

# MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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

Jim Sykes, District 1  
Matthew Beck, District 2  
George McKee, District 3  
Ted Leonard, District 4  
Dan Mayfield, District 5  
Jesse Sumner, District 6  
Tam Boeve, District 7



Thomas Bergey, District 1  
Ray Michaelson, District 2  
Ole Larson, District 3  
Sarah Welton, District 4  
Ryan Ponder, District 5  
Kelsey Trimmer, District 6  
Donna Dearman, District 7

## MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS  
350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

JOINT ASSEMBLY/SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2019

### **I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, September 10, 2019, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Vern Halter.

### **II. ASSEMBLY ROLL CALL**

**Present:** 5 - Assemblymember Jim Sykes, Assemblymember George McKee, Assemblymember Dan Mayfield, Assemblymember Jesse Sumner, and Assemblymember Tam Boeve

**Excused:** 2 - Assemblymember Matthew Beck, and Assemblymember Ted Leonard

### **SCHOOL BOARD ROLL CALL**

School Board Member Bergey, School Board Member Michaelson (entered at 6:05 p.m.), School Board Member Larson, School Board Member Welton, School Board Member Ponder, School Board Member Trimmer, and School Board President Donna Dearman.

### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Halter queried if there were any changes to the agenda.

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

#### **IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The pledge of allegiance was led by Dr. Monica Goyette, School District Superintendent.

#### **V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

Mayor Halter noted there were many members of the public in attendance that wished to speak to their concerns regarding Finger Lake Subdivision. Requested that they come back to the regular Assembly meeting to provide their testimony at the meeting.

The following person spoke to concerns with a commercial building being constructed in her residential neighborhood: Ms. Vickie Wintz.

#### **VI. JOINT ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

##### **A. Building Construction Progress (MSB 2.12.075(A))**

Mr. Mike Brown, Executive Director of Operations, provided a presentation regarding the Houston Middle School earthquake retrofit repair possibilities.

##### **B. Review Capital Construction Plan (MSB 2.12.075(A))**

Dr. Monica Goyette, School District Superintendent, reported on the capital construction plan.

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

School Board Member Welton stated that it is good to have the joint meetings. Spoke to her appreciation of the time spent together and the information received.

School Board Member Ponder thanked the body for the meeting.

School Board Member Larson stated that it is good for the Assembly and School Board to have joint meetings.

School Board Member Michaelson spoke to his appreciation of the presentation regarding the possibilities of how Houston Middle School can be repaired. Opined that the Borough needs to provide good educational environments for children. Stated that he is glad there are a few options that can be considered. Spoke in support of Option No. 2, which is to repair the athletic and administration wings and to replace the academic wing. Opined that option provides the best value. Noted that repairing Houston Middle School is the School Boards highest priority. Stated that he appreciates the due diligence that has gone in to determining the best way to proceed.

School Board Member Bergey spoke to his appreciation of the joint meetings. Stated that he is hopeful that the desires of the community can be incorporated into the repair of Houston Middle School, as this is the best opportunity to do that.

School Board Member Trimmer thanked the body for the meeting. Thanked the Assembly for consideration of School Board Resolution 20-001. Spoke to his connection with the Houston area. Noted that if Option No. 1 is selected for Houston Middle School, that he would not let his children even enter the school. Opined that it is a terrible idea to simply fix the school without doing more appropriate repairs. Noted the overall growth in the Borough.

School Board President Dearman noted that this is her last joint meeting. Spoke to her appreciation of the work she has been involved with over the last six years. Stated that she has enjoyed the joint meetings over the years. Stated that it is important to work together to do what is best for the children. Expressed her appreciation for the support of the Assembly. Spoke in support of Option No. 2 for repairs to Houston Middle School and noted it is a chance to make appropriate improvements not just repairs. Stated that she cares immensely for the north valley. Wished the body continued success.

Assemblymember Sumner spoke to his desire to keep costs low when

repairing the school. Opined that school construction costs are inflated when they do not need to be. Opined that fancy schools do not increase educational output. Stated that the body should focus only on function and not on design. Spoke in opposition to constructing LEED certified schools.

Assemblymember Mayfield thanked the body for the meeting. Spoke to his enjoyment of the joint meetings. Opined that the discussion regarding the repairs for Houston Middle School are timely and appropriate. Thanked School Board President Dearman for her years of service. Noted that he will miss working with her and wished her happy trails.

Assemblymember Boeve thanked School Board President Dearman for her fine representation of the northern constituents. Noted that she has a good working relationship with School District staff and the kids.

Assemblymember Sykes thanked the body for the meeting. Spoke to concerns with maintenance costs if Houston Middle School is not properly repaired. Noted that there are costs associated with maintaining any building and that there needs to be a financial strategy. Related that a lot of buildings in Fairbanks are falling apart due to lack of proper maintenance. Stated that education has always been a priority for the Assembly. Commented that he looks forward to continuing the positive working relationship between the bodies.

Assemblymember McKee stated that he will not form an opinion regarding how Houston Middle School should be repaired until the costs are more certain. Noted that constituents want to know how the Borough is spending money. Opined that schools do not need to be anything fancy and that four walls and a roof is sufficient. Noted that the Borough owns the School District buildings and that there will be even less money from the State next year.

Mayor Halter thanked Mr. Brown for the presentation on possible repairs for Houston Middle School. Noted that he will miss working with School Board President Dearman, both personally and professionally. Stated that he enjoys the joint meetings with the School Board. Spoke to the fiscal uncertainty the Borough is facing, but that Houston Middle School has to be repaired. Opined that four walls and a chalkboard are great, but that they owe school age children more than that. Thanked the School Board for the meeting.

**VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION (For Matters Which By Law, Municipal Charter, Or Ordinance Are Required To Be Kept Confidential; And To Discuss Matters Involving Consideration Of Borough Records That By Law Are Not Subject To Public Disclosure; And Discussion Of Matters Subject To The Attorney/Client Privilege.)**

**A. Discussion of Potential Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Litigation**

The meeting recessed at 7:25 p.m. and reconvened at 7:29 p.m.

**Assemblymember Mayfield moved to enter executive session for matters, which by law, municipal charter, or ordinance are required to be kept confidential; and to discuss matters involving consideration of borough records that by law are not subject to public disclosure; and discussion of matters subject to the attorney/client privilege, specifically to discuss potential litigation regarding the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission also known as FERC. Those present during the executive session will be the Mayor, the members of the Assembly, the Manager, the Attorney, the Clerk, and James Wilson. The motion passed without objection and the Assembly entered into executive session at 7:30 p.m.**

**Assemblymember Mayfield moved to exit executive session.**

**The motion passed without objection and the Assembly exited executive session at 8:22 p.m.**

**IX. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.