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THE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY / THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD

**Anchorage Assembly Conference Room
Room 155, City Hall**

Minutes for Joint Meeting of December 2, 2005

1. CALL TO ORDER

The Joint Meeting was convened by Chair Fairclough at 10:20 a.m. in the Assembly Conference Room, First Floor of City Hall, 632 West 6th Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska.

2. ROLL CALL

ASSEMBLYMEMBERS

PRESENT: Chair Anna Fairclough, Vice Chair Dan Coffey (*late*), Allan Tesche (*late*), Debbie Ossiander, Dan Sullivan (*late*), Ken Stout, Paul Bauer (*late*), Dick Traini (*late*) and Pamela Jennings.

ABSENT: Janice Shamberg and Chris Birch, excused.

(Clerk's Note: *Italics indicate members who arrived late to the Meeting, due to a press conference in the Mayor's Conference Room.*)

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

PRESENT: President Jeff Friedman, Vice President Crystal Kennedy, John Steiner, Tim Steele, Mary Marks and Macon Roberts.

ABSENT: Jake Metcalfe, excused.

Also present at the Joint Meeting were Deputy Municipal Clerk Linda Heim, Mayor Mark Begich, Superintendent Carol Comeau, Chief Financial Officer Janet Stokesbary, Facilities Maintenance Director Ray Amsden, Assistant Superintendent George Vakalis and Moose Federation Director Gary Olson, Chief Fiscal Officer Jeff Sinz and Municipal Assessor Marty McGee.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Superintendent of Schools Carol Comeau led the pledge.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS JOINT MEETING

Ms. Ossiander moved, to approve the Joint Municipal Assembly/School Board Meeting Minutes of September 16, 2005,
Mr. Sullivan seconded,
and this was passed without objection.

5. ADDENDUM TO AGENDA

Ms. Jennings requested a report on the status of the school site selection in Sand Lake. Chair Fairclough assigned this issue to 6.f. in the Agenda and there were no objections.

6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS

6.a. School Safety: Large Animals in School Yards

Mr. Bauer stated that as the community continued to grow, moose would be an increasing safety concern for children. Ms. Comeau responded that her office maintained a working relationship with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (*ADF&G*) and the Moose Federation. Ms. Comeau responded that child safety was a priority. Their policy, procedures and student education worked well to protect children and they had always been shown full support from the *ADF&G*. Chair Fairclough recommended that this issue be addressed by the Public Safety Committee. Mr. Bauer concurred and stated that there were cases outside of Alaska where parents of victims had successfully sued school districts. Ms. Comeau responded the School Administration would participate with the committee worksession.

6.b. The Boniface Instructional Support Center

Ms. Comeau reported that J&L Properties had requested that the School District consider moving more of their administrative offices into the Boniface Mall. The School Board supported this issue being pursued and their goal was to consolidate administration facilities to improve efficiency. To Mr. Tesche, Ms. Comeau responded that she would keep the Assembly informed and answer all their questions. To Ms. Jennings, Ms. Comeau responded their intention would be to move a majority of administration offices into one facility, which would save money. Ms. Comeau stated that the School Information Technology Division, currently housed in relocatables at West High School, also needed to

1 be addressed. They were not paying rent on those facilities, but the high school needed the space. Mr. Traini urged
2 consideration of using the Loussac Library for School board meetings if necessary. Ms. Comeau responded that the
3 School Board would address the issue. Mr. Steele recommended the School Administration supply cost differentials of
4 travel and square footage and proposed savings. To Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Comeau and Mr. Steele responded that they
5 would continue to address traffic improvements between Romig Middle School and West High School if the
6 relocatables were moved.

7
8 **6.c. FY 06-07 Budget**

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10 Superintendent Comeau reported the School Board would follow Governor Murkowski's budget recommendations.
11 Public Hearings for the School Budget were scheduled for January 11th and January 17th. The First Reading of the
12 School Budget would be presented to the School Board on January 26th and the Second Reading on February 2nd. It
13 was scheduled for Assembly Public Hearing on March 28th. To Mr. Coffey, Ms. Comeau responded the School District
14 was in compliance and that there were no shortfalls.

15
16 To Mr. Coffey and Ms. Ossiander, President Friedman responded that state legislators had recommended a local tax
17 increase, which needed to be addressed. Mr. Steele responded that they were told the city needed to contribute more
18 money for education. Ms. Ossiander responded there would be a significant discussion with the state about revenue
19 sharing. The Municipal Assembly would also be in discussion with other city governing bodies concerning that matter.

20
21 To Mr. Coffey, Municipal Assessor Marty McGee responded the assessments were determined by the State and
22 included local exemptions. The current municipal assessment ratio was 97.5%. Mr. Traini requested a copy of the
23 evaluations, including tax ratios and local exemptions.

24
25 Mr. Sullivan and Chair Fairclough requested the School Board work with Mr. McGee, to determine how a local sales
26 tax would affect the school budget. School District Chief Financial Officer Janet Stokesbary responded the state
27 statutes were based on true and full value, determined by the State Assessor. To Mr. Sullivan, Ms. Stokesbary
28 responded the state would accept city sales tax money for school revenues.

