

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, JANUARY 7, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, January 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: 5 - Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov

Telephonic: 2 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Assemblymember Nowers.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

The minutes were approved as presented without objection.

Mat-Su Valley Salvation Army Officer Troy Cook and Mat-Su Valley Salvation Army Board Member Tim Breeden, presented Mayor DeVries with the Mayoral Bell Ringing Award, for raising the most funds during the Salvation Army Christmas Red Kettle Fundraising Campaign.

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, School District Assistant Superintendent, reported on the activities of the School District.

3. State of Alaska

There was no report provided.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

There was no report provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Mayor DeVries shared that the Glenn Massay Theater will be hosting its 22nd Annual celebration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s legacy on January 15, 2024, at 1 p.m.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. Transit Update

Jason Ortiz, Planning Deputy Director, provided a transit update.

2. State/Federal Legislation

3. Strategic Planning Issues

Mr. Brown noted that with Assembly Resolution Serial No. 24-126, which was approved under the consent agenda on December 17, 2024, the Assembly authorized him to move forward with a design/build method for the new Academy Charter School. Noted that things are progressing nicely under that method.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There were no comments provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule. Noted that when the body approved the budget meeting schedule, that the staff departmental budget presentations were not scheduled. Suggested April 10, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to a scheduling conflict she had for that date.

Ms. McKechnie suggested April 9, 2025, at 10 a.m.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[25-003](#)

1. Abbreviated Plat : 12/18/24
2. Agriculture Advisory Board: 11/20/24
3. Big Lake Community Council: 10/22/24
4. Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors: Resolution No. 24-06
5. Enhanced 911 Advisory Board: 10/08/24
6. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 11/14/24
7. Greater Willow RSA Board of Supervisors: 10/09/24, Resolution No. 24-02
8. Planning Commission: 11/18/24, 12/02/24, Resolution No. 24-34
9. Tanaina Community Council: 11/26/24
10. Willow Area Community Organization: 11/06/24
11. Water & Wastewater Advisory Board: 06/12/24

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

- [IM 25-008](#) Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 24-084B With Neeser Construction Inc. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$200,692.25 For Sunshine Creek Circle Improvements.
- [IM 25-009](#) Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 24-031B With Scarsella Brothers, Inc. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$2,621,012.91 For The Central Landfill Grading Project.
- [IM 25-012](#) Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract No. 23-092B with Mass Excavation, Inc. For a Total Contract Amount Of \$1,197,925.03 For Valley View Drive, Spinnaker Drive, Admiralty Circle, and Neptune Circle Upgrades Project.
- [IM 25-014](#) Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 25-008B With Western Construction And Equipment LLC. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$615,721.16 For The Tait Drive Resurfacing Project.
- [IM 25-015](#) Informing The Assembly Of Time Extension Only Grant Amendments For The Road Bond Package, The Rail Extension to Port MacKenzie, And The Gateway Visitor Center Phase II, To Be Presented To The Manager For Signature.
- [IM 25-019](#) Informing The Assembly Of The Managers Signature On And Submittal Of The Rasmuson Community Grant Requesting \$250,000 To Fund Upgrades To The Matanuska River Park.
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 limiting low-income housing by banning trailer parks: Kolton Lucas, Realtor; and Kaitlyn Espada, Valley Board of Realtors President.

The following person spoke to the need for more sidewalks in the Borough and to the need for interconnectivity of sidewalks between the valley and Anchorage: Travis Friesen.

The following person spoke to concerns with a large number of book challenges and the cost to the Borough as a result of those challenges: Kathy Kysar.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 24-109](#) An Ordinance Creating West Raven Circle Natural Gas Local Improvement District No. Lid 669, 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.

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. 24-109.

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 25-001](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 3.15.200, Board Of Equalization; Appeal, Related To Setting Of Dates For Tax Assessment Appeals Before The Borough Board Of Equalization.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

John Aschenbrenner, Deputy Borough Attorney, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-001.

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 25-002](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$15,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Military And Veteran's Affairs, 2023 State And Local Cybersecurity Grant Program And Approve The Scope Of Work And Budget For Modernizing Critical Telecommunications Cybersecurity Infrastructure.

