

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on June 8, 2004, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Timothy L. Anderson for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. J. Bruce Bush, Assembly District No. 1 (*arrived at 6:37 p.m.*)
Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2
Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4
Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (Deputy Mayor) (*arrived at 6:12 p.m.*)
Ms. Betty Vehrs, Assembly District No. 7

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Rob Wells, Seat A
Sarah Welton, Seat B
Linda Menard, Seat C
Mike Chmielewski, Seat E (School Board President)
Larry DeVilbiss, Seat F
Daniel Contini, Seat G

School Board members absent and excused were:

Bob Johnson, Seat D

Borough staff in attendance were:

Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, CMC, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
Ms. Teresa S. Williams, Borough Attorney
Ms. Janice A. Case, Deputy Borough Clerk
Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director
Mr. Ron Swanson, Community Development Director
Mr. Don Shiesl, Public Works Director

School Board staff in attendance were:

Mr. Bob Doyle, Chief School Administrator
Mr. Jack Sherman, Assistant Superintendent of Business
Ms. Kim Floyd, Public Information Specialist
Ms. Connie Lutz, Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment

Mr. Scott Schwald, Director of Operations and Maintenance
Mr. Mike Schwartz, Facility Coordinator

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved as presented.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Finance Director Tammy Clayton.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

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

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Review School Capital Construction Plan *(MSB 2.12.075(A))*

Mr. Don Shiesl:

- reviewed the school capital construction plan;
- discussed past bond projects;
- noted that a playground is being installed at Sherrod Elementary School;
- stated that 14 schools would be receiving computer technology upgrades; and
- discussed the current process for the selection of the architectural engineer.

B. Assessment Test Results *(School District Administration)*

Ms. Connie Lutz, Executive Director of Curriculum and Assessment:

- reported on the spring assessment test results;
- discussed the difference between a norm referenced test and a criterion referenced test;
- reviewed the test results of the Borough in comparison to the State; and
- referred to the memorandum regarding the ranking of boroughs in the state of Alaska.

Assemblymember Vehrs asked if there is a cost differential between McGraw Hill and Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) for testing.

Ms. Lutz stated that DRC is less expensive and has a quicker turnaround.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired what the Borough would be losing without the norm referenced data.

Ms. Lutz:

- stated that the Borough would lose the comparative data to outside schools;
- noted that the criterion test would be based on the Borough's own standards rather than overall standards;
- commented that they cannot compare year to year because of different students; and
- stated that the School Board sent a resolution to the state school board supporting norm reference test.

School Board President Chmielewski:

- noted that the resolution also included a request for additional instruction days due to testing; and
- discussed the time and cost associated with preparing for the tests throughout the school year.

C. Facility Use Requests Re: Schools (*School District Administration*)

Mr. Scott Schwald, Director of Operations and Maintenance:

- discussed the facility use policy;
- noted that the School District is sensitive to the communities needs; and
- commented that the facilities are provided at no cost to the Borough even though there is sometimes a cost associated with the use of the facility.

Assemblymember Colver queried if the public has access to outdoor tennis and basketball courts.

Mr. Schwald stated that they are available to the public.

Assemblymember Colver asked Mr. Swanson if there were any additional issues that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Swanson:

- stated that the Borough is currently trying to restart the Community Schools Program on a small scale;
- noted that they are trying to use Borough facilities as well as the School District facilities; and
- stated that they do have a limited budget and communities are asking for use of these facilities through the Community School Program.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the School District's policy regarding facility use;
- which organizations are charged for facility use; and
- lack of consistency in applying the fee policy.

(The special meeting recessed at 7:15 p.m. and reconvened at 7:25 p.m.)

D. 20-year Facilities Strategic Plan (*Assemblymember Simpson*)

Assemblymember Simpson noted that at a site selection committee Mr. Schwartz stated that the School District had been working on a 20-year facilities strategic plan.

Mr. Doyle stated that the School Board has approved a six-year capital improvement plan.

Mr. Mike Schwartz, Facility Coordinator:

- stated that the 20-year plan is basically an extension of the 6-year capital improvement plan;
- noted that the audit indicated that School District needed to have a 20-year plan,
- referred to the demographics handout; and
- explained the draft of the 20-year plan.

Assemblymember Simpson noted that there is a broad range of members serving on the demographic committee with a lot of expertise looking at strategic planning for facilities.

Assemblymember Vehrs inquired when the demographic committee meetings are held.

Mr. Doyle:

- replied that this past year they convened twice; and
- noted that they are planning to meet in October and May during this coming school year.

School Board President Chmielewski:

- noted that a similar group in Anchorage used to meet;
- stated that the interest in the committee is great;
- commented that people have come from long distances to participate and share information; and
- welcomed the Borough's participation.

