

# 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  
Michael Brown

BOROUGH ATTORNEY  
Nicholas Spiropoulos



Tim Hale, District 1  
Stephanie Nowers, District 2  
George McKee, District 3  
Robert Yundt, District 4  
Mokie Tew, 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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2020

### I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Wednesday, October 21, 2020, 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:** 4 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember Dan Mayfield, and Assemblymember Jesse Sumner

**Excused:** 1 - Assemblymember George McKee

**Telephonic:** 2 - Assemblymember Ted Leonard, and Assemblymember Tam Boeve

### III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

### IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mr. Darwin Fischer, a member of the audience.

## **V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

The following person spoke to concerns that the individual CARES Act grants would no longer be available: Mr. Darwin Fischer.

The following person spoke to concerns with the public process and with who or who was not, wearing a mask: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

## **VI. PUBLIC HEARING (Three Minutes Per Person)**

[OR 20-098](#)

An Ordinance Waiving The Witness Signature Requirement For Absentee By Mail Ballots For The Regular Borough Election To Occur On November 3, 2020.

**Sponsors:** Mayfield

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 20-098: Mr. Jim Sykes.

The following person spoke to concerns with the timing of the legislation: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

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

**Assemblymember Mayfield moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 20-098.**

**Assemblymember Mayfield moved a primary amendment to Ordinance Serial No. 20-098 as follows:**

- **to amend the title of the IM and the Ordinance to read: “An ordinance of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly waiving the witness signature requirement for absentee by-mail ballots and extending the due date for absentee by-mail ballots for the regular Borough election to occur on November 3, 2020; and**
- **to insert a new section 3 and renumber the remaining sections accordingly, to read: “Extension of due date for absentee by-mail ballots. For purposes of the Borough regular election to be held on November 3, 2020, only, the due date of absentee by-mail ballots in MSB 25.35.080(A), specifying that absentee by-mail ballots must be received by the Clerk no later than the third calendar day following the election, is extended to the seventh calendar day following the election. The Borough will count absentee by-mail ballots, which are otherwise proper and received by the Clerk no later than November 10, 2020.”**

**The motion failed (tie vote) by the following vote:**

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

**No:** 3 - Assemblymember Leonard, Assemblymember Sumner, and Assemblymember Boeve

**The Mayor invoked his voting privilege in the positive and the primary amendment passed.**

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

**Yes:** 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,  
Assemblymember Mayfield, and Assemblymember Boeve

**No:** 2 - Assemblymember Leonard, and Assemblymember Sumner

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

Mr. Hays advised that unless the Assembly objects, that the School District and the Borough are entering into a memorandum of agreement to transfer ownership responsibility of Houston Middle School to the Borough regarding demolition.

Mayor Halter queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

Mr. Hays advised that Coalaska will be getting a port development permit which will allow them to bring in trucks and build a cement silo.

Mr. Spiropoulos apologized for not attending the meeting in person. Stated that he had to attend to a family emergency.

Ms. McKechnie reported that early voting has been going well and is especially busy at the Wasilla Library.

Mayor Halter queried when the next meeting for the manager search would be.

Ms. McKechnie advised that she would look at a date after the election and contact the Mayor.

Mr. Spiropoulos stated that he was requested to give a summary of the U.S. Treasury decision about the individual grants the Assembly wanted to do. Advised that without an assessment of immediate need for every person that applied, that it cannot be done. Advised that the Assembly not move forward with the individual grants as the Borough would be liable to pay those funds back to the U.S. Treasury.

Assemblymember Nowers noted that the Assembly has discussed many ways to disburse the funds and queried if any specific ideas have been generated yet.

Mr. Hays advised that nothing concrete has been developed at this time.

Assemblymember Sumner exited the meeting at 6:42 p.m.

Assemblymember Hale spoke to his dismay that the guidance from the U.S. Treasury prevents the Assembly from providing a small amount of funds to working folks who have been hit so hard by COVID-19. Stated that he is hopeful the Assembly can come up with a way to provide assistance either

through utility or mortgage assistance.

Assemblymember Nowers spoke to her concerns about changing election related code so near to the election. Stated that she does not think it was arbitrary to provide extra time for by-mail ballots due to COVID-19. Commented that normally she wouldn't support this but feels that it is warranted during a pandemic. Stated that she is hopeful that the Assembly will find a way to quickly move forward and disburse CARES Act funds to residents.

Assemblymember Mayfield stated that he would not have brought the legislation forward if he thought it would disenfranchise even a single voter. Opined that it helps simplify the voting process for voters during this uncertain and confusing time.

Mayor Halter stated that he is glad the Borough is consistent with the State for this election. Spoke to the different rulings on the witness to a signature issue being different in each state that has taken it up. Noted his support of the legislation.

## **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting recessed at 6:49 p.m.