

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SPECIAL MEETING  
ASSEMBLY/SCHOOL BOARD JUNE 11, 2002

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on June 11, 2002 at the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly Chambers, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Timothy L. Anderson. The purpose was a joint meeting between the assembly and school board.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. J. Bruce Bush, Assembly District No. 1  
Ms. Sara Jansen, Assembly District No. 2 (Deputy Mayor)  
Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3  
Mr. Dan Kelly, Assembly District No. 4  
Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5  
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (arrived at 6:15 p.m.)  
Ms. Kelly Ladere, Assembly District No. 7

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Carl Gatto, Seat B  
Mr. Bob Johnson, Seat D  
Mr. Mike Chmielewski, Seat E  
Mr. Larry DeVilbiss, Seat F  
Mr. Daniel Contini, Seat G (School Board President)

School Board members absent were:

Mr. Rob Wells, Seat A  
Ms. Linda Menard, Seat C

Borough staff participating:

Ms. Sandra Dillon, Borough Clerk  
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager  
Mr. Jim Swing, Public Works Director

School staff participating:

Ms. Patricia Chesbro, Superintendent  
Mr. Bob Doyle, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The agenda was approved as presented, without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Eowyn LeMay Ivey from the Frontiersman newspaper.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

There were no one present who wished to testify.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

## A. Review School Capital Construction Plan [MSB 2.12.075(A)]

Jim Swing reported on the following school capital construction projects:

- Sherrod Replacement School - Collins Construction Co. was issued a notice to proceed this morning at a preconstruction conference; project is due to be completed in August 2003 but the contractor expects to complete it sooner.
- Houston High School - substantial completion date has been extended 110 days to November 19, 2002; building is completely enclosed; about 74% complete; work is progressing on the interior; contractor is installing siding and preparing concrete; project is progressing as well as can be expected.
- District-Wide Technology - AMC Engineers has been selected as the consultant; contract has been negotiated; design should start within a week.
- Wasilla High School - Phase 2 demolition work began on June 4; site was turned over to the contractor on June 8; work is proceeding on schedule; mold was discovered which will have to be cleaned up and added to the contract but is not expected to hold anything up.
- Burchell High School - work is complete; landscaping is to be completed this week; still have to pave the back parking lot.
  - Teeland Middle and Larson Elementary Schools - have been completed for some time but warranty work is still being done.
- Carpet replacement - Originally the bonds approved six schools for carpet replacement; there was only enough money to carpet five of the elementary schools: Snowshoe, Butte, Cottonwood Creek, Iditarod, and Tanaina; the school district is currently looking to see whether they can find enough money to recarpet the remaining two: Big Lake and Pioneer Peak.
- Turning lanes for Larson Elementary and Teeland Middle - the borough did a traffic impact analysis; it was reviewed by the Alaska State Department of Transportation (DOT) and the Alaska State Department of Education (DOE); they verbally said go ahead with the project on June 6; Lounsbury & Associates is proceeding with the design phase.

Discussion followed regarding:

- the Big Lake library opening;
- carpet replacement for Big Lake and Pioneer Peak Elementary Schools;
- waste water at Colony Middle;
- water quality at Teeland; and
- arsenic levels in general.

(Assemblymember Colver arrived at 6:15 p.m.)

Mr. Swing continued reporting on school projects, including:

- Fire Sprinklers at Su Valley and Palmer High Schools - the borough awarded a design contract to PDC Consulting Engineers last month; the sprinkler system installation will go out for bid in August; completion is expected in August 2003.
- Butte gym - removal of asbestos wall boards; bids came in extremely high, so cancelled project for this summer; will rebid in the fall.
- Su Valley and Palmer High Schools - will be replacing boilers.
- Pioneer Peak - will be upgrading HVAC.
- Glacier View - will be paving access road and parking lot.

Discussion and questions ensued regarding:

- no plans at this time to construct turn lanes at Meadow Lakes Elementary, however, there will be a flashing yellow light erected by DOT;
- the cost to resurface a school track being in excess of \$150,000; and
- approval from DOE on the turn lanes at Larson and Teeland; Lounsbury is proceeding with the design.

