

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on May 5, 2011, at the Central Public Safety Building, 101 W. Swanson, Wasilla, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of holding a public hearing and possible budget deliberations on Ordinance Serial No. 11-011 (budget ordinance).

**II. ROLL CALL**

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Warren Keogh, Assembly District No. 1 (*Deputy Mayor*)  
Mr. Noel Woods, Assembly District No. 2  
Mr. Ron Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*) (*via teleconference*)  
Mr. Mark Ewing, Assembly District No. 4  
Ms. Cindy L. Bettine, Assembly District No. 5  
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. John Moosey, Borough Manager  
Ms. Elizabeth Gray, Assistant Borough Manager  
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney  
Ms. Cheryl D. Marino, Deputy Borough Clerk  
Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director  
Mr. Dennis Brodigan, Emergency Services Director  
Ms. Christine Nelson, Planning and Land Use Director  
Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director  
Ms. Sharon Huckins, Administrative Secretary  
Ms. Joell Church, Records Management Officer  
Mr. James Wilson, Assistant to the Borough Manager's Office

**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 Mr. James Wilson, Assistant to the Borough Manager's Office.

**V. PUBLIC HEARING AND POSSIBLE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS** (Three minutes per person)

- A. Ordinance Serial No. 11-011: AN ORDINANCE APPROPRIATING MONIES FROM THE CENTRAL TREASURY FOR THE BOROUGH OPERATING FUNDS, ENTERPRISE FUNDS, EDUCATION OPERATING FUND, AND CAPITAL FUNDS AND ESTABLISHING THE RATE OF LEVY FOR ALL BOROUGH FUNCTIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING JULY 1, 2011, AND ENDING JUNE 30, 2012.

The following person spoke to concerns regarding the Planning Department budget regarding permitting office fees and personnel and spoke in appreciation of the Mayor and the Assembly working hard to decrease the budget: Mr. Butch Moore.

The following person spoke in support of the Emergency Services budget, spoke to how Emergency Services helped save her son's life, and read a letter thanking the Emergency Services Department written by her son: Ms. Amber Aldridge.

The following persons spoke in support of the Human Services Matching Grant: Ms. Rachel Greenberg, Mr. Carl Baker, and Ms. Buella Nielson.

The following persons spoke in support of the Emergency Services budget: Ms. Glori Strickler, West-Lakes Fire Service Area No. 136 EMT, Ms. Jeanne Lewis; Ken Slauson, Wasilla-Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors; Carol Christiansen, Wasilla-Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors; and Mr. Dan Tucker, Wasilla-Lakes FSA Board of Supervisors.

The following persons spoke in support of tourism and the Mat-Su Visitors Center budget: Mr. Craig Saunders and Ms. Karren Harris.

The following person spoke in support of full funding for the School District: Ms. Alysia Laghin-Bushey.

The following person spoke in support of adequate funding for Emergency Medical Technicians and road service areas and concerns regarding less funding for the Planning Commission and Platting Board: Ms. Anne Winckler.

The following persons spoke in support of full funding for the Sutton Library: Ms. Elaine Nash and Ms. Gwendalyn Black.

The following person spoke to concerns regarding Title 27, flood plain issues, and the need to fund the Platting Division staff: Mr. David Robinson, Platting Board Member.

*(The meeting recessed at 7:08 p.m. and reconvened at 7:18 p.m.)*

The following person spoke in support of funding for permanent paramedic positions and the non-profit Palmer Senior Center Meals on Wheels Program: Ms. Sandy Hoeft.

The following person spoke to concerns regarding emergency services responder positions turnover rate and the need to fund permanent positions: Ms. Kara Boothby.

The following person provided an update regarding State funding for the School District: Mr. Ken Forrest, Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District Assistant Superintendent of Administration.

The following person thanked the Assembly for the fiscal year 2011 funding and spoke to concerns regarding not funding elementary positions: Jill Showman, Matanuska-Susitna Education Association President.

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

Mayor DeVilbiss asked if there was objection to continuing Ordinance Serial No. 11-011 to the May 10, 2011, meeting.

There was no objection noted.

## **VI. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION**

The following person spoke in support of holding Assembly meetings after workday hours: Mr. Ken Slauson.

The following person spoke regarding surplus funds: Mr. Butch Moore.

