

# 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, DECEMBER 2, 2025

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## I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, December 2, 2025, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by Mayor Edna DeVries.

## II. ROLL CALL

**Present:** 6 - Assemblymember Michael Bowles, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

**Telephonic:** 1 - Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers

## III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor DeVries queried if there were any changes to the agenda.

[Clerk's note: Assemblymembers Nowers and Fonov had not yet entered the meeting when this vote occurred.]

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to take up Ordinance Serial No. 25-076 under Unfinished Business immediately following the Informational Memorandums.**

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

**Yes:** 5 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier

Mayor DeVries queried if there were any additional changes to the agenda.

There were no additional changes noted.

The agenda was approved as amended.

#### **IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Assemblymember Bowles.

#### **V. SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY**

##### **A. Appointment of Deputy Mayor - Ron Bernier**

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection to appointing Assemblymember Bernier as Deputy Mayor.

There was no objection noted.

#### **VI. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS**

[25-181](#)

A. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 08/19/25

B. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 10/21/25

C. Assembly Election Certification Meeting Minutes: 11/18/25

D. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 11/18/25

The minutes were approved as presented.

#### **VII. 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. Library Board**

Kathy Kysar, Library Board Member, reported on the positive impacts that Borough Libraries have on their communities.

### **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**

Mr. Brown noted that Assemblymember Gamble had requested a meeting for the body to have a waterbody setback discussion. Proposed December 16, 2025, at 4 p.m.

Assemblymember Gamble noted that he is not available at that time as he will be traveling.

Mr. Brown suggested January 6, 2026, at 4 p.m.

Assemblymember Nowers advised that she is not available that date.

Mayor DeVries suggested that the body take up scheduling this meeting at the December 16, 2025, regular Assembly meeting.

There was no objection noted.

### **D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS**

There was no report provided.

### **E. CLERK COMMENTS**

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule. Noted that she will not be present at the December 16, 2025, meeting and that Ms. Wiese and Ms. Henry will be present.

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

[25-182](#)

1. Agriculture Advisory Board: 10/15/25
2. Big Lake Community Council: 10/14/25
3. Glacier View Community Council: 09/25/25
4. Knik RSA Board of Supervisors: 11/04/25
5. Library Board: 10/14/25
6. Planning Commission: 11/03/25
7. Platting Board: 10/16/25
8. South Lakes Community Council: 11/03/25
9. Susitna Community Council: 10/02/25, Letter 11/09/25

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

## G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 25-255](#)

Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 24-119B with Neeser Construction Inc. For a Total Contract Amount Of \$1,927,727.82 For The Smith Road Extension Upgrade And Pathway Project.

[IM 25-259](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Submittal Of A Grant To The Alaska Federal Lands Access Program For East Knik River Road And Old Glenn Highway Separated Paved Pathway.

The informational memorandums were presented, and no comments were noted.

## IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[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.

**MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-076.**

**The motion failed by the following vote:**

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

## VIII. SPECIAL ORDERS

**A. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (You can speak under one of the audience participations on the agenda, but not both; Three Minutes Per Person.)**

[Clerk's Note: Assemblymember Nowers entered the meeting telephonically at 6:36 p.m., exited the meeting due to technical difficulties at 6:43 p.m. and re-entered the meeting permanently at 7:02 p.m.]

The following persons spoke to the need to protect children from pornographic books in Borough libraries: Chris Tyree, Janice Norman, Kristen Modrell, Fred Michels, Jim Fox, Danielle Witzak, Linda Spohn, Eric Robinson, and James William Grays.

The following persons spoke in support of the Skeetawk project in the Capital Improvement Project list: Paul Reid, Oln McCount, and Beth Kune.

The following person spoke in opposition of Ordinance Serial No. 25-103: Brian Endle.

The following persons spoke to the dedication and hard work of Borough Librarians and noted all the public events that libraries host: Mardeen Collins, Jeanne Troshynski, and Mary Robinson.

