

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, MARCH 4, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, March 4, 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: 4 - Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov

Excused: 2 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, and Assemblymember Dee McKee

Telephonic: 1 - 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 Palmer High School Hockey Coach Rusty Berlangier.

V. SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

Mayor DeVries requested a moment of silence in honor of Stephen Brown, a member of the Borough's Agriculture Advisory Board, who recently passed away.

A. Mayoral Proclamation in Recognition of the Palmer Moose Division II Hockey Team

Mayor DeVries read the proclamation in recognition of the Palmer Moose Division II Hockey Team's State Championship win into the record and presented it to Coach Rusty Berlanger.

VI. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[25-035](#)

A. Assembly Regular Meeting: 01/21/25

B. Assembly Regular Meeting: 02/04/25

The minutes were approved as presented without objection.

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

Katherine Gardner, Deputy Superintendent of Business and Operations, reported on the most recent activities of the School District.

3. State of Alaska

There were no reports provided.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

Assemblymember Nowers reported on the most recent activities of the Joint Assembly/School Board on School Issues.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Mayor DeVries related that Dr. Randy Trani, School District Superintendent, made a great presentation at the Wasilla Chamber of Commerce meeting.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

3. Alaska State Troopers Update

Alaska State Trooper B-Detachment Commander Captain Andrew Gorn and Alaska State Trooper B-Detachment Deputy Commander Timothy Cronin, reported on the upward trending status of trooper staffing within the Borough.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no report provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

25-038

1. Abbreviated Plat: 02/05/25, 02/12/25, 02/19/25
 2. Animal Care and Regulation Board: Order for Dismissal of 25-03
 3. Caswell Lakes RSA Board of Supervisors: 12/09/24
 4. Chase Community Council: 10/16/24
 5. Enhanced 911 Advisory Board: 12/10/24
 6. Gateway Community Council: 10/09/24, 11/13/24
 7. Library Advisory Board: 10/14/24
 8. MSB Fish and Wildlife: 11/14/24, 12/12/24
 9. Platting Board: 01/02/25
 10. South Knik River Community Council: 10/17/24
 11. Susitna Community Council: 01/04/24, 02/01/24, 03/07/24, 06/06/24, 08/01/24, 10/03/24, 11/07/24, 01/02/25
 12. Talkeetna Sewer and Water Advisory Board: 01/08/25
 13. Transportation Advisory Board: Resolution No. 25-02
 14. Willow Area Community Organization: 01/08/25
- The citizen and other correspondence were presented, and no comments were noted.

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

IM 25-044

Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract No. 23-126B With Western Construction And Equipment, LLC. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$495,704.71 For Big Rock Road Improvements.

IM 25-049

Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract For Bid No. 21-150B With Roger Hickel Contracting, Inc. For A Final Contract Amount Of \$36,196,452 To Construct Houston Middle School.

[IM 25-052](#) Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract No. 23-078B With OT Enterprises, LLC. For A Total Contract Amount Of \$478,524.75 For The English Bay Drive, Resolution Bay Circle, And Katmai Court Road Improvements Project.

[IM 25-058](#) Reporting The Conclusion Of Contract For Bid 24-077B With Pro Built, LLC. For A Final Contract Amount Of \$293,482 For The Design /Build To Remodel Station 7-9.
The informational memorandum was presented, and no comments were noted.

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.)

The following person opined that the Borough should seek an alternative revenue source other than property tax: Sam Tanksley.

The following person spoke to possible ways to conduct sustainable fish farming and in support of increasing agricultural lands: Travis Friesen.

The following person spoke to the need for library strategists: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to road maintenance concerns on Lazy Mountain and suggested alternative ways that kennel licenses could be granted: Doug Bartko.

The following person spoke to the numerous educational opportunities that the Mat-Su Health Foundation supports: David Wilson, Director of Public Policy for the Mat-Su Health Foundation.

The following person spoke to innovations by the Green Spark company that could tap into energy sources: Keith Dobson.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 25-016](#)

An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of \$314,014 From The Big Lake Road Service Area Fund Balance To The Big Lake Road Service Area Road Improvement Projects List.

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. 25-016.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-019](#)

An Ordinance Amending MSB 5.25.150(C), Willow-Caswell Fire Service Area Board Of Supervisors.

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 Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-019.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-021](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$60,000 From The United States Fish And Wildlife Service, National Fish Habitat Partnership, For Coal Creek At Sushana Drive Fish Passage Replacement.

RS 25-016: 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 Coal Creek At Sushana Drive Fish Passage Replacement 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.

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. 25-021 and Resolution Serial No. 25-016.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

[OR 25-022](#)

An Ordinance Approving The Addition Of A New Regular, Full-Time Right-Of-Way Acquisition Officer (Project Employee) For The Pre-Design & Engineering Division Of The Public Works Department.
Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Tom Adams, Public Works 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. 25-022.

