

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, DECEMBER 3, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, December 3, 2024, 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 Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Tim Hale

Telephonic: 1 - Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by John Aschenbrenner, Deputy Borough Attorney.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

There were no minutes presented.

VI. 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

There were no reports provided.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

Mr. Brown noted that the State Senate will not be present at the coming State Delegation meeting on December 19. Requested that the Assembly schedule a strategic planning session after the first of the year. Stated that he suggests conducting it at Station 6-5 on February 8 or March 1.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection to March 1.

There was no objection noted.

Mr. Brown requested that the Assembly consider topics they would like up for discussion at that meeting and to let him know.

3. Solid Waste Division Update

Jeff Smith, Solid Waste Division Manager, provided a Solid Waste Division update.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no report provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie reported on the upcoming meeting schedule. Noted that she will be at the Alaska Association of Municipal Clerk's ASsocation Conference on December 9 and 10. Spoke to being called up for jury duty in January of 2025 along with other Clerk's staff.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[24-156](#)

1. Abbreviated Plat: 10/30/24, 11/06/24, 11/13/24, 11/20/24
2. Agriculture Advisory Board: 10/16/24
3. Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors: 01/08/24, 09/09/24, 10/14/24, Resolution Nos. 24-03, 24-04, 24-05
4. Butte FSA Board of Supervisors: 07/11/24, 10/10/24
5. Chase Community Council: 07/17/24
6. Greater Palmer Consolidated FSA Board of Supervisors: 07/30/24
7. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 10/10/24
8. Greater Willow RSA Board of Supervisors: 12/28/23
9. Library Board: 10/08/24
10. Local Emergency Planning Committee: 07/17/24
11. MSB Fish & Wildlife Commission: 08/29/24, 09/26/24, 10/24/24
12. Planning Commission: 10/21/24
13. South Knik River Community Council: 09/19/24
14. Susitna Community Council: 10/05/23
15. Talkeetna Sewer and Water Board: Resolution No. TWSB-03
16. Willow Area Community Organization: 10/02/24
17. Waterbody Setback Advisory Board: 10/14/24

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 24-222](#)

Informing The Assembly Of Time Extension Only Grant Amendments For Two Alaska State Homeland Security Grants, To Be Presented To The Manager For Signature.

The informational memorandum was presented, and no comments were noted.

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 person invited the Assembly to the Birchtree Charter School Holiday Market on December 7, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.:
Michael Kahler, Birchtree Charter Parents Guild Member.

The following person spoke in support of the proposed landfill expansion and additional recycling opportunities. Spoke to the need to develop a bio diesel program. Spoke to the need for more pedestrian pathways and the need for increased bike and pedestrian safety: Travis Friesen.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 24-108](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 4.28.020 (A), Enhanced 911 Advisory Board Composition.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ken Barley, Emergency Services 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. 24-108.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-110](#)

An Ordinance Appropriating \$248,823 From The Areawide Fund Balance For Bridge And Railroad Crossing Major Maintenance And Repair; And The Dust Control Program.

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. 24-110.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-111](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$137,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Natural Resources, Division Of Forestry And Fire Protection, To Operate Collection Sites And Dispose Of Spruce Beetle Killed Or Infested Wood And Other Woody Biomass Considered Hazardous Fuels.

RS 24-115: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For An Alaska State Department Of Natural Resources, Division Of Forestry And Fire Protection Grant, To Operate Collection Sites And Dispose Of Spruce Beetle Killed Or Infested Wood And Other Woody Biomass Considered Hazardous Fuels.

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. 24-111 and Resolution Serial No. 24-115.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-112](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant From The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development In The Amount Of \$2,000,000 For The City Water Interconnect Project.

RS 24-118: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Execute The Agreement For The City Water Interconnect 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 Sumner moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-112 and Resolution Serial No. 24-118.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-113](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund Grant From The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development In The Amount Of \$8,000,000 For The Mat-Su First Responder Training Facility Project.
RS 24-119: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Execute The Agreement For The Mat-Su First Responder Training Facility 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 Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-113 and Resolution Serial No. 24-119.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-114](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating School District Funds Totaling \$450,000 To Support The Design Of The New Birchtree Charter School Project.

