

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on December 14, 2010, at the Palmer High School Upper Library, 1701 West Arctic Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Arvin for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

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. Ron Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*)
Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Assemblymembers absent and excused were:

Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Mike Dunleavy, Seat A (*School Board President*)
Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B
Ms. Susan Pougher, Seat C
Mr. R. Ole Larson, Seat D
Mr. Erick Cordero, Seat E
Mr. Neal Lacy, Seat F
Ms. Lynn Gattis, Seat G

Borough staff in attendance were:

Ms. Elizabeth Gray, Acting Borough Manger
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
Ms. Eileen Probasco, Chief of Planning
Ms. Christine Nelson, Planning and Land Use Director
Ms. Shaune O'Neil, Public Works Director

III. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Verne Rupright, city of Wasilla.

IV. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Deputy Mayor Arvin inquired if there were changes to the agenda.

Assemblymember Bettine requested to hear Items of Business “E” prior to item “A.”

There was no objection noted.

Deputy Mayor Arvin inquired if there were any other changes to the agenda.

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

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke to the growth of the city of Wasilla: Mayor Verne Rupright, city of Wasilla.

The following person spoke to concerns regarding the School District Budget: Ms. Niki Taysom.

VI. SPECIAL RECOGNITION/ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

A. Cottonwood Creek Elementary Handbell Performance

Cottonwood Creek Elementary Fifth Graders provided a performance with handbells.

B. Superintendent Dr. Kenneth Burnley – 100 Day Report

Superintendent Dr. Burnley provided a quarterly School District progress report to the joint body.

C. Building Construction Progress *(requested by Borough Administration)*

Mr. Henry Cottle, Operations and Maintenance Director with the School District provided an update regarding the following:

- School District Safety and Security Bonds;
- Cottonwood Creek Elementary traffic upgrades;
- Wasilla High School traffic upgrades;
- Houston High School football field lights;
- Trapper Creek Elementary School roof; and
- School District Maintenance Bonds.

Assemblymember Ewing queried if the Alaska State Department of Transportation (DOT) had recently done an inspection of the District’s school buses.

Mr. Cottle:

- stated that it was not DOT who did the inspection;
- related that the District contracted with the California Highway Patrol (CHP); and
- stated that they came up and spot checked some of the buses.

Assemblymember Ewing queried if it was 10 buses that were inspected.

Mr. Cottle stated that it was 20 buses that were inspected.

Mr. Ken Forrest, School District Assistant Superintendent:

- related that the District had heard complaints regarding some equipment;
- stated that it was at that time the District contracted with a Certified Motor Carrier Inspector from the CHP, who is an independent consultant;
- spoke to the process of how the buses were chosen for inspection;
- related that some of the buses came up with less than satisfactory results;
- stated that they are working with First Student in order to address the repair and safety issues;
- spoke to how the District has contracted for coaches for field trips and away sports;
- advised that schools and parent groups will have a choice between First Student yellow school bus or a motor coach for the away trips; and
- spoke to the amenities that the motor coaches will provide.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- how many buses failed the inspection;
- contracting for the inspector;
- how the process of inspection was conducted;
- working to ensure a higher standard is maintained for buses and drivers;
- maintaining proper heating of school buses;
- working cooperatively with First Student to rectify the issues;
- concerns with First Student management; and
- the need to ensure that students are properly dressed for long haul trips.

(The joint meeting recessed at 7:12 p.m. and reconvened at 7:23 p.m.)

VII. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

E. Borough Area School Site Selection Committee

Assemblymember Bettine:

- thanked the School District for dinner and dessert;
- spoke to a memorandum she provided that outlines what the Committee is tasked with and who the members are;
- introduced Mr. Randy Dellar as the At-Large member;
- spoke to Mr. Dellar's experience with the matrix document, which provides guidance on how to make site selection better; and
- stated that the Committee met yesterday.

Ms. Eileen Probasco:

- spoke to how the School Site Selection Committee came to be by adoption of Borough code;
- spoke to the evolution of how code has changed over the years;
- spoke to the positions on the Committee and where the representatives come from;
- related that there is very little Borough owned land that is available for site selection;
- stated that sometimes there are unanticipated costs that are usually related to road improvements;
- spoke to the reserve fund that is for acquiring school sites;
- stated that because of the Committee, there has been improved coordination with the State Department of Transportation (DOT);
- related that the relationship helps to improve both their projects and site selection;
- spoke to the need to identify appropriate areas in which schools are needed;
- stated that the Committee is always identifying tools that can improve site selection;
- related that improved GIS data is one of the tools the Committee is using;
- spoke to the need to have a comprehensive bond package; and
- stated that there have been three new sites that have been selected as a result of the efforts of the Committee.

