

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special joint meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly and School Board was held on September 9, 2003, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Anderson.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Bill Allen, Assembly District No. 2
Mr. Talis J. Colberg, Assembly District No. 3
Ms. Jody Simpson, Assembly District No. 5
Ms. Kelly Ladere, Assembly District No. 7

Assembly members absent and excused were:

Mr. J. Bruce Bush, Assembly District No. 1
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4
Mr. Jim Colver, Assembly District No. 6 (Deputy Mayor)

School board members present and establishing a quorum were:

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

School board members absent and excused were:

Bob Johnson, School Board Seat D

Borough staff in attendance were:

Ms. Sandra A. Dillon, CMC, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
Ms. Teresa Williams, Borough Attorney
Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director
Ms. Janice Case, Borough Clerk's Secretary
Mr. Jan Affinito, Project Manager II

School District staff in attendance were:

Mr. Bob Doyle, Chief School Administrator
Mr. Jack Sherman, Assistant Superintendent of Business
Ms. Kim Floyd, Public Information Specialist
Mr. Scott Schwald, Director of Operations and Maintenance

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 Mr. Dan O'Barr, a member of the audience.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

(There were no persons present who wished to testify.)

VI. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

A. Lockheed Martin – Update on Dual-Use Vessel

Mr. Lewis D. Madden, Program Manager for Alaska Ship Systems, gave a presentation regarding:

- Lockheed Martin ship designs;
- the information that the Knik Transportation Rescue Boat Feasibility Design Study would encompass; and
- mentioned the scholarship and internship program at Lockheed Martin.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired regarding the other potential uses for the ship.

Mr. Duffy identified other potential uses for the ship, such as an oil spill response vessel.

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

Mr. Scott Schwald, Director of Operations and Maintenance:

- reviewed the top projects of the school capital construction plan: (1) career center; (2) nutrition service facility; (3) Palmer Junior Middle School piping and sprinklers; (4) Iditarod Elementary School, Snowshoe Elementary School, and Su-Valley High School fire alarms; (5) administration building; (6) Palmer alternative school phase II; (7) Big Lake Elementary School siding and doors; (8) Palmer Colony High School ventilation improvements; and (9) Wasilla area elementary school; and
- noted that all of the projects have been approved by the state of Alaska and only need voter approval.

Assemblymember Allen inquired if all the items under Proposition No. 3 have been approved by the state of Alaska.

Mr. Schwald stated that they have been approved.

School Board Member DeVilbiss inquired if the Constitutional Budget Reserve would be able to cover all of the bond proposition items.

Mr. Doyle replied that it is not anything that has been checked by the Borough or the School District at this point.

Mayor Anderson replied that the state legislature is waiting to see how many bonds are approved by the municipalities throughout the state.

C. Building Construction Progress (*MSB 2.12.075(A)*)

Mr. Jan Affinito:

- reported that the Public Works Department has completed several large projects and some smaller ones, such as the Houston High School and the Wasilla High School remodel;
- noted that Sherrod Elementary School was completed ahead of schedule; and
- informed that Houston High School received a construction claim, which is currently being reviewed.

D. Bonds (*School District*)

Ms. Kim Floyd:

- reported that two independent committees working on Proposition No. 1 and Proposition No. 2;
- noted that beginning next week advertisements regarding the school bond propositions will be in the paper and on the radio;
- stated that other creative outlets will also be used to educate the public on the school bonds;
- commented that the School District has given nine presentations to their own employees regarding the propositions; and
- stated that informational sheets on the school bond propositions will be going home with students and sent out to voters with the approval of the Alaska Public Office Commission.

School Board Member Contini inquired if there is a committee working on Proposition No. 3 or Proposition No. 4.

Ms. Floyd replied that there is currently no organized group working on those propositions, but information will still be sent out to the public.

School Board Member Contini inquired regarding the inclusion of a fiscal note for maintenance, operations, and insurance on the propositions.

Ms. Floyd replied that it is no longer required to include the fiscal note on the propositions.

Assemblymember Ladere recommended that the fiscal note be included in order to provide the public with as much information as possible.

E. Budget (*School District and Mayor Anderson*)

Mr. Jack Sherman:

- reported that the budget will appear different from previous years as a result of changes made by the Alaska State Legislature;
- stated that a report of the current budget was printed out at the end of August and will be sent out to the Assembly and School Board;
- commented that the enrollment numbers are not final until the final count at the end of September; and
- explained how each student is calculated.

