Privilege.)

There was no executive session.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:44 p.m.