RS 25-001: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Grant In The Amount Of \$15,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Military And Veteran's Affairs, 2023 State And Local Cybersecurity Grant Program.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Cheyenne Heindel, Finance 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 discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-002 and Resolution Serial No. 25-001.

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 25-003](#)

An Ordinance Converting The Port Mackenzie Building Maintenance Specialist Position From An On-Call Position To A Full-Time Position And Allowing For The Hiring Of This Position Prior To The Beginning Of Fiscal Year 2026.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

David Griffin, Port 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 discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-003.

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.)

There was no one present who wished to testify.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 25-002](#) Award Of Contract No. 25-099C To Braun Northwest Inc. In The Amount Of \$505,648 To Remount And Refurbish Two Northstar Ambulances.

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

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

IX. VETO

There were no vetoes.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 01/21/25, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 24-101](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.73, To Change Notification Requirements And Process For Multifamily Developments.

Sponsors: Hale

- [OR 25-004](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$118,788 From The Alaska State Department Of Military And Veteran's Affairs Homeland Security Program, For Hazardous Materials Decontamination Equipment And Confined Space Rescue Training.
RS 25-004: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Hazardous Materials Decontamination Equipment And Confined Space Rescue Training.
- [OR 25-005](#) An Ordinance Approving The Land Classification Of A Borough-Owned Property As Reserved Use Land For The Purpose Of An Emergency Services Facility In The Core Area.
- [OR 25-006](#) An Ordinance Appropriating \$41,230.75 From The Alaska State Department Of Education And Early Development For The Online With Libraries Internet Cost Assistance Grant Program.
RS 25-005: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Online With Libraries Internet Cost Assistance Program.
- [OR 25-007](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$461,648.07 From Revenue Replacement Funding For 2022 Windstorm Disaster Funding Shortfalls.
RS 25-006: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For 2022 Windstorm Disaster Funding Shortfalls.
- [OR 25-008](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$170,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Military And Veteran's Affairs, Emergency Management Performance Grant, And Requesting A Reappropriation Of \$170,000 From The Emergency Management Fiscal Year 2025 Operating Budget For Emergency Management Wages And Benefits.
RS 25-007: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Grant In The Amount Of \$170,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Military And Veteran's Affairs, Emergency Management Performance Grant, For Emergency Management Wages And Benefits.

[OR 25-009](#) An Ordinance Authorizing The Issuance Of Alaska State Lease Revenue Refunding Bonds, Series 2025 (Goose Creek Correctional Center Project), In One Or More Series, In An Amount Not To Exceed \$110 Million; Approving The Form And Substance Of An Offer To Purchase, A Dealer Manager Agreement, A Third Supplement To Trust Indenture, A Fourth Supplement To Trust Indenture, A Fourth Amendment To Lease Purchase Agreement, A Fifth Amendment To Lease Purchase Agreement, One Or More Continuing Disclosure Certificates, One Or More Bond Purchase Agreements, And A Refunding Trust Agreement; Authorizing Offering Documents; Making Certain Findings And Determinations; Authorizing The Selection And Engagement Of A Dealer Manager And One Or More Underwriters; Authorizing The Execution Of Documents And Instruments Necessary Or Convenient To Accomplish The Foregoing; And Containing Other Provisions Relating To The Subject.

[OR 25-011](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 2.12 Related To Assembly Office Holding, Vacancies, And Meetings.

Sponsors: Fonov and McKee

[OR 25-012](#) An Ordinance Amending Title 25, Elections.

Sponsors: Fonov

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 January 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

[25-002](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation

Agriculture Advisory Board

Melanie Glatt, resignation

Amanda Salmon, resignation

Enhanced 911 Advisory Board

Aleeha Travis

Thomas Lanners

Earl Almdale

Labor Relations Board

Michael Bowles

Platting Board

Michael Liebing

Amanda Salmon

Dan Bush, resignation

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

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

Assemblymember McKee spoke in opposition to inflammatory language being used during meetings.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked the public that attended. Said a prayer.

Ms. McKechnie wished the body happy new year.

Assemblymember Fonov encouraged the public that testified in opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 24-101, to come back for the public hearing and testify again.

Mayor DeVries noted that one of her duties is to fill vacancies on Borough boards. Noted that there are currently a lot of vacancies on a variety of boards. Encouraged members of the public to sign up to serve on a board. Wished everyone safe travels on their way home.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.