29
30 Chair Fairclough encouraged Assemblymembers to attend the School District Budget worksessions and become
31 informed. Mr. Traini responded the School Board and the Administration had done a good job in preparing their
32 budget. To Mr. Coffey, Ms. Comeau responded that all budget worksessions were taped and would be shown on
33 public television, Channel 14. She would supply those dates and times.

34
35 Mr. Bauer and Ms. Ossiander recommended that the School Board also address school funding contributions.

36
37 **6.d. School Bond Procedures**

38
39 Superintendent Comeau reported the Administration would present their recommendations on bond propositions to the
40 School Board on December 12th. The Capital Request Advisory Committee would be reviewing all issues with the
41 School Administration to determine bond propositions and the six-year CIP. Their recommendations would be
42 presented to the Assembly, scheduled for Public Hearing in late January or early February. They were eligible for up
43 to \$63 million in debt reimbursement from the State of Alaska, which would address the completion of their current
44 school projects.

45
46 Mr. Traini requested that the Administration supply a budget summary for the past five years, to explain the actual
47 enrollment numbers. Chair Fairclough also requested class-size reports.

48
49 President Friedman explained that some of the schools were at 105% and some were at a lower capacity. For many
50 reasons they were not considering bussing students across town. To Mr. Stout, Mr. Steele responded that they were
51 in the process of addressing all middle school boundaries, which was highly controversial. Ms. Marks opposed
52 boundary changes and stated there were many high schools and a couple of elementary schools that were also above
53 capacity. Williwaw Elementary was currently at 132% capacity and she urged continued conversation on this matter.

54
55 Ms. Comeau stated the new middle school boundaries would be addressed because of the new Muldoon Middle
56 School. Eagle River and Hillside also needed to be addressed. Mr. Steiner responded that changing school boundary
57 lines was complex because families often choose to live in specific neighborhoods because of the schools. The
58 student population had been in regression in the past couple of years and was now stabilizing. They were addressing
59 larger-than-normal age groups, referred to as "cohorts" which were currently in the high schools. They had recently
60 experienced a larger-than-expected elementary school enrollment. The state economy would make a difference in the
61 future, as rural Alaskan residents moved to the city. A temporary boundary change would not make a difference in the
62 long run.

63
64 Mr. Bauer stated that some military bases in the nation maintained their own schools. Ms. Comeau responded the city
65 had taken ownership of the base facilities, which were now included with the bonding. With the bases increasing they
66 were addressing capacities at Gruening and the Muldoon schools.

67
68 Ms. Comeau stated that needs for special education were exploding, which was not easily calculated. Mr. Steele
69 responded that with the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (*IDEA*), they were required to
70 provide for special needs, which included preschool services. They were making determinations and addressing the
71 need for preschools as a legislative priority. The School Board supported the importance of preschools.

72
73 **6.e. Allocation of Revenues under Municipal Tax Cap and Implications for State Funding for ASD**

74
75 Mr. Steiner stated that the School District and the Assembly had the same tax cap. When schools in Alaska had
76 insufficient funds it was difficult to ask the state to provide the money, when the funding first needed to be allocated

1 from the cities. Mr. Friedman responded that proportions of the two municipal budgets had been agreed upon in the
2 past, and it was not necessary to revisit that policy decision. Chief Fiscal Officer Jeff Sinz responded there had been a
3 gradual and slow shift of revenues over the past five years towards the School District. Mr. Traini responded the state
4 was ultimately responsible for education and it was appropriate for this issue to be addressed. Mr. Tesche responded
5 that the state was mandated to provide education and the state was predicted to have a billion dollar surplus next year.
6 It was unnecessary to increase local taxes to provide education. The focus needed to be on the state for revenues.
7

8 **6.f. School Site Selection in Sand Lake (Addendum)**

9
10 President Jeff Friedman announced there was a school Site Selection Committee Meeting on December 14th.

11
12 To Ms. Jennings, Senior Planner JoAnn Contreras responded the Heritage Land Bank was in a counter negotiation
13 process for property in the Kincaid area of Sand Lake.

14
15 Mr. Sullivan stated that the Eagle River Community Council had addressed interest in the availability of a parcel of
16 property to the south of the Eagle River High School, which was currently under a State Mental Health Trust. Chair
17 Fairclough responded that property had been addressed in the past, and was partially contaminated from a landfill.
18 She urged that the School Site Selection Committee address that issue. Ms. Comeau concurred that the high school
19 needed additional space for parking and future growth. They were planning for expansion when the enrollment
20 reached 1600.

21
22 **7. COMMENTS**

23
24 Ms. Kennedy commended the Mayor and the Office of Emergency Management on their recent publication on
25 Emergency Preparedness. The School District was working on a similar effort to educate students and families.
26

27 **8. SCHEDULING OF UPCOMING JOINT MEETING**

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29 **9. ADJOURNMENT**

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31 Chair Fairclough adjourned the Meeting at 11:25 a.m.
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37 _____
38 ANNA FAIRCLOUGH, Assembly Chair

36
37 _____
38 JEFF FRIEDMAN, School Board President

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41 ATTEST:

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43 _____
44 LINDA HEIM, Acting Municipal Clerk
45 Date Minutes Approved: March 10, 2006.
46 MC/LH