

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on June 10, 2008, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Curtis D. Menard for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

**II. ROLL CALL**

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1 (*Deputy Mayor*) (*arrived at 6:12 p.m.*)  
Mr. Pete Houston, Assembly District No. 2  
Ms. Michelle R. Church, Assembly District No. 3  
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4  
Mr. Robert Wells, Assembly District No. 6 (*arrived at 6:20 p.m.*)  
Mr. Tom Kluberton, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly member absent and excused was:

Ms. Cindy Bettine, Assembly District No. 5

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Jim Colver, Seat A  
Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B (*School Board President*)  
Ms. Susan Pougher, Seat C  
Ms. Patricia Purcell, Seat D  
Ms. Colleen Hamblen, Seat F  
Mr. Myrl Thompson, Seat G

School Board member absent and excused was:

Ms. Cheryl Turner, Seat E

Borough staff in attendance were:

Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk  
Mr. Marian Romano, Assistant Borough Manager  
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney  
Mr. Keith Rountree, Public Works Director  
Ms. Linda Brenner, Community Development Director  
Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director  
Ms. Eileen Probasco, Chief of Planning

School Board staff in attendance were:

Mr. George Troxel, Superintendent of Education  
Ms. Kathy Moffit, Elementary Literacy Coordinator

### **III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor Menard inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved without objection.

### **IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Ron Rucker, President of the Certified Employees Association.

### **V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

*(There was no one present who wished to speak.)*

### **VI. NEW BUSINESS**

A. INTRODUCTION (For public hearing – 06/17/08, 7 p.m., in the Borough Assembly Chambers)

1. Ordinance Serial No. 08-097: AN ORDINANCE REAPPROPRIATING \$25,000 FROM THE ASSEMBLY'S FISCAL YEAR 2008 OPERATING BUDGET, FUND 100, TO FUND 480, AND \$39,000 FROM THE ASSEMBLY RESERVE ACCOUNT, FUND 100, TO FUND 480, TO PERFORM MANAGEMENT REVIEW AUDIT'S OF BOROUGH DEPARTMENTS.
  - a. IM No. 08-153

MOTION: Assemblymember Kvalheim moved to introduce Ordinance Serial No. 08-097 for public hearing on June 17, 2008.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

### **VII. ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

A. Review School Capital Construction Plan (pursuant to code)

Mr. Rountree provided updates regarding:

- Wasilla Middle School renovations;
- Wasilla High School remodel, phase III;
- Palmer High School bleachers;
- Sherrod Elementary School playground;

- South Palmer Elementary School;
- stated that a community meeting was held on May 21, 2008, with the residents of Garden Terrace to gain their input on the use of Abbey Boulevard as a temporary means to access the South Palmer Elementary School site;
- noted that temporary is described as three to five years;
- elaborated that three to five years is the time frame that is estimated to acquire the funds and to construct the east and west accesses to the school site;
- stated that the meeting was positive but the residents were against the use of Abbey Boulevard due to the increase in traffic and safety issues;
- explained that the residents requested that primary access be from Nelson Road on the Southeast;
- spoke regarding a letter to the School District requesting that buses and parents use Nelson Road and not Abbey Boulevard;
- stated that they are currently seeking funding for the east and west accesses to the school;
- elaborated that the Borough is in negotiations with the effected property owners near the west access; and
- provided an update on Susitna Valley High School.

Assemblymember Church queried if there were a planned upgrade for Nelson Road.

Mr. Rountree:

- stated that the road was being built by the developer; and
- elaborated that the developer had not yet worked on Nelson Road.

B. Natural Science Education Center *(Requested by: Assemblymembers Bettine and Church)*

Ms. Brenner:

- introduced the Palmer Hay Flats - Natural Science Education Center staff;
- stated that the Borough is currently involved in a feasibility study to access the Borough's need for this center; and
- spoke regarding the fees associated with a Natural Science Education Center.

Ms. Kris Abshire, Alaskans for Palmer Hay Flats:

- overviewed the structure of the organization and how the group got started;
- expressed concerns with the use of the Palmer Hay Flats;
- noted her desire to improve the area;
- spoke regarding educational programs that could be available to the schools;
- commented on a need to have experts speak to the students; and
- spoke to partnering with other agencies and groups.

Mr. Peter Briggs, architect for Corvus Design:

- spoke to a need for a natural science education program;
- noted that students are currently transported to Campbell Creek which provides a place for learning;
- commented on the need for a home base for activity programs;

- stated that the Palmer Hay Flats are rich with opportunities and experience;
- spoke to the campus master plan; and
- commented on funding and finance options.

C. Charter Schools *(Requested by School Board Member Turner)*

1. Charter School Facilities

Mr. George Troxel:

- stated that the Fronteras Charter School will have a Spanish immersion program;
- noted that 180 students were currently enrolled in the program; and
- commented on the facility.

School Board Member Colver:

- commented on funding for a Valley Technical Charter School;
- stated that the Borough had put out a request for proposal; and
- suggested that charter schools lease property when they first begin their program.

2. Midnight Sun Charter School Property Tax Issue

Mr. Spiropoulos stated that he had a conflict of interest and left the meeting at 6:44 p.m.

Mayor Menard spoke regarding a letter from Mr. John Aschenbrenner, Deputy Borough Attorney, dated January 30, 2008.

D. South Palmer Elementary School Access Issue *(Requested by Assemblymember Church and School Board Member Turner)*

Mr. Rountree:

- stated that the road would not be paved at the time the school opens;
- explained that Mr. Turner, the developer, will construct the road;
- clarified that the Borough is responsible for paving the road;
- elaborated that the developer is only responsible for building the road to gravel standards; and
- noted that the paving would cost approximately \$1 million.

