

MUNICIPALITY OF ANCHORAGE

ANCHORAGE ASSEMBLY/ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD

Joint Meeting of August 19, 1997

1. **CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting was convened at 10:01 a.m. by School Board President Debbie Ossiander in the Mayor's Conference Room, 632 West 6th Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska.

2. **ROLL CALL:**

Assembly Members Present: Charles Wohlforth, Bob Bell, Pat Abney (10:30 a.m.), Dan Kendall, George Wuerch, Mark Begich, Kevin Meyer, Fay Von Gemmingen, Ted Carlson, Joe Murdy.

Assembly Members Absent: Cheryl Clementson (excused.)

School Board Members Present: Kelly Haney, Kathi Gillespie, Dave Werdal, Peggy Robinson-Wilson, Rita Holthouse, Harriet Drummond, Debbie Ossiander.

School Board Members Absent: None.

3. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:**

The pledge was led by President Ossiander.

4. **ITEMS OF BUSINESS:**

A. Update on School Start-up

ASD Superintendent Bob Christal reported on registration activities. He said Goldenview and Mirror Lake middle schools were in the final stages of completion; everything appears to be on track. Renovations at West High are ahead of schedule. He said two tennis courts were recently donated to ASD ownership.

President Ossiander noted opening dedication ceremonies for the two middle schools were scheduled. She discussed School Board assignments by attendance area.

In response to Mr. Bell, Mr. Christal discussed access to school tracks. He said most tracks would be fenced. The intent is to allow community use, while keeping the ability to lock the tracks at night to prevent vandalism. The administration will work with principals individually to develop access schedules.

B. School Foundation Formula Re-Write

Mr. Christal reviewed various legislative bills regarding the school funding formula. He believed hearings on the bills would take place this fall. The administration is analyzing the bills, to ensure they contain provisions to distribute a greater share of State funds to the ASD. Reports on these analyses will be provided to all legislators.

President Ossiander added there are concerns that proposed formulas for bi-lingual students and transportation do not address the unique needs of large urban areas. She noted over one hundred languages are spoken by Anchorage students. Bi-lingual populations are increasing dramatically, which is not the case in many other areas of the State.

There was discussion of a survey from the State regarding the formula. President Ossiander said she had sent in a draft survey herself. She encouraged Assembly members to participate. She suggested coordination with the ASD prior to response.

Mr. Wuerch encouraged as many responses as possible, to strengthen Anchorage's position in Juneau.

Mr. Wohlforth requested a presentation on this issue at the next joint meeting. There was no objection.

C. Deferred Maintenance Task Force

Mr. Christal distributed a list of hearings scheduled in the Legislature regarding deferred maintenance. He noted legislators have not reached a consensus on the definition of deferred maintenance.

D. Cooperative Efforts - MOA & ASD

President Ossiander referred to a memorandum distributed to Assembly members dated May 20, 1997.

Mr. Christal reviewed highlights from the memorandum detailing cooperative efforts.

President Ossiander said the coordination of the Mountain View Municipal Library and Clark Middle School library has proven very beneficial to the community. A joint use agreement with Municipal Parks and Recreation allows access to Municipal and ASD facilities.

Mr. Christal said a significant item was an agreement with the Municipal People Mover to use buses for school field trips.

E. Update on AML Legislative Committee Priorities

Mr. Wuerch reported on the Alaska Municipal League Legislative Committee activities. He said top priorities were identified as 1) deferred maintenance, 2) revision of the school funding formula and 3) the concept of a community dividend program. He described details of the three priorities. The community dividend program would be used to avoid escalating State and local taxes to pay for critically-needed public facilities.

Mr. Begich noted the Anchorage caucus was scheduled to meet on the first Wednesday of the month in the State Legislative Information Office.

F. Proposal to Change School Board Member Election

Ms. Von Gemmingen presented an ordinance to change the Municipal Charter, which would provide for election of School Board members without seat designations.

