

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
Mokie Tew, District 5
Jesse Sumner, District 6
Ron Bernier, District 7

MEETING MINUTES

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS

350 EAST DAHLIA AVENUE, PALMER

ASSEMBLY REGULAR MEETING

6:00 PM

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2021

I. CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, 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.

Mayor Halter spoke in tribute to Mr. Jim Varsos a.k.a Hobo Jim, the Alaskan Balladeer who recently passed away.

II. ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Assemblymember Tim Hale, Assemblymember Stephanie Nowers, Assemblymember George McKee, Assemblymember Robert Yundt, Assemblymember Mokie Tew, Assemblymember Jesse Sumner, and Assemblymember Tam Boeve

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

Assemblymember Hale requested to take up reconsideration of Resolution Serial No. 21-101 prior to the veto.

Mayor Halter queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

The agenda was approved as amended without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by the audience.

Mayor Halter, Mr. Mike Brown, and Ms. Talon Boeve, Emergency Operations Center Responder, presented backpacks to first place winners of the emergency preparedness poster contest. The winners in no particular order were Talon Holden, Raylee Meeuswen, Jordan Schweitzer, Emily Williams, and Jacob Hartman.

V. MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETINGS

[21-201](#)

A. Regular Assembly Meeting: 10/05/21

Ms. McKechnie noted that in the minutes from the previous meeting, that the text box under the Manager's report had cut off part of the words. Stated that it has since been corrected.

The minutes were approved as 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

Dr. Randy Traini, School District Superintendent, spoke in support of Resolution Serial Nos. 21-108, 21-109, and 21-110, which are selecting permanent sites for Mat-Su Central, Charter Academy, and Birchtree Charter Schools.

3. State of Alaska

Mr. Todd Smoldon, Executive Director of Governor Dunleavy's Mat-Su Office, reported on the activities of the Legislature.

4. Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau - Ms. Bonnie Quill

Ms. Bonnie Quill, Mat-Su Convention and Visitor's Bureau Executive Director, spoke in support of Ordinance Serial No. 21-108 and reported on the activities of the bureau in recruiting tourism.

B. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Joint Assembly/School Board Committee On School Issues

There was no report provided.

2. Assembly Public Relations

There were no reports provided.

C. MANAGER COMMENTS

1. State/Federal Legislation

2. Strategic Planning Issues

Mr. Adam Crum, Alaska State Health and Social Services Commissioner and Dr. Anne Zink, Alaska State Chief Medical Officer, reported on the overall situation of the impacts of COVID-19 across Alaska.

Mr. Brown stated that Resolution Serial No. 21-115 is a list of proposed infrastructure projects that could be completed if and when funding becomes available through federal infrastructure bill, through the American Rescue Plant Act, or other possible funding. Noted that the legislation will be up for public hearing at the next Assembly meeting for consideration by the Assembly. Requested that if the Assembly has any projects they would like added to let him know.

D. ATTORNEY COMMENTS

There was no report provided.

E. CLERK COMMENTS

Ms. McKechnie noted that the call-in conference line for the public has been experiencing issues. Advised that Sonexis is aware of these issues and is working to fix them. Noted that it seems to impact about 10 percent of calls. Requested that if a caller experiences any issues using the conference line, to hang up and call back in.

F. CITIZEN AND OTHER CORRESPONDENCE

[21-204](#)

1. Aviation Advisory Board: 05/20/21, Resolution No. 21-01
2. Louise/Susitna/Tyone Community Association: 07/10/21
3. Midway RSA Board of Supervisors: 09/29/21, Resolution No. 21-1
4. MSB Fish and Wildlife Commission: 04/22/21, 05/20/21
5. Planning Commission: 08/16/21
6. Talkeetna Community Council: 09/07/21
7. Tanaina Community Council: 09/14/21

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

G. INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUMS

[IM 21-193](#)

Reporting Of Conclusion Of Contract For Bid No. 19-077B To Dirtworks, Inc. For Lake Louise Boat Launch Project.

[IM 21-215](#)

Informing The Assembly Of The Managers Signature On And The Submittal Of The Fiscal Year 2023 Human Services Community Matching Grant Application To The Alaska State Department Of Health And Social Services.