Assemblymember Church requested clarification that Nelson Road would be built before the school opened although it wouldn't be paved.

Mr. Rountree affirmed the statement.

Assemblymember Church queried when the paving would occur.

Mr. Rountree:

- stated that the paving would occur when the funding is available by the Borough;
- explained that the Borough had gone to the State Legislature to request all the funding for the east access in the amount of \$5.4 million;
- stated that they had not received the funding; and
- advised that Mr. Duffy is going to continue seeking funding for the east and west accesses.

Assemblymember Church queried what would happen if the funding was not provided.

Mr. Rountree explained that the Borough would continue to use south Nelson Road as the primary means to access the school until funding is received for the east and west accesses.

Assemblymember Church asked if the road would be maintained.

Mr. Rountree:

- stated that the road would be maintained; and
- explained that calcium chloride reduces the dust on gravel roads.

Assemblymember Church requested assurance that Nelson Road would be maintained in order to avoid having people drive through Garden Terrace Subdivision.

Mr. Rountree:

- stated that the Borough has letters of commitment from Mr. Turner, the developer;
- advised that he had drafted a memorandum of understanding/agreement between the Borough and Mr. Turner which denotes what each party is responsible for;
- noted that the memorandum is in Mr. Duffy's office.

Assemblymember Church asked how the memorandum affected Garden Terrace Subdivision.

Assemblymember Woods stated that it would ensure that people would not be going through Garden Terrace Subdivision.

E. School District Fiscal Year 2009 Budget Report *(Requested by School Board President Welton)*

Ms. Moffit provided a presentation regarding end-of-year School District facts.

Mr. Troxell:

- stated that the School Board had not taken action on the budget since its adoption by the Assembly; and
- stated that the School District has to have the budget passed by June 30, 2008.

School Board Member Colver:

- noted that the School District has to come up with \$3 to \$4 million to settle employee contracts; and
- pointed out that this money was not included in the fiscal year 2009 budget.

Assemblymember Church thanked everyone for their presentations.

F. School Bonds for the Upcoming Fall Election *(Requested by School Board Member Colver)*

Mr. Troxell:

- spoke regarding a six-year capital improvement list;
- commented on the safety and security bond;
- noted that the total cost for a safety and security bond would be \$19.2 million; and
- stated that all the projects had been approved by the State with 70 percent being reimbursed.

Assemblymember Wells:

- spoke regarding concerns with Seward Meridian Parkway improvements as it pertains to Cottonwood Creek Elementary; and
- noted areas of improvement for parking at Cottonwood Creek Elementary.

Discussion ensued regarding concerns with the access to, and parking for, Cottonwood Creek Elementary School.

G. Lapsed Funds and Energy Grant Funds *(Requested by School Board Member Colver)*

School Board Member Thompson:

- spoke regarding how the energy relief funds have been expended;
- commented on how costs are rising due to the increase in the cost oil; and
- stated that it would be nice to have a contingency fund in case of an emergency.

School Board President Welton:

- queried if the School District had received the energy grant funds; and
- queried the way the funds may be expended.

Mr. Troxel:

- stated that they are expected within the next several days; and
- advised that the State had never advised that the funds must be allocated towards energy;
- stated that the energy cost is about 3 percent of the budget.

Assemblymember Wells:

- spoke regarding a one time lapse to the funding formula;
- spoke to the need for the School District to have a contingency fund;
- noted a need to evaluate the funding formula; and
- requested support for the upcoming ordinance for a one-time exemption for the School District.

Discussion ensued regarding the lapse in funds from the School District.

H. Susitna Valley High School Reconstruction (*Requested by School Board Member Colver*)

Ms. Clayton:

- stated that the Borough is still working towards occupancy for the fall of 2009;
- elaborated on matching the estimated costs for the Susitna Valley High School reconstruction;
- noted other possible funding sources; and
- advised that each option would require Assembly action.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- funds in the State's capital budget;
- the reasons that the insurance coverage was not a match;
- the reasons that the State is asking that the operating funds be used for match;
- costs associated with the roof; and
- the special Legislative session called by Governor Palin.

I. Public Facilities (Site Selection for Schools)

Ms. Probasco:

- spoke to efforts to update the Public Facilities Plan;
- stated that it was developed in 1984;
- commented on how it was updated incrementally throughout the years;
- spoke regarding the need to evaluate the school site selection process;
- explained that there was a microbusiness currently working on the plan;
- advised on areas of improvement for the plan;
- noted a need for improvement for green infrastructure;
- stated that the time for completion of the Public Facilities Plan is early 2009; and
- elaborated on the need for community meetings.

Assemblymember Kluberton asked if there were pervasive efforts in progress as it pertains to Emergency Medical Services and schools.

Ms. Probasco stated the specific plans would address those needs.

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

School Board Member Thompson thanked the Mayor and Assembly for listening to the presentation on the lapse funding issue.

School Board President Welton thanked everyone for attending the ground breaking for South Palmer Elementary School.

Assemblymember Kvalheim:

- noted that the Matanuska Electric Association (MEA) will be working four-10 hour shifts; and
- stated that MEA had challenged the Borough and the School District to do the same.

Assemblymember Church welcomed School Board Member Thompson.

Assemblymember Woods congratulated School Board Member Thompson on his appointment.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting recessed at 8:06 p.m.

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CURTIS D. MENARD, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

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LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 07/15/08