

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on December 27 2010, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 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
Mr. Noel Woods, Assembly District No. 2
Mr. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3
Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4 (*attended telephonically*)
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5

Assemblymembers absent and excused were:

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. Elizabeth Gray, Acting Borough Manager
Ms. Brenda J. Henry, Executive Assistant to the Borough Clerk
Ms. Sonya Conant, Human Resources Manager

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. Sonya Conant, Human Resources Manager.

V. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. FILLING THE VACANCY OF THE BOROUGH MANAGER

Ms. Gray:

- introduced Mr. Colin Baenziger of Colin Baenziger and Associates; and
- stated that Mr. Baenziger is the head of the executive search firm that will assist the Assembly in filling the vacancy of Borough Manager.

Mr. Colin Baenziger provided a summary of the suggested project schedule for filling the vacancy of Borough Manager.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- spoke to receptions that were held for previous candidates; and
- queried if it is better to have separate receptions or conduct them at the same time.

Mr. Baenziger advised that a reception for all candidates has worked well in his experience.

Assemblymember Woods queried if Mr. Baenziger felt that the Assembly would be able to find an appropriate candidate.

Mr. Baenziger affirmed the query.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- stated that one of the requirements is for a candidate with experience in municipalities of more than 20,000 residents; and
- queried how pertinent that may be to finding a candidate.

Mr. Baenziger:

- opined that it is important because it is directly related to experience of the candidate; and
- stated that he would not like to see it lowered.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to concerns that the \$200,000 salary range may attract candidates that are only interested due to the high salary;
- opined that with the research she had done the range was a little high; and
- queried Mr. Baenziger's thoughts on this.

Mr. Baenziger:

- stated that salary range is not necessarily that high;
- related that the position would not necessarily be advertised at that range; and
- stated that it would probably be advertised at a lower range.

Deputy Mayor Arvin:

- stated that he is not attached to the \$200,000 salary range;
- opined that perhaps the range could be narrowed down; and
- stated that should the Assembly find a candidate that is extra specially qualified, they could be offered up to \$200,000.

Assemblymember Woods opined that it may be worth it to find a highly qualified candidate by offering the higher salary range.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- qualifications of candidates; and
- salary range to be offered.

Deputy Mayor Arvin inquired if the Assembly would like to set the salary range at \$130,000 to \$180,000, with the caveat that if a candidate possesses extraordinary qualifications, they could be offered up to \$200,000.

There was no objection noted.

Discussion continued regarding:

- diversity of the area and its residents;
- the myth versus the reality of living in Alaska;
- how to promote the diversity of the area and residents to candidates;
- the process for searching for candidates;
- the possible number of candidates the Assembly would like to interview;
- how to entice qualified candidates to apply; and
- the possibility of offering a higher salary range to an extraordinarily qualified candidate.

Mr. Baenziger stated that he would like to meet with at least three Assembly members tomorrow, at varying times.

Discussion ensued on who should meet with Mr. Baenziger tomorrow.

(The Assembly decided that Assemblymember Bettine, Arvin and Keogh would meet with Mr. Baenziger and that Assemblymember Woods would meet with him should Assemblymember Keogh be unable to.)

(The special meeting recessed at 7:39 p.m. and reconvened at 7:45 p.m.)

B: ~~EXECUTIVE SESSION (for subjects that tend to prejudice the reputation and character of any person provided the person may request a public discussion.)~~

1: ~~FILLING THE VACANCY OF THE BOROUGH MANAGER: CANDIDATE QUALIFICATIONS AND INTERVIEW QUESTIONS~~

[Clerk's note: The executive session was not conducted.]

VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- advised that Steppers Construction had offered a settlement in the suit they have against the Borough;
- advised that Steppers Construction offered \$68,000; and
- related that a counter-offer was made to drop the suit, which has not yet been accepted.

Ms. McKechnie:

- spoke to the meetings scheduled for February 1, 2011, at 4 p.m. to discuss the Bogard Road Extension;
- further added that there is also a regular meeting on that date at 6 p.m.;
- noted that per the suggested project schedule provided by Mr. Baenziger, the Assembly would need to meet with him on February 1, 2011, to discuss the short listed candidates; and
- queried if the Assembly would like to change the Bogard Road Extension discussion to another day in order to accommodate the need to meet with Mr. Baenziger.

