

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
Michael Bowles, 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, AUGUST 19, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, August 18, 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 Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Tim Hale

Telephonic: 1 - Assemblymember Bill Gamble

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Michael Carson.

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.

4. Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau

Casey Ressler, The Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau Executive Director, reported the activities of the Bureau and visitor trends in the Valley.

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

There was no comment provided.

2. Strategic Planning Issues

There was no comment provided.

3. Wolf Lake Park Feasibility Study

25-124

Feasibility Study

Jillian Morrisey, Community Development Director, spoke to a Wolf Lake Park feasibility study.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no comment provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[25-120](#)

1. Big Lake Community Council: 05/13/25, 06/10/25
2. Glacier View Community Council: 04/24/25
3. Planning Commission: 07/21/25

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 25-170](#)

Notification Of Land Acquisition Of One Acre Adjacent To The New Gateway Visitor Center.

[IM 25-177](#)

Informing The Assembly On The Submittal Of The Final Grant Report For The River Management Program Grant (14-DC-087) Awarded Through The Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development.

[IM 25-179](#)

Informing The Assembly Of Consent By The Matanuska-Susitna Borough To Assign Lease Of Land Operating As A Solar Farm From Renewable IPP, LLC To CleanCapital, D/B/A Energy 49, As Provided For In The Fair Market Value Lease.

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 the Borough and the cities for utilizing their health powers. Also, spoke to using the funds for training and the importance of case management: Michael Carson, My House Mat-Su.

The following persons spoke to the Fuller Lake Management Plan, public safety, and public access: Charles St. George, Pamela Grogan, and Raymond Grogan.

The following person spoke to the Annual Report of the Mat-Su Health Foundation, grants, and scholarships: David Wilson, Mat-Su Health Foundation Director of Public Policy.

The following person spoke to concerns with library books: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke in favor of the Wolf Lake Park: John Miller.

The following person spoke to the homeless and people begging for money: Travis Friesen.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 25-079](#) An Ordinance Adopting MSB 15.24.030(C)(43), Fuller Lake, Lake Management Plan; And Amending MSB 17.59.060, Lake Management Plan Implementation.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Rebecca Skjothaug, Current Planner, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-079: Edward Benett, Pamela Grogan, Raymond Grogan, Joann Coaler.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-079 and spoke to the public process: Mike Chmiekewski.

The following person spoke in opposition of Ordinance Serial No. 25-079: Esther Huddleston.

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. 25-079.

The meeting recessed at 7:26 p.m. and reconvened at 7:32 p.m.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Assemblymember Bernier declared a possible conflict of interest with the legislation as he built 7 of the homes in the subdivision. Seven plus years ago. Advised that he feels he can be objective.

RULING: Mayor DeVries ruled that Assemblymember Bernier had no conflict of interest and would not be recused from voting.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 2 - Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Fonov

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[OR 25-083](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$18,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Natural Resources, Office Of History And Archaeology, For The DePriest Family Farm National Register Nomination Project.
RS 25-069: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into The State Grant Agreement And The Agreement With The DePriest Family Trust For The DePriest Family Farm National Register Nomination Project.
Ms. McKechnie read legislation into the record.

Alex Strawn, Planning & Land Use Director, provided the 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 adopted Ordinance Serial No. 25-083 and Resolution Serial No. 25-069.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[OR 25-086](#) An Ordinance Enacting MSB 1.10.180, Limited Health Powers From The Cities.

Sponsors: Borough Manager

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mr. Spiropoulos provided the staff record.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke to the settlement and what the funds would be used for, and the John Hopkins principles of how the funds should be used: Michael Bowles.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-086: David Wilson, Mat-Su Health Foundation.

There being no other present who wished to testify the public hearing closed and the discussion moved to the assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-089.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[OR 25-087](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.044(A), Service Area No. 27: Meadow Lakes Road Service Area; And Placing On The Ballot Of The November 4, 2025, Regular Borough Election The Annexation Of Parcels Located On West Mana Naen Street, West Elvas Lane, And A Portion Of North Utopia View Circle Into The Meadow Lakes Road Service Area.
RS 25-075: A Resolution Finding The Annexation Of Parcels Located On North Mana Nael Street, West Elvas Lane, And A Portion Of North Utopia View Circle Into The Meadow Lakes Road Service Area, Serves The Public Interest; And Placing The Question Before The Voters In The November 4, 2025, Regular Election.

Sponsors: Bernier

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ms. McKechnie provided the staff support.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-087: Esther Huddleston.

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

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-087 and Resolution Serial No. 25-075.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[OR 25-088](#) An Ordinance Annexing All Of Lot 4A, Homestead Hills Phase 2, Into The Greater Butte Road Service Area.

RS 25-076: A Resolution Finding The Annexation Of All Of Lot 4a, Homestead Hills Phase 2, Into The Greater Butte Road Service Area Serves The Public Interest.

Sponsors: Hale

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ms. McKechnie provided the staff support.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-088: Julie Nystrom.

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. 25-088 and Resolution Serial No. 25-076.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

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 special use permits from the State of Alaska for lakes and spoke to keeping other lakes unrestricted, fuel tax and taxing marijuana instead, and animal control: Esther Huddleston.

