

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on May 7, 2015, at the Willow Community Center, Mile 69 Parks Highway, Willow, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of conducting a public hearing and possible deliberations on Ordinance Serial No. 15-015.

**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
- Mr. Dan Mayfield, Assembly District No. 5
- Ms. Barbara J. Doty, Assembly District No. 6 (*arrived at 6:29 p.m.*)
- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

- Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager
- Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
- Mr. Nick Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
- Ms. Jamie Newman, Deputy Clerk
- Mr. George Hays, Assistant Borough Manager
- Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director
- Mr. Michael Brown, Capital Projects Director
- Mr. Eric Wyatt, Information Technology Director
- Mr. James Wilson, Internal Auditor
- Ms. Hilary Schwaderer, Administrative Assistant I
- Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director

**III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Mayor DeVilbiss 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. Charlotte Spain, a member of the audience.

**V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

The following person spoke to the Willow Library expansion project and stated that a public input session will be held on June 3, at 7 p.m., at the Willow Community Center: Ms. Marian Charles.

The following person spoke to concerns with the senior citizen property tax exemption and the vehicle registration tax: Ms. Gail Just.

The following person spoke to concerns with the closure of the Skwentna Landfill: Ms. Bonnie Dee Childs.

The follow person spoke to the Willow recycling program and requested support from the Borough: Ms. Mary Shreves.

The following person spoke to concerns about public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

The following person spoke in support of repealing the permanent registration of motor vehicles over eight years old and related that if the legislation is not repealed, road service area mill rates will inevitably increase: Mr. Jim Norcross.

## **VI. PUBLIC HEARING (Three Minutes Per Person)**

- A. **Ordinance Serial No. 15-015:** An Ordinance Appropriating Monies From The Central Treasury For The Borough Operating Funds, Enterprise Funds, Education Operating Fund, And Capital Funds; Establishing The Rate Of Levy For All Borough Functions For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2015, And Ending June 30, 2016, And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2015, Through June 30, 2016.

Mayor DeVilbiss opened the public hearing.

The following person spoke in support of increasing the mill rate for the Willow Fire Service Area as recommended by the Willow Fire Service Area Board of Supervisors: Mr. Jim Norcross.

The following person spoke in support of the Willow Fire Department and increasing the mill rate for the Willow Fire Service Area to 2.75 mills: Ms. Tamara Boeve and Mr. Mike Klawitter, President of the Nancy Lake Homeowners Association.

The following person spoke in support of the School District's request for a 3 percent increase in funding from the Borough: Ms. Virgie Thompson; Ms. Lisa Shelby; Mr. Randy Quincy; and Mr. Andy McDermott.

The following person spoke to the time and effort fire service area boards put into the budget and expressed frustration with the Borough's budget process and lack of communication from Administration: Mr. William Browne, West Lakes Fire Service Board Chairman.

The following person spoke in support of investing in communities through parks and recreation opportunities and the mill rate increase for the Willow Fire Service Area: Mr. Steve Charles.

The following person spoke in support of funding for the Sexual Assault Response Team and Mat-Su Youth Court: Mr. Bert Cottle, Wasilla Mayor.

The following person spoke in support of funding for the Sexual Assault Response Team, Mat-Su Youth Court, and the Palmer Library: Ms. DeLena Johnson, Palmer Mayor.

The following person read a letter into the record from the Talkeetna Community Council requesting that the Borough address issues with the Talkeetna sewer and water system and the Talkeetna River revetment and dike: Mr. Brian Okonek.

The following person spoke to concerns about the Talkeetna sewer and water system: Mr. Brian Okonek.

The following person spoke in support of increasing the Willow Fire Service Area mill rate to 2.75 and the Willow recycling program: Mr. William Mailer.

The following person spoke to the role of service area boards and opined that service area boards should be elected by the voters that live within the service area: Mr. Ken Slauson.

The following person spoke to concerns with the proposed flat rate increase for the Talkeetna sewer and water system: Mr. Robert Gerlach.

The following person spoke in support of mill rate increases going to a vote of the people within the service area and expressed concern about the ambulance service in Willow: Mr. Doyle Holmes.

The following person encouraged the Assembly to take the position of the elected official from District 7 as the body deliberates on the budget and in favor of the proposed mill rate increase for the Willow Fire Service Area: Mr. Randall Kowalke.

*(The meeting recessed at 7:22 p.m. and reconvened at 7:32 p.m.)*

The following person spoke in support of increasing the mill rate for the Willow Fire Service Area: Mr. Ed McCain; Mr. Renee Gonzalez; and Mr. Dan Tucker.

The following person spoke in support of the proposed mill rate increase for the Willow Fire Service Area and the 3 percent increase in funding to the School District: Ms. Carrie Smoldon and Mr. Todd Smoldon.

The following person spoke in support of the Assembly scheduling another public hearing on the budget and public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

The following person spoke in support of the School District's request for a 3 percent increase in funding from the Borough: Ms. Stacey Ruta and Ms. Wendy Taylor.

The following person spoke in support of the Willow Fire Service Area mill rate increase, however, cautioned that there are other issues with the Willow Fire Department that money is not going to solve: Mr. David Spain.