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - 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

[RS 25-021](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With AAA Valley Gravel, LLC. For The Alsoop Interim Material District, Materials Sale.

[RS 25-025](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With Tutka, LLC. For The Milepost 128 Parks Highway Material Sale.

[RS 25-027](#) A Resolution Allocating Human Services Community Matching Grant Program Funding To Nonprofit Subgrantees For The Provision Of Critically Needed Essential Health And Social Services.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 25-019](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 1 For Contract No. 25-001P With Lounsbury And Associates, Inc. To Add \$40,900 For The Guardrail Inventory And Assessment For Bogard Road Service Area No. 25; And Extend The Contract To June 30, 2025.

[AM 25-020](#) Authorization To Vacate That Portion Of West Independence Drive Lying Between North Deception Drive And North Craigie Court Located North Of Deception Creek, South of Willow Fishhook Road, And West Of Four Mile Road, Located Within The Southeast 1/4 Of Section 2, Township 19 North, Range 4 West, Seward Meridian, Alaska.

[AM 25-021](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 2 For Contract No. 22-143P With The Boutet Company, Inc. To Add \$15,540 For The Williwaw Way, Kodiak Drive, And Helen Lane Project; And To Extend The Contract To July 30, 2027.

[AM 25-022](#) Award Of Bid No. 25-138C To Hughes Fire Equipment, Inc. In The Amount Of \$1,520,253 To Purchase An Enforcer Pumper Tender.

[AM 25-023](#) Award Of Proposal No. 25-079P To Collins Architecture + Energy Conservation, LLC. In The Contract Amount Of \$127,357 To Design School District Elevator Replacements.

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: 5 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[RS 25-026](#) A Resolution Establishing A State Legislative Priority Requesting That The Alaska Legislature Amend State Law Regarding The Open Meetings Act To Allow Local Governments The Option To Exempt Advisory Service Area Boards From The Act.

Sponsors: Fonov

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-026.

The motion failed (required four votes) by the following vote:

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

No: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Sumner
[Clerk's Note: Resolution Serial No. 25-026 was reconsidered during Assembly comments.]

[RS 25-028](#) A Resolution In Support Of Alaska State Senate Bill 92.

Sponsors: Bernier

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST: Assemblymember Nowers declared a conflict of interest as her husband does business with a company that could be impacted by the legislation.

RULING: Mayor DeVries ruled that Assemblymember Nowers had a conflict of interest and would be recused from voting.

Assemblymember Nowers exited the meeting.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 25-028.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to postpone Resolution Serial No. 25-028 to March 18, 2025.

The motion to postpone passed by the following vote:

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

Recused: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Assemblymember Nowers re-entered the meeting.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

X. VETO

There were no vetoes presented.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 03/18/25, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 25-020](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$21,500 From The American Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals, And Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Quality-Of-Life Project
RS 25-015: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Quality-Of-Life Grant From The American Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals.

[OR 25-027](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$39,049.44 From The Alaska State Division Of Forestry Volunteer Fire Capacity Grant Program; And Appropriating \$3,904.94 In Matching Funds For Firefighter And Firefighting Equipment, Clothing, Supplies, And Communications Equipment.
RS 25-023: A Resolution Approving The Scopes Of Work And Budgets For The Alaska State Division Of Forestry Volunteer Fire Capacity Grants And Matching Funds For The Fire Service Areas Of Caswell, Willow, Talkeetna, And Sutton.

[OR 25-028](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$2,100,000 From The Environmental Protection Agency's Solid Waste Infrastructure For Recycling Grants For Communities.
RS 25-024: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Solid Waste Division's Sustainable Organic Materials Compost Program And Infrastructure Development.

[OR 25-029](#) An Ordinance Approving An Appropriation Of Road Service Fund Balances To That Road Service Area's Capital Project Fund.

[OR 25-030](#) An Ordinance Establishing A Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School District Funding Issues.

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 March 18, 2025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

[25-039](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation
Animal Care and Regulation Board
Daniel Bowen, resignation from alternate position and appointed to
Animal Interest position
Board of Equalization
Corbin Thurneau
Local Emergency Planning Committee
Conor Kantrowitz
Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board
Steve Menard
Willow FSA No. 35
Ronald Forsyth, resignation

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

The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - 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.

XII. RECONSIDERATION

XIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Nowers stated that it was great to see the Palmer High School Hockey Team be recognized during the meeting. Shared a story of when she first met Stephen Brown and opined that he was an interesting person. Expressed her condolences to his family.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Resolution Serial No. 25-026.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Assemblymember Sumner called for the question (to stop debate).

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

The main motion passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Assemblymember Gamble stated that although it was a short meeting, that it was fun.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked the public for attending and said a prayer.

XIV. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.