The following person spoke in support of libraries, concerns with community representation on the vacancy report for libraries, in opposition of censorship or book banning, and to concerns with political motives for filing vacancies: Kathy Kysar.

The following person spoke to the need for people to be respectful of others with different world views and spoke to the many library activities that their family enjoys: Rebekah Rodgers.

The following person spoke in opposition to banning books, stated that she has not seen pornography in the Borough Libraries, and noted that libraries are for everyone not just children: Jade Tobony.

The following person spoke to concerns that the first amendment does not protect libraries: Bruce Owens.

The following person spoke to his thanks for a smooth election, spoke to his appreciation for honoring Charlie Kirk in the election brochure, spoke to the need to protect kids from pornography, and in opposition to creating more building permits: Mark Spohn.

The following person opined that the attempt at book banning isn't about books, but about control of sexuality and political ideology: Tiffany Bourgeois.

The following person recounted his struggles with pornography and spoke to the need to protect kids from pornography: Dan Schwarzenberger.

The following persons suggested that books of concern could be segregated but not banned and agreed that children need to be protected from pornography: Tressa Imlock and Dalton Neff

The following person spoke in opposition to censorship or banning of books, spoke to the need to protect children from pornography, and opined that the Borough needs more Alaska State Troopers: Dana Rafaniello.

The following person spoke to concerns with cannabis facilities in residential neighborhoods, concerns with increases to property taxes, in opposition to any new taxes, and to the need for more infrastructure and services: Travis Walton.

The meeting recessed at 7:45 p.m. and reconvened at 8 p.m.

## **B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)**

[RS 25-096](#) A Resolution Adopting The Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Improvement Program.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of the Skeetawk Project being included in the Capital Improvement Project list: Tim O'Grady.

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

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-096.**

**Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment by renumbering Skeetawk Lift 2, to no. 1 and renumbering the remainder of the list accordingly.**

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

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

**Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment by renumbering Church Road Separated Path to No. 9. and renumbering the remainder of the project list accordingly.**

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

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

**Assemblymember McKee moved a primary amendment by renumbering Crevasse Moraine Dog Park to No. 23 and renumbering the remaining project list accordingly.**

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

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

[OR 25-124](#)

An Ordinance Amending Title 23 Real Property.

RS 25-108: A Resolution Amending The Land And Resource Management Division Policy And Procedures Manual.

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. 25-124 and Resolution Serial No. 25-108.**

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

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

[OR 25-125](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$42,461.40 From The Alaska State Department Of Education And Early Development For Internet Cost Assistance.  
RS 25-110: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work For The Online With Libraries Internet Cost Assistance Grant Program.  
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. 25-125 and Resolution Serial No. 25-110.**

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

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

[OR 25-130](#) An Ordinance Reappropriating \$1,000,000 From The Major Repair And Renovation Reserve To The Iditarod Elementary School Cladding Repair Project.  
RS 25-115: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The School Cladding Repair 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 Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-130 and Resolution Serial No. 25-115.**

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

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Bowles, 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.)**

There was no one present who wished to testify.

**D. CONSENT AGENDA**

**1. RESOLUTIONS**

[RS 25-117](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Submit An Application To The Alaska Sate Department Of Natural Resources To Acquire Or Lease State-Owned Land In Butte, Alaska, For The Development And Ongoing Management Of A New Trailhead Facility Serving The Matanuska Peak And McRoberts Creek Trails.

**2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS**

[AM 25-132](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 4 For Contract No. 25-005B With AAA Valley Gravel, LLC. For The Point Mackenzie Road Reconstruction Project To Extend The Substantial Completion Date To June 30, 2026, And The Final Completion Date To July 31, 2026.

[AM 25-142](#) Award Of Bid No. 26-001B To Premier Mechanical, LLC. In The Amount Of \$187,944.13 To Supply And Install Seismic Isolation Gas Valves At School District Facilities.

