

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on November 27, 2007, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. by Presiding Officer Bettine for the purpose of discussing the vacancy of the Borough Clerk.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Pete Houston, Assembly District No. 2
Ms. Michelle R. Church, Assembly District No. 3
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Robert Wells, Assembly District No. 6
Mr. Tom Kluberton, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, CMC, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Deputy Borough Clerk

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Presiding Officer Bettine 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 Ms. Amanda Charles, Executive Assistant to the Borough Clerk.

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. FILLING THE VACANCY OF THE BOROUGH CLERK

Assemblymember Wells spoke in support of advertising the opening of the Clerk position statewide through the Alaska Association of Municipal Clerks (AAMC) and the Alaska Municipal League (AML).

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- queried how the Assembly would go about advertising through AAMC and AML;
- stated that he has due respect for those employees who may apply within the organization; and
- queried whether the Assembly would appoint an acting clerk.

Ms. McGehee:

- advised that the advertising would be through AAMC;
- noted that the Alaska clerk's association does have an affiliation with AML; however, it would be two different advertisements; and
- suggested that the Assembly could also consider advertising with the International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC).

Assemblymember Church:

- spoke in support of hiring the Clerk within the organization;
- spoke to the positives and negatives to bringing new people into the Clerk's Office;
- stated that the Assembly could perform a six-month evaluation on the person who is appointed; and
- stated that if the Assembly is not pleased with the way the Clerk is performing, that they can advertise for the position after the probationary period.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- whether the Deputy Clerk would need to be appointed by the Assembly as Acting Clerk during the hiring process;
- what is required of the Clerk per Borough Code and Alaska State Statute;
- the process that would be used should the Assembly decide to appoint within the organization; and
- the importance of having the application period.

MOTION: Assemblymember Wells moved to advertise the Clerk's position through AAMC and AML with a closing date of December 21, 2007.

Discussion continued regarding:

- how AAMC and AML will advertise the position to the clerks statewide;
- holding application period versus appointing within; and
- the experience that the new person would need to bring to the Clerk's position.

MOTION: Assemblymember Houston moved a primary amendment to advertise the Clerk's position with the IIMC along with AAMC and AML.

Assemblymember Kluberton spoke to the cons of advertising internationally.

VOTE: The primary amendment failed with Assemblymember Houston in favor.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the pros and cons of hiring within the organization or advertising statewide for the position;
- the need to have the process moving forward;
- the difference in experience that clerks have working within larger organizations as opposed to smaller organizations; and
- the timeframe it will take to go through the interviewing process.

MOTION: Assemblymember Church called the question (to stop debate).

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

VOTE: The main motion passed without objection.

Assemblymember Houston queried the timeframe it will take for the hiring process.

Mr. Duffy advised that a new Clerk will not be in place until approximately February by the time that the process is complete.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- spoke to the time it took to go through the hiring process for the Borough Attorney position; and
- noted that the Assembly should set a deadline for the members to receive the applications, so that they can discuss how they would like to move forward.

Discussion continued regarding the application process.

MOTION: Assemblymember Church moved to schedule a meeting on January 8, 2007, at 6 p.m. to review the applications and discuss how the Assembly will proceed, and to receive the package of applications by January 2, 2007.

Assemblymember Kluberton queried whether there is a set of minimum qualifications that Human Resources will use prior to sending the applications forward to the Assembly.

Mr. Duffy advised that Human Resources would forward the applications to the Assembly with the qualified applicants separated from the applicants who do not meet the minimum qualifications; however, all applications will be provided.

Presiding Officer Bettine requested that the work session scheduled for January 8, 2007, regarding animal care and regulation be cancelled, due to the new meeting that has been scheduled.

There was no objection noted.

Assemblymember Church queried whether the applications would be reviewed in executive session.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- spoke to the way the meeting should be advertised;
- advised that applications are not reviewed in executive session;
- spoke to the requirements to hold an executive session; and
- noted that the applications are public information.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

Presiding Officer Bettine:

- requested that along with the applications, that the Assembly be provided with the current job description, State Statute, Borough Code, and a list of questions to review; and
- queried whether the staff has ever been involved in the hiring process.

Mr. Duffy spoke to the staff being involved in the hiring process of the Planning and Land Use Director.

Assemblymember Wells:

- stated that he would appreciate the Clerk providing the Assembly with a template of interview questions; and
- spoke to the Assembly adding questions to the list of interview questions that will be asked of the applicant.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the staff in the Clerk's Office being involved in the interview process through providing input on the potential questions of the applicants;
- the possibility of expanding the duties of the Borough Clerk; and
- the Deputy Clerk acting as Interim Clerk.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke to how well the Clerk's Office runs due to the way that the current Clerk works with the staff: Ms. Amanda Charles.

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mayor Menard:

- noted that he is going through the board positions that expire at the end of December; and
- requested that Assembly Members look at the vacancies and provide their input.

Ms. McGehee:

- spoke to the vacancy report process and how the Mayor nominates the positions;
- stated that the Clerk's Office is the clearing house for the applications; however, it is a very political instrument that the Clerk's Office should not take a part in reference/character checking of persons considered by the Mayor for nomination; and
- requested that the Mayor's Executive Assistant perform the work of collecting the information from the Assembly members and others in this regard.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- stated that he appreciated everyone's input at the meeting;
- stated his appreciation for the Clerk's staff; and
- spoke to the responsibilities of the Assembly needing to look at the whole picture.

Presiding Officer Bettine:

- stated that the Borough has a very capable Clerk's office; and
- noted that it is great for Ms. McGehee to have this opportunity.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- advised that he will not be in attendance at the joint meeting with the State Delegation, as he will be out of town; and
- queried if there was any objection if legal staff was not in attendance at the meeting.

There was no objection noted.

Mr. Duffy:

- spoke to difficulties with getting the State Delegation and the School Board all in attendance at a second meeting; and
- suggested meeting with the School District and the Legislative Delegation for the first hour and the Assembly and Legislative Delegation for the second half of the meeting.

Presiding Officer Bettine:

- spoke to the need for the Assembly to meet with the Legislative Delegation; and
- suggested that the School Board and Assembly have a joint meeting with the Legislative Delegation at a different time.

Ms. McGehee noted that the joint meeting with the Assembly, School Board, and Legislative Delegation has been advertised; however, the advertisement could be changed according to the wishes of the Assembly.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the joint meeting with the Assembly, School Board, and the Legislative Delegation;
- the importance of the School District's budget;
- the importance of the three bodies meet together; and
- advertising the breakfast for the Joint Assembly/School Board/Legislative Delegation at 8:30.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

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CURTIS D. MENARD, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

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MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 12/18/07