School Board Member Menard stated that the Borough will need to consider another high school in the Borough, as the enrollment numbers show a large increase in attendance.

Assemblymember Simpson recommended identifying a small school funding formula.

Mayor Anderson inquired if steps have been taken to help with the large class sizes.

Mr. Sherman noted that additional teachers have been placed throughout the schools where they are needed.

Discussion ensued regarding the increasing amount of students in the Borough.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired if the School District drafts multi-year budgets or performs budget forecasting.

Mr. Sherman replied that the School District does not have multi-year budgets.

Assemblymember Simpson recommended and requested that they do multi-year budgets.

Assemblymember Colberg inquired regarding the increased cost of the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).

Mr. Sherman replied that costs have increased due to the decrease in the market and the increase in health cost of retirees.

F. Mid-Valley High School (*President Chmielewski*)

School Board President Chmielewski:

- updated the Assembly on the current status of the Mid-Valley High School; and
- noted that they are one student over the projected amount.

Assemblymember Simpson:

- stated that she recently visited the temporary site for Mid-Valley High School;
- noted that there is a waitlist for the school; and
- reported that the children on the waitlist are students that are not currently enrolled in the Borough.

G. Legislative/Governor Communications (*President Chmielewski*)

School Board President Chmielewski recommended approaching the legislative delegation for a meeting.

Mr. Duffy noted that Mr. Gillespie, the state lobbyist, will be at the November 4, 2003, regular Assembly meeting.

H. Effective Communications (*Mayor Anderson*)

Mayor Anderson:

- commented on the importance of effective communication;
- commended Ms. Floyd for sending information to the Clerk for distribution to the Mayor and Assembly;
- discussed the importance of the Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School Issues.

School Board President Chmielewski:

- stated that the Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School Issues is useful and important;
- noted that the School Board has discussed ways to be prepared and available to answer questions at the Assembly meetings;
- invited the Assembly members to attend the School Board meetings.

Mayor Anderson expressed importance of having a School Board representative present at the Assembly meetings.

Assemblymember Ladere asked if the School Board meetings are rotated throughout the Borough.

School Board President Chmielewski:

- stated that historically they have not rotated the School Board meetings; and
- noted that they will look to see if there is a way the School Board could formalize the process of holding meetings at other locations.

School Board Member Contini:

- recommended that the Assembly also look into rotating their meetings; and
- commented on the increased costs of rotating due to the need to record the meetings.

I. Facility Use (*President Chmielewski*)

Mr. Schwald:

- noted that there is no longer a community schools program;
- described the new facility use program; and
- discussed how the money the Borough gave the School District is being used for this program.

Assemblymember Ladere expressed the importance of organizations, such as the Talkeetna Community Council, being able to use school facilities.

Assemblymember Simpson inquired why the money from the Borough is not being used for community councils and other government groups.

Discussion ensued regarding facility use.

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

Mr. Doyle:

- informed that a dedication for the Houston High School will be held on October 23, 2003; and
- noted that the School District made additional funds available for Houston High School for additional equipment that was needed.

Ms. Dillon discussed the new election informational pamphlet that was sent out to all of the registered voters.

School Board Member DeVilbiss expressed concern regarding the number of bonds on the ballot this year.

School Board Member Welton:

- stated that she recently visited Wasilla High School and Wasilla Middle School;
- noted that both schools are crowded and will be getting more teachers for the core classes, but there is still concern regarding the elective classes;
- opined that she would like to see a policy for setting meetings away from Palmer two or three times a year; and
- commented on the importance of working on a small school formula.

School Board Member Contini discussed concern regarding increasing costs for schools.

School Board President Chmielewski thanked the Assembly for the opportunity to begin addressing and dealing with school issues.

Assemblymember Colberg expressed his appreciation for the information about PERS.

Assemblymember Ladere discussed the problems facing the Borough regarding increased enrollment in schools and increased costs.

Assemblymember Simpson:

- commented on public concern regarding the large amount funding involved in the bond propositions on the ballot this year; and
- recommended that the school district begin budget forecasting.

Mayor Anderson:

- addressed the importance of open communication;
- expressed appreciation for the school district educating the public regarding the school bond propositions;
- concerned regarding the large amount of bond propositions on the ballot; and
- noted that he is glad that the voters will have the opportunity to vote on the bond propositions.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting adjourned at 8 p.m.

TIMOTHY L. ANDERSON, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

SANDRA A. DILLON, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: October 21, 2003