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

[AM 25-141](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 5 For Contract No. 22-104P(A) With Kinney Engineering, LLC. For The 49th State Street Pathway Project; And To Extend The Completion Date To December 31, 2026.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM No. 25-141.**

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

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

[AM 25-143](#) Approval of the 2026 Assembly Meeting Schedule.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt AM No. 25-143.**

**Assemblymember Bernier moved a primary amendment to strike the July 7, 2025, regular Assembly meeting.**

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

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

## **X. VETO**

There were no vetoes.

## **XI. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 12/16/25, Assembly Chambers)**

[RS 25-114](#) A Resolution Approving Changes To Update The Fiscal Year 2027 Schedule Of Rates And Fees Effective July 1, 2026.

[OR 25-102](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 43.20, Subdivision Development Standards To Allow Lots To Be Reduced To 30,000 Square Feet Within Single-Family Residential Land Use Districts.

**Sponsors:** Sumner

[OR 25-103](#) An Ordinance Repealing MSB 17.02, Mandatory Land Use Permit In Its Entirety; And Adopting MSB 17.07, Land Use Review.

**Sponsors:** Sumner

[OR 25-111](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.55, Setbacks And Screening Easements, To Reduce The Minimum Building Setback Requirement From Pedestrian Easements.

**Sponsors:** Nowers

[OR 25-133](#) An Ordinance Allowing Renters Of The Big Lake Lions Recreation Center To Consume And Serve Alcoholic Beverages Per The Terms Of The Rental Agreement At The Big Lake Lions Recreation Center. 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 December 16, 2025.**

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

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

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

### **1. VACANCY REPORT**

Mayoral Request for Confirmation

Animal Care and Regulation Board

Terry Dennison, Term begins 01/01/26

Board of Adjust and Appeals

Brian Swanson, Term begins 01/01/26

MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission

Michael Bowles

Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board

Cachet Garrett, Term begins 01/01/26

Water and Wastewater Advisory Board

Dan Tucker, Term begins 01/01/26

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to confirm the appointments requested by the Mayor.**

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

**Yes:** 7 - Assemblymember Bowles, 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.

**XII. RECONSIDERATION**

There were no reconsiderations.

### **XIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Assemblymember Gamble opined that safety projects should be the top of the list for Capital Improvement Projects.

Assemblymember Bowles acknowledge public concerns regarding pornographic books in libraries. Requested a report on how books are procured for Borough libraries, to be presented to the body at the first meeting in January. Spoke to concerns with non-borough entities having space on the Borough's website. Stated that he will bring forward legislation that will propose adopting a sales tax and eliminating property tax. Thanked staff for their support for his first Assembly meeting.

Mr. Brown noted that the rates and fees resolution will be up for public hearing at the next meeting. Noted that the Assembly has historically kept rates and fees low, which has impacted property taxes. Advised that he is proposing to increase rates and fees, understanding that the Assembly wants them to be affordable for families, but the increased revenue is needed and helps him to prepare the budget. Stated that he is trying to find a balance between affordability and the need to increase revenues.

Assemblymember Bernier queried the size of the apron needed for the outdoor restroom in Talkeetna.

Ms. Morrisey stated that she was unsure but could get with Assemblymember Bernier to make that determination.

Assemblymember Bernier stated that he would donate the labor and concrete for that project. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember Sumner spoke to the discussion for the Capital Improvement Projects list. Opined that safety projects should be prioritized. Spoke to the need to include an economic multiplier to the evaluation criteria when ranking projects.

Assemblymember McKee stated that she hopes the work of the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee is going well and queried the results of the Community Development citizen survey and how conservatives responded.

Ms. Morrisey advised that there were a lot of questions. None of the questions asked if a participant was conservative or not. Related that there was a specific question asking parents if they would like the ability to receive email notifications about books that their children had checked out.

Assemblymember Bernier queried what part of the public was surveyed.

Ms. Morrisey advised that the survey was released to the public in May or early June with options for parents to provide feedback to Community Development. Noted that QR codes were at all libraries and there were links included on social media posts.

Mr. Spiropoulos wished the body good night.

Assemblymember Nowers apologized for her poor telephone connection during the meeting.

#### **XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session.

#### **XV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 9:26 p.m.