The following person spoke to Project Hope for the cans and kits, spoke to Ordinance Serial No. 25-086: Michael Bowles.

[Clerk's note: Assemblymember Nowers exited in person and entered the meeting telephonically.]

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 25-079](#)

A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budgets For Michelle Drive Bridge At Willow Creek, Lewis Loop Bridge at Fish Creek, And King Salmon Drive Bridge at Cottonwood Creek; And Approving A Time Extension Of The Areawide Budget Appropriation And Fund Balance Appropriation For The 2024 Sushana Drive At Little Susitna River Flooding Mitigation.

[RS 25-081](#)

A Resolution Directing The Clerk To Place Additional Information Regarding The Fuel Excise Tax In The Election Brochure For The Voters.

Sponsors: Nowers

[RS 25-082](#)

A Resolution To Submit An Advisory Question To The Qualified Voters Of The Borough At The November 4, 2025, Regular Borough Election To Enact A 7-Cent-Per-Gallon Motor Fuel Tax For 1.5 Years.

Sponsors: Nowers

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 25-092](#)

Approval Of Change Order No. 2 To The E-911 And Dispatch Services Agreement No. 16-100P, Modifying Contract Language And Increasing The Annual Cost By \$340,000 In Fiscal Year 2026 For Two Additional Dispatchers.

[AM 25-102](#)

Award Of Bid No. 26-012B To Granite Construction Company For The Contract Amount Of \$338,032.40 To Deliver Salted Sand And Road Chips For Fiscal Year 2026 Road Maintenance, Schedule A.

[AM 25-103](#)

Award Of Bid No. 26-012B To Western Construction & Equipment For The Contract Amount Of \$231,870 To Deliver Salted Sand And Road Chips For Fiscal Year 2026 Road Maintenance, Schedule B.

[AM 25-104](#)

Award Of Bid No. 26-015B To Orion Construction, Inc. For The Contract Amount Of \$193,400 To Supply And Install New Crematory At Animal Care.

[AM 25-105](#)

Award Of Bid No. 26-019B To K & H Civil Constructors For The Contract Amount Of \$1,296,157 For Settler's Bay Drive Pavement Preservation.

[AM 25-107](#)

Award Of Bid No. 26-022B To QAP For The Contract Amount Of \$654,523 To Construct East Lakeview Road Pavement Preservation. Ms. McKechnie 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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[RS 25-077](#)

A Resolution Amending The Scope Of Work For The Wasilla Pool Drain And Backwash Pit Repairs To Include Americans With Disabilities Act And Safety Upgrades At Recreation Facilities, Including The Purchase Of An Americans With Disabilities Compliant Pool Chair Lift, Automatic Door With Access Control, Locker Room Security Doors, And Entrance Door Crash Bars. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[RS 25-078](#)

A Resolution Approving The Amended Budget For Lynda Lake Portage At Beaver Lake Road And Birch Creek Tributary At Mastodon Road Fish Passage; And Approving The Time Extensions Of The Areawide Budget Appropriations For Fish Passage Birch Creek Tributary At Mastodon Road Match Fund And Fish Passage Neklason Lake At Homebuilt Circle Match Fund. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-078.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[AM 25-098](#) Authorization To Purchase A Tanker Fire Apparatus For The Willow/Caswell Fire Service Area No. 140 From General Fire Apparatus/Rosenbauer For The Amount Of \$626,846. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt AM 25-098.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

[AM 25-108](#) Authorization To Purchase 2010 Pierce Velocity Pumper Refurbishment Services From Hughes Fire Equipment, Inc. For The Amount Of \$1,018,973. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM 25-108.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

IX. VETO

There were no vetoes presented.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 09/02/25 Assembly Chambers)

[OR 25-091](#) An Ordinance Naming The Big Lake Facility The Big Lake Lions Recreation Center.

Sponsors: Gamble

[OR 25-094](#) An Ordinance Reappropriating National Opioid Settlement Funding Totaling \$21,000 For The Department Of Emergency Services Peer Support Training Program.

RS 25-080: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Department Of Emergency Services Peer Support Training Program.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for September 2, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

[25-121](#) Mayoral Requests for Confirmation
Animal Care and Regulation Board
Rebecca Bond-Knuth
Rebecca Bond-Knuth, resignation
Borough Area School Site Selection Committee
Wilfred Fernandez, resignation
Enhanced 911 Advisory Board
Michelle Hoyt
Local Emergency Planning Committee
Dwayne Shelton, resignation
Mariko Kays
Assemblymember Bernier moved to confirm the appointments and resignations requested by the Mayor.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Hale

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 presented.

XI. RECONSIDERATION

There were no reconsiderations.

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember McKee questioned IM 25-170 and spoke to staff and their hard work.

Assemblymember Bernier said a prayer.

Mr. Hays reminded the Assembly of the open houses for proposed Motor Fuel Excise Tax, Port MacKenize, and the groundbreaking for American Charter.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to the open houses regarding the proposed Motor Fuel Excise Tax and having FAQs available for the public on the Borough webpage. Spoke to Assemblymember McKees questions about IM 25-170, the State Fair, Andy Couch, and salmon closures.

Assemblymember Sumner spoke to amending the lake management plan codes.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.