

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, MARCH 5, 2024

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, March 5, 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: 5 - Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dee McKee, Assemblymember Robert Yundt, Assemblymember Bill Gamble, and Assemblymember Ron Bernier

Telephonic: 2 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, and 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 Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[24-034](#)

A. Assembly Regular Meeting: 02/06/24

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

There was no report provided.

3. State of Alaska

Mr. Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office, reported on Governor Dunleavy's plan for education funding, education reform ideas, and executive orders being worked on.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

There was no report provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

Mayor DeVries reported on having attended the Southcentral Mayor's Energy Coalition.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

Mr. Brown reported on the recent visit of several members of the Military to Port MacKenzie. Spoke to having resubmitted the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. Noted that he is relatively sure that the Borough will be receiving \$40 million for transportation projects which includes the Seldon Corridor project from Wasilla Fishhook to west to Snow Goose Drive.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos advised that the last three contractors with snow removal claims have settled with the Borough and that the issue should be concluded.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie spoke to the upcoming meeting schedule.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[24-037](#)

1. Butte Community Council: 01/10/24
2. Greater Willow RSA Board of Supervisors: 12/28/23
3. South Knik River Community Council: 02/16/23, 03/16/23, 04/20/23, 05/18/23, 08/17/23, 09/21/23, 10/19/23, 11/16/23, Resolution Nos. 1-2023, 2-2023, 1-2024
4. Tanaina Community Council: 01/23/24

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 24-056](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Submittal Of A Grant Application To The National Fish Habitat Partnership For Salmon Habitat-Related Projects.

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.

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[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.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Christopher Loscar, Animal Care and Regulation Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor DeVries opened the public hearing.

The following person opined that the grant funds should be spent toward enforcement, which is badly needed: Daniel Potter.

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

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-015 and Resolution Serial No. 24-013.

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 24-032](#)

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.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Joe Metzger, Land and Resource Management Division 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 Bernier moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 24-032 and Resolution Serial No. 24-025.

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 24-034](#)

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.

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. 24-034 and Resolution Serial No. 24-028.

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 persons spoke in opposition to and concerns with Resolution Serial No. 24-031: Angie Wade, Lisa Wade, Patricia Fisher, John Strassenburg, Margaret Stern, Adam Cuthriell, Ruth Wood, June Okada, and Kendra Zamzow.

The following person spoke in opposition to banning books: Kathy Kysar.

The following persons stated that they do not oppose coal, noted that components of it can be damaging to the economy and spoke to the need for clean energy alternatives: Ken Griffin, Ken Hackada, Jake Motika

The following person spoke to the importance of libraries to communities: Joseph Davis.

The following person spoke to the part she played in the recall election of three Palmer City Council members and to the need to protect children from pornography: Jackie Goforth.

The following person spoke to the need to protect children from pornography: Karen Harris.

The meeting recessed at 7:24 p.m. and reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 24-032](#) A Resolution In Support Of Governor Dunleavy's House Bill 307 And Senate Bill 217 To Reduce Artificial Barriers To New Power Generation That Could Otherwise Benefit Alaskan Residents.

Sponsors: Nowers

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 24-008](#) Award Of Bid No. 24-064B To Matanuska Telecom Association, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$1,172,964.60 To Provide Metro Ethernet Circuits.

- [AM 24-009](#) Award Of Bid No. 24-065B To Matanuska Telecom Association, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$187,529.76 To Provide Public Wi-Fi Services.
- [AM 24-010](#) Award Of Bid No. 24-066B To Matanuska Telecom Association, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$183,564 To Provide Direct Internet Access At Dorothy Swanda Jones Building.
- [AM 24-022](#) Approval Of Change Order No. 2 For Contract No. 22-104P(C) With DOWL, LLC. To Add \$15,865 For The Shaw Elementary School Turn Lane Project; And To Extend The Contract To November 1, 2024.
- [AM 24-024](#) Award Of Bid No. 24-093B To Stephi Engineering In The Contract Amount Of \$203,000 For The Cleaning And Inspection Of The Talkeetna Sewer Collection System.
- [AM 24-025](#) Approval Of Utility Relocation Costs Of \$119,700 To Matanuska Electric Association, Inc. For Settlers Bay Drive At Crocker Creek Fish Passage Improvements.
- [AM 24-026](#) Authorization To Vacate A 33-Foot Wide Section Line Easement On The Eastern Boundary Of Parcel No. 3, Tax Parcel A8, Waiver Resolution No. 2000-80pwm, Located Within The NE 1/4 Section 4, Township 16 North, Range 2 West, Seward Meridian.
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 Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Gamble, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

[RS 24-031](#)

A Resolution Supporting The Development Of Coal-Fired Power Generation And Related Infrastructure Using Technologies To Reduce Emissions And Provide Affordable, Reliable, Clean Electricity.