President Ossiander said the Board had discussed the proposal, and identified positive and negative impacts. She reported there was a concern the proposal would favor incumbents, and potentially disenfranchise minority communities and geographically isolated communities. There was also a concern the proposal would favor candidates who have better financing than others. Another concern was the format of candidate forums. She said the Board would like more time to research the question further before taking a formal position.

Ms. Von Gemmingen pointed out the proposal would eliminate jockeying for position during filing for office, and ensure candidates with the highest votes would be elected.

G. Mayor/SBAC Review of Capital Projects Management

President Ossiander said the School Board would be happy to work with the School Board Advisory Commission, and cooperate fully with the Commission's review.

Ms. Robinson-Wilson reported on last week's Commission meeting. She reviewed the focus of the Commission, which was to determine whether construction was being done as efficiently as possible.

H. Update on Charter Schools

Carol Comeau reported on the three charter schools which would begin operation this fall, Walden Pond, Aquarian and Family Partnership. She noted the issues involved in establishing and operating a charter school are complex, especially since the concept is new to Anchorage. Ms. Comeau said the schools' operators wish to be autonomous, but at the same time are dependent on ASD staff to learn all the things necessary to run these schools. It would be helpful if charter school staff begins the learning process at least one year prior to starting the school. Establishing locations for the schools is also a major challenge.

Mr. Christal discussed cost and space issues associated with the charter schools.

In response to Mr. Meyer, Mr. Christal discussed disposal of the old Northern Lights ABC School facility. He noted the new school would not open until August 1998. He said the Board would report on potential use of the facility by October of this year. Mr. Christal pointed out the facility

may be needed for charter schools or temporary housing for students during construction of other schools.

Ms. Gillespie suggested charter school legislation presently in the House and Senate be a topic at the next joint meeting. She pointed out the proposed legislation could have a great impact on the ASD. She said the proposal included a provision for unlimited charter schools, and an independent authority which would be able to override School Board decisions.

In response to Mr. Kendall, President Ossiander said the ASD receives funding for charter school students.

Ms. Gillespie added the issue of Federal funding of start-up costs for schools would also have a significant financial impact on the ASD.

There was a discussion of the relative strengths and weaknesses of charter school laws in other states.

I. Update on Part-time Students

President Ossiander discussed a significant change to the ASD budget process this year. She said home school and private school students would be allowed to enroll with the ASD for up to three classes. The Board has held one hearing on the proposal; it would be finalized at the Board's next meeting. The impact of the proposal is not known at this time.

In response to Ms. Abney, President Ossiander discussed State funding policies for part-time students. Logistic challenges include security, priorities for popular classes, and extra curricular activities.

J. Budget Preview for Next Year

President Ossiander announced the School Board would have its first introduction to next year's budget in December, 1997.

Mr. Christal said he and the Board have yet to discuss whether to continue the citizen input groups that have helped with the budget process in past years. There may be some modification to that system. There is a new business system and new teacher evaluations to be implemented, which will take significant time from finance department staff. He added reductions of Federal funding will be reflected in the budget.

Mr. Meyer requested a summary of pending ASD labor negotiations.

K. Capital Projects for Next Year

Mr. Christal said staff would be evaluating needs and available bond funds, to develop a recommendation by later this year.

President Ossiander suggested holding a work session in the next few months to discuss high school renovations.

Mr. Meyer requested an update on technological equipment and infrastructure in the schools.

Mr. Christal discussed private sector donations of surplus computers.

Ms. Abney noted she had received complaints that people had lost the ability to utilize Pop Wagner fields for football practice.

Mr. Christal suggested people concerned with this issue be referred to Jill Waters of Community Resources.

Mr. Begich announced Ms. Clementson's birthday was today.

Mr. Murdy announced a Public Safety committee meeting on August 26, 1997.

Ms. Von Gemmingen said she and Mr. Murdy would host a west Anchorage town meeting on September 25, 1997 at the Regal Alaskan Hotel.

It was agreed the next joint Assembly/School Board meeting would be held on October 28, 1997 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

5. **ADJOURNMENT:**

The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Chair
Anchorage Assembly

President
Anchorage School Board

ATTEST:

Recording Secretary

Date Minutes Approved: October 28, 1997

LF/db