

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on September 11, 2007, at the Borough Assembly Chambers, 350 E. Dahlia Avenue, Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6:26 p.m. by Deputy Mayor Lynne Woods for the purpose of holding a joint Assembly/School Board meeting.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

Ms. Lynne Woods, Assembly District No. 1 (*Deputy Mayor*)
Ms. Michelle R. Church, Assembly District No. 3
Ms. Mary Kvalheim, Assembly District No. 4
Ms. Cindy Bettine, Assembly District No. 5
Mr. Robert Wells, Assembly District No. 6 (*via teleconference*)
Mr. Tom Kluberton, Assembly District No. 7

School Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Jim Colver, Seat A
Ms. Sarah Welton, Seat B
Ms. Linda Menard, Seat C
Ms. Patricia Purcell, Seat D (*via teleconference*)
Mr. Larry DeVilbiss, Seat F (*School Board President*)
Mr. Daniel Contini, Seat G

School Board member absent and excused was:

Ms. Cheryl Turner, Seat E

Borough staff in attendance were:

Ms. Michelle M. McGehee, CMC, Borough Clerk
Mr. John Duffy, Borough Manager
Mr. Nicholas Spiropoulos, Borough Attorney
Ms. Amanda E. Charles, Executive Assistant to the Borough Clerk
Mr. Bill Klebesadel, Project Management/Engineering Division Manager
Ms. Elizabeth Hartley, Comptroller

School Board staff in attendance were:

Mr. George Troxel, Superintendent of Education
Mr. Jack Sherman, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Risk Management

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Deputy Mayor Woods inquired if there were any changes to the agenda.

GENERAL CONSENT: The agenda was approved without objection.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Gilbert Lucero, a member of the audience.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke regarding Mat-Su Career and Technical School: Mr. Ken Ray.

The following person spoke regarding his concerns with disclosure regarding misconduct of School District staff: Mr. Joseph Hawkins.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

A. Building Construction Progress (*pursuant to code*)

Mr. Klebesadel:

- reported that Knik Elementary School is up and running, and clarified that it has further parking issues that need to be resolved;
 - stated that the Mat-Su Career and Technical School opened on August 20, 2007;
 - added that Shaw Elementary School opened in August, however, further work is planned for the intersections, which will be completed by spring 2008 ;
 - informed the Board that Su Valley Junior/Senior High School will be completed by July 2009;
 - reported that the new prototype for the South Palmer Elementary School will be available early 2008, with construction completed in 2009;
 - commented that the Kurtis Arcala Nutrition Services Facility was completed on time and under budget;
 - stated that the remaining balance from the nutritional services facility is \$455,000;
 - clarified the critical needs for this money were concluded to be the Big Lake Elementary School roof, the Trapper Creek Elementary School roof, flooring moisture issue in many schools, the Palmer Junior Middle School carpeting, the Shaw Elementary School bus loop phase II, and the career center sign and upgrades;
 - noted that the Wasilla High School work was completed on time, despite setbacks;
 - reported that in less than 60 days, the Su Valley High Interim School contractor completed \$1.4 million dollars in improvements to the Upper Susitna Senior Center;
 - stated that Wasilla Middle School received new flooring in both gymnasiums, and the roof over the smaller auxiliary gymnasium was replaced; and
 - added that the remainder of the work on Wasilla Middle School would be completed next year.
- Deputy Mayor Woods queried if there were any access improvements to Wasilla Middle School from Crusey Street.

Mr. Klebesadel stated that he did not know of any improvements to that access.

Deputy Mayor Woods extended her thanks to Mr. Klebesadel and the staff for the successful work on the projects.

Assemblymember Bettine queried the parking and road improvement cost issues with the Knik Goose Bay Elementary School.

Mr. Klebesadel:

- stated that the main issue involved were mixed expectations for who should pay for the improvements; and
- added that, overall, there are small issues of negotiations remaining.

Assemblymember Kluberton queried the one-year time frame for opening the new schools.

Mr. Klebesadel:

- stated that the needs were addressed by the School District; and
- elaborated that the staff is working to address all the needs in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

School Board Member Colver queried regarding the Hollywood Road access improvement.

Mr. Klebesadel:

- stated that it was a \$2.9 million dollar change order; and
- clarified that \$2 million went towards on-site work and the remaining \$900,000 went towards road improvements.

School Board Member Colver queried the total cost of the project.

Mr. Klebesadel stated that he did not know the final answer, but believed it to be around \$14.5 million.

Ms. Romano expressed her thanks to all the departments for their combined efforts on the Susitna Valley High Interim School.

B. Status/Need of Portables in the District *(Requested by: Assemblymember Bettine)*

Deputy Mayor Woods referred to the letter from Mr. Troxel, dated July 30, 2007.

Assemblymember Bettine stated that she requested this item originally because she needed further clarification as to the need for further portables.

Ms. Hartley:

- stated that all the money from the insurance has been used; and

- summarized that there is no remaining money from the insurance to cover the additional portables.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- requested that the School District address the list on the second page and how it relates to their original budget; and
- asked if the basic education requirements are being met.