Ms. Clayton:

- addressed the turn lane safety issue at Meadow Lakes;
- noted that the closeout has not yet been completed; and
- mentioned that there are some funds there but before any reallocation of monies can be approved, the closeout has to occur.

Assemblymember Ladere:

- requested that any excess funds be used to construct a turn lane at Meadow Lakes.

Ms. Clayton:

- discussed the \$70 million in bonding for future projects; a handout was distributed listing Future Bonding Projects FY 2003-2004 including nutrition services, administration building, vocational center, Iditarod renovation and expansion, Valley Pathways School, and Wasilla Elementary School;
- noted projects that would be eligible for reimbursement;
- said that reimbursement is predicated on the passage of the bond issue in November; and
- stated that it is not known at this point whether all projects would be funded.

Ms. Chesbro:

- noted that the board had just gotten the information and really hasn't had a chance to do their part regarding future projects.

Assemblymember Jansen:

- inquired regarding the status of the nutrition center.

Brief discussion followed, and it was noted that information on the project will be needed fairly quickly for federal funding.

B. District Administration Building; Palmer Economic Development Association (PEDA) (requested by Daniel Contini).

School Board President Contini:

- commented with regard to the PEDA proposal for building a district administration building;
- noted that the administration building always seems to fall through the cracks when it comes to bonding projects; and
- solicited comments as to the feasibility of PEDA's proposal.

Discussion followed.

School Board Member Gatto:

- noted his understanding of the PEDA proposal: PEDA would bond, build, and then lease the facility to the school district.

Assemblymember Kelly:

- inquired as to the amount of money involved in a lease situation.

Mr. Duffy:

- suggested both administrations sit down with PEDA and flush it out and supply a written report to both bodies.

School Board Member Chmielewski:

- summarized PEDA's presentation to the school board;
- noted their intent was honorable and timely in the sense that they have identified a need and an issue in which they could be involved to find a solution;
- said PEDA openly stated that they didn't have all the cost factors yet, and that they are inviting the borough and the school board to help work that out;
- encouraged participation in the PEDA proposal;
- requested that it be set up so the school board and assembly would get feedback and reports on a regular basis; and
- supported Mr. Duffy's suggestion of meeting with PEDA and written reports.

Assemblymember Ladere:

- noted that although we haven't seen any data yet, she is delighted that PEDA has come to us with the administration building proposal;
- commented on the poor condition of the current administration building and noted that any government buildings should be accessible to all our citizens;
- supported exploring the potential with PEDA to get into an appropriate facility at a reasonable price; and
- encouraged everyone to work hard to solve the problem of the existing administration building.

Assemblymember Colver:

- noted that the PEDA proposal is filling a need that is not being filled otherwise.

Mr. Doyle:

- clarified, in general, the procedures involved in leasing a facility; and
- noted that he sees three options regarding the administration building:
  - 1) the PEDA proposal;
  - 2) Sherrod improvements;
  - 3) \$8 million bond project that the borough would let out for bid to build a new facility from scratch; and
- explained that in a lease situation they would be looking at an existing building that could be modified in a specific attendance area with a very narrow window of getting them up and going;

Assemblymember Colver:

- encouraged consideration of future use of the old Sherrod School; and
- queried regarding the PEDA proposal, the disposition of Sherrod, and the associated costs.

Mr. Duffy:

- responded that those answers would be made part of the written report.

School Board Member Johnson:

- emphasized the need for a new building;
- expressed concern about using Sherrod; and
- discussed the Iditarod renovation.

Assemblymember Ladere:

- expressed support for Mr. Johnson's idea that the board consider the Iditarod renovation;
- commented that she thinks that families are looking at ways to assist our communities to develop in ways that they want to;
- opined that Palmer is turning into a beautiful community for government, and it is evidenced by the fact that they

- are coming forward with a proposal to solve some of our problems; and
- stated she thinks it could be a win-win solution for everyone.

Assemblymember Jansen:

- recognized the need to do something about the administration building;
- aid that the PEDAs proposal would have to make fiscal sense as the school district has already incurred lease payments in other places; and
- expressed support for the manager's suggestion to meet with PEDAs.

School Board Member Gatto:

- expressed concern for the dangerous condition of the current administration building and advocated the need for a new building; and
- noted the building cannot be fixed or renovated; that we should consider it a safety issue.