[IM 21-222](#)

Informing The Assembly Of 13 Individual Fiscal Year 2022 Winter Trail Care And Grooming Grant Agreements That Will Be Provided To The Manager For Signature.

The informational memorandums were presented and no comments were noted.

VII. SPECIAL ORDERS

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

B. PUBLIC HEARINGS (Three Minutes Per Person.)

[OR 21-100](#)

An Ordinance Approving The Sale Of Borough-Owned Land Identified As Lot 927, Caswell Lakes Subdivision, To Adjacent Property Owner Brad McCourt On Behalf Of McCourt Family Trust, Pursuant To MSB 23.10.230, Agreements By Application.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mr. Eric Phillips, Community Development Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Boeve moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-100. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

[OR 21-101](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating COVID-19 Disaster Relief Funds Of \$17,918.34 From The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

RS 21-104: A Resolution Approving The Amended Budget For COVID-19 Disaster Relief Funds.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Boeve moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-101 and Resolution Serial No. 21-104. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

[OR 21-102](#)

An Ordinance Reappropriating \$33,600 From The Cash Performance Areawide Bond Fund Account To The Chanlyut Circle Upgrade Project.

RS 21-106: A Resolution Amending The Scope Of Work And Budget For The MSB Facility Access Improvements Project, Chanlyut Circle Upgrade.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Mr. Terry Dolan, Public Works Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Nowers moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-102 and Resolution Serial No. 21-106. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

[OR 21-104](#)

An Ordinance Authorizing The Issuance Of Areawide General Obligation Bonds, In One Or More Series, To Finance The Construction, Additions, Improvements, Betterments, Repair, Reconstruction, Or Acquisition Of Public Roads And Facilities Related Thereto In The Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Together With All Necessary Equipment And Transportation Facilities, And The Acquisition Of Lands Or Rights In Lands In Connection Therewith, And To Refund Certain Outstanding General Obligation Bonds Of The Borough; Fixing Certain Details Of Such Bonds; And Authorizing Their Sale.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Finance Director, provided a staff report.

Mayor Halter opened the public hearing.

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

Assemblymember Boeve moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 21-104. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

C. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three Minutes Per Person.)

The following person spoke in support of Resolution Serial Nos. 21-108, 21-109, and 21-110 regarding selecting permanent sites for Mat-Su Central, Charter Academy, and Birchtree Charter schools: Ms. Elaine Ridley.

D. CONSENT AGENDA

1. RESOLUTIONS

[RS 21-076](#) A Resolution Establishing That Financing Of Energy Improvement Projects Through Assessments Serves A Valid Public Purpose And Related Matters (Pace Program).

Sponsors: Nowers

[RS 21-108](#) A Resolution Selecting A Permanent Site For Mat-Su Central School Within Lot 1, Stringfield Subdivision, Plat No. 2020-96, Located In Section 34, Township 18 North, Range 1 East, Seward Meridian, Alaska.

[RS 21-109](#) A Resolution Selecting A Permanent Site For American Charter Academy Within A Portion Of Tract A Of Alaska State Land Survey No. 2004-18, Plat No. 2007-167, Palmer Recording District, Third Judicial District, State Of Alaska.

[RS 21-110](#) A Resolution Selecting A Permanent Site For Birchtree Charter School Within A Portion Of Government Lot 1 And The North East 1/4, North West 1/4, Section 30, Township 18 North, Range 1 East, Seward Meridian, Palmer Recording District, Third Judicial District, State Of Alaska.

[RS 21-111](#) A Resolution Supporting The Submittal Of An Economic Development Administration Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant Application With The Fairbanks North Star Borough For The Development Of Rail And Natural Gas Infrastructure Providing Economic Development Opportunity And Improving Resiliency.

[RS 21-116](#) A Resolution Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into An Agreement With Bond Brothers Logging, LLC. For The Yoder Road Timber Sale.

