

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



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 SPECIAL MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025

Budget Deliberations and Adoption

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, May 13, 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: 6 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Maxwell Sumner, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov

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 John Aschenbrenner, Deputy Borough Attorney.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person thanked the Assembly for fully funding the School District's request: Dr. Randy Trani, School District Superintendent.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. BUDGET DELIBERATIONS AND ADOPTION

[OR 25-025](#) An Ordinance Appropriating Monies From The Central Treasury For The Borough Operating Funds, Enterprise Funds, Education Operating Fund And Capital Funds, Establishing The Rate Of Levy For All Borough Functions For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2025, And Ending June 30, 2026; And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2025, Through June 30, 2026.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Amendment No. 18

Areawide Fund – Nondepartmental (page 60) and Capital Projects (page 475).

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

- * the Areawide Fund, Nondepartmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470/ (446.700) by decreasing the appropriation by the amount of \$250,000; and**
- * Reducing the Capital Project – Public Transit by \$250,000, leaving \$750,000.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Amendment No. 19

Areawide Fund – Nondepartmental (page196) and Capital Projects (page 474).

Assemblymember McKee moved a primary amendment and to make any other conforming changes to the budget as follows:

- * the Areawide Fund, Nondepartmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470/ (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$20,000; and**
- * Adding the Capital Project – For a grant to provide for low cost spay/neuter option for residents.**

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

Amendment No. 20

Areawide Fund - Community Ice Arenas (page 176), Land Management Fund – Nondepartmental (page 224) and Capital Project Fund (page 473)

Assemblymember Fonov moved a primary amendment and any other conforming changes as follows:

- * the Land Management Fund, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by decreasing appropriation by the amount of \$530,000; and**
- * eliminating the appropriation from the Land Management Fund for \$530,000.**

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Fonov

No: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Sumner, Assemblymember Gamble, and Assemblymember Bernier

Reconsideration

Amendment No. 2

Areawide Fund Nondepartmental (page 60) and Capital Project (page 474)

Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Amendment No. 2 as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

- * Areawide Fund, Nondepartmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$50,000; and**
- * Adding the Capital Project For a planning grant to the City of Palmer for \$50,000 to allow for snow removal at the City of Palmer Airport.**

Reconsideration failed by the following vote:

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

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Gamble

Reconsideration

Amendment No. 3

**Areawide Fund Nondepartmental (page 60) and Capital
Project (page 474)**

**Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Amendment
No. 3 as follows and any other conforming changes to the
budget:**

*** Areawide Fund, Nondepartmental, transfer to
415/425/430/435/440/470(446.7100) by increasing the
appropriation by the amount of \$26,000; and
* adding the Capital Project Jordan Lake Park Grant to the
Big Lake Community Council for the amount of \$26,000 with
the following project description: Completion of the park.**

Reconsideration failed by the following vote:

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

No: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Gamble

Reconsideration

Amendment No. 4

Areawide Fund Community Clean Up (page 129)

**Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Amendment
No. 4 as follows and to make any other conforming changes to
the budget: the Areawide Fund, Nondepartmental, Community
Clean Up Vehicle Junk Removal (100.130.158.429.429.600) by
increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$75,000 for
towing reimbursement.**

Reconsideration failed by the following vote:

Yes: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

No: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble,
Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Reconsideration

Amendment No. 5

Areawide Fund Non Departmental (page 60) and Capital Project (Page 487)

Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Amendment No. 5 as follows and any other conforming changes to the budget:

***Areawide Fund, Non Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$75,000; and**

***adding the Capital Project For a grant of \$75,000 to provide Firearm Safety Training to residents.**

Reconsideration failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Gamble

No: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Reconsideration

Amendment No. 6

Areawide Fund Non Departmental (page 60) and Capital Project (page 473)

Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Amendment No. 6 as follows and to make any other conforming changes to the budget:

***Areawide Fund, Non Departmental, transfer to 415/425/430/435/440/470 (446.700) by increasing the appropriation by the amount of \$30,000; and**

***adding the Capital Project Mat Su Disc Golf Association Grant for \$30,000 to be used for obtaining contracted services for disc golf improvements.**

Reconsideration failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Sumner

No: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

Assemblymember Hale moved to set the mill rates at 8.485 areawide and 0.371 nonareawide.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 25-025.

The motion passed by the following vote:

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

VII. VETO

A. Motion to Override Any Possible Mayoral Veto on Fiscal Year 2026 Budget Items (Ordinance Serial No. 25-025)

There were no vetoes presented.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENT

Ms. McKechnie advised that for the May 20 meetings, that chambers would be split in half due to the Palmer City Special Election.

Assemblymember Nowers stated that she is pleased that the body was able to lower the mill rate. Noted that it was over 10 mills when she was first elected to the Assembly. Commented that she appreciates the hard work of staff in putting together the budget. Spoke to concerns with the State funding debt bond reimbursement.

Assemblymember Hale noted that this will be his last budget cycle. Spoke to several projects that have been funded over the years. Cautioned the body to be mindful in cutting the budget too much as it could have unintended consequences. Stated that it is good to have a low mill rate, but not too low. Commented that it has been a pleasure to serve the residents of the Borough as a member of the Assembly.

Assemblymember McKee thanked the body for supporting the spay and neuter clinic amendment. Opined that it will help lower costs for the shelter if there are less pets making more pets. Spoke to the unity of the body and how much it pleases her that they are all respectful to each other.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone who attended the meeting. Spoke to his pleasure with a low mill rate. Said a prayer.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.