

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on April 1, 2014, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of conducting a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Jim Sykes, Assembly District No. 1
- Mr. Matthew Beck, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Steve Colligan, Assembly District 4 (*entered at 4:13 p.m.*)
- Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (*attended telephonically until 4:45 p.m. at which time he entered the meeting physically*)
- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused:

- Mr. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*)
- Mr. Darcie K. Salmon, Assembly District No. 5

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Ms. Deborah Retherford, Seat A
- Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B
- Ms. Susan Pougher, Seat C
- Mr. Ole Larson, Seat D
- Ms. Tiffany Scott, Seat E
- Ms. Donna Dearman, Seat F
- Mr. Ray Michaelson, Seat G

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Jamie Newman, Deputy Borough Clerk
- Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager
- Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
- Ms. Brenda J. Henry, Assistant Clerk

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor DeVilbiss 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 Assemblymember Colver, representative of Assembly District No. 6.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

(There was no one present who wished to testify.)

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Annual Budget And Bonding For Schools *(MSB 2.12.075(A))*

Dr. Deena Paramo, Superintendent and Mr. Luke Fulp, Assistant Superintendent of Business Operations, presented the School District's proposed fiscal year 2015 budget.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- how legislation at the State level has the potential to impact the budget;
- the School District's desire to have a transparent budget process;
- debt service for school bonds;
- reductions in revenue sharing;
- concerns with increases to the Public Employees' Retirement Systems (PERS) contributions;
- concerns with the Alaska Teachers' Retirement System (TERS);
- the percentage of property taxes that go to fund the School District;
- the differences in the fiscal year 2014 budget and the fiscal year 2015 proposed budget;
- how federal mandates impact the budget; and
- ongoing teacher contract negotiations.

B. Supporting The State Of Alaska Evaluating The Cost Savings Of Pooling Insurance For Statewide Education And Other Public Employees *(Requested by Assemblymember Colligan)*

Assemblymember Colligan:

- spoke to the need to save funds;
- opined that consolidated insurance for the Borough and the School District would be an opportunity for savings; and
- stated that he would like to see a group formed that could evaluate where savings could occur.

Ms. Katherine Gardner, School District Human Resources Director, provided a presentation regarding public school employees pooling with other government employees for health insurance benefits.

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

Assemblymember Colligan:

- thanked the School District for the work done thus far;
- noted that changes in insurance is difficult for families; and
- opined that if insurance plans could be tailored to the needs of the users it would be more beneficial.

School Board Member Retherford:

- spoke to her appreciation of the joint meeting; and
- related that carrots are very popular at her son's elementary school.

School Board Member Dearman:

- stated that it was a pleasure to meet with the body; and
- reminded the body that children are the future.

School Board Member Larson:

- thanked the body for the meeting;
- spoke in favor of cost savings;
- opined that increased costs of health care is a major issue; and
- stated that the School District is looking to the Assembly for assistance.

School Board Member Michaelson:

- spoke to the responsibility of elected officials to care for their constituents; and
- thanked the body for the meeting.

School Board Member Welton:

- thanked the body for the exchange of information;
- opined that property owners are aware that their taxes go to fund schools; and
- spoke to the importance of being good stewards.

School Board Member Scott:

- thanked the Assembly for their support of the School District; and
- requested support of the proposed fiscal year 2015 budget.

School Board President Pougher:

- stated that student testing begins this week;
- noted that more and more students are meeting the bench marks; and
- thanked the Assembly for supporting education.

Assemblymember Sykes:

- thanked the School District for their presentation;
- spoke to his desire for budget transparency; and
- opined it was a good meeting.

Assemblymember Halter:

- noted his pleasure with the meeting;
- thanked the School District for being so thorough;
- spoke to mistakes he had made in past budgets; and
- thanked the body for the meeting.

Assemblymember Colver:

- thanked the School District for the presentation;
- opined that it was easy to understand;
- stated that he looks forward to the time that more funds are expended for education rather than for testing; and
- spoke to his frustration with the amount of funds expended on gathering information.

Assemblymember Beck:

- thanked the body for the meeting;
- stated that he is looking forward to the budget process; and
- spoke to his pleasure with the education that his children receive.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- thanked the School District for their presentation at the Palmer Chamber of Commerce meeting;
- opined that it was well received; and
- spoke to the possibility of combining grades in the Sutton area.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.


LARRY DEVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 04/15/14