

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on April 14, 2015, at the Borough Assembly Chamber, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of conducting a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Jim Sykes, Assembly District No. 1
- Mr. Matthew Beck, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*)
- Mr. Steve Colligan, Assembly District No. 4 (*entered telephonically at 7:20 p.m.*)
- Mr. Dan Mayfield, Assembly District No. 5
- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:

- Ms. Barbara Doty, Assembly District No. 6

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Ms. Deborah Retherford, Seat A
- Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B
- Ms. Susan Pougher, Seat C
- Mr. Ole Larson, Seat D
- Mr. Kelsey Trimmer, Seat E
- Mr. Ray Michaelson, Seat G

School Board members absent and excused were:

- Ms. Donna Dearman, Seat F

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
- Mr. John Moosey, Assistant Manager
- Mr. George Hays, Assistant Borough Manager
- Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor DeVilbiss inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

Assemblymember Sykes requested to add a legislative update as item C., under 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. Joe Griffith, General Manager of Matanuska Electric Association.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke to a teleconference hosted by Governor Walker and Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Hopkins regarding natural gasline projects on April 15, 2015: Wasilla Mayor Bert Cottle.

The following person spoke to concerns with Matanuska Electric Association: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Report from Matanuska Electric Association (*Requested by Assemblymember Arvin*)

Mr. Joe Griffith:

- spoke to Matanuska Electric Association's (MEA) service area;
- spoke to MEA's power generation system;
- spoke to MEA's infrastructure and substation upgrades; and
- spoke to MEA's long range transmission plans.

(The meeting recessed at 7:05 p.m. and reconvened at 7:15 p.m.)

B. Annual Budget And Bonding For Schools [*MSB 2.12.075(A)*]

Dr. Deena Paramo and Mr. Luke Fulp provided a report on the School District's fiscal year 2016 budget.

C. Legislative Update

Dr. Deena Paramo provided a legislative update.

Assemblymember Sykes spoke to House Bill 132.

MOTION: Assemblymember Sykes moved to direct the Manager to write a letter to the Governor and Legislative Delegation in support of vetoing House Bill 132 and that when the Mayor meets with Governor Walker that he take the same position.

Mayor DeVilbiss inquired if the School Board wished to take part in the discussion of House Bill 132.

School Board President Pougher related that the School Board did not wish to take part in the discussion.

Mayor DeVilbiss spoke to his intent to take comments at this time and to resume action on the pending motion made by Assemblymember Sykes after comments.

There was no objection noted.

VII. SCHOOL BOARD, MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

School Board Member Welton:

- thanked the Assembly for hosting the meeting with the School Board;
- spoke to the good conversation and discussion between the bodies;
- spoke to the budget shortfall and the impact on students;
- spoke to the importance of the education system; and
- opined that budgets are moral documents that hold the values of the community.

School Board Member Trimmer:

- spoke to the current economic climate;
- related that he understands everyone has to make sacrifices in light of declining revenue;
- stated he believes the School District's budget is reasonable; and
- spoke to the importance of investing in education.

School Board Member Larson:

- spoke to past fiscal challenges;
- spoke to his optimism in terms of doing the right things for kids;
- thanked the Assembly for the open dialog; and
- spoke in appreciation of the opportunity to meet jointly with the Assembly.

School Board Member Retherford

- spoke to the School District's budget;
- spoke to the importance of investing in education; and
- encouraged people to attend year end school events.

School Board Member Michaelson:

- spoke to the need to clarify the amount of tax money that funds education;
- opined that people love Borough schools;
- spoke to the State's fiscal forecast;
- spoke to the decline in revenue;
- spoke to the need to preserve class size for quality education;
- spoke to the need to preserve the number of different programs offered to meet the commitment of choice and access to education; and

- spoke favorably about the candid discussion with the Assembly this evening.

Dr. Paramo:

- spoke to the relationship of trust between the School District and Borough; and
- affirmed her commitment to ensuring that the Mat-Su School District is the best in Alaska despite fiscal challenges.

School Board Member Pougher:

- spoke to the positive work of the School District;
- affirmed the School Board's commitment to quality education;
- encouraged the Assembly to fund the School District at the level requested; and
- spoke to achievements of local schools.

Mr. Moosey:

- spoke to the Borough's funding contribution to the School District; and
- announced that Mr. Bill Gamble has been selected as the incoming Director of Emergency Services.

Ms. McKechnie:

- stated that she has received a request to reschedule the April 23 and April 24, budget work sessions;
- suggested that the April 23, work session be rescheduled to April 30, at 10 a.m.;
- suggested that the April 24, work session be rescheduled to May 4, at 4 p.m.; and
- requested that the Assembly contact her to confirm high school graduation ceremonies that individual members may wish to attend.

Assemblymember Beck:

- stated that he is looking forward to the continued budget process;
- thanked the School Board and staff for meeting with the Assembly this evening;
- opined that the Assembly has a fundamental responsibility to protect the most vulnerable among us;
- added that investing in education is a high priority;
- spoke to quality education programs offered by the School District; and
- reported that the Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board unanimously passed a resolution recommending the Central Landfill for the new Septage and Leachate Treatment Facility.

Assemblymember Colligan:

- thanked the School Board for attending tonight's meeting; and
- spoke to budget challenges and measures that may need to be taken.

Assemblymember Halter:

- thanked the School Board and staff for tonight's meeting;
- opined that the majority of voters support additional school bonds; and
- opined that schools are the Borough's number one priority.

Assemblymember Mayfield:

- spoke to the current financial climate;
- spoke to the need to equalize revenue and expenses;
- spoke to the need to sustain investment in education;
- thanked Dr. Paramo for the concise budget presentation;
- thanked the School Board for the engaging conversation; and
- congratulated Mr. Bill Gamble on his appointment as the new Director of Emergency Services.

Assemblymember Sykes:

- thanked the School Board and staff for attending tonight's meeting;
- expressed appreciation to the School District;
- thanked the School District for presenting an organized and understandable budget;
- spoke to the budget process;
- commended Mr. Bill Gamble on his appointment as Director of Emergency Services.

Assemblymember Arvin spoke to the Borough's partnership with the School District.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- expressed appreciation to Borough and School District for working together;
- shared his experience with the math curriculum offered by the School District; and
- spoke favorably about forward funding capital projects for school construction.

(The meeting recessed at 9:08 p.m. and reconvened at 9:17 p.m.)

The School Board exited the meeting.

[Clerk note: see page 2 of the meeting minutes for the pending motion.]

Mayor DeVilbiss ruled the motion out of order.

MOTION: Assemblymember Sykes moved to appeal the decision of the chair to direct the Manager to write a letter to the Governor and Legislative Delegation in support of vetoing House Bill 132 and that when the Mayor meets with Governor Walker that he take the same position

VOTE: The motion to sustain the chair's ruling failed with Assemblymembers Sykes, Beck, Mayfield, and Hater in favor. (Motion requires 2/3 vote to pass.)

MOTION: Assemblymember Halter moved to postpone the motion to direct the Manager to write a letter to the Governor and Legislative Delegation in support of vetoing House Bill 132 and that when the Mayor meets with Governor Walker that he take the same position, to a time certain of April 21, 2015.

VOTE: The motion passed with Assemblymembers Sykes and Beck opposed.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 9:32 p.m. .


LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 08/04/15