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

**MOTION:** Assemblymember Halter moved to schedule special meetings regarding the fiscal year 2012 budget deliberations and possible adoption at 6 p.m. on May 16, 2011, tentatively schedule 6 p.m. on May 23, 2011 and May 25, 2011, and by adding the topic to the May 17, 2011, regular meeting agenda.

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

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- noted that a mediation has been scheduled regarding the Krause case in Anchorage on May 10, 2011; and
- commented that if the case comes close to a settlement, he may not be in attendance at the May 10, 2011, Assembly special meeting.

Assemblymember Colver:

- noted that Ms. Pam Graham had a family emergency and had to leave work before the State Redistricting maps were completed;
- commented that he hoped to have maps to testify in front of the State Redistricting Board;

- asked whether it was attempted to create the maps; and
- queried the intent of management.

Mayor DeVilbiss stated that it was his understanding that the Assembly was not going to be looking at maps, but instead sticking to the concepts.

Mr. Moosey:

- spoke to concerns regarding not having Assembly consensus on the maps;
- noted that Pam Graham is the only one capable of creating the maps and unfortunately is out of the office due to a family emergency;
- commented that if the Assembly gives some direction on maps versus a statement, Administration would be glad to attend the May 6, 2011, meeting;
- stated that he wanted to ensure that Administration was on the same page as the Assembly; and
- spoke to proceeding with caution with not having full staff.

Assemblymember Colver:

- opined that time ran out before we had a chance to complete the issue;
- noted that there was Assembly consensus the first time the Assembly maps came forward;
- noted that the Assembly asked if the Assembly maps could be worked in to the State Redistricting maps;
- noted that staff commented that the maps that were provided were their first try and the maps were a work in progress; and
- opined that the Assembly intended to deal with the maps further in hopes to have something to look at under the comments portion of the agenda to send forward to the State Redistricting Board meeting.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- noted that the maps could be taken up at this meeting; and
- commented that he heard there were issues with the map.

Assemblymember Colver:

- noted that there were issues with the map; and
- spoke to the need to schedule time to work on the map.

Assemblymember Arvin stated that he thought there was Assembly consensus to move away from creating the maps and to attend the meeting and read the Assembly's position with respect to having five full seats in the Borough.

Mayor DeVilbiss noted that he thought he stated the Assembly's consensus before the meeting was over on May 3, 2011.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- opined that it was his understanding that there was Assembly consensus that we want everything to remain within the boundaries of the Borough;
- spoke in appreciation of Ms. Graham keeping the boundaries within the Borough and not extending them into Anchorage or Denali; and
- opined that the consensus was to not share Borough legislators or senators with Fairbanks or Anchorage.

Assemblymember Woods opined that the consensus was to have five representatives and two and a half senators within our Borough with a minor portion to be divided.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- stated that she didn't know that the Assembly has another solution at this late date so she would have to agree;
- advised that she understands that the Borough had to sue the State during the last reapportionment; and
- queried the process.

Mayor Devilbiss noted that the Borough sued the time before the last census.

Ms. McKechnie:

- noted that there is a 30 day window after the State adopts the Redistricting boundaries, that the Borough could bring forward a suit; and
- reported that the Borough did not sue the State during the previous reapportionment, however, the Borough provided an amicus brief.

Assemblymember Bettine queried whether there was funding to cover the expenses should the Borough need to sue.

Mr. Spiropoulos:

- advised that there would be enough funding to get the process started;
- noted that he spoke to a law firm three months ago that has experience in these matters; and
- advised that it would be more helpful to protect Borough interests to have the Borough make comments with regards to the redistricting plan at the May 6, 2011, State Redistricting meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the Assistant Manager and Mayor already appearing before members of the State Redistricting Board to testify;
- the Borough redistricting history;
- the need to have the Borough's position on record;
- minority groups within the Borough;
- concerns regarding submitting a map if there is anticipation of going to court;
- the deadline for submitting a map;

- the need for the Assembly to provide direction to the Manager for submitting comments at the May 6, 2011, State Redistricting Board meeting;
- the number of maps; and
- the need to schedule a meeting to discuss the maps.

[Clerk Note: The Assembly added State Redistricting to the May 12, 2011, agenda to take place before the budget.]