Assemblymember Keogh queried if the reserve fund is adequate to acquire the sites.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- advised that the fund balance is approximately \$3,000,000;
- noted that the projection is approximately \$4,100,000;
- stated that the reason the fund was started was to have a site selected prior to going to the voters; and
- further added that this was also done in order to provide the voters more certainty where the school was going to be located.

Superintendent Dr. Burnley:

- spoke to difficulties with the boundary change analysis and implementation; and
- noted the importance of partnering with the Borough in order to ensure the success of any new school.

Mr. Shannon Bingham, President of Western Demographics:

- stated that he has worked with over 160 school districts over the last 25 years;
- related that his firm has provided guidance for closures, expansions or consolidations for schools with varied numbers of students and school districts with complex issues;
- noted that he works with parents in depth in order to provide good information to school districts when deciding where to locate new schools;
- stated that it is important to know how the entire community feels about school issues;
- noted that it lends credibility to the process when the community is involved in making recommendations; and
- spoke to his pleasure with the volume of information he has received from the District and the Borough.

Mr. Bingham provided a demonstration on how GIS information is used for the school site selection process.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- long term bond planning and bond packaging;
- the importance of educating the public;
- boundary change analysis and implementation;
- land development analysis;
- enrollment projections; and
- possible closures or replacements of existing schools that require extensive repairs.

School Board President Dunleavy advised that the School District had scheduled a work session tonight at 8:30 p.m., as they were optimistic as to the time the joint meeting would adjourn.

Superintendent Dr. Burnley advised that the next presentation could encompass agenda items “A” through “D” in order to facilitate conclusion of the meeting.

There was no objection noted.

- A. Annual Budget, Preliminary Discussion; State Legislative Action Needed (*Pursuant to MSB 2.12.075*)
 1. School Budget Presentation
- B. Year End Encumbrance Carryover
- C. MSBSD Resolution 11-006 Supporting MSBSD’s Commitment to “Live Within Its Means”
- D. MSBSD Resolution 11-008 Requesting a Reasonable Funding Allocation from the Borough Assembly

School Board President Dunleavy:

- related that the purpose of Resolution Serial No. 11-006 is to let everyone know that when the School District makes budget decisions, that they stick to them; and
- related that the purpose of Resolution Serial No. 11-008 is to provide for a mechanism to address any unforeseen costs that could not be budgeted for.

Mr. Forrest provided a presentation on the 2011-2012 projected School District budget.

Superintendent Burnley stated that he believes the presentation provided a clear picture of where the School District is headed with the budget.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- stated that he appreciated the presentation by Mr. Forrest;
- related that he is pleased to have Superintendent Dr. Burnley with the School District; and
- commended the School Board for their efforts.

VI. Future Items/Future Business

January 19, 2011 6 PM Regular School Board Meeting, Palmer High School Upper Library
February 2, 2011 6 PM Regular School Board Meeting, Palmer High School Upper Library

School Board President Dunleavy spoke to the upcoming School Board meeting schedule.

VII. COMMENTS

Ms. Gray:

- stated that she enjoyed the meeting; and
- related that she is pleased with the working relationship between the Borough and the School District.

Superintendent Dr. Burnley:

- noted his agreement with Ms. Gray;
- stated that the School District is working to be cooperative citizens with the Borough; and
- spoke to the developing working relationship between the two administrations.

School Board Members Welton, Cordero, Pougher, and Gattis wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

School Board Member Larson stated that he is pleased with the improved working relationship between the Borough and the School District and looks forward to improving relationships with the cities as well.

Assemblymember Halter wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- thanked the School Board for hosting the meeting; and
- opined that the food was great.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- noted this was his first meeting with the joint body; and
- stated that he looks forward to getting to know everyone much better.

Assemblymember Woods:

- stated that he enjoyed the meeting;
- thanked the Chef for the food; and
- wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- thanked the School Board for providing a delicious dinner;
- stated she enjoyed the budget presentation as it was very informative; and
- wished everyone Happy Holidays.

Deputy Mayor Arvin:

- complimented Superintendent Burnley on the professionalism of his staff;
- spoke to the positive feedback of the community regarding the School District; and
- wished everyone a Merry Christmas.

School Board President Dunleavy:

- thanked the Assembly for coming to Palmer High School for the meeting; and
- stated that the School District is looking forward to continuing to expand the partnership with the Borough.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The joint meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.



RONALD ARVIN, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 01/18/11