

# 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  
Robert Yundt, 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, FEBRUARY 20, 2024

### I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, January 16, 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 Dee McKee, Assemblymember Robert Yundt, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

**Telephonic:** 1 - Assemblymember Dmitri Fonov

### III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

### IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office, Mr. Todd Smoldon.

### V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

There were no minutes presented.

### 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**

There were no reports provided.

**3. State of Alaska**

Mr. Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office, reported on education and Governor Dunleavy's legislation.

**B. COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues**

There were no reports provided.

**2. Assembly Public Relations**

There were no reports provided.

**C. MANAGER COMMENTS**

Amy Spargo with Arctic Winter Games Host Society, provided an Arctic Winter Games update.

**1. State/Federal Legislation**

**2. Strategic Planning Issues**

**D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS**

There was no report provided.

**E. CLERK COMMENTS**

Ms. McKechnie reported on the upcoming meeting schedule.

**F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE**

**24-030**

1. Big Lake Community Council: 11/28/23, 12/12/23
2. Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors: 11/13/23, 01/08/24, 01/22/24
3. MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission: 11/16/23, 12/07/23, 12/14/23
4. Greater Talkeetna RSA Board of Supervisors: 11/09/23
5. North Lakes Community Council: 12/14/23, 01/11/24
6. Port Commission: 07/17/23, 10/16/23

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

## **G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS**

**IM 24-055** Informing The Assembly Of A Grant Amendment To Be Presented To The Borough Manager For Signature For An Extension Of The November 2018 Cook Inlet Earthquake Disaster.

The informational memorandum was presented, and no comments were noted.

## **VII. SPECIAL ORDERS**

### **A. PERSONS TO BE HEARD (MSB 2.12.081; Three Minutes Per Person.)**

There were no persons to be heard.

(Requires 11 Days Advance Notice And Must Otherwise Be In Compliance With The Necessary Code Requirements. If No Advance Notice Is Given, Persons Wishing To Speak May Do So Under The Audience Participation Section Of The Agenda.)

### **B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)**

**OR 24-027** 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 No. 4809000T031A, To Raymond And Shannon Latchem.

Ms. McKechnice read the legislation into the record.

Mr. George Hays, Deputy 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 Gamble moved to adopt Ordinate Serial No. 24-027.**

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

**OR 24-028** An Ordinance Approving Classification Of Borough-Owned Lands For Inclusion In The 2024 Competitive Bid Land Sale And Future Over-The-Counter Land Sales.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Lisa Gray provided the staff report.

Mayor DeVries moved to open the public hearing.

The following people spoke opposed to the Willow property being a part of the legislation: Steve Charles, Greg Jones, Barbara Laucius, and Robert Hancock.

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

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-028.**

**Assemblymember Yundt moved to postponed Ordinance Serial No. 24-028, to June 18, 2024.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

**OR 24-029** An Ordinance Amending MSB 3.70, Service Area Sales Tax, To Change Monthly Talkeetna Sewer And Water Special Service Area No. 36 Sales Tax Returns To Quarterly Returns.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, provided the staff report.

Mayor DeVries moved to open 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. 24-029.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

### **C. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three Minutes Per Person.)**

The following person spoke to ideas for the new Palmer Library: Travis Friesen.

The following person spoke to issues with the MSB Library Board advertising board meetings: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke in support of libraries and librarians: Nancy Bertels.

The following person spoke to issues with to the Freedom to Read Act: Karen Lewis.

The following person spoke in support of the first amendment and public libraries and discouraged banning books: Bradley Palmer.

The following persons spoke to AM 24-019 and Public Works RIP List and the Big Lake RSA RIP List: Pat Daniels, Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors member; Jill Parson, Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors member; and Andrew Traxler, Big Lake RSA Board of Supervisors member.

The following person spoke to obscene books and privatizing libraries and schools: Linda (Last name-indiscernable.)

The following person spoke to obscene books and tax payers' money: Mark (Last name indiscernable.)

The following person spoke in opposition of Ordinance Serial No. 24-010: Patti Fisher.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 24-010: Ron Johnson.

The meeting recessed at 7:27 p.m. and reconvened at 7:38 p.m.

### **D. CONSENT AGENDA**

#### **1. RESOLUTIONS**

**RS 24-026** A Resolution Authorizing The Borough Manager To Sell The Susitna River Salvage Timber Harvest (MSB006573).

**RS 24-027** A Resolution Implementing The Rescue Services Agreement Between The City Of Palmer And The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, For Services Through June 30, 2029.

## **2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS**

**AM 24-014** Authorizing The Borough Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With The City Of Palmer For Fire Services Through June 30, 2029, With An Annual Payment Of \$1,182,130.95 For Fiscal Year 2025.

**AM 24-016** Approval Of Contract Amendment For Bezek Durst Seiser Architects, Contract 20-001P, To Extend Contract Completion Date For Construction Administration And Commissioning Of Houston Middle School.

**AM 24-017** Approval Of Change Order No.1 For Contract No. 24-057B With R Squared Contracting, Inc., For The DSJ Attic Insulation And Roof Thermal Improvements To Add \$20,418 For Blown Insulation In The Attic.

**AM 24-018** Award Of Bid Number 24-077B To Pro Built, LLC For The Contract Amount Of \$276,078 To Remodel Station 7-9 West Lakes Ambulance Building.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**AM 24-021** Award Of Bid No. 24-084B to Neeser Construction Inc. For The Contract Amount Of \$200,692.25 To Construct Sunshine Creek Circle Improvements.