RS 24-122: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget To Support The Design Of The New Birchtree Charter School Project. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 24-114 and Resolution Serial No. 24-122: Michael Kahler, Birchtree Charter Parents Guild Member.

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

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-114 and Resolution Serial No. 24-122.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Nowers, 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.)

The following person spoke to the process of how books are up for challenge before the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee. Spoke to concerns with pornography in the adult section of a public library. Spoke to a form she personally created that became a public record and is being circulated on social media; Jackie Goforth.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 24-123](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Sell The Moraine Ridge Salvage Timber Harvest.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

- [AM 24-118](#) Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly Regular and Joint Meeting Schedule for 2025.
- [AM 24-133](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 2 For Contract No. 23-002P(A) With Kinney Engineering, LLC. For The Fern Street Upgrade And Pathway Project To Extend The Completion Date To December 31, 2026.
- [AM 24-134](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 5 For Contract No. 22-078P(B) With The Boutet Company, Inc. For The Lakes Boulevard Upgrade Project To Extend Completion Date To October 31, 2025.
- [AM 24-135](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 5 For Contract No. 22-078P(A) With Lounsbury & Associates, Inc. To Add \$11,311 For The Hidden Hills Road Reconstruction Project And To Extend The Completion Date To December 31, 2025.
- [AM 24-136](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-078B To Andela Products In The Contract Amount Of \$185,022 To Purchase A Glass Pulverizer For The Solid Waste Division, Public Works Department.
- [AM 24-137](#) Approval Of Bid No. 25-091C To General Fire Apparatus/Rosenbauer In The Contract Amount Of \$1,243,546 To Purchase Fire Rescue Engine For The West Lakes Fire Service Area. Ms. McKeenie read the consent agenda 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 Nowers, 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 12/17/24, Assembly Chambers)

[RS 24-124](#) A Resolution Approving Changes To Update The Fiscal Year 2026 Schedule Of Rates And Fees, Effective July 1, 2025.

[OR 24-096](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.73 To Clarify That Mobile Home Parks Are Not Permitted In The Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Sponsors: Nowers

[OR 24-115](#) An Ordinance Approving A Request From The Agricultural Rights Owners Paul And Margaret Cook, And Ben Raevsky, To Subdivide A 320-Acre Farm Consisting Of 2 Parcels Into Two 40-Acre Parcels And One 240-Acre Parcel); To Construct One Permanent And One Temporary Residence To Accommodate The Farm Families; And Implement An Updated Farm Plan With An Additional Subunit Farm Plan.

[OR 24-117](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.060(C), Service Area No. 36: Talkeetna Sewer And Water Service Area To Amend The Operating Rules, Rates, And Procedures.

[OR 24-118](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$315,790 In Fiscal Year 2025 Community Assistance Program Funding.
RS 24-128: 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.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for December 17, 2024.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Board of Adjustment and Appeals

Tina Crawford

Borough Area Schools Site Selection Committee

Kristina Adamczak

Enhanced 911 Advisory Board

Jared Eison

Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School Issues

Maxwell Sumner

Labor Relations

Daniel Bowen

Local Emergency Planning Committee

Michael Chmielewski

Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board

Ruth Wood

Platting Board

Christian Chiavetta

Big Lake RSA No. 21

Nate Suing

Board RSA No. 25

Jennifer Noffke

Greater Butte No. 26

Lucy Klebesadel

Trapper Creek RSA No. 30

Becky Badillo

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - 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)

There were no referrals.

XI. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone for attending. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember Nowers stated that she is happy for the grant for the new fire station. Noted what an asset it will be to the Borough. Spoke to her pleasure that the water infrastructure plan is moving forward. Spoke to her support of the cities working together to ensure water connectivity for the future.

Mr. Brown stated that he requested that Resolution Serial No. 24-124 be introduced and have a public hearing so that it would be out for the public to view before any action was taken on it. Advised that there are no remarkable changes. Spoke to the importance of the document when the Assembly enters the budget cycle.

Assemblymember Gamble stated that he appreciated the Solid Waste Division presentation and is looking forward to the coming improvements to the landfill.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session held.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.