

I. CALL TO ORDER

The joint meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly/city of Houston/city of Palmer/city of Wasilla was held on September 5, 2013, at the Mat-Su Borough School District Administration Building, 501 North Gulkana, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of receiving a joint consolidated dispatch presentation, Assembly update and discussion regarding the M/V Susitna (ferry), and AM No. 13-123.

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*)(*entered telephonically at 7:05*)
Mr. Steve Colligan, Assembly District No. 4
Mr. Darcie K. Salmon, Assembly District No. 5 (*arrived at 6:04 p.m.*)
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (*arrived at 6:47 p.m.*)
Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Palmer City Councilmembers present:

Mayor DeLena Johnson
Richard Best (*arrived at 6:10 p.m.*)
Linda Combs
Edna DeVries
Ken Erbey
Kathrine Vanover

Houston City Councilmembers present:

Mayor Virgie Thompson
Jim Johansen
Gina Jorgensen
Alma Hartley
Lance Wilson
Kathleen Barney

Wasilla City Councilmembers present:

Mayor Verne E. Rupright
Colleen Sullivan-Leonard
Dianne Woodruff
Brandon Wall

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Rupright noted that due to the lack of a quorum of the city of Wasilla, that there would be no action taken by the City, but they would stay to see the consolidated dispatch presentation.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- queried if there was any objection to taking up audience participation prior to Council Comments; and
- noted that this would facilitate the cities being able to exit the meeting prior to the Assembly items of business.

There was no objection noted.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as amended without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Doug Griffin, Palmer City Manager.

V. JOINT ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Consolidated Dispatch Presentation

Mr. Joseph P. Blaschka, Mr. Dave Magnenat, and Mr. Keith Flewelling, of ADCOMM Engineering Company provided a presentation regarding consolidated dispatch.

Mayor Thompson requested that the city of Houston be involved in any future discussion regarding consolidated dispatch.

Councilmember Best:

- queried if it would be more efficient to ensure the two current computer aided dispatch (CAD) systems could talk to each other, rather than to develop an entirely new system;
- stated that he is pleased that when he calls 911, that the dispatcher is familiar with the area; and
- spoke to concerns with dispatchers not being local to their area.

Mr. Magnenat:

- stated that it is much more complicated to try to get two different CAD systems to communicate with each other;
- noted that there would be no reason that two separate dispatch centers could not be on the same CAD system and still be in two different locations; and
- noted that unless a job description requirement is that the dispatcher has to live within the area they are dispatching for, that there is no guarantee that there will always be a dispatcher who is absolutely familiar with the area.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- that if there is a decision against consolidating the dispatch centers, that there should still be a single CAD system;
- funding and staff that would be needed for a consolidated dispatch;
- the three budget options provided in the report;
- conflicts between the local CAD systems and the Borough's geographical information system (GIS);
- concerns with the Alaska State Troopers (AST) not wanting to participate;
- the excellent service of the local dispatch centers;
- concerns with duplication of services;
- the desire to ensure that local dispatch centers are not overwhelmed by major catastrophes;
- the purpose of developing a consolidated dispatch as a non-profit;
- the possibility of one of the cities or the Borough assuming the responsibility of running a consolidated dispatch center;
- that both local CAD systems are tier 1 systems, but either would need to be upgraded if it were to be selected;
- the benefits of having a CAD administrator;
- the desire to improve the experience for the caller;
- concerns of how the costs would be spread among the municipalities that would participate in a consolidated dispatch;
- how consolidation could be impacted by the lack of AST participation;
- whether or not there was consideration of using existing staff for managing the GIS information, should there be a consolidated dispatch center created;
- the different levels of staffing that would be required;
- the desire to ensure appropriate coverage in the event of catastrophic events; and
- the desire to increase efficiencies of the 911 system.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke to concerns with a berm in the Susitna Parkway gravel pit and to the need for the berm requirements to be altered: Mr. Butch Moore.