**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 Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier**

**AM 24-019** Approval Of The Big Lake Road Service Area No.21 Road Improvement Project List - 2024.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the read.

**Assemblymember Fonov moved to adopt AM No. 24-019.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

**AM 24-020** Approval Of Contract Amendment For State Lobbyist Services To Harris Consulting To Extend The Contract To June 30, 2025, In An Amount Not To Exceed \$80,400 Per Year.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the read.

**Assemblymember McKee moved to adopt AM No. 24-020.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

**No:** 1 - Assemblymember McKee

**AM 24-021** Award Of Bid No. 24-084B to Neeser Construction Inc. For The Contract Amount Of \$200,692.25 To Construct Sunshine Creek Circle Improvements.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

## **VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**OR 24-007** An Ordinance Amending MSB 23.20.090(C), To Change The Requirement Of Preparing A Five-Year Harvest Schedule Every Three Years, To A Voluntary Schedule.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**The main motion passed by the following vote:**

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

**OR 24-010** An Ordinance Allowing Candidates For Mayor, Assembly, And School Board To Designate A Political Affiliation.

**Sponsors:** Yundt and McKee

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

**MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Yundt moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-010.**

**Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment as follows:**

**\* strike MSB 25.05.070, non-partisan requirement, from the legislation;**

**\* amend the title adding at the end "And Submit the Question to the Qualified Voters of the Borough at the November 5, 2024, Regular Borough Election;**

**\* insert a new section 6 as follows: Section 6. Proposition. The Borough shall submit the following proposition to the qualified voters at the November 5, 2024, Borough Regular Election. The proposition must receive an affirmative vote from the majority of the qualified voters voting on the Question to be approved.**

**Political Party Affiliation Listed on the Ballot**

**Current Matanuska-Susitna Borough code states that all Borough elections shall be non-partisan.**

**This ordinance would removed that requirement to allow candidates for elected office to designate a political party affiliation on the ballot with their name. A candidate may designate a party affiliation if they are registered with a party, or may designate nonpartisan or undeclared. If a candidate makes no designation, the candidate shall be designated as undeclared.**

**Should this become law?**

**Yes \_\_\_\_\_**

**No \_\_\_\_\_**

**\*Change the current section 6 to section 7 and amend it to read: Effective Date. Section 6 of this ordinance takes effect immediately. All other section of this ordinance shall become effective only if the proposition described in section 6 is approved by the majority of the qualified voters voting on the proposition at the Borough Regular Election on November 5, 2024.**

**Assemblymember Bernier called for the question (to stop debate).**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

**The primary amendment failed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Gamble

**No:** 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

**Assemblymember Hale called for the question (to stop debate).**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

**The main motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 5 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

**No:** 2 - Assemblymember Hale and Assemblymember Nowers

## **IX. VETO**

There were no vetoes presented.

## **X. NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 03/05/24 Assembly Chambers)**

- OR 24-015** An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$52,000 From The American Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals To A Project Account For The Purpose Of Funding Two Coordinator Staff Positions.  
RS 24-013: A Resolution Accepting And Appropriating \$52,000 From The American Society For The Prevention Of Cruelty To Animals To A Project Account For The Purpose Of Funding Two Program Coordinator Positions.
- OR 24-032** An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$400,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Natural Resources Division Of Forestry, For The Critical Facilities Protection Saw Crew Project.  
RS 24-025: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget, And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into The Grant Agreement For The Critical Facilities Protection Saw Crew Project.
- OR 24-034** An Ordinance Reappropriating \$123,838.46 From Fiscal Year 2021 Fish Passage Grant Match To The 2021 Transportation System Project.  
RS 24-028: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For 2021 Transportation Grant Match.

**Assemblymember Bernier moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the clerk and to set the public hearings for March 5, 2024.**

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

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

## **B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

### **1. VACANCY REPORT**

**24-031      Mayoral Requests for Confirmation**

Agriculture Advisory Board

Melaine Glatt

Board of Equalization

Amy Henry

Commission on Salaries & Emoluments

Marcie Obremski

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

**The motion passed by the following vote:**

**Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, 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 presented.

## **XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Assemblymember Fonov spoke to transparency in candidate brochures and in support of Ordinance Serial No. 24-010.

Assemblymember McKee spoke to enjoying knowing the details of all expenses and is looking forward to working further on Ordinance Serial No. 24-028.

Assemblymember Bernier thanked everyone for attending the meeting. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember Nowers expressed her opposition to Ordinance Serial No. 24-010. Thanked the librarians and staff. Spoke to freedom and parental rights. Noted the upcoming Board of Fisheries meeting and encourage people to go.

Mr. Brown noted he is headed to Juneau and asked assemblymembers to state if they have an interest.

Assemblymember Gamble wanted to echo Assemblymember Nowers comments on Ordinance Serial No. 24-010 and the Board of Fisheries upcoming meeting. Spoke to the knowledge of our current MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission and encouraged more people to go and learn.

Assemblymember Yundt encouraged everyone to drive safe.

Ms. McKechnie reminded the members if they travel to Juneau on the borough's behalf they are required to submit a public report.

## **XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

There was no executive session.

## **XIV. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

**Disabled Persons Needing Reasonable Accommodation In Order To Participate At An Assembly Meeting Should Contact The Borough ADA Coordinator At (907) 861-8432 At Least One Week In Advance Of The Meeting.**



Mayoral Signature and Clerk Attestment

For

February 20, 2024, Assembly Regular Meeting Minutes

(14 pages)

  
EDNA DeVRIES, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

  
LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 03/19/24