I. CALL TO ORDER

The special joint meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly and School Board was held on April 8, 2003, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Assemblymember Simpson, Presiding Officer.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:
- Mr. J. Bruce Bush, Assembly District No. 1 *(Arrived at 6:15 p.m.)*
- Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3
- Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4
- Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5
- Ms. Kelly Ladere, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:
- Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6

School board members present and establishing a quorum were:
- Rob Wells, School Board Seat A
- Sarah Welton, School Board Seat B
- Mike Chmielewski, School Board Seat E (President)
- Larry DeVilbiss, School Board Seat F
- Daniel Contini, School Board Seat G

School board members absent and excused were:
- Linda Menard, School Board Seat C
- Bob Johnson, School Board Seat D

Borough staff in attendance were:
- Ms. Sandra A. Dillon, CMC, Borough Clerk
- Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
- Ms. Teresa Williams, Borough Attorney
- Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director
- Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, Deputy Borough Clerk

School District staff in attendance were:
- Mr. Bob Doyle, Chief School Administrator
- Mr. Jack Sherman, Assistant Superintendent of Business
- Ms. Kim Floyd, Public Information Specialist
- Mr. Dave Holmquist, Mid-Valley Alternative School Principal

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Assemblymember Simpson 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 School Board Member DeVilbiss.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following persons spoke in support of full funding of the school district budget: Michael Carson, Cary Birdsall, Lisa Brayton, Kris Moore, and Jeannie Berres.

The following persons spoke in support of the Mid-Valley Alternative School: Ethan Hanson, Chris Elder, and Barry Cascale.

The following persons spoke in support of the inclusion of the Midnight Sun Charter School in the school bond package: Jeanne Troshynski.

The following persons spoke in support of the inclusion of the Academy Charter School in the school bond package: David Dahms and Barbara Gerard.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Annual Budget *(Pursuant to code)*

Chief School Administrator Bob Doyle stated that the formal school district budget will be presented to the Assembly on April 28, 2003.

School Board Member DeVilbiss stated that the budget is based on the assumption of maximum participation.

Assemblymember Colberg asked if maximum participation included the state, the borough, or both.

School Board Member DeVilbiss stated that the budget assumptions were made based on both borough and state maximum funding.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the total project funding;
- full funding for pupil transportation;
- projected budget cuts irregardless of full funding; and

- inflation costs in relation to full funding.

B. Legislative Update *(Requested by: School Board President Chmielewski)*

Discussion ensued regarding:
- transportation being funded at 100 percent;
- ways that the district will look at reducing the cost of transportation to the state;
- learning opportunity grants;
- the current foundation formula v. base student allocation increases;
- keeping bond debt obligations fully funded; and
- the district's efforts to continually monitor what is happening in the legislature.

Mr. Duffy stated that the district should also be working through the borough's state lobbyist.

School Board President Chmielewski encouraged members of the Assembly to also address the legislature regarding school funding during their upcoming visit to Juneau.

Assemblymember Allen requested a written synopsis of legislation that the school district is supporting so that the borough and school district can speak from the same page.

School Board Member Wells suggested a meeting of the Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School Issues be set as soon as possible to address common legislation.

Assemblymember Ladere requested a documentation from administration listing the priorities before she leaves to Juneau on April 16, 2003.

C. Status of Bond Issues *(Requested by: School Board President Chmielewski)*

School Board President Chmielewski:
- stated that he had requested this item for discussion so that everyone understands the timeline associated with the proposed school bonds; and
- opined that it is important to look at the bond package proposal in terms of need, as well as in terms of presentation for passage.

Discussion ensued regarding:
- the packaging of items for the bond proposal;
- random polling for community input on the projects;
- supporting potential polling with a full fiscal note of the projects;
- guidelines for polling and hiring a professional consultant to conduct the polling;
- funding for any potential polling being taken from the Chief School Administrator's budget; and
- the election timeline for placing the bonds on a ballot.

Ms. Dillon reviewed the regular election time frame for placing ordinances on a ballot beginning from May 20, 2003 (the earliest that a proposal could be adopted).

Brief discussion ensued regarding the scheduling of work sessions to discuss the bond projects in more detail.

Ms. Dillon stated that work sessions could be scheduled on May 6 and May 13, 2003, to address the bonds.

Discussion continued regarding:

- the timeframe associated with holding a special bond election in June;
- the costs of holding a special election; and
- the inclusion of the full issuance costs for the bond package on the ballot.

Ms. Clayton stated that if individual groups of bonds passed, that the borough would try to issue the bonds together to save costs.

Discussion continued regarding the potential of the borough absorbing the entire costs of the bonds.

D. Mid-Valley Alternative School *(Requested by: Assemblymember Simpson)*

Assemblymember Simpson stated that she had requested this item for discussion in order to get a synopsis of the Mid-Valley Alternative School's background and operations.

Mr. Doyle:

- stated that the school has been housed at the Faith Fellowship Bible Church in Big Lake;
- spoke regarding the need for the alternative school by children in the area who do not attend regular school;
- noted the educational and social challenges faced by the children who attend the Mid-Valley Alternative School and the meaningfulness of the programs to the students;
- provided the number of students currently in attendance at the school and the projected number of students in the coming year;
- remarked that the district is asking for a one-year extension from the church;
- asked that a site selection committee be established to find a permanent site for the school; and
- noted other accommodating sites for placement of the school.

