

RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, November 13, 2019

At Wonder Park Elementary School

Present: Tammy Hanson, Fred McLeary, Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Kathy & Bob Skaats, Elmer & Roxanne Jeske, Michelle Scaman, Renea Miller, James Smallwood, Dan & Sherry Wright

Meeting was called to order at 6:30 pm by Chair Ed Leach.

1. Legislative report

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (provided report electronically)

- Senator Josh Revak was sworn in by Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer on Saturday, November 2nd at the Legislative Information Office here in Anchorage. Senator Revak was in the House last year and was nominated to fill the seat vacated by the death of Senator Chris Birch.
 - During last session, my Caucus worked well with the Senate Majority, and I look forward to continuing this working relationship with Senator Revak.
- Alaska Hire- the State Attorney General has refused to defend the Alaska Hire Law, which requires private contractors working on state-funded projects to hire qualified Alaskans as a percentage of their workers. The Law has broad bipartisan support over its 33-year history and has not been ruled unconstitutional by a judge. Therefore, it's unfortunate that the State Attorney General does not defend the law.
 - Alaska currently has one of the highest rates of unemployment in the nation and there is a great deal of demand for developing our infrastructure, so we should look for ways to hire more Alaskans, not less.
- Lastly, before I head back to Juneau for the Start of Session, I will be hosting a constituent coffee meeting in early December. More details will be announced in my next e-news and on my Senate Facebook page.

I hope you are enjoying my monthly E-newsletter. If you're not receiving them, please send your email address to my staff at Keith.Bauguess@akleg.gov.

Sen. Bill Wielechowski (report provided by Sonja Karvasaki) – Josh Revak was appointed by the Governor to fill the seat left by Chris Birch. House seat is now vacant with three contenders. There will not be another PFD Special session. Alaska Hire has been an issue lately – the AG has refused to defend Alaska Hire law. AG is trying to come up with regulations for executive privilege against lawsuits. This would create conflict of issues with someone working for the executive branch. Pioneer Home rate increases September 1 – lawsuit on behalf of some residents. ASEA / Janus Decision – Governor wanted employees to continually confirm their union affiliation. Union has put something in place to continue to take funds from employee paychecks. She spoke about the education funding. She spoke more about the Palmer Correction facility, similar to what Ivy shared. Hilcorp purchase of BP assets – comments due on Friday to the Regulatory Commission of Alaska. They are tightly holding their financial information. This has to do with the TranAlaska Pipeline.

Sen. Tom Begich (provided by Loki Gale Tobin) – hopes to have more update re: Alaska Hire next month. Optimistic that there will be a solution on the table to address transitional housing for homeless, potentially on land near APU. Looking at mid-December for another budget. Pre-K bill scheduled for next legislative session.

Rep. Geran Tarr – no report

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz – Happy to be here. Had a few town hall events, ordinarily this is a quieter time for legislators. 11/5 – Joint meeting with Wielechowski and LeDoux. Town hall on single accreditation at the University. Financial aid is a factor in accreditation, and the Alaska people have said we need to go about this more carefully, to ensure students will have access to financial aid and the schools up to the standards of other universities. Regions have decided not to move forward with single accreditation. There are currently six lawsuits in play. Forward funding of education is one thing legislators all agree on. Appeals will take place on this. Two other topics under works – concern of the crime bill that passed last year is pushing a lot more cases through the court system, and into the prison systems. So we need to have prosecutors and public defenders to accommodate the increase that has taken place. Two years is a very long time for a case to get to trial. 17 million was put into the budget to re-open the Palmer Correction facility. An RFP to send prisoners outside is cheaper and quicker, but there was bi-partisan opposition to that. This was found to increase recidivism. This also brought Lower 48 gangs to Alaska, coming back with people they met in Lower 48 prisons. Alaska Hire laws have been in place for about 37 years, in particular with government contracting and high demand jobs. State money only – there are lots of limitations on it. Ed spoke that in the federal government, if a judge will not defend the law, another judge can be appointed to take care of it.

Rep. Andy Josephson – no report

2. Assembly report

Pete Petersen – Good news \$25 million grant for work on the Port of Anchorage. That is enough to get through construction season next year. Bag ban overturn failed. Retailers are finding over 90% of people are bringing their own bags. There was one amendment to allow restaurants to carry out leftovers. Confirmed a new Parks & Rec Director (Jon Rodda retired) with Josh Durand. He is a Service High Graduate. Meeting Tuesday will include possible passage of next year's budget, shortening the amount of time studded tires will be allowed, due to change of weather patterns – there will be an allowance for folks that live further north, but they will have to challenge the ticket. Hiring 4 new park and trail rangers hired through Anchorage Police Department. We had a bit of discussion about some of the various camps in Russian Jack Springs Park.

If the Legislators refuse to put funds in the budget for the port, MOA can utilize tariffs. Alaska Municipal League Convention may discuss getting some funding from other cities that utilize the Anchorage port. Previous contractors did not use suitable materials and the case against them will be coming up with about \$3 million in damages sustained.

Forrest Dunbar – MLP sale update – RCA hearings have until Feb 17 to make a decision. There is a stipulation for all parties to drop their claims (to keep the sale moving forward). Settlement was made with all those parties. Legacy MLP customer's rates will be held in check with the merger. Part of the deal included a new treatment center that will be built, probably out by Clithroe Center. It is a win/win as Providence wanted it, but the city also wants that. \$997 million sales price – with \$234 million to the MOA. Vast majority will go into a trust account that will spin off revenue interest annually. Using a portion to settle debts are the current plans

for those funds. April budget revisions will most likely be the first opportunity to determine actual use of those funds.

3. School board report – no report
4. Principal report – no report
5. FCC report - James Smallwood – no report
6. Census 2020 employment opportunities – Dawn Morris provided information on the census. 1790 was the first year a census was taken by around 650 US Marshalls. Approximately 4 million people were counted. Representation for each state is based on the US Census, determines boundary lines for state and local legislative districts and school districts. This also brings federal funding to our state. She had a handout that showed some of the programs funding covers based on the census numbers. Census workers get a list of households that have not completed their census and will follow up with people to encourage them to fill out the forms. NYC has been the largest city throughout the census. From 13 states to 50 states. The census begins this year in Toksook Bay, Alaska. There will be coordination with agencies so homeless also might be counted. There will also be an online version, so for those travelling, they can complete it that way. Dawn can be reached at 444-2847.
7. Alaska carbon emission sources – Ed has heard young people talking about what can be done about climate change. Ed provided a list of per capita emissions of CO₂ by state and it shows Alaska has minimal emissions. US produces about 1/6 of the emissions in the world and is the only country whose greenhouse gas emissions are going down. Alaska Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory 1990 – 2015 report was provided and discussed (available on DEC web page). We have a large cargo aviation industry here, which provides a large portion of employment in Alaska. In order to reduce our greenhouse gases in Alaska, we would need to reduce production of oil/gas, which devastates our budget. When we consider reduction in emissions, we also must be aware of the other consequences.
8. 2020 nominations, which will be voted on at the December meeting, were as follows:
Ed Leach – President
Fred McLeary – Vice President
Sherry Wright – Secretary
Kendra Kloster - Treasurer
Kathleen Plunkett - FCC Representative
Michelle Scaman - Trustee
9. December 11th potluck meeting will be Wonder Park. Sherry Wright will not be present, so will need someone to take minutes.

Meeting adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Sherry Wright, Secretary