

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, OCTOBER 7, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, October 7, 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: 6 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Telephonic: 1 - Assemblymember Dee McKee

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Assemblymember Bernier.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

There were no minutes of preceding meetings.

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 Committees

There were no reports provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

There were no reports provided.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

25-152 Williwaw Subdivision Project Report

Jason Ortiz, Planning and Land Use Deputy Director; and Wade Long, Development Services Manager, reported on the Williwaw Subdivision Project.

Mayor DeVries provided a token of appreciation to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints for their work on the Williwaw Subdivision clean-up project.

Mr. Brown noted that the state and federal priorities will be up for public hearing on October 21, 2025. Requested if the Assembly has any changes, to please let him know as soon as possible so that he can have amendments prepared in advance of the meeting. Spoke to seeking state funding for the Talkeetna dike and revetment repair project. Advised that with the support of Madam Mayor, that staff reports for legislation on all items but complex issues will be eliminated. Noted that questions can still be asked and that the intent is to cut-down on the length of Assembly meetings.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos noted that neglected and deteriorating properties are a nationwide issue. Commented that Jason Ortiz has presented at the last two Alaska Municipal Attorneys Association conferences about neglected and deteriorating properties. Stated that other municipalities have had a lot of interest in how the Borough is accomplishing these types of projects.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule and pertinent election dates. Introduced Amber Outzs, a temporary employee assisting with the coming election.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

25-147

1. Agriculture Advisory Board: 08/20/25
2. Glacier View Community Council: 05/22/25
3. Library Board: 08/12/25
4. Planning Commission: 08/18/25, Resolution No. 25-13
5. Platting Board: 08/21/25
6. South Lakes Community Council: 09/08/25
7. Susitna Community Council: 08/07/25
8. Talkeetna Community Council: 07/07/25, 08/04/25
9. Talkeetna FSA Board of Supervisors: 12/30/24
10. Tanaina Community Council: 05/27/25, 06/24/25
11. Willow Area Community Organization: 06/04/25, 07/02/25, 08/06/25
12. West Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors: 08/11/25

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

IM 25-204

Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 24-156B With Tutka, LLC. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$326,463.39 For The Tanya Court Improvements Project.

IM 25-214

Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 24-125B with Granite Construction For a Total Contract Amount Of \$740,984.10 For The Knik Knack Mud Shack Road Improvements Project.

IM 25-218 Informing The Assembly Of The Request For The Managers' Signature On The Agreement For Mutual Aid/Automatic Aid For Emergency Services Between The Borough And The City Of Houston.

IM 25-219 Informing The Assembly Of A Grant Amendment For The State Homeland Security Program For Time Extension Only That Will Be Presented To The Manager For Signature.

IM 25-220 Informing The Assembly That The Land Management Division Will Be Conducting A Competitive Sale Of Previously Approved And Offered Tax Foreclosure Properties In The Fall Of 2025.

IM 25-221 Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 25-052B With CGC Services, LLC. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$417,336 For The Wasilla High School Boiler Upgrades Project.

IM 25-225 Informing the Assembly of the Manager's Signature on a Memorandum of Understanding Regarding the Alaska State Department of Transportation's Fiscal Year 2025 Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Application for the Port Mackenzie Multimodal Freight Expansion Project.

IM 25-226 Informing The Assembly Of The Submittal Of Fiscal Year 2025 Port Infrastructure Development Program Grant Requesting \$6,281,645 For The Port Mackenzie Cell 1 Replacement And Dry Storage Project. 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 persons spoke in opposition to the statement included in the 2025 Election brochure, and the need for the election brochure to be impartial and free of religious statements: Fran Seger-Boss, Dave Musgrave, Ginger Bain, Peg Redding, Hannah Peitrich, Matt McHenry, Doug Hill, Angie Fraker, Linda Sloan, Ellen Vande Visse, Michael Hannon, Mable Wimmer, Jim Sykes, Bill Campbell, Abigail Saltonstall, Liz Jackson, and Norm Harris.

The following person spoke to concerns with the cost of road improvements as listed in the capital improvement projects for Meadow Lakes Road Service Area: Esther Huddleston.

The following persons spoke in support of the statement included in the election brochure and to their admiration of Charlie Kirk: Linda Spohn and Mark Spohn.

The following person spoke to concerns with pornographic books in Borough libraries: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to concerns with excessively luminous headlights: John Miller.