The following person spoke to concerns with the disposition of the M/V Susitna ferry: Mr. Jim Sykes.

The following person spoke to the need for a consolidated dispatch: Ms. Loretta Lopez.

VI. CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS COMMENTS

Mayor Rupright:

- thanked ADCOMM Engineering Company for the consolidated dispatch presentation;
- noted that there is more information that will be needed in the future;
- stated that the possibility of a consolidated dispatch center is related directly to local safety;
- spoke to the population growth of the Borough; and
- spoke to concerns with the ability of the area to meet emergency needs.

Councilmember Sullivan-Leonard:

- thanked that presenters for the consolidated dispatch presentation;
- requested a digital copy of the full length report;
- noted that life and safety is a big issue in the Borough; and
- opined that now is the time for consolidating the dispatch centers.

Councilmember Combs:

- stated that the body has been provided a great deal of information for consideration;
- opined that the body is concerned with regional public safety; and
- spoke to the need to balance concerns of government with those of funding.

Councilmember Best:

- stated that he is interested in seeing the full length report;
- noted that he would have preferred to have seen it before the meeting this evening; and
- related that he is looking forward to future discussions.

Mayor Johnson:

- thanked the Borough for funding the study;
- spoke to the need for a consolidated dispatch; and
- stated that she looks forward to working together to accomplish that.

Councilmember Johansen:

- thanked the presenters for an informative presentation;
- spoke to concerns with costs;
- stated that consolidated dispatch should move forward regardless of the AST decision;
- opined that a consolidated dispatch would be more efficient and effective;
- opined that participants can always opt out if they are unhappy with the way it moves forward;
- opined that consolidated dispatch should be an independent entity; and
- stated that he supports current dispatchers being hired for a new facility.

Mayor Thompson:

- noted that emergency services is the important issue before the body;
- opined that AST should be involved;
- stated that she would like to see citizens involved in the process; and
- spoke to the possibility of the State running the consolidated dispatch center.

Assemblymember Colligan:

- spoke to his appreciation of the work and thoroughness of the consolidated dispatch report;
- stated that consolidated dispatch is a topic that is worthy of future discussion;
- opined that senior dispatchers are a highly trained commodity;
- noted that the Borough would be competing for dispatchers with higher paying municipalities;
- opined that every city or the Borough would like to be in charge of the consolidated dispatch, but that none have the funding within their budgets;
- stated that consolidated dispatch is a shared liability;

- provided an example of emergency dispatch that went wrong due to a technical error in the CAD system;
- noted that technology and complexities are continually changing;
- spoke to the responsibility to provide the best emergency service dispatch possible; and
- stated that the bodies need to continue to work together.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- noted that the Borough is growing and changing;
- spoke to a survey of the fastest growing counties/parishes/boroughs in the United States, with there being 750 of them; and
- related that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough is ranked No. 13 overall.

Assemblymember Colver:

- opined that the current system is dysfunctional;
- spoke to the need to plan for the future;
- noted that there is a lot of work ahead of the body;
- spoke to the need to involve AST in the discussion regardless if they want to participate at this time;
- opined that interviews with dispatchers need to be conducted;
- stated that service needs to be the highest consideration, rather than the costs;
- advised that public testimony had changed his mind, that cost should not be the major consideration; and
- noted that all stakeholders need to participate in the discussion.

Assemblymember Salmon:

- noted that everything can change in a minute;
- spoke to his personal experiences with the response from emergency services;
- opined that life cannot have a dollar value applied to it;
- noted that customer service and customer experience need to be high priorities; and
- stated that the costs associated with a consolidated dispatch are not a concern to him.

(The cities exited the joint portion of the meeting.)

(The meeting recessed at 8:30 p.m. and reconvened at 8:43 p.m.)

VII. ASSEMBLY ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. M/V Susitna – Ferry Update and Discussion

Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager; Mr. Marc VanDongen, Port Director; Captain J.P. Stormont, of Associated Maritime Providers, Inc.; and Mr. Dave Cruz, of Cruz Construction, provided an update regarding the different options for the M/V Susitna - Ferry.

