

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, JANUARY 20, 2026

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 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: 7 - Assemblymember Michael Bowles, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor DeVries asked if there was any objection to adding a special order of the day to the agenda, following the pledge of allegiance, for former Assemblymember Steve Colligan to recognize former Assemblymember Ron Arvin who recently passed.

There was no objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by former Assemblymember Steve Colligan.

Mr. Steve Colligan paid tribute to former Assemblymember Ron Arvin.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[26-018](#)

A. Joint Assembly/School Board Meeting Minutes: 12/09/25

B. Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes: 12/16/25

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 and Operations, spoke to recent school closures due to weather and spoke to Operations and Maintenance keeping the roads clear. Noted recent Advance Placement Program recognition the School District received. Spoke to the budget and winter sports.

3. State of Alaska

There were no report provided.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committees

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to recent Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School District Funding Issues meeting and budget proposals.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Mayor DeVries spoke to a proclamation she presented to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Foundation January 19, 2026.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

3. [26-021](#) Annual Assessor's Report Presentation
Oliver Querin presented on the 2026 annual assessor's report.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos thanked former Assemblymember Steve Colligan for coming to speak to former Assemblymember Ron Arvin.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule and presented the proposed dates for the 2027 Fiscal Year budget meetings.

There was no object noted to scheduling the meetings.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[26-019](#)

1. Alpine RSA Board of Supervisors: 11/13/25
2. Glacier View Community Council: 11/20/25
3. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 12/11/25
4. Historical Preservation Commission: 02/06/25, 04/24/25
5. Planning Commission: 12/15/25, Resolution No. 25-30
6. Platting Board: 11/06/25, 12/04/25
7. Point MacKenize Community Council: 04/22/24, 05/09/24, 06/14/24, 07/11/24, 08/04/24, 09/12/24, 11/14/24, 12/12/24, 02/13/25, 04/10/25, 06/12/25, 09/11/25, 10/09/25, 11/13/25
8. Talkeetna Community Council: 12/01/25
9. Trapper Creek Community Council: 10/16/25

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 26-005](#)

Reporting Conclusion Of Contract No. 24-114B With Ahtna Construction & Primary Products Co. LLC. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$2,769,159.17 For The Lakes Boulevard Upgrade Project. The informational memorandum was 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 library books, Community Development, and the Library Citizens' Advisory Committee: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to the Mat-Su Health Foundation: Dave Wilson, Mat-Su Health Foundation Director of Public Policy.

The following person spoke to time volunteering on a MSB Road Service Area Advisory Board: Stephen Edwards.

The following person spoke to libraries and the Sutton's Friends of the Family and the MSB Library Board: Kathy Kysar.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[RS 26-001](#) A Resolution Approving An Application To Relocate A Beverage Dispensary License From An Area Outside The City Limits In The Borough To A Location Within The City of Wasilla.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Resolution Serial No. 26-001: John Klapperich.

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

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 26-001.

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 26-002](#)

An Ordinance Confirming The Assessment Roll For The Yarrow Road Natural Gas Local Improvement District No. 664 And Establishing The Method Of Terminating Assessments And Making Refunds To Property Owners.

OR 26-003: An Ordinance Providing For The Financing Not To Exceed \$113,105 Principal Amount Of Special Assessment Internal Service Funds For The Yarrow Road Natural Gas Local Improvement District No. 664, And Fixing Details Of Said Financing.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in opposition of Ordinance Serial Nos. 26-002 and 26-003: Carrie Agrey and Alicia Holliday.

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

Assemblymember Bowles moved to adopt Ordinance Serial Nos. 26-002 and 26-003.

Assemblymember Bowles moved to postpone Ordinance Serial Nos. 26-002 and 26-003 to April 21, 2026.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Fonov

The main motion passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Bowles

[OR 26-004](#)

An Ordinance Confirming The Assessment Roll For The West Raven Circle Natural Gas Local Improvement District No. 669 And Establishing The Method Of Terminating Assessments And Making Refunds To Property Owners.

OR 26-005: An Ordinance Providing For The Financing Not To Exceed \$11,663 Principal Amount Of Special Assessment Internal Service Funds For The West Raven Circle Natural Gas Local Improvement District No. 669, And Fixing Details Of Said Financing.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the legislation.

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 Nos. 26-004 and 26-005.

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 26-007](#)

An Ordinance To Enter Into A Lease With Cellco Partnership D/B/A Verizon Wireless For A Communication Site Located At 5182 North Pittman Road, Wasilla; And To Classify A Portion Of The Subject Parcel As General Purpose Lands.

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 the discussion moved to the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 26-007.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The meeting recessed at 8:16 p.m. and reconvened at 8:30 p.m.

