

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on November 30, 2010, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 5:04 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Ronald Arvin for the purpose of discussing filling the vacancy of the Borough Manager.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Warren Keogh, Assembly District No. 1 (*attended telephonically*)
Mr. Noel Woods, Assembly District No. 2
Mr. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3
Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5 (*arrived at 5:15 p.m.*)
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6
Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Ms. Sonya Conant, Human Resources Manager
Ms. Christine Nelson, Planning and Land Use Director

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Deputy Mayor Arvin 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. Christine Nelson, Planning and Land Use Director.

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION (*for subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person provided the person may request a public discussion and matters immediate public knowledge of which would clearly have an adverse impact upon the finances of the Borough.*)

A. HIRING OF THE BOROUGH MANAGER

B. CONTRACT TERMS FOR THE BOROUGH MANAGER

MOTION: Assemblymember Halter moved to enter into executive session to discuss subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person provided the person may request a public discussion. Specifically to discuss the contract terms and the hiring of the Borough Manager. Those present during the executive session were the members of the Assembly, the Attorney, the Clerk, the Human Resources Manager, and Ms. Christine Nelson.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection and the Assembly moved into executive session at 5:07 p.m.

(Assemblymember Bettine entered the meeting at 5:15 p.m.)

(Ms. Nelson exited the meeting at 5:25 p.m.)

MOTION: Assemblymember Halter moved to exit executive session.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection and the Assembly exited executive session at 6:50 p.m.

MOTION: Assemblymember Colver moved to retain the short list of candidates and to direct staff to hire an executive search firm. Also, to have staff issue a press release that the Borough Assembly has carefully considered the final candidates and has decided to hire an executive search firm to continue the process of selecting the next Borough Manager.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

Deputy Mayor Arvin queried if the Assembly would like to discuss the parameters of how they intend to engage the executive search firm.

Assemblymember Halter:

- stated that he would like to know the cost for the service;
- further added that he would also like to know how many there are to choose from and how the firm would be selected; and
- opined that this is a time sensitive issue and the Assembly needs to move fairly rapidly.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- advised that per code the Manager has the authority to enter into contracts that are less than \$100,000;
- stated that should the Ms. Gray deem that it is in the best interests of the Borough that she could also forgo the competitive bidding requirements;
- further added that Ms. Gray could choose a firm in conjunction with the Human Resources Manager, should the Assembly decide to go that way;

- advised that the other option would be to gather qualifications and bring them back before the Assembly for a decision; and
- stated that in terms of selection, those are the code parameters that the Assembly is dealing with.

Assemblymember Colver:

- stated that he is in favor of Ms. Gray executing the contract and the selection of the executive search firm being made by the Human Resources Manager;
- opined that the funds for the service should not exceed \$50,000 for all services; and
- stated that the service would be to develop a shortlist of candidates of up to 10, at which time the Assembly would take over and vet the candidates.

Assemblymember Ewing stated that the offered salary should be \$160,000, depending on experience.

Assemblymember Woods:

- spoke to concerns with setting a salary range without knowing the qualifications of the candidates; and
- opined that although the Borough is a second class Borough, that it requires first class management.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- stated that the Borough is not a private enterprise;
- further added that public entities do not pay as much as private entities; and
- stated that this should be kept in mind when determining a salary range.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- queried if \$50,000, would be sufficient funds to hire an executive search firm;
- stated that because the advertisement for Manager states that the salary is based on experience, that the Assembly should be informed as to what experience is being sought; and
- queried if the list of expertise that the Assembly created could be used as a guideline to select a firm.

Ms. Conant:

- stated that the Assembly's guidelines could be used;
- further added that \$50,000 for the executive search firm should be sufficient; and
- opined that this should provide a very good search.

Assemblymember Bettine queried if the amount should be lower.

Ms. Conant stated that it would depend on the firm that is selected.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the number of candidates for the executive search firm to select to bring before the Assembly;
- the funds required for the executive search firm;
- the parameters to be used in scoring candidates;
- how to advertise the salary range for candidates; and
- the process to report back to the Assembly regarding selection of the executive search firm.

MOTION: Assemblymember Bettine moved to conduct an interim evaluation of Ms. Gray during an executive session to be scheduled for December 7, 2010.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- spoke to an email that was sent to the Assembly, which contained his report for the comprehensive financial audit; and
- stated that the report contains information regarding lawsuits and claims over \$100,000; and
- advised that he has offered his assistance to Ms. Conant should she require it, regarding selecting the executive search firm.

Assemblymembers Colver and Woods requested the comprehensive financial audit be forwarded to them in hard copy format.

Assemblymember Colver:

- spoke to an accident that recently occurred at the Seldon and Lucille intersection;
- stated that accidents like this are part of the reason behind the road bond;
- stated that he would be remiss in representing his constituents if he did not make this intersection a priority;
- spoke to how dangerous the intersection is;
- noted that Seldon and Lucille are both Borough roads; and
- stated that traffic has increased on Seldon Road due to being paved, which has turned it into collector status road.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to an article in the Anchorage Daily News regarding Anchorage road issues;
- stated that she would like Ms. Sullivan to get the Borough on the front page of the paper regarding Borough road issues;
- spoke to the dangerous conditions at the Seldon and Lucille intersection;

- invited the Assembly to a Mexican food dinner at Houston High School, which would benefit the school in travelling to Hawaii for basketball; and
- stated that Houston High School is a small school and it is nice to see them have the opportunity to travel.

Assemblymember Woods:

- stated that he has been contacted by his constituents recently regarding several different subjects; and
- spoke to his interest in the tall structures information that is coming forward.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- spoke to concerns regarding duplicity in public opinion messages that have been provided to the Assembly recently;
- stated that the funding that is necessary to fix the Seldon and Lucille intersection needs to come through; and
- opined that the Borough is creating several dangerous intersections when upgrading roads throughout the Borough.

Assemblymember Halter:

- stated that the Assembly should start working on road bonds sooner; and
- related that Senator Huggins feels that a 50/50 approach is appropriate and would help the bonds succeed.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- apologized for not being present for the meeting; and
- related that today is his retirement day and he was unable to leave work.

Deputy Mayor Arvin:

- spoke to his appreciation of the insight Assemblymembers Bettine and Keogh provided during the manager selection process; and
- stated that he may be unavailable to attend the December 7, 2010, meeting in person.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The regular meeting adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



RONALD ARVIN, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 01/18/11