

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

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

BOROUGH MAYOR
Vern Halter

BOROUGH CLERK
Lonnie R. McKechnie, CMC

BOROUGH MANAGER
John Moosey

BOROUGH ATTORNEY
Nicholas Spiropoulos



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

MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

ASSEMBLY SPECIAL MEETING

6:00 PM

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019

Public Hearing, Budget Deliberations, and Possible Adoption

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Thursday, May 16, 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. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Assemblymember Jim Sykes, Assemblymember Matthew Beck, Assemblymember George McKee, Assemblymember Ted Leonard, Assemblymember Dan Mayfield, Assemblymember Jesse Sumner, and Assemblymember Tam Boeve

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Halter queried if there was any objection to removing Ordinance Serial No. 19-071 from introduction and moving introduction to May 28, 2019, and public hearing for June 4, 2019.

There was no objection noted.

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

The agenda was approved as amended without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke to concerns with the public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTION (For Public Hearing 05/21/19, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 19-071](#) An Ordinance Amending MSB 3.04.046 Local Education Funding.
[Clerk's Note: Ordinance Serial No. 19-071 was pulled from introduction at approval of the agenda.]

B. PUBLIC HEARING, DELIBERATIONS, AND POSSIBLE ADOPTION OF THE FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET

[OR 19-019](#)

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, 2019 And Ending June 30, 2020; And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2019 Through June 30, 2020.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke to the need to diversify the tax base: Ms. Terry Snyder.

The following person spoke in support of the Manager's proposed budget for the Mat-Su Central Fire Service Area: Mr. David Eller.

The following person spoke in opposition to proposed amendments to the Assembly and Mayor's wages and to concerns with crime in the Borough: Ms. Patty Fisher.

The following persons spoke in opposition to the proposed amendment to cut funding for Valley Community Recycling Services (VCRS): Ms. Molly Boyer, VCRS Executive Director; Mr. Barry Munsell; Ms. Amerika Powers, and Mr. Robert Wallace.

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

Assemblymember Beck moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 19-019.

**Assemblymember Sykes moved to continue budget deliberations to a time certain of May 28, 2019, at 6 p.m.
The motion passed by the following vote:**

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Sykes, Assemblymember Beck, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Leonard, and Assemblymember Boeve

No: 2 - Assemblymember Mayfield, and Assemblymember Sumner

Assemblymember Sykes moved to schedule budget deliberation and possible adoption meetings for May 29, May 30, and May 31. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Sykes, Assemblymember Beck, Assemblymember Leonard, Assemblymember Mayfield, and Assemblymember Boeve

No: 2 - Assemblymember McKee, and Assemblymember Sumner
Assemblymember Beck moved to reschedule the annual evaluation of the Clerk and Manager from June 18, 2019, to June 11, 2019. The motion failed by the following vote:

Yes: 2 - Assemblymember Beck, and Assemblymember McKee

No: 5 - Assemblymember Sykes, Assemblymember Leonard, Assemblymember Mayfield, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

VII. VETO

A. Motion To Override Any Possible Mayoral Veto On Fiscal Year 2020 Budget Items
(Ordinance Serial No. 19-019)

There were no vetoes presented.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENT

Assemblymember McKee stated that it is inappropriate for Assembly members to direct departments, as that is not what they were elected to do. Opined it is a waste of time to work on the budget when they have no idea what will happen with the State's budget. Opined that the mill rate should be set at 10.33 and to let the Manager figure out how to make that happen.

Assemblymember Mayfield opined that the body should have moved forward with deliberations. Stated that he is looking forward to doing the work at the next meeting.

Assemblymember Sumner opined that it is the Assembly's job to have the ability to move departments that were created by the Assembly. Further opined that it is our job to determine appropriations to departments.

Assemblymember Leonard stated that he appreciates the extra time to look at the amendments. Stated that if there are any large amendments, that it would be nice to see them in time to be able to research their impacts and ask questions. Related that if there are ways to improve the budget process for next year, that he would like to hear them. Noted that it is ultimately up to the Assembly to set the budget. Stated that he would be in favor of setting the mill rate and then adopt the budget if that is possible and then to include a rebate on tax bills if it becomes prudent to do so.

Assemblymember Beck spoke to the need to move slowly and make wise decisions regarding the budget. Noted that it is easier to wind down than to wind up. Stated that his sense is that the Borough operates on a slim budget as it is. Stated that services that are provided to citizens are good, but they are minimal. Related that he will be looking at amendments very closely. Opined that now is not the time for panic or fear, but for creativity and envisioning a better future.

Assemblymember Sykes spoke in support of delaying deliberations. Opined that it is good for the public to be able to see proposed amendments before they are moved. Stated that at times reorganization of departments can be a good thing, but that it probably should not be done through the budget process but should happen independently.

Mr. Moosey spoke to the seriousnewss of beetle killed spruce in the Borough. Stated that the Borough is working with Governor Dunleavy's Office and Alaska State Division of Forestry to mitigate wild fires. Related that they have come up with plan to advertise to the public to encourage homeowners to clear beetle killed spruce and to bring them to specific sites at transfer stations or the Central Landfill. Stated that the intent is to have

them chipped up. Opined that it is the least we can do to allow citizens to protect their own homes from wild fire.

Mr. Spiropoulos advised that he will look in to the possibility of setting the mill rate prior to adoption of the budget and to determine if it can be done practically and legally.

Ms. McKechnie spoke to how the budget amendment packets will be prepared.

Mayor Halter noted that it is quite the dilemma to not know what is happening with Governor Dunleavy's budget. Spoke to the possibility of changing the fiscal year to a calendar year in order to eliminate the timeline crunch we are under. Spoke in support of amending budget ordinance by substitute of last year's budget. Spoke to concerns with too many reductions this year having too large of an impact. Stated that he will be asking for a motion to substitute the Fiscal Year 2020 budget with the Fiscal Year 2019 budget.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.