E. Selection of Architect for New School Designs (*School District Administration*)

School Board President Chmielewski:

- stated that the School Board plays an interesting role in the approval of the architect for the new school designs;
- explained the current process of approving the architect; and
- commented that it may be beneficial for the School Board to have a larger part in the preliminary process.

Mr. Doyle discussed the option of having a two or three members of the School Board sit on the preliminary committee.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the current process for selecting an architect for new school designs;
- potential conflicts of interest by participating on the preliminary committee; and
- School Board involvement in the request for proposals and scope of work processes.

F. Additional Funds to Fund Education to the Cap (*Mayor Anderson*)

Mayor Anderson:

- explained why the Assembly did not give the School District the full amount of funding that they had requested;
- stated that there was strong public input on property taxes;
- spoke to the importance of diversifying the tax base; and
- commented that this is why he has sponsored a proposed sales tax and severance tax.

Assemblymember Simpson queried how the School Board could meet its goals set out for this year if extra revenues were available later in the year.

Mr. Doyle:

- stated that continuity is very important to children;
- noted that the School District begins hiring teachers the week before school starts;
- commented that hiring additional teachers later in the year would be easier with high schools due to the second semester; and
- discussed the benefits of a solid source of funding.

Mayor Anderson stated that he is trying to look to the future.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the difficulties associated with meeting the School District's goals with funds received in the middle of the school year; and
- diversification of revenues.

G. Borough and School District Consolidation of Services (*Assemblymember Kvalheim*)

Assemblymember Kvalheim:

- stated that the School District and the Borough are looking to have a management audit completed; and
- requested that once the audits have been completed that we look to consolidating some of our services.

Mayor Anderson inquired if the Borough is looking to consolidate some services with the School District, such as purchasing.

Mr. Duffy replied that the Borough has explored this in the past.

Mr. Doyle:

- stated that the School District is putting together a proposal for a management audit to focus on increased efficiency; and
- spoke to the Borough having a management audit with the same organization for comparative information purposes.

School Board Member Menard spoke to joining insurance groups due to the increased cost of health care.

Assemblymember Colver:

- spoke in support of consolidating services in order to put more money into the classroom and increase efficiency;
- discussed the possibility of consolidating services such as insurance groups, purchasing, and a combined maintenance department; and
- opined that it is not necessary to hire a consultant for this purpose.

Mayor Anderson stated that consolidating services between the School District and the Borough could be determined without a study.

School Board President Chmielewski:

- commented that there are practical issues that would need to be worked out in any merger; and
- stated that he actively supports a reasonably sized, and not very expensive, look by a third party for some perspective.

Discussion ensued regarding consolidating services.

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

Ms. McGehee:

- noted that there is a special meeting scheduled for June 15 at 4 p.m.; and
- stated that the Assembly packets for the June 15 meeting would not be available until 12 noon on June 10, 2004.

Mr. Doyle requested that Title 1 be added to the agenda for the September 14, 2004, joint Assembly/School Board Agenda.

School Board Member Wells discussed the funding formula that was put in place in 1994 and possible changes to the funding formula.

School Board Member Menard:

- appreciated the discussion on consolidation of services;
- offered to participate in a committee to discuss efficiency and consolidation of services; and
- voiced appreciation for the additional funds received from the Borough to fund the schools.

School Board Member DeVilbiss:

- stated that from the perspective of the public it is difficult to talk them into raising more revenues; and
- noted that one of the charter schools was terminated last night.

School Board Member Contini:

- advised everyone to read the facility report handed out this evening;
- noted that it is very expensive to run schools; and
- expressed the importance of working together regarding facility use.

School Board President Chmielewski:

- spoke to the termination of the charter school contract; and
- stated that he appreciated the funds the Assembly appropriated to the School District.

Assemblymember Colberg:

- stated that there is a fiscal discipline that has benefited from the consumer price index;
- opined that it would be sending the wrong message to people to throw out the use of the consumer price index in the funding formula;
- noted that wages in Alaska are declining, which makes it harder to justify a budget that does not seem to have a goal from year to year; and
- stated that it would be nice to see a budget process relate from year to year with goals.

Assemblymember Kvalheim encouraged a proactive relationship between the Assembly and the School District.

Assemblymember Vehrs:

- discussed the summer host program in Anchorage for people with recreational vehicles;
- commented on the importance of discipline; and
- stated that she is looking forward to building the trust between the Borough and the School District.

Mayor Anderson:

- stated that the purpose of discussing additional funding for education was that taxpayers are at their limit;
- commented that the Borough and School Board needs to recognize that unless there is some form of diversification of revenues, there will be an adverse effect on education;
- asked Mr. Duffy to look into potentially changing the funding formula; and
- thanked the Assembly and the School Board for the open discussion.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

/s/

TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

/s/

MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: July 20, 2004