2. ACTION MEMORANDUMS

[AM 21-106](#) Award Of Bid No. 22-056C To True North Emergency Equipment, Inc. In The Contract Amount Of \$488,718 Purchase Spartan Tender. Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Boeve 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 Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

VIII. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

XI. RECONSIDERATION

[RS](#)
[21-101-R](#) A Resolution Approving A Change To The Fiscal Year 2022 Schedule Of Rates And Fees For Central Landfill And All Transfer Sites To Add A Special Level Pickup Truck Rate Of \$10.

Sponsors: Tew

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Sumner moved to reconsider Resolution Serial No. 21-101. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

Assemblymember Sumner moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 21-101 by striking "\$10" and inserting "\$20" in its place throughout the legislation.

Assemblymember Nowers moved a secondary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 21-101 by striking "20" and inserting "\$41" in its place throughout the legislation.

**Assemblymember McKee 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 Tew, Assemblymember Sumnerand
Assemblymember Boeve

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 1 - Assemblymember Nowers

No: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee,
Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew,
Assemblymember Sumnerand Assemblymember Boeve

Assemblymember Nowers moved a secondary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 21-101 by striking "\$20" and inserting "\$34" in its place throughout the legislation.

**Assemblymember McKee called for the question (to stop debate).
The motion passed by the following vote:**

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tewand Assemblymember Boeve

No: 1 - Assemblymember Sumner

The secondary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowersand
Assemblymember Sumner

No: 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tewand Assemblymember Boeve

The primary amendment passed by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tewand Assemblymember Sumner

No: 1 - Assemblymember Boeve

Assemblymember Nowers moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 21-101, by making the legislation apply only to transfer stations.

**Assemblymember McKee called for the question (to stop debate).
The motion failed by the following vote:**

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers,
Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and
Assemblymember Boeve

The primary amendment failed by the following vote:

Yes: 3 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers and
Assemblymember Boeve

No: 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tew and Assemblymember Sumner

**Assemblymember McKee 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 Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and
Assemblymember Boeve

The main motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 5 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee,
Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew and
Assemblymember Sumner

No: 2 - Assemblymember Nowers and Assemblymember Boeve

Mayor Halter issued an immediate veto of Resolution Serial No. 21-101.

Assemblymember Tew moved to override the Mayoral veto of Resolution Serial No. 21-101.

**Assemblymember McKee called for the question (to stop debate).
The motion failed by the following vote (required five votes):**

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt,
Assemblymember Tew and Assemblymember Sumner

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

Assemblymember McKee 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 Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and
Assemblymember Boeve

**The motion to override the Mayoral veto failed by the following
vote (required five votes):**

Yes: 4 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember McKee,
Assemblymember Tew and Assemblymember Sumner

No: 3 - Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember Yundt and
Assemblymember Boeve

IX. VETO

[RS](#)
[21-101-V](#)

A Resolution Approving A Change To The Fiscal Year 2022 Schedule Of
Rates And Fees For Central Landfill And The Transfer Sites To Add A
Special Level Pickup Truck Rate Of \$10.

[Clerk's Note: The Mayoral veto issued on 10/07/21, was not moved due to
the Mayor issuing an immediate veto.]

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. INTRODUCTIONS (For Public Hearing 11/16/21, Assembly Chambers)

[OR 21-103](#)

An Ordinance Approving The Addition Of A Regular, Full-Time, Fire
Service Area Assistant For The Willow And Caswell Fire Service Areas;
And Approving A Supplemental Appropriation Of \$54,615 From Both
The Willow And Caswell Fire Service Areas Fund Balance Accounts To
Their Respective Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budgets, For Wages And
Benefits For The New Position For The Period January 1, 2022, To
June 30, 2022.

[OR 21-105](#)

An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating An Additional \$100,000
From The Alaska State Department Of Health And Social Services, To
Provide Financial Assistance To The Borough For COVID-19 Vaccine
Support Services.

RS 21-107: A Resolution Approving The Extended Timeframe And
Revised Budget For The Alaska State Department Of Health And Social
Services Grant, To Provide Financial Assistance To The Borough For
COVID-19 Vaccine Support Services.

[OR 21-106](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$50,000 From The Palmer Volunteer Fire Association For Improvements To The Driveway And Parking Pad For Greater Palmer Fire Service Area Station 3-3 Located On Lazy Mountain.