Assemblymember Arvin:

- spoke to concerns with adding a redistricting discussion to the May 12, 2011, meeting agenda before the budget, as the discussion the members just had was lengthy; and
- opined that dealing with the maps is a waste of time.

Assemblymember Keogh:

- spoke to grants received in the Assembly District No. 1 area;
- spoke in appreciation of the Mayor's budget goals;
- commented that he would like to see an overall budget reduction of three percent;
- opined that some line items are over budgeted and could be decreased;
- noted that he would like four positions added including three full-time paramedic positions and a Media Design Specialist position in the Public Affairs Department;
- spoke in support of non-areawide and areawide mill levies decreasing;
- spoke to not getting too drastic with budget cuts and to allow the Manager some time to get oriented and let his expertise offer some direction down the road on how the Borough could be best organized to be more efficient and streamlined; and
- opined that he would rather see budget cuts be performed surgically versus wholesale across the board cuts.

Assemblymember Halter:

- spoke in appreciation of the Mayor's comments regarding presenting his budget plan idea to the Assembly;
- noted that he is looking forward to reviewing the Mayor's proposed budget plan;
- spoke to the organizational chart needing some work;
- spoke to the need to define positions;
- noted that the Borough is in a growth period; and
- spoke to the need for the Manager to have a good budget so that he has an opportunity to move forward.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- spoke to the need to have more than three full time emergency services permanent positions;
- noted that the positions would be covering 24 hours per day seven days a week;
- stated that he would look at having five or six positions;
- spoke to the need to have qualified engineers operating the fire trucks;
- stated that the whole concept is to eliminate a lot of the overtime;
- commented that he is looking forward to the Mayor's proposed budget cuts and additions;
- spoke to the need to look at the funding of libraries;

- spoke to combining maintenance at the School District and Borough;
- stated that he would like to see the Assembly provide the tax payers with a better level of services and more streamlined management with a first time ever reduction in the mill rate; and
- stated that he is sure that the Manager and staff will represent the Assembly's concerns with regards to State Redistricting.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke in appreciation of Assemblymember Keogh's well thought out comments;
- noted that she is looking at the differences between all of the Emergency Services Department part-time positions;
- stated that she would like to see staffing at the new Knik-Goose Bay fire station;
- commented that the population in Knik-Goose Bay area is larger than the cities of Palmer and Wasilla combined;
- spoke to concerns regarding the overall economic development health of the Borough without having an Economic Development Director;
- stated that she does not like to see all of the eggs in one economic development basket;
- commented she is very supportive of the port and rail;
- spoke to the need to have staff coordinate the economic development of the rail and the Port projects, as Mr. Dave Hanson was able to do with the coal and seed potatoes;
- opined that the Public Affairs Department does need an extra position which goes hand in glove with the Economic Development Department;
- opined that it is time the Borough has bi-annual budgets;
- spoke to concerns with the amount of staff time spent on the annual budget;
- commented that the city of Wasilla has bi-annual budgets;
- noted that she is looking forward to seeing what Mayor DeVilbiss has proposed for the budget; and
- thanked the Mayor for providing the proposed budget amendments in advance.

Assemblymember Woods:

- noted that looking at the budget book, he has a lot of questions;
- spoke to concerns regarding the attitudes of some people against any economic development of the Borough which really reflects on the Borough's opportunity to provide services that a lot of people think the Borough needs; and
- stated that the budget will be interesting, as it is his first budget cycle.

Mayor DeVilbiss provided an overview of his proposed budget amendments.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- opined that the Assembly has always focused on the areawide mill rate;
- noted that during her time serving on the Assembly, the mill rate has been reduced or kept the same;
- spoke to the need to look at the service area budgets as well, as tax payers look at the bottom line when they receive the tax bill;
- opined that there are ways to decrease the service area budgets;

- opined that it may be a little harder to decrease the service area budgets because there are 17 boards out there just for road service areas; and
- spoke to the need to focus on decreasing all of the mill rates rather than only focusing on the areawide mill rate.

Assemblymember Ewing:

- stated that he likes what he is seeing;
- noted that he has proposed amendments that he would be forwarding to the Clerk;
- commented that one of the proposed amendments is a reduction in Assembly travel; and
- stated that he feels if other people are asked to tow the line, the Assembly needs to lead by example.

### VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8:54 p.m.

  
LARRY DeVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

  
LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 06/07/11