

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 15, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, October 15, 2024, 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

Excused: 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 Sumner.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[24-137](#)

A. Assembly Special Meeting Minutes: 10/01/24

B. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 10/01/24

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

There were no reports provided.

2. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District

Katie Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business Operations, reported on the recent 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

There was no report provided.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

Talon Boeve, Emergency Operations Specialist, presented the awards to the Emergency Preparedness poster contest winners, who were: David Smith, Leeia Mitchell, James Lavin, Mia Andrianov, and Jade cichosz.

3. Alaska State Trooper Update

Captain Andrew Gorn, Commander of Detachment B; and Austin McDaniel, Communications Director for Department of Public Safety, reported on annual crime statistics for Alaska and specific to the Borough.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no report provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule and to pertinent election dates.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[24-138](#)

1. Abbreviated Plat: 09/18/24
2. Big Lake Community Council: 08/13/24
3. Butte Community Council: 08/14/24
4. Local Road Service Area Advisory Board: 08/15/24
5. MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission: 08/22/24
6. North Lakes Community Council: 08/29/24
7. Platting Board: 09/05/24
8. South Knik River Community Council: 08/15/24
9. Waterbody Setback Advisory Board: 09/04/24, 09/17/24

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 24-193](#)

Informing The Assembly Of 16 Fiscal Year 2025 Winter Trail Care And Grooming Grant Agreements That Will Be Provided To The Manager For Signature.

[IM 24-199](#)

Informing The Assembly Of A Grant Amendment For Grant No. 13-DC-632 Fiscal Year 2013 Road Bond Package, To Be Presented To The Manager For Signature.

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 spoke to concerns with squatters and structures they are building on East Fireweed Road in Wasilla: Zane Henning.

The following person spoke to the need for renewable energy: Travis Friesen.

The following person thanked the Assembly for forming the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee and opined that it should not be advisory only, spoke to the need to protect children from pornographic books in libraries: Karen Lewis.

The following person spoke in support of the appointment of the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee for District 7 and to the need to protect children from pornographic books in libraries: Linda Spohn.

The following person spoke to the need to protect children from pornographic books in Borough libraries, to concerns with behavior of members of the Library Citizen's Advisory Committee, and to concerns with how those meetings are run: Jackie Goforth.

The following person thanked the body for their work and spoke to concerns with the disposition of leases for agricultural land at Point MacKenzie: Marshall Blankenship

The meeting recessed at 7:33 p.m. and reconvened at 7:43 p.m.

(Assemblymember Fonov re-entered the meeting at 7:45 p.m.)

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[RS 24-097](#)

A Resolution Approving 2025 State Legislative Priorities.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mike Brown, Borough Manager, provided the staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Old Glenn Highway, Milepost 1 to 18 being designated as a highway safety corridor: Ron Johnson, Butte Community Council.

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. 24-097.

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 24-097, page 5 of the resolution, by striking item G. in its entirety.

The primary amendment failed (tie vote) by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Gamble

Mayor DeVries invoked her voting privilege in the negative.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Gamble, and Mayor DeVries

Assemblymember Gamble moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 24-097, page 5, Section E, by striking the existing language in its entirety and inserting the following in its place: "E. SUPPORT FOR THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL – The Assembly adopted Resolution Serial No. 24-099 on October 1, 2024, supports the proposed Alaska Long Trail, while opposing over-reaching restrictions through a National Scenic Trail designation and maintaining Borough land authority and management where applicable, Borough retention of the right to exercise existing and future management plans and economic development opportunities and Borough jurisdiction of management of all Borough trails and uses, and retention of traditional uses of existing trails that are motorized."

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No.24-097, page 6 of the resolution, Item J. as follows:

*** insert a new No. 3, to read: " Clean coal powered energy; and
* to renumber the remaining sections accordingly.**

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Assemblymember Sumner declared a conflict of interest as he is on the Matanuska Electric Association Board of Directors.

RULING: Mayor DeVries ruled that Assemblymember Sumner had a conflict of interest and would be recused from voting on the amendments to the Energy Policy Goals section.

Assemblymember Sumner exited the meeting.

Assemblymember Hale moved a secondary amendment by striking "clean coal powered energy" and inserting the following in its place: " Support clean coal energy along with renewable energy."

The secondary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Gamble,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Recused: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

The primary amendment passed as amended by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Gamble,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Recused: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

Assemblymember Sumner re-entered the meeting.

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

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

[RS 24-098](#)

A Resolution Approving 2025 Federal Legislative Priorities.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mike Brown, Borough Manager, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Old Glenn Highway, Milepost 1 to 18 being designated as a highway safety corridor: Ron Johnson, Butte Community Council.

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. 24-098.

Assemblymember Gamble moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 24-098, page 4 of the resolution, Item D., by striking the current language in its entirety and inserting the following in its place: "D. SUPPORT FOR THE ALASKA LONG TRAIL – The Assembly adopted Resolution Serial No. 24-099 on October 1, 2024, supports the proposed Alaska Long Trail, while opposing over-reaching restrictions through a National Scenic Trail designation and maintaining Borough land authority and management where applicable, Borough retention of the right to exercise existing and future management plans and economic development opportunities and Borough jurisdiction of management of all Borough trails and uses, and retention of traditional uses of existing trails that are motorized."

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-097](#)

An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$65,000 From The Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area Fund Balance To A Project To Repair Pumper-Tender 62.

RS 24-102: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Project To Facilitate Repairs For Pumper-Tender 62 For Central Mat-Su Fire Service Area.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ken Barkley, Emergency Services 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 Sumner moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-097 and Resolution Serial No. 24-102.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-098](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$30,079 From The United States Fish And Wildlife Service, National Fish Habitat Partnership For Neklason Lake Fish Passage.

