

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, JULY 15, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, July 15, 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

Telephonic: 2 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, and Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers

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

[25-106](#)

A. Assembly Clerk Evaluation Meeting Minutes: 06/17/25

B. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 06/17/25

The minutes were approved as presented without objection.

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

Katie Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations, spoke to summer activities, online registration, summer feeding program, and facility improvements. Noted the upcoming School Board meeting.

3. State of Alaska

Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office, spoke to the base student allocation increase, recent vetoes, and recent special session.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committees

There was no report provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

There was no report provided.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

There was no comment provided.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no comment provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule and when she will be out of the office.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[25-104](#)

1. Enhanced 911 Advisory Board: 04/08/25
 2. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 05/08/25
 3. Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board: 03/24/25, 5/19/25,
 4. Platting Board: 05/01/25
 5. Talkeetna Sewer & Water SSA Board of Supervisors: 05/07/25
 6. Trapper Creek Community Council: 05/15/25
 7. Water and Wastewater Advisory Board: 03/19/25
 8. West Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors: 05/12/25
 9. Willow Area Community Organization: 05/07/25
- The citizen and other correspondence were presented, and no comments were noted.

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 25-152](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Submittal Of A Safe Streets For All Grant Application Requesting \$12,818,160 For Transportation Projects To Improve Safety Around Schools.

[IM 25-153](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Submittal Of A Commercial - Property Assessed Clean Energy And Resilience Application (C-Pacer) By Wasilla HS Holdings, LLC And The Managers Signature On The Associated Funding Documents.

[IM 25-158](#)

Reporting The Manager Waivers Of Formal Bidding Procedures In Accordance With MSB 3.08.320(B).

The informational memorandums were 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 thanked Assemblymember Gamble and spoke to road improvements in his neighborhood, spoke in support of OR 25-076 and property tax exemption for seniors: Mike Dale.

The following person spoke to Trunk Road and putting in a driveway for fire trucks and asked for a letter of support to be written from the Assembly: Tom Roberson.

The following person spoke to a "woke" hub being opened in the City of Palmer and Mat-Su Health Foundation: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to Point MacKenzie, the West Susitna Access Road, and mining opportunities: Travis Friesen.

The following persons spoke in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-076: Casey Weber, Linda Spohn, Scott (no last name given), Dave Maxwell, Michael Garhart, Joel Sigman, Ken Griffin, Ken Huckeba, Quinn Taylor, Mark Spohn, Starla Brewer, Dana Raffaniello, Michael Bowles, Gregorio Avila, Mike Coons, Amanda Casillo, Don Koval, Karen Gorton, Bradley Palmer, and Russell Richardson.

The following person spoke to Ordinance Serial No. 25-076, adding an expiration date, reduced needs, and transportation needs: Herb Bischoff.

The following person spoke to a supreme court case and to the passing of Congressman John Lewis: Mary Robinson.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 25-061](#)

An Ordinance Creating Yarrow Road Natural Gas Local Improvement District No. 664, Approving The Improvement Plan For The District, Authorizing The Manager To Proceed With The Improvement, And Assessing Equally Among The Properties Within The District The Costs Of The Improvement.

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 opposition of Ordinance Serial No. 25-061: Carrie Agre.

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

Assemblymember Bernier moved adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-061.

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate)

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The main motion passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

The meeting recessed at 7:48 p.m. and reconvened at 8:01 p.m.

[OR 25-068](#)

An Ordinance Amending MSB 2.38.Community Development Department; Title 18, Related To The Port District; And Title 23, Related To Land Management, To Reassign Responsibility For Administering Land Selection, Management And Development For Port MacKenzie.

Sponsors: Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

David Griffin, Port Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-068: Michael Bowles and Travis Friesen.

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

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-068.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-076](#) An Ordinance Enacting MSB 3.80, Areawide Fuel Excise Tax, In The Amount Of Seven Cents Per Gallon.