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 opposition to a shooting range at Zero Lake Road: Michael Leech.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 26-003](#) A Resolution Amending The Scope Of Work For The Material Site Development / Reclamation Project And Authorizing The Manager To Sign A Grant Amendment.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 26-004](#) Acceptance Of Late Filed And Retroactive Senior Citizen And Disabled Veteran Exemption Applications For The Period Of November And December 2025.

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 Bowles, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[RS 26-004](#) A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Net Income Received From The Sale Of The Ferry.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 26-004.

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 26-005](#) Approval Of The 2026 Road Service Area Road Improvement Project List.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to adopt AM No. 26-005.

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment to AM No. 26-005 by striking "\$6,200,000" and inserting "\$620,000" in its place for the estimated cost of the Adele Circle and August Circle project on the Road Service Area #9 Road Improvement Project List.

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

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

[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

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-111.

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment by changing the definition of "Pedestrian easement" as follows, "'Pedestrian easement' means an easement specifically labeled as a pedestrian or walkway easement on the recorded subdivision plat intended exclusively for public pedestrian travel providing connectivity between streets, lots, or public areas."

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

[AM 25-148](#) Award Of Bid No. 26-086B To Recon, LLC. In The Contract Amount Of \$191,200 To Provide Geotechnical Evaluation Of Land Identified As Likely Having High Quality Deposits Of Civil Construction Materials. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Action Memorandum 25-148.

The main motion passed by the following vote:

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

IX. VETO

There were vetoes.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 02/03/26 Assembly Chambers)

[OR 25-123](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 17.59, Lake Management Plan Implementation, To Update Definitions Related To Motorized And Personal Watercraft.

[OR 25-126](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 8.55, Special Events, To Repeal The Surety Bond Requirement Standards.

Sponsors: Fonov

[OR 25-128](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 15.24 Assembly; Zoning Functions To Update The Process Of Initiating And Amending Lake Management Plans.

RS 25-113: A Resolution Establishing A Fee For Processing Requests For Lake Management Plans Under MSB 15.24 Assembly; Zoning Functions.

Sponsors: Sumner

[OR 26-001](#) An Ordinance Adopting MSB 15.24.030(H) The Matanuska-Susitna Borough 2026 Hazard Mitigation Plan Update.

[OR 26-006](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$23,804 In Insurance Proceeds Related To A Non-Fault Motor Vehicle Accident Involving Municipal Property.

[OR 26-008](#) An Ordinance Discontinuing The Library Citizens' Advisory Committee Prior To The Sunset Date Of June 30, 2027.

Sponsors: Bowles

[OR 26-009](#) An Ordinance Approving The Sale Of Borough-Owned Land Located In The Big Lake Area To The Adjacent Property Owner, Alaska District Church Of The Nazarene, In The Amount Of \$35,000.

Sponsors: Gamble

[OR 26-010](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating January 2022 Mat-Su Windstorms Disaster Relief Funds In The Amount Of \$227,355.69 From The Federal Emergency Management Agency; And \$75,785.23 From The Alaska State Division Of Homeland Security And Emergency Management.

RS 26-005: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For MSB School District Facilities As A Result Of The January 2022 Mat-Su Windstorms Disaster, Project No. 55030.

[OR 26-011](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Grant In The Amount Of \$1,462,926 From The Federal Transit Administration For The Transit Operations In The Borough.

RS 26-006: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Transit Operations In The Borough.

[OR 26-012](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating A Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation Grant In The Amount Of \$22,935.48 For Fire Extinguisher Training Systems Purchase.

RS 26-007: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Fire Extinguisher Training Systems Purchase.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and set the public hearings for February 3, 2026, respectively.

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

[26-020](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation
Historical Preservation Commission
Vivian Smith
Planning Commission
Ivan Fonov
Port Commission
Andrew Traxler

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

Assemblymember Nowers moved to divide the question to take the appointment of Ivan Fonov separately.

The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble

No: 4 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Assemblymember Fonov declared a conflict of interest with the appointment of Ivan Fonov as he is a relative.

RULING: Mayor DeVries ruled that Assemblymember Fonov did not have a conflict of interest.

The motion main passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Bowles, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

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 Sumner spoke to attending a Governor's event.

Assemblymember Bernier spoke to Stephen Edwards and his pervious appointment to the Meadow Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors and said a prayer.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to the discussion regarding waterbody setbacks and spoke to volunteers on Borough boards.

Mr. Brown spoke to the upcoming meeting.

Assemblymember Bowles thanked Borough staff for the work they do.

Assemblymember Gamble spoke to Stephen Edwards and his service as a volunteer on Borough boards and to serving on RSA boards.

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to appointments and the vacancy report.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.