

# MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 East Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska 99645 - 907-861-8683

## BOROUGH MAYOR

Vern Halter

## BOROUGH CLERK

Lonnie R. McKechnie, CMC

## BOROUGH MANAGER

Michael Brown

## BOROUGH ATTORNEY

Nicholas Spiropoulos



## BOROUGH ASSEMBLY

Tim Hale, District 1  
Stephanie Nowers, District 2  
George McKee, District 3  
Robert Yundt, District 4  
Mokie Tew, District 5  
Jesse Sumner, District 6  
Tam Boeve, District 7

## MEETING MINUTES

### ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS

350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

ASSEMBLY REGULAR MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021

## I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Vern Halter.

## II. ROLL CALL

**Present:** 7 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember George McKee, Assemblymember Robert Yundt, Assemblymember Mokie Tew, Assemblymember Jesse Sumner, and Assemblymember Tam Boeve

## III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

## IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mr. Bill Stoltze, State Lobbyist for the Borough.

## V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

### [21-112](#)

A. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 04/06/21

B. Assembly Special Meeting Minutes: 04/08/21

C. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 04/20/21

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**

City of Wasilla Mayor Glenda Ledford reported on the activities on the city.

#### **2. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District**

There was no report provided.

#### **3. State of Alaska**

Mr. Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Office, reported on the activities of Governor Dunleavy regarding COVID funds and a possible special session of the State Legislature.

### **B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

#### **1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues**

Assemblymember Nowers reported on the activities of the committee.

#### **2. Assembly Public Relations**

Mayor Halter noted that May 3 was drive your tractor to work day. Related that May 4 is Agriculture Day. Spoke to a book written in the 1950's regarding agriculture that he owns and is quite fond of.

### **C. MANAGER COMMENTS**

#### **1. State/Federal Legislation**

Mr. John Harris and Mr. Bill Stolze, State Lobbyist for the Borough, reported on the activities of the State Legislature.

## **2. Strategic Planning Issues**

Mr. Brown stated that June 1, is when fees for trailhead parking violations will start to be enforced. Staff has been developing a ticketing procedure, due to this being a new fee. Stated that staff is currently putting reminders on vehicles instead of tickets, for the remainder of May. Spoke to the outreach staff has been doing regarding the change in trailhead parking. Advised that the bid opening for Houston Middle School reconstruction has been delayed until next Tuesday.

## **3. Wildland Fire Update**

Mr. Ken Barkley, Emergency Services Director, provided an update regarding wildfire risk reduction measures being developed throughout the Borough. Spoke to the number of cords of beetle killed spruce that have been harvested by residents who had secured permits. Spoke to the areas that residents with a permit can harvest beetle killed spruce.

## **D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS**

There was no report provided.

## **E. CLERK COMMENTS**

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule. Stated that at the last meeting the Manager had discussed the possibility of scheduling a meeting for June 22, 2021, in order to discuss road bonds. Queried if that was a meeting the body would like to schedule.

Mayor Halter queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

## **F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE**

[21-116](#)

1. Board of Adjustment and Appeals: 03/22/21, BOAA 21-03 Final Decision
  2. Borough Area School Site Selection Committee: 02/18/21
  3. Chase Community Council: 02/03/21
  4. Chickaloon Community Council: 02/10/21
  5. Greater Butte RSA Board of Supervisors: 01/14/21
  6. Greater Palmer Consolidated FSA Board of Supervisors: 01/08/21, 02/11/21
  7. Knik-Fairview Community Council: 01/20/21, 02/13/21, 02/17/21
  8. Local Road Service Area Advisory Board: 03/18/21
  9. Platting Board: 03/04/21
  11. Planning Commission: 04/05/21
  12. Port Commission: 01/18/21, 01/25/21, 02/22/21
  13. Trapper Creek Community Council: 03/18/21
- The citizen and other correspondence were presented and no comments were noted.

**G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS**

[IM 21-083](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Borough's Intent To Enter Into A Management Agreement For A Five-Year Term With The Wasilla Knik Historical Society For The Use Of Borough-Owned Land And Building Located Within Section 24, Township 16 North, Range 3 West And Identified As Tax Parcel 16N03W24D007 (MSB003559).

The informational memorandum was presented and no comments were noted.

**VII. 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.)**

OR 21-001

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$4,600,000 In Aspen Insurance Proceeds To School Capital Project Fund 400, Project No. 40204, Rebuild Houston Middle School; Reappropriating \$5,900,000 From Areawide Committed Fund Balance And \$6,000,000 From School District Fund Balance To Capital School Project, Fund 445, To Fund 400, Project No. 40204; Reappropriate \$15,000,000 In XL America Insurance Proceeds, \$1,725,446 In School Bond Construction Interest, And \$890,521 In Unspent School Site Selection Reserves From Emergency Fund 445, Project No. 55026, To Capital School Project Fund 400, Project No. 40204.

RS 21-001: A Resolution Approving Scope Of Work And Budget For The Demolition And Rebuilding Of Houston Middle School.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke to concerns with the public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

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

**Assemblymember Boeve moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-001 and Resolution Serial No. 21-001. The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

[OR 21-040](#)

An Ordinance Amending MSB 2.08.060(A), Compensation For The Mayor.

**Sponsors:** McKee

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Mayor Halter stated he had a conflict of interest as this legislation would increase his wages.

RULING: Deputy Mayor Boeve ruled that Mayor Halter had a conflict of interest and would be recused from voting.

Mayor Halter exited the meeting.