Assemblymember Bettine opined that it could be added to the regular meeting agenda and the Assembly could go into executive session immediately.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- stated that he finds it problematic to conduct an executive session at the beginning of a meeting when there is a large number of public in attendance;
- opined that it is a matter of public perception to follow the agenda as closely as possible; and
- stated that it is important to be courteous of the public in attendance.

Deputy Mayor Arvin noted his agreement with Assemblymember Keogh.,

Discussion ensued regarding scheduling of meetings.

(The Assembly decided to schedule a meeting for Bogard Road Extension discussion for January 18, 2011, at 3 p.m. as the second agenda item and to schedule the meeting with Mr. Baenziger for February 1, 2011, at 5 p.m.)

Assemblymember Keogh:

- spoke to his attendance at recent Port Commission and Platting Board meetings;
- commended the Platting Board on their unanimous decision on plats for a subdivision;
- related that their decision was to require the developer to include bike paths and sidewalks to ensure the safety of children to access schools; and
- noted that it was not a popular decision, but an important one nonetheless.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to concerns regarding a recent Alaska Public Radio talk show where she heard the discussion of turn lanes on the Parks Highway between mile post 163 and 305;
- related that it bothered her so much because there are no turns lanes between Wasilla and Big Lake, unless there is a traffic light;
- further added that it is the same for Knik-Goose Bay Road;
- noted that these are both safety corridors with a large number of accidents;
- related that the daily traffic counts for the portion of the Parks Highway from Lucas Road to Big Lake Road in 2008 were 13,400 to 19,529;
- further added that the daily traffic counts from mile post 163 to 305, which is near Cantwell, are 2,200;
- stated that she is considering lobbying the Alaska State Department of Transportation heavily for funds to be reallocated; and
- queried if this is something the Assembly would like to pursue.

Assemblymember Keogh and Deputy Mayor Arvin noted their support.

Discussion ensued on how the Assembly would like to approach lobbying to have funds reallocated for the high traffic use area of the Parks Highway.

Deputy Mayor Arvin inquired if Assemblymember Bettine would like a resolution drawn up that speaks to her concerns.

Assemblymember Bettine affirmed the query.

Deputy Mayor Arvin queried if it was known who was behind the request for turn lanes in the Cantwell area.

Assemblymember Bettine stated that she thought it was industry.

Assemblymember Wood opined that Representative Bill Stolze would be good to speak with, as he is the Co-Chair for the Finance Committee.

Deputy Mayor Arvin opined that this effort should be carefully navigated.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to the Parks Highway project changing over the years due to funding;
- stated that the Borough has been promised repeatedly that the safety corridors would be a priority and they have not been; and
- wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Assemblymember Woods wished the body Happy New Year.

Assemblymember Ewing stated that he is pleased to hear that the Big Lake Lions and local merchants were able to build an ice arena without using any public funds.

Deputy Mayor Arvin queried how the joint meetings with the legislators are scheduled.

Ms. McKechnie:

- stated that typically in October, the Assembly gives staff that direction;
- further added that at that time, Administration contacts the legislators and Mr. Gillespie, who is the lobbyist; and
- stated that after a date is coordinated with the bodies, the meeting is scheduled.

Deputy Mayor Arvin:

- spoke to a recent conversation that he had with newly elected Representative Feige;
- related that Representative Feige was very upset that he was not invited to the meeting;
- related that he told him it may be due to the fact that he had not yet been sworn in;
- opined that it would serve the Borough's relationship with the State Delegation to ensure that all officials are invited; and
- stated that Representative Feige appears to be a very engaged and hands on person; and
- wished everyone a Happy New Year.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- stated that he had inquired as to why Representatives Feige and Gatto were not in attendance at the joint meeting;
- further added that he was told that the invitation was extended to the current and newly elected delegation; and
- thanked Deputy Mayor Arvin for bringing that up.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The adjourned at 8:25 p.m.



RONALD ARVIN, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:



LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 01/18/11