Assemblymember Kelly:

- recognized that Palmer would gain from having a new administration building within its city limits;
- inquired whether PEDAs has actually identified a site, or whether it would be Sherrod; and
- suggested that the assembly might consider a new building jointly with Palmer in order to consider the future needs of both administrations.

Further discussion ensued regarding:

- leasing and funding; and
- safety of the current building.

Assemblymember Ladere:

- requested that information as to what would happen with the current property it be included in the written report.

Discussion continued, regarding:

- a timeline for return of information; and
- the expectation that dialog will continue among the parties.

## VII. SCHOOL BOARD, MAYOR , ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Ms. Chesbro:

- commented that she enjoyed working with everyone over the past two years and noted she will be an audience participant in the future.

Ms. Dillon:

- commented on the startup of the election season;
- noted three elections: the state primary in August, the borough election in October, and the general election in November;
- discussed the candidacy filing period for school board and assembly: July 29 through August 9, 2002; and
- noted that early/absentee voting starts in September.

School Board Member DeVilbiss:

- commented with regard to new technology updates; and
- recognized students for their achievements and the caliber of the students graduating this year.

- School Board Member Gatto:

School Board Member Gatto:

- spoke to the incentives and zero tolerance rules at Burchell High School, specifically with regard to no fighting
- expressed appreciation for the fact that the students police themselves and help each other obey the rules; and
- noted that we can depend on students to police each other if they have the right incentives – at Burchell the incentive is if you fight, you're out.

School Board Member Chmielewski:

- commented that even though it has been a relatively short meeting, it has been a good meeting;
- encouraged everyone to enjoy the summer and to be prepared for the challenging issues in the fall; and
- noted he looks forward to working with the borough on those issues.

School Board Member Contini:

- • thanked everyone for the discussion on the projects that might be considered for future bonding; and
- noted that the school board will meet tomorrow evening to start the interview process for the interim superintendent.

Assemblymember Ladere:

- expressed appreciation for the very productive meeting;
- noted that she thinks we have a very good capital improvement program considering the limited funding that the borough currently has;
- spoke to the high quality of the staff in all categories who have chosen to stay here, whether they are directly employed or not, to contribute to the quality of our school programs;
- noted there are still areas in which to improve the working relationship of both bodies;
- observed that there is a lot of wisdom coming together; and
- commented that she feels there is room for improvement and would like to see the school board and administration come together a little more closely on our IT programs.

Assemblymember Simpson:

- spoke to the Memorandum of Agreement that was signed about a year ago which outlines how the two bodies are to communicate on how technology issues are dealt with, planned out, and discussed, and noted that this MOA was side-stepped in the current situation with regard to the AS-400;
- reported that the steering committee is working now to get back on track with communication and put the two administrations and the programmers together on a more regular basis to hammer out how the new computer system will be used;
- expressed concern and discussed purchasing codes;
- encouraged the school board to familiarize themselves with school district purchasing codes and those of the borough; and
- expressed best wishes to Ms. Chesbro.

Assemblymember Bush:

- • expressed best wishes to Ms. Chesbro.

Assemblymember Colver:

- • expressed that he is proud of our educators and students;
- thanked borough administration and public works for a job well done with regard to the gravel and turn lane on Seldon Road;

- thanked Ms. Chesbro for her contribution to the district; and
- noted that we should address the needs of Wasilla High School once it is known how money will be available.

Assemblymember Jansen:

- expressed concern regarding the IT issue;
- noted that it is important to look for ways to meet each individual programming element that each entity might have; also noting concern for cost;
- is hopeful that there will be full and candid sharing of information towards the common goal of being able to make decisions that are ultimately best for the taxpayers; and
- thanked Ms. Chesbro and wished her the best in the future.

Mayor Anderson:

- also recognized Ms. Chesbro and thanked her for her contributions, noting in particular eliminating the majority of issues regarding the budget;
- recognized and expressed appreciation for the steps being taken to resolve the issues between the two bodies; and
- encouraged continuing to work together on the issues.

## VI. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting was adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor  
ATTEST:

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SANDRA A. DILLON, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: July 16, 2002