

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on March 29, 2011, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The special meeting was called to order at 6:05 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Warren Keogh, Assembly District No. 1
- Mr. Noel Woods, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Ron Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*via teleconference*)
- Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4
- Ms. Cindy Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
- Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6

Assembly members absent and excused:

- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Mike Dunleavy, Seat A (*School Board President*)
- Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B
- Ms. Susan Pougher, Seat C
- Mr. Ole Larson, Seat D
- Mr. Erick Cordero, Seat E
- Mr. Neal Lacy, Seat F
- Ms. Lynn Gattis, Seat G

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Lonnie McKechnie, CMC, Borough Clerk
- Mr. John Aschenbrenner, Borough Deputy Attorney
- Ms. Cheryl Marino, Deputy Borough Clerk
- Ms. Christine Nelson, Planning and Land Use Director
- Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director
- Mr. Dennis Brodigan, Emergency Services Director
- Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor DeVilbiss asked if there was any objection to taking up items of business D and G before item A and to combine items B and F.

There was no objection noted.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Ray DePriest, a member of the audience.

V. SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY

A. Proclamation in Recognition of Alcohol Awareness Month.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- read the proclamation into the record; and
- presented the proclamation to Mr. Seth Keller.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke regarding the Borough Area Schools Site Selection Committee: Mr. Randy Dellar.

VII. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

D. Teeland Middle School Design Team Presentation (*Requested by Borough Administration*)

The Teeland Middle School Design Team provided a presentation regarding Sustainable School of the Future Project.

G. Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District Blue Book (*Requested by School District*)

Mr. Burnley provided a presentation regarding the blue book.

A. Council of Educational Facility Planners International (CEFPI) Pacific Northwest Region Pinnacle Award for Machetanz Elementary School (*Requested by Borough Administration*)

Mr. Michael Carlson, McCool Carlson and Green, and Mr. Tom Lytle, Machetanz Elementary School Principal, provided a report on the Pinnacle Award.

C. Building Construction Progress (*Requested by Borough Administration*)

Mr. Braun noted that a current list of ongoing capital projects was provided to the Assembly and School District members with their meeting information.

E. Boundaries and Facilities Presentation (*Requested by School District*)

Dr. Burnley:

- introduced Mr. Shannon Bingham; and
- requested Mr. Bingham provide a report regarding boundaries and facilities.

Mr. Bingham provided a presentation regarding boundaries and facilities.

Assemblymember Bettine queried whether the boundary exemption would take care of the high school and middle school needs in the next couple of years.

Mr. Bingham:

- advised that the proposed attendance area changes would be a stop gap maneuver that would help to cope with Borough needs for the next three to four years; and
- reported that after three to four years, the Borough would become so behind from an enrollment standpoint, that there would be a significant number of additional portable classrooms needed at seven or eight of the Borough's most crowded facilities.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- which facilities are crowded;
- the need to have four additional elementary schools, an additional middle school, and an additional high school in the next ten years;
- the bus ride distance and route from South Schrock Road area to the Houston High School;
- the location of Machetanz Elementary School in regards to the attendance area;
- the number of available seats at Sutton Elementary School;
- the need for a third elementary school in the east portion of the Borough; and
- the Schools Site matrix.

(The meeting recessed at 7:51 p.m. and reconvened at 8 p.m.)

(Assemblymember Arvin was not present via teleconference at this time.)

B. Annual Budget *(Pursuant to MSB 2.12.075(A))*

F. Fiscal Year 2012 Budget Presentation *(Requested by School District)*

Dr. Burnley:

- noted that the School District would be finalizing the preliminary School District draft budget on March 30, 2011;
- spoke to how the budget is tied to the School Board's strategic plan;
- spoke to an Assembly resolution requesting that the School District live within their means;
- reported that when the School District negotiated the collective bargaining agreements, the directive was to cut the budget to make those arrangements; and
- spoke to an Assembly resolution regarding Borough growth.

Mr. Ken Forrester provided a presentation regarding the School District's FY12 preliminary budget.

H. Statutes, Rules, and Regulations for Improving Efficiency *(Requested by School Board Member Dunleavy)*

President Dunleavy noted that this discussion item had been previously covered during the meeting.

I. Bonding for Land and Facilities *(Requested by School District)*

Dr. Burnley:

- opined that there is not enough resources for facilities whether school site selection funding is used or working with the Borough on a comprehensive plan;
- spoke to the need to align with the Borough's plans for facilities; and
- spoke to the need to think about bonding for facilities and have a public relations campaign over three year intervals.

