

I. CALL TO ORDER

The special meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly was held on May 5, 2014, at the Central Mat-Su Public Safety Building, 101 West Swanson, Wasilla, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Mayor Larry DeVilbiss for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the budget ordinance, Ordinance Serial No. 15-015.

II. ROLL CALL

Assembly members present and establishing a quorum were:

- Mr. Jim Sykes, Assembly District No. 1
- Mr. Matthew Beck, Assembly District No. 2
- Mr. Ronald Arvin, Assembly District No. 3 (*Deputy Mayor*)
- Mr. Steve Colligan, Assembly District No. 4
- Mr. Dan Mayfield, Assembly District No. 5
- Ms. Barbara J. Doty, Assembly District No. 6
- Mr. Vern Halter, Assembly District No. 7

Staff in attendance were:

- Ms. Lonnie R. McKechnie, Borough Clerk
- Ms. Brenda J. Henry, Assistant Clerk
- Mr. John Moosey, Borough Manager
- Mr. George Hays, Assistant Borough Manager
- Ms. Laura Newton, Deputy Borough Attorney
- Ms. Tammy Clayton, Finance Director
- Ms. Eileen Probasco, Planning and Land Use Director
- Mr. Eric Wyatt, Information Technology Director
- Mr. Eric Phillips, Community Development Director
- Ms. Amy Bohmbach, Administrative Assistant I
- Ms. Debra Wetherhorn, Administrative Assistant II
- Ms. Mary Miller, Executive Assistant to Borough Manager
- Mr. James Wilson, Internal Auditor
- Ms. Patty Sullivan, Public Affairs Director

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 Ms. Patty Rosnel, a member of the audience.

V. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The following person spoke to concerns with the public process: Mr. Eugene Carl Haberman.

VI. PUBLIC HEARING (Three Minutes Per Person)

- A. **Ordinance Serial No. 15-015:** An Ordinance Appropriating Monies From The Central Treasury For The Borough Operating Funds, Enterprise Funds, Education Operating Fund, And Capital Funds; Establishing The Rate Of Levy For All Borough Functions For The Fiscal Year Beginning July 1, 2015, And Ending June 30, 2016, And Setting The Surcharge Rate For The Wireline And Wireless Enhanced 911 Systems For The Period Of July 1, 2015, Through June 30, 2016.

Mayor DeVilbiss opened the public hearing.

The following persons spoke in support of funding for additional fire service positions: Mr. Ken Slauson, Chair of Mat-Su Central Fire Service Area; and Mr. Dan Tucker, Vice-Chair of Mat-Su Central Fire Service Area.

The following person spoke to the need for government to be concerned with the welfare of its citizens and to enhance their well-being: Mr. Sid McCausland.

The following person spoke to concerns that with the senior tax exemption, she is paying no property taxes and opined that is unfair to other tax payers: Ms. Patricia Fisher.

The following person spoke in support of the senior tax exemption and spoke to the need to diversify the tax base: Mr. Zach Lehman.

(The meeting recessed at 6:23 p.m. and reconvened at 6:45 p.m.)

Mayor DeVilbiss queried if there was anyone else that would like to testify.

The following person spoke in support of funding for additional fire service positions: Mr. David Eller.

MOTION: Assemblymember Arvin moved to continue the public hearing on Ordinance Serial No. 15-015, to May 7, 2015, at 6 p.m. at the Willow Community Center.

VOTE: The motion passed without objection.

VII. MAYOR, ASSEMBLY, AND STAFF COMMENTS

Mr. Moosey:

- noted that Mr. Carl Hereford retired recently;
- related that Mr. Hereford was the staff who handled the E-911 program;

- stated that it may take a bit of time to fill that position with the right person;
- spoke to concerns with that position being empty;
- requested to bring Mr. Hereford back on an on-call basis until the position is filled;
- related that Mr. Justin Davidson, who was a Borough employee, passed away yesterday in vehicle accident; and
- noted that Mr. Gary Keller, who was also a Borough employee, passed away two weeks ago.

Assemblymember Doty:

- noted that this is her first budget cycle;
- spoke to the importance of keeping the public engaged; and
- thanked the public for attending and providing comments.

Assemblymember Colligan:

- noted the memorandum provided by Mr. Moosey, which speaks to items that are not included in the budget;
- referred to item 6d and 6e, Information Technology Department; and
- queried if those positions were related to Mr. Hereford's retirement, or a combination of his position and another.

