

I. CALL TO ORDER

The emergency meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on September 24, 2012, at Central Mat-Su Fire Station 6-1, 101 West Swanson Avenue, Wasilla, Alaska. The emergency meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor DeVilbiss for the purpose of taking up Resolution Serial No. 12-112.

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. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (*arrived at 6:03 p.m.*)
Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Assemblymembers absent and excused:

Mr. Darcie K. Salmon, Assembly District No. 5

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager
Ms. Brenda J. Henry, Executive Assistant to the Borough Clerk
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Mr. George Hays, Assistant Borough Manager
Mr. Dennis Brodigan, Emergency Services Manager
Ms. Shaune O'Neil, Public Works Director
Ms. Lorrie Moffitt, Health and Safety Manager
Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director
Ms. Cheyenne Heindel, Financial Analyst
Mr. Casey Cook, Emergency Manager
Mr. Brad Sworts, Transportation and Environmental Manager
Mr. Steve Barenburg, Meadow Lakes Battalion Chief

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor DeVilbiss queried 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 Houston City Mayor Virgie Thompson.

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Resolution Serial No. 12-112: A RESOLUTION EXTENDING THE DISASTER DECLARATION THAT WAS ISSUED ON SEPTEMBER 20, 2012, DUE TO A VERY STRONG STORM WITH HIGH WINDS AND HEAVY RAINFALL.

1. IM No. 12-224

MOTION: Assemblymember Arvin moved to adopt Resolution Serial No. 12-112.

Mr. Moosey:

- noted that it has been an eventful week due to the flooding within the Borough; and
- stated that Mr. Brodigan would provide an overview of what has occurred this past week.

Mr. Brodigan provided an overview of the September 2012 flood event.

Assemblymember Arvin queried how the damage assessment is being conducted.

Mr. Tom Kurth, Incident Commander with Alaska State Division of Forestry, spoke to the composition of the team providing support to the Emergency Operations Center in assessing the flood damage.

Mr. Barenburg reported how emergency assessments are being conducted.

Mayor DeVilbiss queried why the National Guard has not been called.

Mr. Barenburg:

- stated that he is unsure as that is not within his purview;
- related that crews have not felt that there were any areas that they could not handle; and
- noted that if residents have requested any type of assistance, such as placing sand bags, that crews would have responded.

Mr. Brodigan:

- related that staff did consider requesting assistance from the National Guard during a morning briefing;
- advised that they did not call because rivers have been receding;
- noted that the entire flood event escalated exponentially Wednesday afternoon; and
- stated that they would augment staff with National Guard should it become necessary.

Ms. O'Neil:

- stated that staff was advised that the National Guard is only called in to tend to issues that local resources cannot handle;
- noted that they have been able to handle the event thus far; and
- advised that the Borough has not been in a position that Homeland Security felt it was necessary to call the National Guard.

Assemblymember Colligan:

- thanked Emergency Operations Center (EOC) staff for their hard work and organization;
- spoke to the houses that were flooded on Lucille Street;
- noted that he is concerned with the culvert and that perhaps the design needs to be looked at;
- stated that he is pleased to see the communication efforts that have been going out to the public to keep them informed; and
- requested a briefing on any storms that may be expected within the next week.

Mr. Brodigan:

- related that the National Weather Service is reporting there are a few more storms coming up;
- noted that it is anticipated that those storms will affect the Yentna and Skwentna Rivers, but not to the extent that has been seen this week;
- advised that EOC staff have been in contact with residents along the rivers providing and receiving information; and
- stated that the River Forecast Center does not expect the storms to have any effect on the major creeks or rivers that have been affected this last week.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- noted the effect the tidal flux has had on the Knik River; and
- queried if that is being considered with the river forecasts.

Mr. Brodigan:

- related that the weather pattern is such that the water will fall on the other side of the mountains in Prince William Sound;
- advised that the event with Knik River was a combination of an active storm in the Sutton area that was brining the water level up at the same time the high tide came in; and
- stated that as soon as the tide went out the river began to recede.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the most current financial figures to-date;
- the importance of Governor Parnell making the disaster declaration;
- that funds will be available to reimburse the Borough;
- that the Borough will not be reimbursed for a salaried employee, but will be for an hourly employee who may have overtime;
- the request for a detailed report on what roads and bridges need repair, when they will be repaired, and the costs involved;
- that damage assessments are ongoing;

- whether or not the State will reimburse the Borough for repairs to infrastructure;
- that Road Service Area Supervisors are working with contractors in assessing their areas;
- that all bridges and roads will be inventoried by tomorrow;
- the need to complete infrastructure repairs prior to winter;
- concerns with stability and repairs to the Shirley Towne bridge;
- the Assembly's pleasure with the way information has been constantly provided;
- what caused a water surge on the Big Susitna River;
- that assessment crews are sharing resources as much as possible; and
- that the flood event has been an amazing opportunity to learn what resources are available during an emergency.