The following person spoke in support of increasing the Willow Fire Service Area mill rate to 2.5 and that the proposed mill rate increase go before the voters at the 2015 regular election as adopted by the Willow Fire Service Board of Supervisors: Mr. Jim Huston, Willow Fire Service Area Board of Supervisors Member.

The following person spoke in support of funding for the Palmer Library and spoke generally to the budget: Ms. Patricia Rosnel.

There being no others present who wished to testify, the public hearing closed and discussion moved to the Assembly.

**MOTION:** Assemblymember Arvin moved to adopt Ordinance Serial No. 15-015.

**MOTION:** Assemblymember Arvin moved to continue Ordinance Serial No. 15-015 to May 11, 2015, at 6 p.m. in Assembly Chambers.

**VOTE:** The motion passed without objection.

## **VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS**

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- spoke to the Central Monofill case;
- reported that the Central Monofill appeal was upheld by the Court of Appeals; and
- spoke to the executive session scheduled on May 11.

Mr. Moosey:

- thanked the Willow community for the hospitality this evening;
- related that he recognizes that the issues discussed this evening are important to the residents of Willow; and
- commended the residents for the thoughtful and respectful comments made during the Assembly meeting.

Ms. McKechnie:

- stated that a request was received to reschedule the May 12, special Assembly meeting to May 14; and
- thanked the Willow community for the food.

Assemblymember Colligan spoke to scheduling conflict on May 14.

Assemblymember Beck suggested that the meeting be rescheduled to the following week. Ms. McKechnie queried if the body would like to reschedule the May 12, special Assembly meeting to May 20.

There was no objection noted.

Assemblymember Halter:

- thanked the firefighters for their service;
- stated that there is no requirement in Borough code for voter approval on mill rate increases;
- spoke in support of the Borough's revenue cap;
- opined that the revenue cap will stand in fiscal year 2016;
- spoke to the Willow Fire Service Area mill rate in the fiscal year 2016 budget;
- added that the proposed mill rate is 2.75 percent;
- further added that it is duty of the Assembly to set mill rates;
- opined that the idea that a mill rate increase has to be voted on by the people is a myth that has been perpetuated in Willow for many years;
- opined that the idea has been a detriment to the citizens of Willow;
- added that the mill rate for the Willow fire service area has been too low;
- further added that he fully expects fire service to improve with the mill rate increase,
- added that the community needs to get past the divisiveness;
- encouraged the body to support the mill rate increase for the Willow Fire Service Area as proposed in the budget as it is a critical issue for the community;
- spoke to his position that the Borough must provide adequate landfill service in Skwentna; and
- spoke to the Talkeetna sewer and water rate structure.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- spoke to the Borough's revenue cap; and
- provided an explanation of the law.

Assemblymember Mayfield:

- spoke favorably about the community of Willow;
- spoke in support of the 2.75 mill rate increase for the Willow Fire Service Area; and
- spoke in support of funding the 3 percent increase requested by the School District.

Assemblymember Doty:

- expressed appreciation to the Willow community for the warm welcome this evening;
- spoke in support of funding the 3 percent increase requested by the School District;
- spoke in support of the mill rate increase for the Willow Fire Service Area;
- opined that Mat-Su Youth Court and the Sexual Assault Team are very important programs that serve the entire Borough;
- added that many agencies within the Borough have an obligation to keep the programs up and running;
- spoke in support of recycling programs; and

- opined that these are tough financial times and the Assembly must keep that in mind as budget deliberations progress.

Assemblymember Colligan:

- thanked the Willow community for coming out this evening;
- complemented the community on the engaging and polite conversation;
- expressed that he is proud of Borough staff;
- spoke to the downturn in the economy;
- spoke to the importance of funding basic services in tough financial times;
- spoke to the vehicle registration tax; and
- spoke to the senior citizen/disabled veteran owner occupied property tax exemption approved by the voters in 2014.

Assemblymember Beck:

- thanked the community of Willow for coming out this evening;
- spoke favorably about the School District; and
- spoke in support of funding the 3 percent increase requested by the School District.

Assemblymember Sykes:

- expressed appreciation to the Willow community for the warm welcome;
- expressed appreciation for so many people coming out to testify before the Assembly this evening;
- spoke in support of firefighters, emergency service responders, librarians, teachers and volunteers;
- added that Willow residents have demonstrated that they can come together on community projects and it is gratifying to see;
- spoke in support of the School District;
- spoke in support of funding the 3 percent increase requested by the School District;
- spoke to revenue generating ideas; and
- spoke to online improvements in budget transparency.

Assemblymember Arvin:

- spoke to the senior citizen/disabled veteran owner occupied property tax exemption approved by the voters;
- stated that he is proud to have sponsored the legislation that placed the question on the ballot;
- commended Assemblymember Halter for his work on the Assembly;
- added that he has enjoyed serving on the Assembly with Assemblymember Halter; and
- further added that he appreciates coming to Willow to engage with the community.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- thanked the community of Willow for coming out this evening;
- spoke in support of trying to maintain the landfill in Skwentna; and
- spoke to his philosophy on government and the budget.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The special meeting recessed at 8:55 p.m. to be reconvened on May 11, 2015, at 6 p.m.

  
LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

  
LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 05/27/15