

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
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 SPECIAL MEETING

6:00 PM

THURSDAY, MAY 8, 2025

Budget Deliberations and Possible Adoption

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, May 8, 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: 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 Katie Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business & Operations.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following persons came to speak to disc golf and funding for the Alcantra Disc Golf Course: Jeremy Ratliff, Jaxton Ratliff, Dexter (Last name not given), Tom Voight, Rhianna Fabrello, and Tae Voight.

The following person spoke to the Heather Way clean-up project and spoke to the proposed full time community cleanup position: Corine Hickey, Tanaina Community Council Member.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION

OR 25-025 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, 2025, And Ending June 30, 2026; And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2025, Through June 30, 2026.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

The meeting recessed at 6:58 p.m. and reconvened at 7:05 p.m.

Amendment No. 5

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Capital Project (Page 487)

Assemblymember Bernier moved a primary amendment as follows and any other conforming changes to the budget:

***Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$75,000; and**

***adding the Capital Project - For a grant of \$75,000 to provide Firearm Safety Training to residents.**

Assemblymember Nowers moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$75,000" and inserting "\$50,000" in its place.

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Hale and Assemblymember Nowers

No: 5 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Amendment No. 6

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Capital Project (page 473)

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$30,000; and**

***adding the Capital Project - Mat-Su Disc Golf Association Grant for \$30,000 to be used for obtaining contracted services for disc golf improvements.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

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

Amendment No. 7

**Areawide Fund - Planning & Land Use, Community Clean-Up
(page 129)**

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***Reduce the Areawide Fund, Planning & Land Use, Community Clean-Up, Temp Wages & Adjmts (411.200) by \$30,000; and
*increase the Areawide Fund, Planning & Land Use, Community Clean-Up, Permanent Wages (411.100) by \$56,320 and Benefits (412.XXX) by \$49,970 adding 1.00 FTE Program Coordinator.**

Assemblymember Hale moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$30,000" and inserting "\$63,910" in its place and approving one FTE Program Coordinator and removing the on-call employee.

The secondary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

The primary amendment passed as amended by the following vote:

**Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, and
Assemblymember Fonov**

No: 2 - Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Bernier

**Amendment No. 8
Talkeetna Road Service Area (page 380)**

Assemblymember Bernier moved to a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***The Annual Road Maintenance Contract by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$47,530; and**

***re-appropriating \$25,530 from Project 30049 1800 Talkeetna Road Service Area Capital Project into the operating budget.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

**Amendment No. 9
Non-Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 196) and Capital Project (page 473)**

Assemblymember Bernier moved a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***The Non-Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$48,000; and**

***adding the Capital Project - Willow Library Walking Trail (the Oval) for the amount of \$48,000 with the following project description: Design and Construction of an access walking trail behind library to provide a safe secondary ingress/egress to property.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember McKee

Amendment No. 10

Non-Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 196) and Capital Project (page 473)

Assemblymember Bernier moved a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***The Non-Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$25,000; and**

***adding the Capital Project - Willow Library Meeting Room Sound Proofing for the amount of \$25,000 with the following project description: Improvement of the Willow Library Meeting Room Acoustics.**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Hale and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 5 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

Amendment No. 11

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60), Land Management (page 227), and Capital Project (page 473 & 480)

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***The Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by decreasing appropriation by the amount of \$530,000;**

***decreasing the Areawide Capital Project Big Lake Recreation Center by the amount of \$530,000; and**

***the Land Management Fund Non-Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440*470 (446.700), by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$530,000;**

***increasing the Land Management Capital Project Big Lake Recreation Center by the amount of \$530,000; and**

***and appropriating \$530,000 from the Land Management Permanent Fund to the Fiscal Year 2026 Land Management Operating to fund the Big Lake Recreation Center Capital Project.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Bernier

Amendment No. 12

**Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Education
Operating Fund - Non-Departmental (page 232)**

**Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment as follows
and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:**

***The Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer to Education
Operating (445.220) by decreasing the appropriation by the
amount of \$1,500,637; and**

***the Education Operating Fund, Non-Departmental, Areawide
(367.110) by decreasing the appropriation by the amount of
\$1,500,637.**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

- Yes: 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier**
- No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble**

Amendment No. 13

**Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Education
Operating Fund - Non-Department (page 232)**

**Assemblymember Bernier moved a primary amendment as
follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget,
by reducing the Local Education Contribution amount by 4
percent.**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

- Yes: 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier**
- No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble**

Amendment No. 14

**Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Education
Operating Fund - Non-Department (page 232)**

**Assemblymember McKee moved a primary amendment as follows
and to make any other conforming changes to the budget, by
reducing the Local Education Contribution by 3 percent.**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble

Amendment No. 15

**Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Education
Operating Fund - Non-Department (page 232)**

**Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment as
follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget,
by reducing the Local Education Contribution amount by \$1 for
the Fiscal Year 2026.**

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

The motion failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble
- No:** 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee,
Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Amendment No. 16

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment to reduce the Fund Balance to \$250,000 and reduce the areawide mill rate by the corresponding number.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

- Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier**
- No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale and Assemblymember Fonov**

Amendment No. 17

Areawide Fund - Non-Departmental (page 60) and Capital Project (page 474)

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***The Areawide Fund, Non-Departmental, transfer from 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by decreasing the appropriation by the amount of \$25,000;and**

***amending the Capital Project - by decreasing the planning grant to the City of Palmer for snow removal at the City of Palmer Airport by striking "\$50,000" and inserting "\$25,000".**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

- Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Fonov and Assemblymember Bernier**
- No: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble**

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

The motion failed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble
- No:** 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and
Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Fonov moved to continue Ordinance Serial No. 25-025 to May 13, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

- Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier
- No:** 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and
Assemblymember Gamble

VII. VETO

A. Motion to Override Any Possible Mayoral Veto on Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Items (Ordinance Serial No. 25-025)

There were no vetoes presented.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENT

Assemblymember McKee spoke to the Education Operating Fund and the Matanuska-Susitna School District's budget.

Assemblymember Bernier spoke to lowering taxes and said a prayer.
Directed Administration to rebid Road Maintenance Contracts for Meadow Lakes Road Service Area No. 27 and Gold Trail Road Service Area No. 28.

Mayor DeVries declared the motion to rebid Road Maintenance Contracts was out of order because the discussion was not advertised and the public did not have the opportunity to give public input.

Assemblymember Hale spoke to the budget and to the May 13, 2025, special Assembly meeting.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to education bonds and the budget.

Mr. Brown spoke to creating legislation regarding the road maintenance contracts for the May 20, 2025, regular Assembly meeting.

Assemblymember Fonov directed staff to create legislation to rebid the road maintenance contract for Bogard Road Service Area No. 25.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.



Mayoral Signature and Clerk Attestment

For

May 8, 2025, Assembly Budget Deliberations Minutes

(12 pages)

EDNA DeVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 06/03/25