Sponsors: Borough Manager

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mr. Brown provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in opposition of Ordinance Serial No. 25-076: Michael Bowles, Keastin Schimtt, William Brewer, Matt Winn, Linda Spohn, Jeff Howerton, Mark Spohn, Jackie Goforth, Starla Brewer, Mike Coons, Scott Lapene, and Casey Weber.

The following persons spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-076 with amendments: Michelle Heun and Cindy Bettine.

The following person spoke to concern with Ordinance Serial No. 25-076: Dana Raffaniello.

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

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-076.

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment to Ordinance Serial No. 25-076 by adding a new section that reads: "MSB 3.80.280 Expiration. The ordinance codified in this section shall expire on June 30, 2027."

Assemblymember McKee moved a secondary amendment to by striking "2027" and inserting "2028".

The motion failed by the following vote:

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

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Fonov moved a secondary amendment by striking "June 30, 2027" and inserting "December 31, 2027."

The motion failed by the following vote:

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

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment to Ordinance Serial No. 25-076 by inserting a new section that reads: "MSB 3.80.040(A)(7) Motor fuel that is sold or transferred to a businesses with a dedicated storage tank for use exclusively on non-roadway uses such as heavy equipment."

Assemblymember Fonov moved a secondary amendment by striking "Motor" and inserting "Diesel" in its place.

The secondary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Assemblymember Bernier moved to suspend the rules and to extend the meeting past 10:00 p.m. not to exceed 10:30 p.m.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The primary amendment passed as amended by the following vote:

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

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

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment to MSB 3.80.050(A)(2)(a) by striking the word "ten" in both places and inserting "one-hundred and nineteen" in its place to read: "b. In a small, personal use size container hundred and nineteen gallons or less in volume, so long as that motor fuel is not off-loaded to a storage tank, transport tank or container larger than hundred and nineteen gallons in volume."

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

Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone Ordinance Serial No. 25-076 to August 5, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Fonov

[OR 25-077](#)

An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$146,973 From The Enhanced 911 Fund Balance To A Project To Allow The City Of Wasilla To Obtain Reimbursement From The Enhanced 911 Surcharge Funding For Priority Dispatch Law Enforcement Protocol Software.

RS 25-064: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Project To Allow The City Of Wasilla To Obtain Reimbursement From The Enhanced 911 Surcharge Funding For Priority Dispatch Law Enforcement Protocol Software.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ken Barkley, 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 close and discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-077 and Resolution Serial No. 25-064.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-078](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$38,777.21 From The Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation For The Matanuska Greenbelt Trails Signage And Trailhead Improvements.

RS 25-065: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Matanuska Greenbelt Trails Signage And Trailhead Improvements.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Jillian Morrissey, 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 the discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-078 and Resolution Serial No. 25-065.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-080](#)

An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$200,000 From The West Lakes Fire Service Area No. 136 Fund Balance To The Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area No. 130 Fund Balance For The Purchase Of A Used Fire Engine.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ken Barkely, 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 the discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-080.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, 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 in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 25-076: Amanda Bowles.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to suspend the rules and to extend the meeting past 10:30 p.m. and not to exceed 10:45 p.m.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

- [RS 25-066](#) A Resolution Waiving Landfill Fees For The Alaska State Adopt-A-Highway Program For Fiscal Year 2026.
- [RS 25-067](#) A Resolution To Specify Roles And Responsibilities For Federal Transit Administration Grant Applications And Agreements.
- [RS 25-070](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Borough Manager To Sell The Zero Lake Road Salvage Timber Harvest.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

- [AM 25-074](#) Authorizing The Borough Manager To Enter Into A Grant Agreement For Fiscal Year 2026 With Valley Community For Recycling Solutions In The Amount Of \$200,000.
- [AM 25-076](#) Acceptance Of Late Filed And Retroactive Senior Citizen And Disabled Veteran Exemption Applications For The Period Of May And June 2025.

[AM 25-077](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-190B To Bradley Son Enterprises, LLC. For The Annual Contract Amount Of \$123,760 To Provide Equipment Maintenance For Solid Waste.

