

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH WASTEWATER & SEPTAGE ADVISORY BOARD

Mike Campfield, Chair
Danny Noland

Bob Walden, Vice Chair
Dan Tucker

Gina Jorgensen

MINUTES

REGULAR MEETING

September 13, 2023

MSB Assembly Chambers
350 E. Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645

2:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

This regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board was held on Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at the DSJ Building at 350 East Dahlia Avenue in Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 2:30 p.m. by Mr. Mike Campfield, P.E.

II. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Mike Campfield, P.E.
Ms. Gina Jorgensen
Mr. Danny Noland
Mr. Dan Tucker
Mr. Bob Walden

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to adopt the agenda, by Mr. Walden. Seconded by Mr. Tucker.

VOTE: No objections. The agenda was approved as presented.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Campfield.

V. AUDIENCE INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Jeff Smith, MSB Solid Waste Division Manager

VI. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. March 8, 2023 (regular meeting)

Minutes for the March 8, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed by the Board.

Motion to approve the minutes as presented, by Ms. Jorgensen.

Seconded by Mr. Walden.

VOTE: The minutes were approved without objection.

VII. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*Three minutes per person*)

Mr. Jeff Smith, Solid Waste Division Manager: Interested in participating and hearing the Board's direction on the septage situation, as it could have an impact on the Landfill.

VIII. AGENCY AND STAFF REPORTS

A. City of Wasilla – Mr. Bob Walden, P.E., Public Works Deputy Director

The City of Wasilla continues to work on their wastewater treatment plan and their aging infrastructure. They have identified a number of projects, including lagoon- and sludge-related projects, a new digester, and microturbines. For some of these projects, there are key components that require a year or more for production. Additionally, the City of Wasilla is seeking twelve different easement acquisitions, including one large acquisition intended for use in expanding their treatment facility, which is at 90-95% of capacity. They would like to have more conversation with the City of Palmer to learn more about their plans and activities.

B. City of Palmer – Mr. Jude Bilafer, Public Works Director

Not present.

C. City of Houston – Gina Jorgensen

Nothing to report.

D. Anchorage Water & Wastewater Utility – Mr. Will O'Malley, Project Manager

Not present.

E. Matanuska-Susitna Borough – Mr. Mike Campfield, P.E., Environmental Engineer

No activity on septage. There are a lot of federal funding opportunities available for water and wastewater; some programs with 50 percent match requirements, and a few that would provide an even greater percentage of funding, up to 100%.

F. State of Alaska, DEC- Mr. Oran Woolley, Wastewater Engineering Associate

Not present.

IX. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. WSAB Resolution 23-01

Motion to adopt Resolution 23-01, by Mr. Tucker.

Seconded by Ms. Jorgensen.

Motion, by Mr. Tucker, to amend the Resolution's "be it resolved" section to:

"Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board adopts the following goals and objectives: 1) On a continuing basis, assess the current wastewater and septage handling situation and conditions and identify and propose potential alternatives, should the current options be compromised or terminated; 2) review and maintain past alternative options; 3) investigate new and evolving methods, means and opportunities for wastewater and septage treatment, and; 4) continue to inform and educate the Assembly regarding wastewater and septage issues that could affect Borough residents."

Seconded by Ms. Jorgensen.

VOTE: The motion to amend Resolution 23-01 as presented was passed without objection.

VOTE: No objections. WSAB Resolution 23-01 was adopted as amended.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding opportunities for wastewater projects

The Board discussed funding opportunities made available through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The EPA has been awarded a large amount of funding to address clean water projects and drinking water projects. The clean water funding is available for wastewater treatment projects, such as cleaning up discharges and cleaning water from wastewater treatment plants. This equates to loans provided at very low interest rates, and potentially no interest. It is federal funding, passed through the State, so all the federal requirements apply.

The Board requested additional input from Mr. Smith, who added comments on a SWPPER grant program. One element of this program, which could include wastewater treatment funding, is expected to open again in the months ahead.

XI. INFORMATIONAL HANDOUTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

XII. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Campfield: Thanks to Mr. Tucker for his work to clarify the Board's goals. Identifying new and evolving methods is a good goal to add; there are things have changed even within the last ten years. Appreciates Mr. Noland's willingness to converse with his competitors within the industry and represent them on the Board. Perhaps a work session could be scheduled between now and the next quarterly meeting.

Ms. Jorgensen: Thank you to Mr. Tucker for his input in amending the Board's goals. Frustrated with the difficulty in securing funding. There is funding out there that we could access, and it is needed, but the Assembly is not allowing it.

Mr. Noland: Mr. Noland is in communication with his competition and is able to represent all the septic portion/functions. The big frustration for septic haulers is that while they are paying thousands of dollars each month to drive to Anchorage repeatedly, they say a solution cannot be funded. There are funds to cover the costs once the system is in place. Excited about being on the board and being a little closer to the conversation; eager to work toward quicker progress. Prefers that the Board present advice to the Assembly sooner rather than later, and more frequently. The relationship between haulers and Anchorage is very fragile.

Mr. Tucker: Thanks to the Board for their support in amending the Board's purpose/goals. Looks forward to inciting more action; just circulating the information is not enough. We had hoped at one time that City of Palmer could be a part of the solution, but that doesn't seem to be happening. Perhaps private entities could be a part of the solution. Inquired whether recent legislation pertaining to the Open Meetings Act and small boards will apply to this Board.

Mr. Walden: Encourages members to take a look at the new ADEC septic packet that has been published. Looking forward to hearing Mr. Noland's input from his perspective within the industry.

XIII. NEXT MEETING

A. December 13, 2023, 2:30 p.m., MSB Assembly Chambers

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by Mr. Tucker.
Seconded by Mr. Walden.

VOTE: No objections. The meeting was adjourned at 3:22 p.m.


Mr. Mike Campfield, P.E., Chair

ATTESTED:

 12/04/23
Elaine M. Flagg, Board Administrative Support