Mr. Don Carney, School District Operations and Maintenance Assistant Director:

- reported that the Borough and School District could be reimbursed 70 percent of fair market value for the land that is used for schools through the state of Alaska Grant Program and the State Debt Program;
- noted that there is only a limited amount of funding available through the Borough Area Schools Site Selection Committee;
- spoke to the need to ensure that the purchase of land is addressed in a manner so that it would qualify for State participation;
- stated that the purchasing practices set out by State guidelines would need to be followed and the projected cost or revenue needed for the land purchases in the grant request would need to be included in order to qualify;
- noted that funding for land had not been requested within previous grant requests; and
- spoke to the need to pursue answers from the State to see what would be accepted and to move forward in that direction with future grant and debt applications.

Assemblymember Bettine queried what the reimbursement would be based on.

Mr. Carney:

- advised that the fair market value at the time of purchase is what the reimbursement would be based on; and
- noted that the Borough would have the opportunity to petition the State for reimbursement of the land purchase as long as the process was followed.

Assemblymember Bettine requested that Ms. Gray and the Land Management Division find out what is in the Department of Education's policy.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- bonding for the October regular election ballot;
- Census information;
- the Mat-Su Career and Technical High School;
- economic times and population decline in the 1980's; and
- the need to have a conservative approach to building facilities.

J. New School Construction Strategy *(Requested by Mayor DeVilbiss)*

[Clerk Note: The Assembly and School Board concluded that discussion of the new school construction strategy was covered during discussion of item H]

K. Iditarod School Renovation Project *(Requested by Borough Administration)*

Dr. Burnley:

- noted that the Iditarod School Renovation Project topic had been already covered; and
- commented that the School District would have more information at a later date.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to the Borough space issues;
- commented on previous discussions of having a Borough annex in that direction; and
- spoke to the condition of the School District's meeting area.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- commented that there are times when the Borough has a large public turnout at meetings with controversial issues;
- opined that the Borough Assembly Chambers is half the size of the Wasilla City Hall meeting chamber and one quarter the size of the School District's meeting chambers;
- opined that the gym at Iditarod Elementary School would be an ideal meeting place for the Assembly; and
- spoke to previous Assembly discussions regarding the need to have one staff member from each department and a staff member available to collect taxes at a location closer to the population center so that the public would not have to travel to Palmer.

L. Discussion of Borough Area Schools Site Selection Committee *(Requested by Mayor DeVilbiss)*

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- advised that he and the Assembly would be looking at all boards and commissions; and
- spoke to receiving a comment regarding whether there was a need for the Borough Area Schools Site Selection Committee.

M. Use of School Courier Services for Borough Libraries *(Requested by Mayor DeVilbiss)*

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- noted that he is looking for ways to help the Borough libraries;
- commented that one of the biggest expenses is transporting books; and
- stated that he is looking for a way that the Borough and School District could share in this.

N. Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and Teachers Retirement System (TRS) Liability *(Requested by Mayor DeVilbiss)*

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- spoke to a Fairbanks North Star Borough resolution regarding PERS and TRS;
- opined that it may be premature for a Borough PERS and TRS resolution; and
- noted that the Legislature may start addressing the issue of retirement studies which is an expensive part of being able to adjust employees.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- concerns that the bill that is currently before the Legislature may cause a determination study to be initiated when one person is removed;
- the PERS/TRS study only applying to municipalities and not the State;
- the need to keep working on the concept of fixing PERS and TRS before the oil pipeline runs dry;
- the previous legislation that required contributions; and
- the PERS/TRS study.

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

Member Welton thanked everyone for contributing to the great conversation.

Member Larson thanked the School District staff for compiling the meeting information.

President Dunleavy:

- thanked the Borough for taking care of children in the past; and
- noted that he is looking forward to working with the Assembly and taking care of children in the future.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- spoke to receiving many phone calls during the past week regarding the hiring decision of the Wasilla High School principal;
- noted that citizens were upset about the hiring of the Wasilla High School principal position; and
- spoke to a news article that he provided regarding schools turning into prisons.

Assemblymember Colver:

- complimented the School District and School Board for tackling the high school starting times;
- spoke to concerns regarding groups having the ability to book school facilities over a long period of time using the online school facility reservation system; and
- spoke to ways to resolve the school facility reservation system.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- thanked the School District and School Board for the budget information;
- queried what both bodies thought of changing code to reduce the joint Assembly/School Board meetings to three times per year by removing the June meeting; and
- offered to sponsor legislation removing the June meeting.

President Duvleavy indicated his support of removing the June meeting.

Assemblymember Woods spoke in appreciation of the information that the School District and School Board provided the Assembly.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 10:13 p.m.


LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 04/05/11