

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on March 10, 2009, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Woods for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1 (*Deputy Mayor*)
Mr. Pete Houston, Assembly District No. 2
Ms. Michelle R. Church, Assembly District No. 3
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Tom Kluberton, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:

Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4
Mr. Rob Wells, Assembly District No. 6

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B
Ms. Susan Pougher, Seat C (*via teleconference*) 6:05 p.m.
Mr. R. Ole Larson, Seat D
Mr. Brian Sullivan, Seat E
Ms. Colleen Hamblen, Seat F
Mr. Myrl Thompson, Seat G

School Board members absent and excused were:

Mr. Jim Colver, Seat A (*School Board President*)

Borough staff in attendance were:

Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
Mr. Keith Rountree, Public Works Director
Ms. Cheryl D. Marino Deputy Borough Clerk
Mr. Mark Mayo, Planning Director
Mr. Bill Klebesadel, Project Management/Engineer Division Manager
Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Financial Analyst

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Deputy Mayor Woods inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ms. Cheyenne Heindel.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke in support of naming South Palmer Elementary School after Mayor Curtis D. Menard: Ms. Jill Showman, Matanuska-Susitna Education Association President of the Teacher's Association.

The following person spoke in support of naming South Palmer Elementary School after Mayor Curtis D. Menard and spoke regarding the NANA Management contract with the School District: Mr. Rick Burns, President of the Classified Employees Association.

The following person spoke regarding facility use issues with the School District and NANA Management: Ms. Kathleen Fleming.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Building Construction Progress (*Requested by: Borough Administration*)

Mr. Rountree provided an update on the following projects:

- the monthly Public Works facility maintenance meetings;
- site selection evaluation;
- School District safety and security upgrades;
- Houston High School football field lights;
- Trapper Creek Elementary School repairs;
- Colony High School/Middle School video surveillance;
- Colony High School running track replacement;
- Wasilla Middle School addition and renovation;
- Big Lake Elementary School re-roof and asbestos abatement;
- Su-Valley Junior/Senior School construction;
- Su-Valley High School wood-fired boiler system;
- Palmer High School field turf; and
- South Palmer Elementary School.

Assemblymember Church queried if the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) is the minimum acceptable standard used in the monthly Public Works facility maintenance.

Mr. Rountree:

- reported that LEED is included in the minimum acceptable standard;
- noted that the facility design manual covers everything from flooring to roofing material; and
- stated that any building over 10,000 square feet has to be LEED certified at a minimum unless it is deemed unfeasible, per the Green Building's Policy.

Assemblymember Church noted that the costs for Houston High School and Trapper Creek Elementary School were significantly higher than the estimates.

Mr. Rountree:

- advised that the original numbers were estimates; and
- reported that the only way to get accurate numbers is to have a request for proposal.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the type of surveillance equipment needed for Colony High School;
- the need for improving fencing at some of the schools;
- the Trapper Creek Elementary School roof condition;
- the bonds for the safety and security upgrades; and
- the status of the bond market.

B. Annual Budget (*pursuant to code*)

Mr. Troxel:

- advised that the School Board is currently working on the School District budget;
- commented that the School District budget will be forwarded to the Assembly by April 1, 2009;
- reported that the final School Board public hearing on the budget will be March 18, 2009;
- advised that the School Board is scheduled to meet on March 19, 2009; and
- noted that the School Board may need to schedule additional meetings if the budget is not finalized by March 19, 2009.

Deputy Mayor Woods:

- thanked School Board Member Pougher for providing the Assembly with the School District's Performance Based Budget goals; and
- noted that the School District did not note goals related to being efficient with funding.

School Board Member Welton:

- provided an overview of performance based budgeting;
- noted the limited funding with the current economy;
- reported that the budget packages are complete packages, but may not list everything the School District would like;
- advised that there have been program changes which are explained in the narrative pieces;
- noted that the School District can work with less than the zero based budget or the enhanced budget;
- noted that the performance based budget ranks items in order;

- spoke to how the School District established their priorities; and
- stated that she recognized that having everything funded is not practical.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- noted that the budget is programmed based versus performance based;
- noted that the budget is not in ranking sequence; and
- queried the meaning of “R5” within the report.

School Board Member Hamblen:

- advised that “R5” means a reduction of 5 percent in the budget, “ZB” means zero based, “R2” is a reduction of 2 percent, and “EP” stands for the Enhanced Program with a one percent increase in funding; and
- spoke to the ranking system.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the report ranking system;
- the various types of packages;
- the School Board not knowing what the State is funding until June 2009;
- the budget being a continually revolving process; and
- the zero based budget not being enough funding for the School District.

C. South Palmer Elementary School Road Access (*Requested by: School Board*)

Mr. Rountree:

- noted that a detailed presentation was presented at the last Joint Assembly/School Board meeting regarding the South Palmer Elementary School access issues; and
- requested that Mr. Klebesadel provide an update.

Mr. Klebesadel:

- noted that 150 residents attended a meeting at Evangelos Restaurant on January 22, 2009, regarding this issue;
- advised that a “white route” alignment was added;
- reported that the Borough is currently verifying grades and elevation on the “white” route;
- spoke regarding a letter of commitment from Mr. Tucker;
- advised that Mr. Tucker had been in contact with the State of Alaska Department of Transportation regarding the Fireweed connection;
- reported that there are still significant issues with Abby Boulevard and East Brome Avenue;
- noted that other alignments have not changed;
- stated that the Public Works Department will continue to price out all of the options and present a recommendation to the Assembly; and
- advised that this is a part of the ongoing South Trunk Road Extension Project that started two years ago.

