

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on May 2, 2012, at the Central Mat-Su Fire Station 6-1, 101 E. Swanson Avenue, Wasilla, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of holding a public hearing on Ordinance Serial No. 12-012 (budget ordinance).

**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. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*)  
Mr. Steve Colligan, Assembly District No. 4  
Mr. Darcie K. Salmon, Assembly District No. 5  
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6  
Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk  
Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager  
Mr. Don Moore, Acting Assistant Borough Manager  
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney  
Ms. Jamie Newman, Deputy Borough Clerk  
Ms. Sharon Huckins, Administrative Secretary  
Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director  
Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Financial Analyst  
Ms. Shaune O'Neil, Public Works Director  
Ms. Eileen Probasco, Acting Planning and Land Use Director  
Mr. Dennis Brodigan, Emergency Services Director  
Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director  
Ms. Shannon, Post, Chief Information Officer  
Mr. Mark Van Dongen, Port Director  
Mr. Don Dyer, Economic Development Director  
Ms. Sonya Conant, Human Resources Director  
Mr. Eric Phillips, Community Development Director (newly appointed)  
Ms. Marian Romano, Acting Community Development Director

**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 Ms. Jean Woods, a member of the audience.

#### **V. PUBLIC HEARING**

- A. Ordinance Serial No. 12-012: AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING MONIES FROM THE CENTRAL TREASURY FOR THE BOROUGH OPERATING FUNDS, ENTERPRISE FUNDS, EDUCATION OPERATING FUND, AND CAPITAL FUNDS AND ESTABLISHING THE RATE OF LEVY FOR ALL BOROUGH FUNCTIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2012, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.

Mayor DeVilbiss opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for a new Talkeetna Library and the value of the library to residents in the Upper Susitna Valley: Ms. Peg Foster, Ms. Cathy Teish, and Mr. Richard Burgener.

The following persons spoke in support of the continued funding for Mat-Su Youth Court: Ms. Lisa Albert-Konecky, Mat-Su Youth Court Co-Director; Mr. Nathan Hamman; Mr. Mark Simon; Ms. Sharon Lasselle; Ms. Megan Lasselle; Ms. Samantha Lasselle; and Ms. Laura Pinnick.

The following persons spoke in support of tourism and funding for the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau: Ms. Karen Harris, Ms. Mabel Wimmer, Ms. Dee Dee Kay, and Ms. Diana Straub.

The following person spoke in support of increased funding for the Palmer Library: Ms. Jean Woods.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for the Human Services Community Matching Grant Program: Ms. Maggie Humm, Alaska Legal Services Supervising Attorney; Ms. Sharon Scott, Mat-Su Health Foundation Program Officer; Ms. Angie Boardman, Access Alaska; Mr. Dodd Shay, Alaska Assistance Dogs; and Ms. Diana Straub.

The following person spoke in support of the proposed funding for the School District in the budget: Mr. Karl Schleich.

The following person expressed concern with the continuous use of temporary workers to satisfy the employment needs of the Borough instead of creating permanent positions: Mr. Carl Hereford, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Employees Association President.

The following person encouraged the Assembly to continue to diversify the tax burden on home owners through private business and industry development: Mr. Dan Kennedy.

The following person spoke in opposition to public employee unions and growth in government: Mr. Marcus Reim.

The following person spoke to the value of public employees: Ms. Debbie Weatherhorn, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Employees Association.

The following person expressed pride in union membership and spoke about the charitable contributions made by union members: Ms. Nancy Hereford, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Employees Association.

The following person spoke about the need for the Borough to attract and retain quality employees through competitive wage and benefit packages: Ms. Lauren Kruer, Matanuska-Susitna Borough Employees Association.

The following person requested that copies of the budget questions and answers submitted by the Assembly to Administration, be made available to the public by Thursday, May 3, and expressed support of public employees: Ms. Michelle Church.

The following person spoke in support of funding for the Emergency Services Department: Mr. Ken Slauson, Wasilla Lakes Fire Service Area Chairman and Mr. Ken Farina, Talkeetna Fire Department Chief.

Assemblymember Colver:

- noted his appreciation of Borough employees; and
- affirmed his belief that no positions are in jeopardy of being cut in this year's budget.

*(The meeting recessed at 7:06 p.m. and reconvened at 7:19 p.m.)*

*(Assemblymember Salmon re-entered the meeting at 7:21 p.m.)*

The following person spoke in support of the continued funding of the Human Services Community Matching Grant Program: Ms. Betsy Woodin, Health and Social Services Board.

The following person spoke to concerns regarding working conditions and compensation afforded to emergency service responders: Ms. Sandy Hoeft, Emergency Responder

**MOTION:** Assemblymember Arvin moved to continue the public hearing on Ordinance Serial No. 12-012 to May 3, 2012, at 6 p.m.

**VOTE:** The motion passed without objection.

Assemblymember Keogh asked for information on compensation and employee turnover among emergency responders.

Mr. Brodigan:

- noted the pay rate for emergency responders is comparatively lower than other Borough employees;
- stated that wages for emergency responders are not in alignment with the salary schedule used by other Borough employees; and
- reported an eighteen to twenty-five percent turnover rate among emergency responders.

Assemblymember Colligan asked if an independent wage study against industry standards has ever been commissioned concerning the compensation provided to emergency responders.

Mr. Brodigan noted that the Human Resources Director conducted an analysis of the work force compared to market and other Borough employees.

Discuss ensued regarding:

- national emergency response standards;
- recent base pay increases to emergency responders; and
- recruitment and retention initiatives concerning emergency services personnel.

Assemblymember Keogh asked if funds for the new Talkeetna Library are included in the capital budget.

Mr. Moosey:

- reported funds for the project are not in the proposed budget;
- noted that a state matching grant in the amount of \$2.8 million was funded by the Legislature, however, Governor Parnell has not signed the budget bill into law; and
- added that if the State grant is received, the Borough will have to provide match funds in the amount of \$1.8 million.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the potential source of match funding for the project; and
- Borough funding for the Palmer and Wasilla libraries.

## **VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

The following person noted that emergency responders received an increase in pay two years ago: Ms. Sandy Hoeft, Emergency Responder.

The following person spoke in support of the Borough utilizing its website in an effort to engage and inform the public: Ms. Michelle Church

## **VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Assemblymember Halter thanked Borough employees for their hard work.

Assemblymember Arvin:

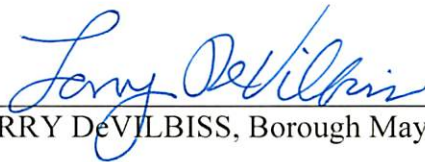
- noted his appreciation of Borough employees;
- affirmed that there is strong support on the Assembly for Borough employees;
- noted that the Assembly is very appreciative of staff in all departments;
- requested that department heads convey to employees the Assembly's appreciation of them; and
- spoke to the Assembly incrementally addressing work force deficiencies.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- expressed support of Borough employees;
- spoke in favor of continuing dialog concerning the human services matching grant;
- affirmed his intent to not veto budget items, provided the Assembly holds the line; and
- spoke to the success of time spent with home schooled students in an endeavor to learn more about local government.

### **XIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The regular meeting adjourned at 8:08 p.m.

  
LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

  
LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 05/15/12