Mr. Troxel:

- provided a list of where the portables are currently located;
- added that it includes a list of where there is an additional need for portables;
- pointed out that three portables were taken from Wasilla High School; and
- spoke to the effects of how taking a portable from a high school creates a scenario where the teacher needs to travel to different classrooms, which ultimately negatively affects the teacher by taking away their home base.

Assemblymember Kvalheim asked if the areas marked for additional storage were needed for immediate access.

Mr. Troxel stated that students would be placed in the portables before additional storage.

Assemblymember Kvalheim requested clarification on the need for a portable for the Boys and Girls Club at Goose Bay Elementary School.

Mr. Troxel:

- stated that traditionally they have had a portable for the Boys and Girls Club;
- added that the Boys and Girls Club is popular in the area; and
- commented that the Boys and Girls Club uses the portable at night time and the portable is used by the school during the day.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- requested further clarification on how the student-to-school ratio determines the need for the portables; and
- spoke to the importance of the Boys and Girls Club at Goose Bay Elementary School.

Mr. Troxel:

- clarified that these are requests directly from the principals of the schools; and
- agreed that there is a priority list.

Mr. Colver spoke to the changing needs, as current portable schools evolve into structure schools.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- stated that there will be approximately 20 portables available in the next year from completion of projects; and
- queried if the schools could wait until that time.

Mr. Troxel:

- explained that the needs vary by school;
- spoke to different levels of special needs children at some schools; and
- stated that it is a question of “how much less than perfect” do you accept.

Mr. DeVilbiss queried if conexes could be used for storage.

Mr. Troxel stated that there are issues with humidity and heat in the conexes.

Assemblymember Bettine queried if the Mat-Su Career and Technical School alleviated the over crowding at Wasilla High School.

Mr. Troxel stated that he believed it was around 40 students.

School Board Member Menard:

- spoke to the numbers of children that were taken out of the over-populated schools and enrolled in the technical school;
- stated that there was a total of 252 students that were affected;
- opined that the appropriate time for the portable discussion is after the third week in October when the enrollment totals are due; and
- stated that a better number would be available at the next joint meeting.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- requested that this item be added to the next joint meeting agenda; and
- asked for clarification on the qualifications of a day school.

Troxel explained that it was a new school for children who have unique needs who do better in a smaller environment.

Deputy Mayor Woods requested clarification on special needs students.

Mr. Troxel:

- spoke to not stereotyping students; and
- provided examples of different special needs students.

School Board Member Welton clarified that there is a federal law that states one cannot identify all the people who fall under the special needs programs.

(The joint meeting recessed at 7:19 p.m. and reconvened at 7:30 p.m.)

C. Susitna Valley High School Portables – Painting of Murals

(Requested by: Assemblymember Kluberton)

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- stated that members of the public have noted areas for improvement in the curb appeal of the Su Valley High Interim School;
- suggested having the principal throw a design contest for the student body regarding a design for the portables;
- added there would be a need to have the contest judged and the final design approved by the proper body; and
- requested suggestions and commentary from the body.

School Board Member Welton:

- stated that she had made this suggestion earlier;
- informed Assemblymember Kluberton that she was told that it would not be wise for the resale value of the portables;
- offered her support for the design contest idea; and
- suggested some other ideas for designs, which involves the art teachers and different school programs.

School Board President DeVilbiss:

- stated that the architects had informed him that the new South Palmer School is being designed by the student body; and
- opined that he did not see a problem with painting the schools.

Deputy Mayor Woods clarified that it did not have to involve all 16 schools.

Mr. Troxel:

- informed the body that repainting a portable incurs a \$640 cost for supplies and it takes approximately 14 man hours; and
- spoke to the suggestion by School Board Member Welton that the shop class could create some cut-outs.

Assemblymember Kvalheim noted that members of the community may volunteer supplies to paint the portables.

School Board Member Menard:

- opined her strong support for this idea;
- noted it sets the mind-frame for the entire student body; and
- added that there is a need to promote the value of art within the student body.

Mr. Troxel:

- noted a correction in his previous statement; and
- clarified that it costs \$320 to repaint a portable.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- spoke to the importance of the artwork being appropriate so that it may be transferred to another school;
- suggested that some criteria be laid out for the design contest;
- stated that the theme should be of an artistic value to all the schools; and
- opined that it should be viewed as mobile art.

School Board Member Colver:

- noted that there are talented artists in the area; and
- spoke to how the artists could work with the student body to come up with the design.

D. MSB 19.08.023, Site Approval Process for Lease of Charter School Facilities (*Requested by: School District*)

Mr. Troxel:

- spoke regarding inconsistencies between school district policies and the Borough ordinances; and
- suggested that deadline be changed to October 1 of each year.

Deputy Mayor Woods requested that the Clerk draft the appropriate ordinance.

Ms. McGehee assented.

E. Education Funding Task Force Report (*Requested by: Deputy Mayor Woods*)

Deputy Mayor Woods:

- stated she had seen a headline about special needs programs; and
- opined her desire to go forward to the Legislature as a joint body with the same mission.