Sponsors: Yundt

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Gamble moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 24-031.

Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment to IM No. 24-061, by attaching the University of Alaska Fairbanks, Institute of Northern Engineering, Cook Inlet Region Low Carbon Power Generation with Carbon Capture, Transport, and Storage Feasibility Study.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

Assemblymember Yundt moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 24-031, as follows:

*** page 2, last whereas clause, by inserting "(the UAF Feasibility Study)" in the second line after the word "feasibility;"**

*** page 2, last where as clause, by inserting "(the CCS Power Plant)" after the number 553937;**

*** page 2, by inserting the following whereas clause at the bottom of the page, to read: "WHEREAS, the UAF Feasibility Study was released to the Borough on February 29, 2024, and makes certain recommendations including proceeding with the CCS Power Plant, legislative enablement, and funding steps; and"; and**

*** page 5, at the end of No. 2, by inserting the following language: "and supports and encourages the STate of Alaska to support proceeding with the CCS Power Plant by implementing the recommendations of the UAF Feasibility Study."**

Assemblymember Nowers moved a secondary amendment to strike the proposed language on page 5.

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Fonov, and Assemblymember Bernier

No: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember Gamble

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

No: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

Assemblymember Gamble moved a primary amendment by striking all references to carbon capture and sequestration throughout Resolution Serial No. 24-031.

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

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

No: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, and Assemblymember McKee
Assemblymember Nowers moved to postpone Resolution Serial No. 24-031 to June 18, 2024.

The motion failed by the following vote:

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

No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale, and Assemblymember Nowers
Assemblymember Fonov called for the question (to stop debate).

The 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

The main motion passed as amended by the following vote:

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

No: 2 - Assemblymember Hale, and Assemblymember Nowers

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

IX. VETO

There were no vetoes presented.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 03/19/24, Assembly Chambers)

[RS 24-023](#) A Resolution Approving An Application To Relocate A Beverage Dispensary License From An Area Outside City Limits In The Borough To A Location Within The City Of Wasilla.

[OR 24-033](#) An Ordinance Extending The Time Limit For Completion Of Expiring Project Funds Through June 30, 2025.

[OR 24-035](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$50,000 From The Mat-Su Trails And Parks Foundation To Continue Development Of Settlers Bay Coastal Park.

RS 24-029: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Settlers Bay Coastal Park.

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 19, 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

[24-039](#)

Mayoral Requests for Confirmation
Parks, Recreation, and Trails Advisory Board
Harry R. Hillman

Assemblymember Bernier moved to confirm the appointment 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

[OR 24-010](#) An Ordinance Allowing Candidates For Mayor, Assembly, And School Board To Designate A Political Affiliation.

Sponsors: Yundt and McKee

Assemblymember Gamble moved to reconsider Ordinance Serial No. 24-010.

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 motion to reconsider 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

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Fonov wished everyone a good evening.

Assemblymember Gamble spoke to having attended the Board of Fisheries meeting. Noted that it was an eye opening experience. Opined that the Borough's Fish and Wildlife Commission has a high level of expertise and is incredibly knowledgeable. Stated that he was glad he attended the Military visit to Port MacKenzie.

Assemblymember Yundt spoke to a local wrestling tournament that has been happening for 40 years. Related that he would like to see Wasilla and Houston High Schools be involved as they were not represented at the meet. Related that Redington High School has won many state wrestling titles. Stated that he would like to see more kids participating in wrestling tournaments.

Ms. McKechnie requested that the Assembly join her in Conference Room 110 to receive their Arctic Winter Games sponsor jackets.

Mr. Brown stated that it was exciting that the Arctic Winter Games start this weekend. Spoke to many projects that the Borough has that will be starting up this summer. Spoke to the work that has been done on road service area contracts.

Assemblymember Nowers echoed the comments of Assemblymember Gamble about the Borough's Fish and Wildlife Commission. Stated that it is exciting to see the Arctic Winter Games coming together. Spoke to the need to find inexpensive and clean energy alternatives. Spoke to concerns with last minute amendments.

Assemblymember Bernier noted that there is a prayer group that goes out to Port MacKenzie weekly. Said a prayer.

Assemblymember McKee spoke to the kind of wrestling coach that she thinks Assemblymember Yundt is. Opined that he does a great job. Stated that she looks forward to alternative energy sources.

Assemblymember Gamble requested that energy alternatives discussion occur at the August planning session.

Mayor DeVries noted that Port MacKenzie has the potential to be an asset to the whole state.

XIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

There was no executive session.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:49 p.m.