MOTION: Assemblymember Halter moved a primary amendment to Resolution Serial No. 12-112, to the 9th and 10th "whereas" clauses, by striking "September 24" and inserting in its place "September 29."

VOTE: The primary amendment passed without objection.

VOTE: The main motion passed as amended without objection.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- advised that any extension of the continuing declaration needs prompt publicity;
- noted that the resolution gives the Manager the power to cancel it early if the weather gets better or subsides and moves to recovery; and
- stated that if the Manager cancels the declaration early, that it needs to get prompt publicity.

Assemblymember Colver:

- thanked the EOC staff for their hard work;
- opined that lives were saved by keeping the public constantly informed; and
- stated that he is grateful there have been no injuries or fatalities.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- thanked the EOC Staff for their dedication;
- related that he has visited the EOC several times over the last week;
- noted that it has been well coordinated and he has observed great team work; and
- queried who helps residents with dealing with their insurance companies.

Mr. Moosey:

- noted that Governor Parnell declared the flood event a disaster;
- related that the assistance coming from the State is for infrastructure and public assistance;
- advised that there will be places for residents who have been damaged to go for help; and
- stated that as soon as those locations has been determined, that he will make sure that the information is disseminated to the public immediately.

Assemblymember Keogh opined that the flood event is a good example of the need to keep the Borough emergency response reserves from being spent down.

Assemblymember Colligan:

- spoke to his appreciation of the EOC staff; and
- stated that he is looking forward to getting information on how to help constituents.

Assemblymember Halter:

- thanked the EOC staff for their hard work;
- noted that it has been amazing how fast and effective they have been;
- related that Talkeetna residents have been pleased that the EOC was in constant contact with them; and
- spoke to observing many rivers and creeks that were out of control.

Assemblymember Woods:

- stated that in 67 years he has not seen such a flood in every river and creek in the Borough; and
- noted that he really appreciates the work of all of the Borough emergency crews.

Assemblymember Arvin:

- thanked EOC staff;
- stated that they have done a remarkable job managing this event; and
- requested an update regarding the rail extension law suit.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- noted that an appeal was filed in January directly to the Ninth Circuit Court;
- advised that it has been fully briefed and waiting for argument;
- stated that the plaintiff's filed a petition for a stay to stop the Army Corp Permit from taking effect;
- noted that the implication is that no work on wetlands can be done pending the outcome of the case;
- advised that the Borough's response is due tomorrow and he expects that the Court will respond by the end of the week;
- advised that joint counsel is coordinating their response and preparing to file an opposition;
- summarized the intent of the plaintiff's motion; and
- advised that he will be able to report more in depth at the next meeting.

Assemblymember Halter queried if a panel of judges would be hearing the request for stay.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- stated that he is unsure, as it could go to an individual justice;
- advised that no panel has been assigned to hear oral argument;
- stated that the Borough has requested expedited oral argument and that the other side agreed;
- noted that we have not yet received a notice of oral argument from the court;
- spoke to the possible timeframe; and
- noted that the flood event has dominated Borough operations.

Assemblymember Arvin queried if the rail extension construction project can continue until there is a finding on the stay.

Mr. Spiropoulos affirmed the query.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

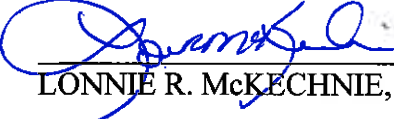
- opined that it is ironic that last Monday he had attended a meeting dealing with river erosion and it is now flooding;
- related that at the meeting, a lot of input was received from the public about houses falling into the river;
- stated that the public was upset that the problems causing the houses to fall into the river could not be classified as a natural disaster event;
- opined that with the recent storms, that perhaps those residents can receive some assistance;
- advised that at the meeting, there was agreement with the Alaska State Department of Transportation and Homeland Security for a channeling project; and
- spoke to his appreciation of the hard work by the EOC staff.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.


LARRY DEVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 10/16/12