School Board President DeVilbiss requested an update from Mr. Sherman.

Mr. Sherman:

- stated that he, or one of his representatives, were present at each meeting;
- noted divided discussions on district house factors regarding cost differentials, page 4 of 71;
- spoke to intensive funding, page 5 of 71, added that there was unanimous support of this topic;
- discussed budgeting issues with early funding for education, page 7 of 71;
- spoke further about formula levying, page 8 of 71, which involves reductions in state funding and changes there in; and
- summarized that the vote to pass this report forward was not unanimous.

Deputy Mayor Woods spoke regarding reading a newsletter regarding this report.

Assemblymember Bettine asked if there was anything in the report that the School District views as unfavorable.

Mr. Sherman spoke to having to clarify information in order to get a true cost analysis done.

School Board Member Colver:

- noted the improvements in the report from the first draft; and
- spoke to some areas for concern to watch for as the report moves forward to the State.

Deputy Mayor Woods:

- spoke to the importance of being in attendance during the entire legislative session; and
- stated that their lobbyist was very “in tune” with their needs for further education funding.

Assemblymember Bettine asked if the School Board has a lobbyist.

School Board Menard stated that they depend on the Borough’s lobbyist.

Assemblymember Bettine suggested having a joint work session to discuss how they planned on being heard in Juneau and the associated costs with a trip to Juneau.

School Board President DeVilbiss:

- stated that they needed to think about the lobbying issue;
- opined that the best bet is to communicate with our legislators; and
- referred to the report and noted his concerns with who was, and was not, included on the task force.

Assemblymember Church noted her support of having the School Board attend the legislative session with the members of the Assembly.

Assemblymember Bettine requested a meeting in November.

Discussion ensued regarding a date for the meeting.

Assemblymember Wells:

- stated that the joint Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School Issues would meet on September 17, 2007,
- added that they could discuss what needs they want brought forward; and
- volunteered to report back to the Assembly and School Board in early November.

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

School Board President DeVilbiss deferred to School Board Member Menard.

School Board Member Menard:

- thanked all for the dinner and desserts;
- reported that she would be chairing the Mat-Su School Foundation; and
- spoke to her tenure with the School Board; and
- thanked everyone.

Mayor Menard spoke to the dedication of School Board Member Menard to the School District and the children.

Mr. Troxel:

- thanked the School District and the Borough staff for their work on the Su Valley High Interim School;
- informed the body that Mr. Scott Schwald would be retiring September 30, 2007; and
- stated that they are increasing the number of committees from 5 to 10 for program performance-based budgeting.

School Board Member Welton:

- stated that she would miss School Board Member Menard;
- added that the Wasilla Middle School floors are wonderful;
- noted that she is visiting some of the open houses; and
- commented that she is looking forward to the legislative session.

School Board Member Colver:

- thanked School Board Member Menard for her years of service; and
- opined his support of Assemblymember Bettine's idea of working together in the next legislative session.

School Board Member Contini:

- stated that he would miss School Board Member Menard; and
- offered his support regarding Mr. Kluberton's idea regarding decorating the portables.

School Board President DeVilbiss:

- stated that he would miss School Board Member Menard; and
- thanked her for her work with the ordinance regarding the new schools' architects and the associated naming of the schools.

Assemblymember Kluberton:

- thanked everyone for their support of the idea of the artwork on the portables; and
- stated that it was a good meeting and he appreciates the joint efforts to work together.

Assemblymember Bettine queried Mr. Troxel regarding how he would be acquiring the applications for the committees for performance-based budgeting.

Mr. Troxel responded that they would be advertising with notices in the schools, via Newspapers, and through the PTA.

Discussion ensued regarding the specificities of the committees.

Assemblymember Bettine:

- recognized School Board Member Menard as the true First Lady of the Borough;

- thanked her for her years of service;
- noted that the two Boards have been working well together; and
- opined her support of working together towards communications with the state delegation and the joint meeting.

Assemblymember Kvalheim:

- thanked School Board Member Menard for her 12 years of service;
- asked administration to extend the thanks of the two boards to the staff for their speedy work on the schools; and
- stated that this was her best joint meeting to date.

Assemblymember Church:

- stated that she would miss School Board Member Menard;
- noted that she appreciates the cooperation between the Assembly and the School Board; and
- added her desire for the joint efforts in the legislative effort.

Assemblymember Wells:

- extended his appreciation to School Board Member Menard for her 12 years of service;
- thanked Mr. Sherman and Mr. Schwald for their service; and
- requested that administration get clarification on the letter regarding bond services on the nutritional needs letter from Mr. Troxel.

Mr. Troxel stated that he would bring the letter to the upcoming meeting on Monday, September 17, 2007.

Ms. Romano extended her thanks to School Board Member Menard for her years of service.

Deputy Mayor Woods:

- spoke regarding the invitation to go to Elmendorf Air Force Base;
- thanked everyone for the meeting; and
- stated she is honored to work with everyone.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special joint meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

/ S /

LYNNE WOODS, Deputy Borough Mayor

ATTEST:

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MICHELLE M. MCGEHEE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes approved: 10/16/07