

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on March 14, 2005, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 12 noon by Mayor Timothy L. Anderson for the purpose of convening as a committee of the whole to discuss economic development.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1
Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4
Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District 6 (*Deputy Mayor*)

Assembly members absent and excused were:

Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3
Ms. Betty Vehrs, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, CMC, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Anderson inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Dr. Paul Dauphinais, Matanuska-Susitna College Director.

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

(The Assembly entered committee of the whole at this time.)

Mr. Duffy:

- referenced letter a of support from the Matanuska-Susitna College Advisory Board;
- referred to the scope of work for professional assistance for the proposed four-year institute;
- stated that they have been working to arrange a meeting with the Chancellor from Anchorage;
- stated that the Chancellor has sent a list of questions that they would like answered before the meeting;
- recommended obtaining professional assistance to answer some of the questions; and
- introduced Dr. Dauphinais, the Matanuska-Susitna College Director.

Dr. Dauphinais:

- thanked the members of the Assembly for inviting him to attend the meeting and for their interest in the university;
- spoke to partnering with the Borough for the long-term growth of the area, as well as the college;
- stated that the Matanuska-Susitna College is working with Borough departments, particularly Emergency Services to improve the Emergency Medical Technician Program;
- noted that they are also working to try to offer the Early Childhood Development Program in a different mode, a blended form of delivery;
- spoke to the online aspect of the Early Childhood Development Program;
- discussed the difficulties the work place is experiencing with recent college graduates;
- stated that they are working to reinforce the life skills or success skills of college students;
- stated that one of their goals is to keep students here and working after graduating;
- referenced the reading material and the importance of students looking at education as a coherent whole; and
- stated that the reading material documents the old and new ways of education.

Assemblymember Allen:

- stated that he is confident that the Assembly will make headway on this issue;
- queried about the possibility of an annex in the city of Palmer for the college; and
- noted that the Borough owns a building in downtown Palmer that would require approximately \$3 million to bring up to code.

Dr. Dauphinais stated that they would be interested in an annex in the city of Palmer, and that it would have to go through the president of the university system.

Assemblymember Woods:

- spoke to the reading material;
- stated that the reading material referenced the biggest obstacle to changing the way we view education was the bureaucracy of the program; and
- inquired if this is our biggest problem.

Dr. Dauphinais stated that this may or may not be the biggest obstacle.

Assemblymember Woods noted that the Matanuska-Susitna College was one of the few that did not receive any new buildings this year.

Dr. Dauphinais:

- stated that it is difficult to get continuity when the turnover of staff is so high;
- stated that he has applied for two capital project requests;
- noted that you have to have an administration on campus for some time before you can get capital projects to go all the way through;
- noted that this is the reason why the campus has not received new major buildings in some time; and
- stated that if the proposal addresses the questions from the university and has data to back up the proposal with a compelling needs statement, the administration will not be a major problem.

Assemblymember Colver stated that seniors are also looking for higher education opportunities.

Dr. Dauphinais noted that seniors do not pay tuition.

Discussion ensued regarding demographics for higher education and providing community interest courses in the Borough.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired as to the status of the strategic plan to date.

Dr. Dauphinais:

- stated that the strategic plan was discussed at the retreat in 2003;
- commented that the University discussed providing higher quality education at a greater depth, not necessarily breadth;
- spoke to the refrigeration and heating program;
- stated that a goal is to use space more effectively and efficiently; and
- noted that a facilities master plan is currently being written in Anchorage.

Assemblymember Woods inquired if the facilities plan included dormitories.

Dr. Dauphinais:

- affirmed that the plan did include dormitories; and
- stated that Mari Montgomery is the contact person for University land issues.

Mayor Anderson inquired what the Borough's strategy is and where they are going with this project.

Mr. Duffy:

- replied that the Borough's plan is to get the scope of work approved; and
- noted that after the scope of work has been approved, the Borough would hire a consultant who will determine the next step based on scope of work.

Assemblymember Allen clarified that the Borough would hire a contractor until the need is seen for a permanent position.

Discussion ensued regarding expanding the college to a four-year university.

(The Assembly exited committee of the whole at this time.)

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (Three minutes per person.)

(There was no audience participation.)

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Duffy stated that they have received good bids for the Wasilla Area Elementary School.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.

/S/

JIM COLVER, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

/S/

MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: April 5, 2005