Assemblymember Halter queried if someone wanted to test the ferry, and it was in wet lay-up, if there would be any additional costs.

Captain Stormont advised that if it were to be in a wet layup that the cost would be approximately \$12,400.

Assemblymember Halter queried Captain Stormont's opinion of bringing the ferry to the Borough.

Captain Stormont spoke to concerns with the sea heights and sea storms in Seward and in the Cook Inlet.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- that the sea is more calm in Ward Cove than other areas;
- the costs associated with towing the ferry versus being driven;
- the possibility of wet layup;
- the possibility of docking the ferry in different coves during the winter;
- the estimated timeframe in which to move the ferry;
- the opinion that dry docking is no longer an option at this time;
- that the ferry is extremely unique;
- concerns with future maintenance expenses;
- that there are numerous items on the ferry that are out-of-date;
- the different options that have materialized within the last few months;
- the functionality and limitations of the ferry;
- that the ferry is a good vessel in need of the right dock;
- the cost estimates for a dock in Port MacKenzie;
- that it would take three years to complete landings in the Borough;
- the permitting process that would be involved in construction of the landings;
- the status of recent offers to purchase the ferry;
- the desire to eliminate future costs;
- the possibility of finding a partner to operate the vessel as a ferry in Cook Inlet;
- the possibility of recertifying the ferry to a lower category;
- whether or not there is someone in-state who could recertify or decertify the ferry; and
- the costs that would be associated with recertifying or decertifying the ferry.

MOTION: Assemblymember Halter moved wet dock the ferry in Ketchikan and to direct the Manager to continue to move forward with the sale of the ferry to another governmental agency.

Mr. Moosey queried how difficult it would be to take the ferry out of wet lay-up, should a potential buyer like to test the vessel.

Mr. Cruz stated that it would not be that difficult.

Assemblymember Woods queried if the ferry would be kept in the least expensive wet lay-up facility.

Mr. Moosey affirmed the query and noted that he would come back before the Assembly for approval.

Discussion ensued regarding the need to properly vet all options.

MOTION: Assemblymember Colver moved a primary amendment to include the following:

- to bring back numbers for wet lay-up in Ward Cove;
- to bring back numbers for wet lay-up in Seward;
- to keep sale options open; and
- to keep options open for transfer to another entity.

VOTE: The primary amendment passed without objection.

VOTE: The main motion passed as amended without objection.

B. **AM No. 13-123:** Award Of Bid No. 14-016B To Western Construction And Equipment, LLC. In The Contract Amount Of \$2,180,753.10 For Caswell Lakes Road Upgrade.

MOTION PENDING: Assemblymember Halter moved to adopt AM No. 13-123.

MOTION: Assemblymember Halter moved to postpone AM No. 13-123 to a time certain of September 17, 2013.

Assemblymember Halter:

- stated that the reason for postponement is due to the fact that he believes the figures regarding funding are incorrect; and
- stated that he would like to talk with the Caswell Lakes Road Service Area Board of Supervisors, as they were in favor of transferring their funds in order to ensure full funding of the contract.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

VIII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Assemblymember Colligan:

- stated that his recollection is that the Borough had agreed to build a road and put in a berm at the Susitna Parkway interim materials district;
- noted that the property was staked improperly; and
- related that he would like to ensure that the work that was committed to is done.

Mr. Moosey noted that the ordinance would need to be amended and come before the Assembly for approval.

Assemblymember Colligan stated that he thought it was originally supposed to be part of the ordinance.

Mr. Moosey noted that it was discussed to be included, but never was.


Assemblymember Colligan requested that whatever resolution is arrived at that, it be put into writing.

Mr. Moosey introduced the new Public Works Director, Mr. Terry Dolan.

Mr. Spiropoulos advised that he would not be in town for the Joint Assembly/School Board meeting and that Mr. Aschenbrenner would attend in his stead.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.


LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 10/15/13