

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

350 East Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska 99645 - 907-861-8683

Tim Hale, District 1
Stephanie Nowers, District 2
Dee McKee, District 3
Robert Yundt, District 4
Mokie Tew, District 5
Jesse Sumner, District 6
Ron Bernier, District 7



Thomas Bergey, District 1
Jim Hart, District 2
Ole Larson, District 3
Jubilee Underwood, District 4
Ryan Ponder, District 5
Dwight Probasco, District 6
Jeff Taylor, District 7

MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS

350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

JOINT ASSEMBLY/SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2022

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special joint meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly/School Board was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2022, 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. ASSEMBLY ROLL CALL

Present: 6 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Mokie Tew, Assemblymember Jesse Sumner, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Excused: 1 - Assemblymember Robert Yundt

SCHOOL BOARD ROLL CALL

Present: School Board Member Thomas Bergey, School Board Member Jim Hart, School Board Member Ole Larson, School Board Member Jubilee Underwood, School Board President Ryan Ponder, and School Board Member Dwight Probasco

Excused: School Board Member Jeff Taylor

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by School Board President Ryan Ponder.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following persons spoke in support of a new school for Mat-Su Central School: Brant Moen, Stacey McIntosh, Glen Elrod, Ashley Emmert, Paster Chad Scott, Holly Christensen, Garrett Christensen, Noah James-Tagaban, Nathan James-Tagaban, Brian Endle, Tiffany Copeland, Daphne Cristopherson, Nathan Chud, Rainey Spurlock, Barbara Gerard, Kandis Carpenter, Vicky Hewitt, Killeen Connelly, Todd Connelly, Nicole Connelly, Nicole Holdness, Tiffany Trice, Debbie Spaulding, Janice Streisand, and Willa DaNeans.

The following persons spoke in opposition to voting machines: Karen Lewis, David Eastman, Daniel Sampson, and Lloyd Thurman.

The following persons spoke in support of the School Board rescinding the transbathroom policy: John Miller and Richard Stocker.

The following person thanked the young people who provided testimony: Todd Smoldon.

The following person noted that there are other charter schools that are also in need of a new school: Patty Farren.

VI. JOINT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Achievement/Enrollment Update (Request by Administration)

Dr. Randy Trani, Superintendent, reported on enrollments and achievements for the 2022/2023 school year.

B. School Related Transportation Projects (Requested by Administration)

Alex Senta, Project Management Division, reported on school related transportation projects.

The meeting recessed at 8:35 p.m. and reconvened at 8:47 p.m.

C. Building Construction Progress and Review Capital Construction Plan (MSB 2.12.075(A))

1. Houston High School Construction Update

Alex Senta, Project Management Division, reported on the status of the construction of the new Houston High School.

2. Mat-Su Central School Discussion

Dr. Randy Trani, Superintendent, provided a presentation of the School District's choice for funding a new school for Mat-Su Central School.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to suspend the rules and to extend the meeting to 10 p.m. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Bernier

Discussion continued regarding Mat-Su Central School.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to suspend the rules and to extend the meeting to 10:15 p.m. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Bernier

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, SCHOOL BOARD, AND STAFF COMMENT

School Board Member Hart thanked the public for their turnout. Thanked the body for the discussion and wished everyone a good night.

School Board Member Probasco thanked the public for their testimony. Stated that he is hopeful the Assembly and the School District can find a compromise and get a new school built for Mat-Su Central.

School Board Member Bergey thanked the public for their testimony. Noted that any of the money that goes to build the school is tax payer money, as was stated earlier by Assemblymember Nowers. Commented that there are many other schools that are in need of new facilities. Opined that schools should be built with tax payer approval.

School Board Member Underwood thanked the public for providing testimony. Stated that she is hopeful that the body can come up with a solution quickly.

School Board Member Larson thanked the public for participating in the meeting. Spoke to his enjoyment of public testimony. Noted that the School District offers many learning style options that are available to students. Stated that he would like the Assembly to lobby the Legislature for an increase to the base student allocation (BSA). Noted that there has not been an increase in eight years. Thanked the body for the meeting.

School Board President Ponder spoke to his appreciation for the public comments that were provided. Noted his respect for the public process. Thanked staff for the reports and information provided. Stated that he is in favor of bonding for the new school. Thanked the body for the meeting.

Assemblymember Tew opined that the Borough should not bond for the new school and go into debt when there are sufficient funds between the School District and the Borough to go forward without going into debt.

Assemblymember McKee stated that she does not understand why the public is still testifying against voting machines. Noted that a resolution requiring a hand count has already been adopted. Queried the large salaries and numerous duplicative positions of assistant superintendents with the School District.

Assemblymember Hale spoke to his support of the School District. Noted that he understands that there are many charter schools that are in need of a new building and that it needs to be addressed. Stated that he is hopeful that the body can find a way to make it work.

Assemblymember Nowers noted that she too is hopeful that the body can find a way to build the new school. Spoke to concerns that there are other schools also in need of new buildings. Stated that she would like to see a comprehensive list of those needs from the School District and what timeline they are expecting for them to be accomplished.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked the body for the meeting.

Assemblymember Sumner thanked the body for the lively discussion. Stated that he is hopeful that they can find a way to build the new school without the Borough going into needless debt. Noted that he agrees with School Board Member Larson that the BSA needs to be increased. Commented that taxpayers do not benefit from their government holding on to funds. Further added that governments should not over collect or under collect funds. Spoke in support of finding funding for school circulation routes.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:19 p.m.



Mayoral Signature and Clerk Attestment

For

September 6, 2022, Regular Meeting Minutes

(15 pages)

EDNA DeVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 09/27/22