The following person spoke to the Empty Library Memorial in Berlin, Germany that is dedicated to the memory of the Nazi book burnings of May 10, 1933 and noted that this is Banned Books week: Kathy Kysar.

The following persons spoke to their admiration of Charlie Kirk, to concerns that the partisan and religious language in the election brochure could be offensive to some, and in opposition of the excise fuel tax: Janice Norman, Dave Johnson, Desiree Terry.

The following person spoke to the pros and cons of Charlie Kirk and to concerns with a directional sign on Bogard Road: Travis Friesen.

The meeting recessed at 7:50 p.m. and reconvened at 8:01 p.m.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

OR 25-104 An Ordinance Naming An Area Of The Crevasse Moraine Trail System In Memory Of Dot Helm.

Sponsors: Nowers

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-104: Colleen Vague.

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-104.

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 25-105 An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.038, Service Area No. 24: Talkeetna Fire Service Area; Annexing Parcels Located In The Area Of East Rollie L. Circle, South Leroy Davies Road, And Riddle Avenue Into The Talkeetna Fire Service Area Without The Placement Of The Question On The Ballot And Finding That It Services The Public Interest.

RS 25-087: A Resolution Finding The Annexation Of Eight Parcels In The Area Of East Rollie L. Circle, South Leroy Davies Road, And Riddle Avenue Into The Talkeetna Fire Service Area Serves The Public Interest.

Sponsors: Bernier

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

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. 25-105 and Resolution Serial No. 25-087.

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 25-106 An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.145, Service Area No. 136: West Lakes Fire Service Area By Annexing Six Parcels Off Of West Susitna Parkway Into The Fire Service Area Without The Placement Of The Question On The Ballot And Finding That It Serves The Public Interest. RS 25-088: A Resolution Finding The Annexation Of Six Parcels Off The West Susitna Parkway Into The West Lakes Fire Service Area Serves The Public Interest.

Sponsors: Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

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 Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-106 and Resolution Serial No. 25-088.

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 25-107 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant From The United States Fish And Wildlife Service And Required Match Funding From The Fiscal Year 2023 Areawide Budget Appropriation For Cottonwood Creek At Fern Street Fish Passage.

RS 25-089: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement For Cottonwood Creek At Fern Street Fish Passage; And Approving The Time Extension Of The Fiscal Year 2023 Areawide Budget Appropriation For Fish Passage Improvements Match Funds.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

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. 25-107 and Resolution Serial No. 25-089.

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 25-108 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$10,712 From The Mat-Su Disc Golf Association For The Alcantra Saw Crew Project.

RS 25-090: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into The Grant Agreement For The Alcantra Saw Crew Project.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

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 Fonov moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-108 and Resolution Serial No. 25-090.

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 25-109 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$319,837 From The Alaska State Department Of Health And Social Services For The Human Services Community Matching Grant Program
RS 25-091: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Human Services Community Matching Grant Program.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person opined that the grant funds should be dedicated to supporting addiction treatment and not be provided to the communities: Michael Bowles.

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. 25-109 and Resolution Serial No. 25-091.

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 25-110 An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$800,000 From The Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area Fund Balance To Purchase A Wildland Apparatus.

RS 25-093: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work For A Project To Purchase A Wildland Apparatus For The Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

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. 25-110 and Resolution Serial No. 25-093.

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 support of Ordinance Serial No. 25-104: Steven Marquiss.

The following person spoke to concerns with property tax assessment increases that are scheduled to increase exponentially in only the Butte area: Michael Bowles.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

RS 25-099 A Resolution Amending The Scope Of Work For HVAC System For Central Landfill Warm Storage Facility To Enlarge Municipal Solid Waste Cell 4.

RS 25-101 A Resolution Amending The Allocation Percentage Breakdown Of Opioid Remediation Funds.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

AM 25-123 Award Of Bid No. 26-037B To Tutka, LLC. In The Contract Amount Of \$131,750 For Site Improvement Activities For A Future Warm-Storage Fire Station And Truck Fill Site.

AM 25-126 Award Of Proposal No. 26-052P To NV5 Geospatial, Inc. In The Amount Of \$499,974.28 For Aerial Imagery Acquisition 2026-2028.

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 25-094 A Resolution Amending The Scope Of Work For The Online Auction Services Project To Complete The Material Site Development And Reclamation Project.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-094.

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 25-117 Award Of Bid No. 25-057C To Kendall Ford Of Anchorage In The Amount Of \$337,920 To Replace Six Fleet Vehicles.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM No. 25-117.

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment by striking the purchase of all six Ford Rangers.