School Board Member Larson queried the South Palmer Elementary School Road Access Project timeline.

Mr. Klebesedel:

- stated that it is likely that the South Palmer Elementary School Access Project would not begin this year; and
- spoke to how the buses will access the school.

Assemblymember Bettine queried the reason that the “blue” route is not being used.

Mr. Klebesedel:

- advised that the “blue” route is not being used because of its cost; and
- noted that Mr. Turner originally proposed \$1.2 million, \$500,000 of which was to construct the road to residential collector standards, and \$700,000 would be set aside for the bridge.

Assemblymember Bettine queried if there was State funding for a section of the “blue” route.

Mr. Klebesedel reported that State funds were for the intersection at Trunk Road.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the condition and status of Nelson Road;
- the use of calcium chloride to improve the condition of Nelson Road;
- the current contract in place to plow Nelson Road;
- the issue of Nelson road crossing the Fairview Road Service Area (RSA) and Midway RSA boundaries;
- the concern of Fairview RSA and Midway RSA regarding an increased mill levy;
- the material needed to bring Nelson Road to a standard condition;
- the Trunk Road Extension Project extending through to Seward Meridian in the Long Range Transportation Plan;
- the new “white” alternate route to Fireweed Road;
- the Trunk Road roundabout;
- the School Board’s discussion regarding the cost to close South Palmer Elementary School exceeding the cost of the school opening;
- the warranty issue should South Palmer Elementary School not open;
- the impact to road service areas;
- the possible need for portables that will be available from Susitna Valley High School;
- the timeframe to perform road paving;
- the need to approach the State Legislature again for funding;
- the possibility of not opening South Palmer Elementary School; and
- the issues of condemnation.

D. Susitna Valley High School Insurance Update (*Requested by: School Board*)

Mr. Rountree advised that he cannot speak to this item as it is scheduled for the Assembly to discuss in executive session at the March 17, 2009, meeting.

- E. Resolution Serial No. 09-024: A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY AND THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NATURAL SCIENCE EDUCATION/COMMUNITY CENTER WITHIN THE PALMER HAY FLATS STATE GAME REFUGE. *(Sponsored by: Assemblymember Bettine)*
1. IM No. 09-079

MOTION: Assemblymember Bettine moved to adopt joint Resolution Serial No. 09-024.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to the Palmer Hay Flats non-profit organization's presentation to the School Board and Assembly in June 2008;
- stated that this project is on the Borough's Federal and State priority lists;
- noted that the legislation shows support from both bodies; and
- commented that this will help in moving forward with completing the feasibility portion of the study.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection by both bodies.

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

School Board Member Weltin noted her appreciation for the meeting.

School Board Member Pougher:

- commented that she enjoyed listening to the different opinions regarding South Palmer Elementary School; and
- noted that she is looking forward to a resolution to the South Palmer Elementary School access issues.

School Board Member Hamblen:

- spoke to frustrations regarding the Performance Based Budget process;
- reported that the School Board has a meeting scheduled on March 18, 2009;
- stated that the School Board has had weekly budget meetings;
- encouraged the Assembly to attend the School Board meeting on March 18, 2009; and
- commented that she enjoyed the meeting and the camaraderie that has been established.

Assemblymember Houston:

- spoke to frustrations regarding changes to the School District's budget after the fiscal year 2009 budget was adopted;
- spoke to the need for a School District fiscal plan to help determine which direction to go; and
- encouraged everyone to tour the Palmer Hay Flats.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to volunteers and bed tax dollars contributing to the majority of the upgrade to scout ridge at the Palmer Hay Flats;
- noted that there is access to the Palmer Hay Flats, but access is by-foot;
- commented on appreciating the meetings with the School Board;
- spoke to serving on the School District's Activities Task Force, for use of public facilities and extra curricular activities;
- advised that there are ongoing facility access issues to the schools;
- noted that there are buses that are parked and are not being used;
- spoke to concerns regarding transporting children down into the Palmer Hay Flats; and
- thanked everyone for a great meeting.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- asked everyone to think very carefully about delaying the opening of South Palmer Elementary School;
- noted that there is no easy resolution to the road access issue;
- spoke to the "white" route;
- commented that funding may be difficult to obtain during the current economy; and
- thanked everyone for the meeting.

Assemblymember Church:

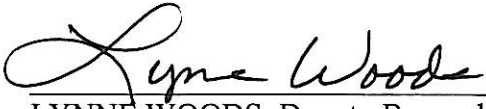
- noted that it was a good meeting;
- spoke to concerns regarding the NANA Management contract extension;
- commented that the NANA Management contract extension is a controversial issue;
- spoke in support of naming South Palmer Elementary School after Mayor Curtis D. Menard;
- spoke to the School District's request that code be changed to allow them to use the funds that are given back to the Borough for a contingency fund;
- spoke to the South Palmer Elementary School access; and
- spoke to the need for the School Board to submit a "plan B" for South Palmer Elementary School for the fall.

Deputy Mayor Woods:

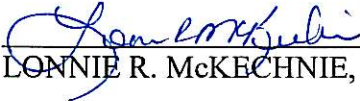
- thanked everyone for coming to the meeting;
- spoke to receiving calls over the last month regarding the budget;
- spoke to the public's concerns regarding cut backs, opposition to higher taxes, and road issues;
- noted that the Borough may have to look at a decrease in services; and
- noted her appreciation for everyone's contributions.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.


LYNNE WOODS, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 04/07/09