RS: 21-112: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For Improvements To The Driveway And Parking Pad For Greater Palmer Fire Service Area Station 3-3 Located On Lazy Mountain.

[OR 21-107](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$1,000,000 From The Alaska State Department Of Commerce, Community, And Economic Development For The 2024 Arctic Winter Games.

RS 21-113: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget And Authorizing The Manager To Enter Into The Grant Agreement For The 2024 Arctic Winter Games.

[OR 21-108](#) An Ordinance Accepting And Appropriating \$156,030 From The Matanuska-Susitna Convention And Visitors Bureau For The Gateway Visitors Center.

RS 21-114: A Resolution Approving The Scope Of Work And Budget For The Gateway Visitors Center.

[RS 21-115](#) A Resolution Approving A List Of Potential Federally Funded Infrastructure Projects.

Ms. McKechnie read the legislation into the record.

Assemblymember Boeve moved to introduce the legislation as read into the record by the Clerk and to set the public hearings for November 16, 2021. The motion passed by the following vote:

Yes: 7 - Assemblymember Hale, Assemblymember Nowers, Assemblymember McKee, Assemblymember Yundt, Assemblymember Tew, Assemblymember Sumner and Assemblymember Boeve

B. MAYORAL NOMINATIONS AND APPOINTMENTS

1. VACANCY REPORT

There was no vacancy report.

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.

XII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Brown advised that the Alaska Railbelt Clean Energy Infrastructure Growth Cluster grant application was submitted to the United States Economic Development Administration today. Stated that there letters of support were received from Governor Dunleavy, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Dan Sullivan, Congressman Don Young, Representative Bart LeBon, Representative Steve Thompson, Representative Mike Prax, Representative Grier Hopkins, Representative Adam Wool, Representative Mike Cronk, Senator Scott Kawasaki, Senator Robert Myers, Senator Click Bishop; the cities of Fairbanks, Houston, Palmer, and the Denali Borough; the Fairbanks Economic Development Corporation, the Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce, Knik Tribal Council, and the Palmer Chamber of Commerce.

Assemblymember Yundt noted Mayor Halter's many years of service and stated that in all good conscience, he could not vote to override the mayoral veto. Stated that transfer fees could be discussed during the budget cycle.

Assemblymember McKee spoke to a conversation he had regarding the Assembly's view of the Borough's economy. Opined that the Assembly cannot give direction to the Manager without establishing that point of view. Further opined that it is a disserve the community.

Assemblymember Sumner noted that the Borough has been more economically sound over the last six years than many other parts of the country. Opined that it is not the Assembly's responsibility to predict what the economic future will be.

Assemblymember Nowers noted that areas that are thriving have looked at what they can do to attract business. Opined that there is no need to be in competition with Anchorage as what benefits the Borough may benefit them as well. Noted that everyone is concerned with energy and transportation costs. Spoke to the need for the Borough to retain what attracts residents to live here. Stated that she appreciated the presentations at the earlier meeting. Noted her pleasure that the C-Pace legislation was adopted. Stated that she is pleased that Mr. Jim Varsos was recognized. Spoke to a neighbor of hers that recently passed, Mr. Elliot Gagnon who was an Anchorage plastic surgeon with a long history of serving his community.

Mayor Halter spoke in appreciation of the presentation by Mr. Neal Fried. Spoke to the division of the bodies in Anchorage and in Palmer. Stated that he does not see that in the Borough's Assembly. Noted that he sees a lot of hard work and respect amongst the body. Stated that he does not think that micromanaging staff is the right thing for the Assembly to do. Commented

that he holds each Assembly member in high regard. Related that former Assemblymember Noel Woods and his wife Jean recently passed away, which saddens him. Stated that life is precious and should be treasured.

XIII. 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. Matanuska-Susitna Borough vs. Drum

Assemblymember Boeve moved to enter into 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. Those present during the executive session were the Mayor, the Assembly, the Manager, the Assistant Manager, the Attorney, and the Clerk.

The motion passed without objection and the Assembly entered into executive session at 7:33 p.m.

Assemblymember Boeve moved to exit adjudicatory session. There was no objection noted and the Assembly exited adjudicatory session at 8:45 p.m.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.