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

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

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

AM 25-124 Award Of Bid No. 26-045B To Steppers Construction, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$264,975 For The Design/Build Of A Covered Storage Building At The Operations And Maintenance Facility.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM No. 25-124.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

No: 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Fonov

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

IX. VETO

There were no vetoes.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 10/21/25, Assembly Chambers)

RS 25-072 A Resolution Approving 2026 State Legislative Priorities.

RS 25-073 A Resolution Approving 2026 Federal Legislative Priorities.

OR 25-112 An Ordinance Appropriating Talkeetna Sewer And Water Fund Reserves In The Amount Of \$40,353.38 To Pay Off Debt Associated With Talkeetna Community Water Upgrades.

OR 25-113 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$9,700 From The American Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals For The Dog Kennel Enrichment Upgrades Project.

RS 25-095: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Dog Kennel Enrichment Upgrades Project.

OR 25-114 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$35,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Military And Veterans' Affairs For Phase One Of A Tsunami Warning Sirens Project.

RS 25-097: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Phase One Of A Tsunami Warning Sirens Project.

OR 25-115 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$37,220 From The Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation For Signage For The Government Peak Recreation Area.

RS 25-098: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Signage For The Government Peak Recreation Area.

OR 25-116 An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating Additional Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$447,459 For The November 2018 Cook Inlet Earthquake.

RS 25-100: A Resolution Approving The Amended Scope Of Work And Budget For November 2018 Cook Inlet Earthquake Disaster Relief Funds.

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 October 21, 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

25-149 Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Agriculture Advisory Board

Melissa Lytwyn, resignation

Borough Area Schools Site Selection

Richard Allen

Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board

Kimberly Waychoff, resignation

Alpine RSA No. 31

Traci Barickman

Assemblymember Bernier moved to confirm the resignations and appointments 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

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

Mr. Spiropoulos advised that he and Ms. Bodolay will be at the National Attorney's Conference and will not be present at the next meeting.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked those that attended the meeting and said a prayer.

Assemblymember Hale thanked the public who testified to concerns with the language that was added to the election brochure. He noted that he agrees with them that it was a partisan statement and has no place in the Borough's election brochure. He further added that something of this magnitude should have had public input. Noted that he voted against the amendments that included it, but voted in support of the main motion to adopt the amended election brochure. He stated his regret that he did not vote against it.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to the need to be cautious in what is included in future election brochures. Spoke in opposition to political violence and in support of free speech.

Assemblymember McKee spoke to her appreciation for the testimony that was provided and the civility with which it was presented.

Mr. Brown addressed the public testimony that the Borough is raising land assessment values by 400 percent or more in the Butte area. Related that a screenshot of a training tool was either taken out of context or misunderstood, giving rise to the rumor that the Borough was trying to pull a fast one. Advised that at no time was the Borough considering such a massive correction to the inventory of land values. Stated that the Assessor annually reports to the Assembly on land valuations, prior to tax assessments being sent out. Noted he was excited to announce that he signed a new permit for Alaska Range Resources for a Port District permit, for a mining exploration contract.

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the number of election workers that are still needed. Noted that there is training and compensation provided.

Assemblymember Sumner thanked everyone that testified to their concerns about the election brochure. Noted that the Assembly does not always get everything right and that he has regrets as to how it has played out. Spoke to concerns with the length of the state and federal priorities legislation that will be up for public hearing at the next meeting. Advised that he will be making a motion to split it up into shorter more prioritized lists.

Assemblymember Gamble expressed concern about the assessment training tool being released to the public.

Mr. Brown spoke to the speed with which misinformation travels on social media. Summarized to how property values are determined. Noted that it was a training document and publicly available record, with sample values listed at four to five times the normal assessment. Noted that the Borough strives for transparency with all things and that the release of the training screenshot is not something to be concerned with because the Borough has nothing to hide. Noted that there is a disparity in land values all over the Borough and they need to be brought into equal standing.

Assemblymember Gamble spoke to his pleasure with the success of the Port MacKenzie open house. Noted how well attended it was. Thanked Mr. Brown and staff for their hard work on the event.

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to his desire to be able to correct the public when they speak to misinformation. Spoke to his decision to move the amendment to the election brochure. Noted his admiration of Charlie Kirk.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:12 p.m.



Mayoral Signature and Clerk Attestment

For

October 7, 2025, Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes

(17 pages)

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edna DeVries".

EDNA DEVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lonnie R. McKechnie".

LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 11/18/25