

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on May 4, 2011, at Central Mat-Su Fire Station 6-1, 101 E. Swanson, Wasilla, Alaska. The special meeting was called to order at 4 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of holding a public hearing on the Ordinance Serial No. 11-011 (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. Ron Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*) (*attended telephonically*)
- Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4 (*arrived at 6:03 p.m.*)
- Ms. Cindy Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
- Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (*arrived at 6:27 p.m.*)
- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, CMC, Borough Clerk
- Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager
- Ms. Elizabeth Gray, Assistant Borough Manager
- Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
- Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director
- Ms. Brenda J. Henry, Executive Assistant to the Borough Clerk
- Ms. Joell Church, Records Management Officer
- Ms. Sharon Huckins, Administrative Secretary I
- Mr. Stefan Hinman, Media Design Specialist
- Ms. Sally Letherman, IT Technician
- Mr. Dennis Brodigan, Emergency Services Director
- Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Financial Analyst
- Ms. Shannon Post, Chief Information Officer
- Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs 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. Jay Nolfi, a former member of the Assembly.

V. PUBLIC HEARING (Three minutes per person)

- A. Ordinance Serial No. 11-011: 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, 2011, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2012.

Mayor DeVilbiss opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for human services community matching grant program: Ms. Maggie Humm, Alaska Legal Services Supervising Attorney; Ms. Pamela Wattley; Ms. Linzi Rothermel, Mat-Su Red Cross Corporate Partnership Manager; Ms. Jen Burkmire, The Children's Place Executive Director; Ms. Edythe Ecksted, Palmer Senior Center; Ms. Lisa Wade, Chickaloon Tribal Council Health and Social Services Director; and Mr. Carl Baker, Palmer Senior Center Board Member.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for Mat-Su Youth Court through the human services community matching grant program: Ms. Lisa Albert-Knoecky, Mat-Su Youth Court Co-Director; Mr. Keelan Mangus; Ms. Hannah Denny; Ms. Felicia Glaser; Ms. Madison Mitchell, Mat-Su Youth Court President; Ms. Erin Sarafin; and Mr. Issac Sarafin, Mat-Su Youth Court Vice-President.

The following person spoke in support of funding for Alaska Legal Services through the human services community matching grant program: Ms. Sunny Radebaugh.

The following persons spoke in support of full funding for the School District: Ms. Lorraine Bass, Pioneer Peak Elementary Physical Education Teacher; Ms. Avalon Packer; and Ms. Ellen Varosi.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for the Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau: Mr. Jason Votruba, Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau Vice-President; and Ms. Nicole Bendle, Mat-Su Convention and Visitors Bureau Board Member and Treasurer.

The following persons spoke regarding responsible fiscal spending: Ms. Ellen Varosi, Mr. Butch Moore, and Ms. Jay Nolfi.

The following person spoke in support of funding for the city libraries: Ms. Jean Woods.

(The special meeting recessed 7 p.m. at and reconvened at 7:16 p.m.)

The following person spoke in support of full funding for the Emergency Services Department: Ms. Sandra Sexton, Emergency Responder.

The following person spoke in support of full funding for the School District: Mr. Joseph Hartman.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for the human services matching grant program: Mr. Stan Mitchell; Mr. Eddie Ezell, Food Pantry Executive Director; Ms. Vicky Jo Kennedy; Mr. Kenneth Anderson, President of the Palmer Senior Center; Ms. Anna Hartman; and Mr. John Klapperich.

The following person spoke in support of increased funding for the Emergency Services Department: Ms. Ashley Cunnington, Emergency Responder; Mr. Cliff Silvers, Water Rescue Chief; and Ms. Sandra Hoeft, Emergency Responder.

MOTION: Assemblymember Ewing moved to continue the public hearing on Ordinance Serial No. 11-011 to May 5, 2011, 6 p.m.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke in support of additional funding for the Borough Finance Department budget: Ms. Jay Nolfi.

The following person spoke to concerns with the M/V Susitna enterprise fund and in support of responsible fiscal spending: Mr. Butch Moore.

The following person spoke to concerns with tax impacts and exemptions on senior citizens within the Borough: Mr. Ken Slausen.

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Colver:

- thanked the public for providing comments on the budget;
- noted his support of the human services community matching grant program; and
- requested information on how many music teacher positions are being cut district wide.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- thanked the public for attending; and
- stated that she will be supporting funding for the human services matching grant program.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- spoke in support of funding for city libraries;
- noted ways he intends to present cuts to the budget;
- stated that the three things government must provide to its citizen's are education, emergency services, and infrastructure;
- stated that quality of life is based on culture and it is important to preserve culture through providing citizen's a good quality of life;
- thanked the public for coming to testify to their concerns with the budget cuts; and
- noted the Assembly will consider every option possible in producing a balanced budget.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- stated that this is his first budget cycle;
- opined that it takes a lot of hard work to accomplish a balanced budget; and
- thanked the public for coming out to provide testimony.

Assemblymember Halter:

- spoke to ways the Assembly could cut the budget;
- spoke to how the mill rate is affected by School District funding;
- stated that deciding on a balanced budget is extremely tough;
- noted that he pays taxes and shares the same concerns as the public;
- stated mill rates are increasing overall; and
- spoke to economic development increasing job opportunities in the Borough.

Assemblymember Woods:

- stated that this is his first budget cycle;
- spoke to problems with determining funding sources;
- acknowledged that there are citizens who cannot afford housing or heating;
- noted how difficult it is to separate the tax load for those who can pay and those who are struggling;
- noted that if someone has a magic solution the Assembly would love to hear it; and
- thanked the public for attending.

Assemblymember Arvin:

- spoke to the considerable amount of time he has been spent reviewing the budget;
- thanked staff for bringing in the budget under what was presented last year;
- opined that it will be difficult to cut the mill rate from what it was last year;
- spoke to how difficult it is to produce a balanced budget that provides essential services; and
- thanked the public for their testimony.

Mayor DeVilbiss related that cutting one mill from the mill rate would require cutting \$7 million from the budget, which is a significant amount of money.

Assemblymember Bettine requested information on how the federal stimulus funds that were allocated to offset the mill rate, and the funds to be received through the State budget will affect the current proposed mill rate.


Ms. Clayton stated that the proposed areawide mill rate is currently at 9.63 mills.

Discussion ensued regarding the desire of the Assembly to lower the mill rate.

Assemblymember Arvin stated that he would prefer to conduct budget deliberations in Assembly Chambers.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.



LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 06/07/11