[AM 25-079](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-191B To Valley General Construction, LLC. For The Contract Amount Of \$1,291,458 To Construct Crimsonview And Heavenly Meadows Street.

[AM 25-080](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-192B To Bob's Service, LLC. For The Contract Amount Of \$121,879 To Purchase And Install A Thaw Truck Boiler.

[AM 25-081](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-176B To Roger Hickel Contracting, Inc. For The Contract Amount Of \$14,283,754 To Construct American Charter Academy.

[AM 25-082](#) Authorizing The Borough Manager To Enter Into A Lease Agreement For A Communication Tower Site, Known As Bald Mountain, With The Alaska State Department Of Natural Resources, Division Of Mining Land And Water, For A 10-Year Term. (MSB007172 & ADL 223117).

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

[RS 25-068](#)

A Resolution Directing The Borough Manager To Prepare Future Budgets Utilizing The Fuel Excise Tax Revenue To Reduce The Areawide Mill Rate And Create A Proportional Increase In The 16 Road Service Area Mill Rates And Allocate An Amount Equal To 70 Percent Of The Excise Tax Revenues To A Capital Project For Voter Approved Transportation Projects.

Sponsors: Sumner

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Fonov moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-068.

Assemblymember Fonov moved to postpone Resolution Serial No. 25-068 to August 5, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[AM 25-075](#)

Approval Of Utility Relocation Costs Of \$166,500 To Matanuska Electric Association For The Crimsonview Drive, South Vermillon Drive, South Thalo Drive, South Ochre Drive Reconstruction Project In South Colony Road Service Area No. 16; And Extend The Completion Date To July 15, 2026.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Assemblymember Sumner declared a conflict of interest with the legislation as it directly relates to public utilities and he holds a position on the Matanuska Electric Association Board.

RULING: Mayor DeVries ruled that Assemblymember Sumner had a conflict of interest and would be recused from voting.

Assemblymember Sumner exited the meeting.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt AM No. 25-075.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Recused: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

Assemblymember Sumner re-entered the meeting.

[AM 25-078](#) Authorization To Renew A 3-Year License Agreement For The
Borough's Financial Software, New World, With Tyler Technologies In
The Total Amount Of \$801,680.04.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Fonov moved to adopt AM No. 25-078.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, 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 presented.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 08/05/25 Assembly Chambers)

[OR 25-081](#) An Ordinance Enacting A Tax Cap Under MSB 3.04.077 And
Establishing An Areawide Real Property Tax Cap Of 10 Mills And A
Non-Areawide Tax Cap Of 0.55 Mills.

Sponsors: Sumner, Fonov and Bernier

[OR 25-082](#) An Ordinance Naming The Story Walk Pathway At Sutton Library In
Honor Of Nancy Bertels.

Sponsors: Hale

[OR 25-084](#)

An Ordinance Adopting MSB 3.15.037(E) To Allow For Prorated Senior And Disabled Veteran Residential Real Property Tax Exemption When A Qualifying Individual Moves Their Permanent Residence Mid-Year; And Submitting The Question To The Voters.

Sponsors: Gamble

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 August 5, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

[25-105](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Enhanced 911 Advisory Board

Earl Almdale, resignation

Willow-Caswell FSA Board of Supervisors

Randale Sparks

Tamara Boeve

Michael Jonrowe

Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors

Randy Richards

Assemblymember Bernier moved to confirm the appointments and resignations requested by the Mayor.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

C. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

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

[OR 25-066](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.23, Port Mackenzie Special Use District, Repealing The Port Development Permit And Associated Standards.

Sponsors: Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to refer Ordinance Serial No. 25-066 to the Planning Commission for 90 days.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

XI. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Bernier said a prayer.

Mr. Brown stated staff would follow-up on Assemblymember Fonov's questions about AM No. 25-078.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to Ordinance Serial No. 25-076 and requested staff provide a section on the Borough's website for Frequently Asked Questions on the Fuel Excise Tank and tax calculator.

Assemblymember Fonov thanked the public for attending and their comments.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10: 39 p.m.