RS 24-103: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget and Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With The United States Fish And Wildlife Service For Neklason Lake 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.

Lyndsey Brisard, Revenue and Budget Manager, 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 Fonov moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-098 and Resolution Serial No. 24-103.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 24-100](#) An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$2,250,000 From The Greater Palmer Consolidated Fire Service Area Fund Balance To A Project To Construct The New Public Safety Building Station 3-9. RS 24-104: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Project To Construct Public Safety Building Station 3-9; And Repayment Of A Loan By Areawide To The Greater Palmer Consolidated Fire Service Area.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ken Barkley, Emergency Services 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 Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-100 and Resolution Serial No. 24-104.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, 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 24-112](#) To Vacate The 33-foot-Wide Section Line Easement, Excepting The West 86 Feet, On The Northern Boundary Of Block 1, Lot 4, Ancient Tree Estates, Plat #82-89. The Property Is Located West Of Mud Lake, South And East Of East Bogard Road, And Directly North Of North Of Creekview Drive; Within The Northwest 1/4 Section 6, Township 17 North, Range 1 East, Seward Meridian.

- [AM 24-113](#) Authorization To Purchase Wireless Routers And Switches From World Wide Technology In The Amount Of \$118,622.85.

- [AM 24-114](#) Approval Of Contract Amendment To Contract 24-071P With Wolf Architecture, Inc. To Extend The Contract Completion Date For The Gateway Visitor Center Redesign Project From October 15, 2024, To March 31, 2026.

- [AM 24-115](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 3 For Contract No. 23-020P With HDL Engineering Consultants, LLC. In The Amount Of \$99,890 For Phase II Design Services Of The Meadow Lakes Loop Improvements Project; And Extension Of The Completion Date To December 31, 2026.

- [AM 24-116](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-051B To Valley Mechanical Contracting In The Contract Amount Of \$172,950 To Supply And Replace A Boiler At Susitna Valley School.

- [AM 24-117](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-052B To CGC Services In The Contract Amount Of \$353,270 To Supply And Replace Two Boilers At Wasilla High School.

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: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

- [RS 24-114](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Negotiate And Enter Into An Agreement With The Big Lake Lions' Club To Purchase The Big Lake Recreation Facility And Adjacent Parking Lot At 2942 South Lions Court, Big Lake, Alaska For \$400,000 Subject To Appropriation In The Fiscal Year 2026 Budget, And Upon Such Terms And Conditions As The Manager Deems Advisable.

Sponsors: Gamble

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 24-114.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, 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 11/19/24, Assembly Chambers)

- [RS 24-089](#) A Resolution Adopting The Fiscal Year 2026 Capital Improvement Program.
- [OR 24-099](#) An Ordinance Conveying And Merging The Borough's Development Rights Interest With The Agricultural Rights Title, For Fee Simple Title With Agricultural Covenants For Tax ID Nos. 26N05W21C002 And 26N05W21C003, To Anthony And Tammie West.
- [OR 24-102](#) An Ordinance Accepting And 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 24-109: A Resolution Approving The Budget For The Online With Libraries Internet Cost Assistance Grant Program.
- [OR 24-103](#) An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$32,045 From The Enhanced 911 Fund Balance To A Project To Reimburse The City Of Wasilla For Text To 911 Services And A Session Border Controller System.
RS 24-110: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Project To Allow The City Of Wasilla To Obtain Reimbursement From The Enhanced 911 Surcharge Funding For Text To 911 Services And A Session Border Controller System.

[OR 24-104](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$2,500,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development, For The Flood And Erosion Mitigation For Susceptible Roads Project.

RS 24-111: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Grant In The Amount Of \$2,500,000 For The Flood And Erosion Mitigation For Susceptible Roads Project; And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development.

[OR 24-105](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$750,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development, For The Road Improvement And Upgrades Project.

RS 24-112: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Grant In The Amount Of \$750,000 For The Road Improvement And Upgrades Project; And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development.

[OR 24-106](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$700,000 From The Alaska State Designated Legislative Grant Program, For The Design And Construction Of A Fire And Emergency Medical Services Public Safety Building In Willow.

RS 24-113: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For A Project For The Design And Construction Of A Willow Fire And Emergency Medical Services Public Safety Building.

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 November 19, 2024.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

[24-140](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation
Parks, Recreation, and Advisory Board
Maksim Revutskiy
Midway RSA No. 9
Mark Mobley, resignation
Craig Steward, resignation

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, 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. Brown noted that the new display that was approved with Resolution Serial No. 24-105, will be referred to as "Law, Liberty, and Legacy." Noted that staff is looking at stands that would display one document each and that would make the entire display portable or able to be loaned to the public.

Assemblymember Bernier stated that he would like to include the Bill of Rights.

Mayor DeVries queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked the body for the meeting. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to Governor Dunleavy having recently signed legislation that would assist in making health care costs more transparent. Spoke to having attended the tour given by Terra Energy, in Skwentna. Opined the Assembly may need to form an energy subcommittee. Opined that high health costs and high energy costs are restricting growth.

Assemblymember Gamble noted that the Jay Nolfi Park ground breaking ceremony was well attended. Thanked staff for their support on that project. Related that he too attended the Terra Energy tour, during which he learned quite a bit about the possibilities for coal and carbon sequestration in that area. Thanked the body for their support of the Big Lake Lions Club acquisition legislation.

Assemblymember Fonov thanked the body for the meeting. Noted that he also attended the Terra Energy tour. Opined it was very good and highlighted the huge potential for coal development options.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:19 p.m.