Mr. Holmquist:

- spoke regarding the district's approved curriculum of the alternative school;
- noted that there is a 15 hour per week work component to the curriculum; and
- advised that Burchell High School and Valley Pathways are both predecessors of the Mid-Valley Alternative School, utilizing the same model.

Discussion continued regarding:

- the possibility of co-locating Mid-Valley Alternative School at Houston High School;
- the importance of Mid-Valley Alternative School maintaining its uniformity and the need for a separate facility;
- Mid-Valley Alternative School being funded separately from any other school in the district;
- bringing legislation forward to the Assembly during the first meeting in May to establish a site selection committee for Mid-Valley Alternative School; and
- the location of the school in a residential neighborhood and the impacts that this has on the neighbors.

Assemblymember Simpson asked Mr. Doyle if he would be willing to meet with the community to address their issues with the location of the Mid-Valley Alternative School.

Mr. Doyle stated that he proposes to work with the borough to find an appropriate permanent site for the school, but does not believe he can influence the neighbors in the area who are opposed to the current location of the school.

Assemblymember Simpson:

- asked Mr. Doyle to put in writing an explanation of whether or not the school is a closed campus and what kind of supervisory policy is in place for the school; and
- stated that she would also like some information included related to issues raised about students moving through the area.

Mr. Doyle stated that he would provide this information.

Discussion continued regarding:

- the success of the students attending Mid-Valley Alternative School; and
- the need of parents to work with the school administration regarding issues they may have.

The special meeting recessed at 7:30 p.m. and reconvened at 7:40 p.m.

E. School District Procurement Process *(Requested by: Assemblymember Simpson)*

Assemblymember Simpson:

- stated that she asked for this item to be discussed in order to gain an update of the district's procurement procedures;
- thanked the district for the regulations that were implemented in January; and
- queried how the procedures relate to site-based procurement now that the district's central warehouse in no longer in operation.

Mr. Sherman stated that the district will continue to have a purchasing department, but will no longer utilize a warehouse to store all supplies.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired if individual schools will be placing their own supply orders.

Mr. Sherman:

- stated that the district will undertake an information gathering process from each of the sites; and
- noted that the district will still go out for bid for the needed supplies, and that purchase orders will be submitted when supplies are needed.

Assemblymember Simpson thanked the district for the changes to their purchasing code.

F. Pacific Rim Education and Workforce Development *(Requested by: Assemblymember Simpson)*

Assemblymember Simpson stated that she had requested this item for discussion in order to gain more insight into what the foundation is and how it dovetails into programs that are already in place.

Mr. Doyle:

- stated that this is a foundation in its beginning stages that will gain more definition as it grows; and
- noted that the foundation is in the process of establishing a board of directors.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the scope of the foundation;
- potentially filtering the Work Force Investment Act through the foundation;
- the goal of the foundation to reconnect low income youths in the employment sector;
- the desire to create a work force/economic center in the borough that would serve as a hub for regional work force and economic development;
- the relationship of the foundation with the borough and the district; and
- the foundation being a completely independent, non-profit organization equipped to secure funding opportunities that the borough has not been able to take advantage of in the past.

Ms. Floyd stated that the foundation will ultimately be seeking grant funds to help sustain its operations.

Assemblymember Simpson queried if the foundation is currently under district operations.

Ms. Floyd responded that the founding members are members of the district, but reiterated that the founding members are actively seeking a board of directors appointed from a variety of industries and areas in the community to lead the foundation's efforts.

Mr. Doyle stated that the purpose of the foundation is to look as broadly as possible beyond the borough and Alaska at large corporations for training and employment for Alaska's youth.

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

Ms. Dillon introduced the Assembly and the School Board to a proposed election information pamphlet that contains information applicable to the October 2003 regular borough election.

Ms. Williams responded to an earlier question in the meeting regarding whether or not a quorum is necessary to transact business during a work session, stating that a quorum for the Assembly is required to transact business during a meeting and that the school district does not have a similar provision.

Ms. Dillon advised that Roberts Rules of Order states that a quorum of both bodies is needed to transact business during a joint meeting.

School Board Member Wells:
- commented that he appreciated the meeting;
- requested full funding of the school district's budget; and
- stated that he looks forward to moving the bond proposal to the ballot in October.

School Board Member DeVilbiss commented regarding the bonds, stating that he does not support polling the community for input on the projects.

School Board Member Welton commented that the borough should fully fund the district and look closely at the bond propositions to make sure they consider the future.

School Board President Chmielewski:
- thanked Assemblymember Simpson for chairing the meeting;
- commented that he feels the joint meetings are improving; and
- reiterated that he is in favor of polling the community for input on the bond propositions.

Assemblymember Ladere:
- stated that it was a pleasure to meet with the School Board; and
- opined that the Pacific Rim Education and Workforce Development Foundation is headed in the right direction.

Assemblymember Kvalheim commented regarding her support of the direction of the borough and the district in regard to the issues discussed at the meeting.

Assemblymember Bush:
- spoke regarding the war effort and the need to show our support; and
- commented that the bond issues should be placed before the voters so that they can decide what is needed.

Assemblymember Allen:

- commented that it was a good meeting and that he looks forward to continued work with the school district; and
- asked to serve on the Pacific Rim Education and Workforce Development Foundation.

Assemblymember Simpson thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and appreciated the members' candor.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.

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JIM COLVER, Borough Deputy Mayor

ATTEST:

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SANDRA A. DILLON, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: May 6, 2003