Deputy Mayor Boeve assumed the duties of the Chair.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee provided a staff report.

Deputy Mayor Boeve opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke to concerns with the public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

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

**Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-040.**

**Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment by striking "\$50,000" and inserting in its place "\$100,000."**

**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 Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

**The primary amendment failed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Tew, and Assemblymember Sumner

**No:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Boeve

**Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment by striking "\$50,000" and inserting "\$90,000" in its place.**

**Assemblymember McKee moved a secondary amendment by striking "\$90,000" and inserting "\$80,000" in its place.**

**Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate).  
The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

**The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Tew, and Assemblymember Sumner

**No:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Boeve

**Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate).  
The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

**The primary amendment failed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Tew, and Assemblymember Sumner

**No:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Yundt, and Assemblymember Boeve

**Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate).  
The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

**The main motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, and Assemblymember Boeve

**No:** 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Sumner

Mayor Halter re-entered the meeting and resumed the duties of the Chair.

OR 21-041

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$4,330,896.61 From The Alaska State Department Of Health And Social Services, Division Of Public Health, COVID-19 Emergency Operations Center, To Fund 445, Project No. 55029, For Community Driven Strategies That Support COVID-19 Related Activities.

RS 21-041: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Community Driven Strategies That Support COVID-19 Related Activities.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ms. Elizabeth Ripley, President and Chief Executive Officer of Mat-Su Health Foundation provided a report.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in opposition to the legislation: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

The following persons spoke in support of the legislation: Mr. Todd Smoldon.

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

**Assemblymember Boeve moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-041 and Resolution Serial No. 21-041. The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

**C. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three Minutes Per Person.)**

The following person spoke to concerns with the public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

**D. CONSENT AGENDA**

**1. RESOLUTIONS**



[RS 21-043](#) A Resolution Amending The Budget Of Disaster Relief Funds From The COVID Pandemic, Project No. 55029, Fund 445.

## 2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 21-038](#) Authorization To Purchase From Motorola Solutions, Through ProComm Alaska In The Contract Amount Of \$229,999.18, Motorola APX8500 And APX900 Series Mobile Radios And Related Accessories.

[AM 21-039](#) Award Of Bid No. 21-134B To Orion Construction, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$359,000 For Old Station 6-2 Sprinklers And Remodel.

[AM 21-040](#) Award Of Bid No. 21-163B To Western Construction And Equipment, LLC. In The Contract Amount Of \$157,726 For Timber Way And Timberwood Improvements.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**Assemblymember Boeve 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 Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

## VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## IX. VETO

## X. NEW BUSINESS

### A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 05/18/21, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 21-019](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.55, Setbacks And Screening Easements, To Exempt Signs From Setbacks To Right-Of-Way And Property Lines.

[OR 21-042](#) An Ordinance Extending The Time Limit For Completion Of Borough Capital Projects.

[OR 21-043](#) An Ordinance Providing For The Sale Of Certain Borough-Wide Real Property Acquired Through Tax Foreclosure For Delinquent Real Property Tax Years 2014 And Prior And Special Assessment For 2015 And Prior; And Not Needed For Public Purpose.

[OR 21-044](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating 2019 McKinley Fire Disaster Relief Monies In The Amount Of \$32,331.92 From The Federal Emergency Management Agency And The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management, To Fund 445, Project No. 55022.

RS 21-042: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The 2019 McKinley Fire Disaster Relief Monies, Project No. 55022.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**Assemblymember Boeve moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for May 18, 2021. The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

## **B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

### **1. VACANCY REPORT**

[21-118](#) Mayoral Requests For Confirmation  
Board of Adjustment and Appeals  
Jay Van Diest

**Assemblymember Boeve 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 Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

## **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**

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming budget meetings.

Assemblymember Tew opined that it is fair to pay a Mayor \$100,000 and that the position is worthy of that pay rate.

Assemblymember Hale spoke in support of a raise for the mayor position. Spoke to the community clean up days that are organized in his district. Thanked the Manager and staff for the assistance in making them happen.

Assemblymember Sumner spoke in support of an increase for the mayor position. Noted that more duties could be added to the position. Stated that he wished someone would reconsider.

Assemblymember Nowers stated that she does not support an increase in the pay rate for the mayor position. Spoke in support of the many things that Mayor Halter does for his community. Spoke in support of Assemblymember McKee's position on economic development. Stated that she would like to have a discussion regarding economic development. Opined that the body needs to work on bringing more business to the Borough, which would bring more jobs for residents.

Assemblymember Yundt stated that he will be moving for reconsideration of the pay increase for the mayor position. Related that he misunderstood what was being voted on. Stated that the Borough has the greatest Mayor in all of Alaska. Stated that he would like to see someone paid well enough that it could be a full-time job that could push more economic development.

Assemblymember Boeve noted that on the Parks Highway from Mile Post 71 to 77 you can still see the devastation caused by the Sockeye Fire, even years later. Expressed her support and enthusiasm for the fire wise program.

Mayor Halter stated that he is confident that the direction the Borough is going is good one and that it will not matter who the next mayor is. Opined that work needs to be done in order to complete the rail spur and that would be a good project for the next Mayor to make happen. Stated that he is so pleased with the budget that he feels it could be adopted as is without any amendments. Noted that it is the best budget he has seen in all his years at the Borough. Reminded the body that if they do have any amendments to get them to the Clerk as soon as possible so that she can prepare them for the body. Commented that he is looking for the mill rate to be under 10.

### **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session.

### **XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.