Mr. Moosey:

- noted it is a combination of the on-call position and new positions; and
- stated that because 6d and 6e positions are not in the budget, that they would be new requests.

Discussion ensued regarding:

- the possible on-call position for Mr. Hereford;
- what positions are in the current budget;
- the need for more information regarding items that were not included in the budget;
- concerns that 3d is not included in the budget;
- the new fleet maintenance facility that is urgently needed to replace the building owned by the city of Wasilla;
- pass through grants for the Sexual Assault Response Team and Youth Court;
- what the pass through grants are for under item 2 – other agencies;
- that the body will be in a tough position determining what are actual priorities;
- that Mr. Moosey's memorandum will be on the Borough website for public review; and
- concerns with the lack of funds for 6c – professional consulting services.

Assemblymember Beck:

- expressed his condolences to the families of Justin Davidson and Gary Keller;
- spoke in support of a new fleet maintenance facility for the Borough;
- related that there was a fire near his house that got out of control;
- thanked the emergency responders who protected the surrounding property owners; and
- listed the topics of discussion at the listening session held on April 27 for residents of Assembly District's one and two.

Assemblymember Sykes:

- added to the list of topics of discussion at the listening session held on April 27;
- spoke to ideas to diversify the tax base;
- noted that the Borough has been doing the opposite by cutting off revenue streams;
- stated that most of the tax base is from property owners;
- noted that there will be shortfall in funding the budget;
- spoke to the need to determine what services to cut or how to increase revenue;
- stated that the listening session was a valuable meeting and that he looks forward to more of them;
- spoke to the Joint Assembly/School Board Committee on School Issues that was recently held;
- spoke to the budget discussion that occurred at that meeting;
- noted that the State is now paying out more money in oil tax credits than what is being taken in, which is negatively impacting education;
- spoke to the need for sustainable budgeting;
- thanked the public for coming out;
- thanked staff for answering questions regarding the budget;
- advised the public that all budget documents are available online; and
- opined that the Borough's check book should be online.

Assemblymember Mayfield:

- spoke to having attended many fire service area meetings;
- spoke in support of fire service area boards;
- thanked the volunteers on the fire service boards; and
- wished everyone a great evening.

Assemblymember Halter:

- noted that the weather impacts budget public hearings;
- spoke to his past budget experience;
- requested an executive session regarding the M/V Susitna as soon as possible;
- requested information as to the status of negotiations;
- stated that he would like to look into the possibility of scrapping the ferry; and
- spoke in support of the purchase of the Fireweed Building.

Assemblymember Arvin:

- spoke to concerns with asbestos and lead paint abatement regarding the Fireweed Building;
- spoke to the need for a solid waste services fee increase;
- requested clarification on what staff positions are empty and not being filled versus what was not included in the budget.

Mr. Moosey:

- related that he did not want to fill positions and then have them not be funded and the person would have to be turned away;

- stated that the transportation planner position has not been filled and he would like to fill that position from in-house;
- noted that the unfilled positions referenced in his memorandum are not being recommended for elimination; and
- stated that they can be looked at after the budget is adopted.

Assemblymember Arvin:

- spoke in support of resolving the ferry issue;
- opined that it should be decommissioned;
- spoke to concerns with senior citizens losing their homes due to unpaid taxes;
- noted that there is the option to pay taxes rather than receive the exemption;
- opined that is not likely to occur, but it is an option;
- spoke in support of residents owning their property without risk of the government taking their property;
- stated that he is excited to explore tax diversity;
- opined that it is the responsibility of the body to do so;
- spoke in support of the disabled veteran and senior citizen tax exemption; and
- noted that in many places all over the world people cannot own property.

Assemblymember Beck advised that he is not available May 12 due to a graduation and requested that the executive session regarding the M/V Susitna occur on May 13.

Mayor DeVilbiss queried if there was any objection.

There was no objection noted.

Mayor DeVilbiss:

- spoke to concerns with increasing taxes at any time; and
- queried if there was a dollar amount associated with the memorandum provided.

Mr. Moosey advised that there is not, as he did not assume that it would be included in the budget.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

The special meeting recessed at 7:35 p.m. to be reconvened on May 7, 2015, at 6 p.m.


LARRY DEVILBISS, Borough Mayor

ATTEST:


LONNIE R. McKECHNIE, CMC, Borough Clerk

Minutes Approved: 05/27/15