NOVEMBER 2019 VOLUME 2

MONTHLY UPDATE

Current news and updates from the Anchorage Assembly

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Assembly Unanimously Passes 2020 budget

After hours of deliberation the Assembly approved the 2020 budget, including the general operating budget, 6 year plans, capital budget, and utilities and enterprise budgets. We held many work sessions, committee meetings, and three public hearings on the budget.

We explored four issues in detail: 1) budgets for the Anchorage Fire Department and 2) services related to homelessness, 3) the inclusion of the ML&P proceeds to the Municipal Trust, and 4) alternative options for the Academy and Vanguard road project.

Amendments from Assembly members, either passed on the floor or adopted in the S (Substitute) version of the budget include four issues:

- a new bus route to **restore service on Old Seward and 36th Ave,** connecting to the Loussac Library,
- a lump sum into the Assembly Department to hire an **Elections Coordinator, Minutes Clerk, and part-time Assembly aides**,
- a hefty boost in funding for **more shelter beds**,
- a competitive grant process to fund **important ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) work.**

These additions were made without additional cuts to departments. Rather, these community priorities were funded by re-allocating proposed increases to the budget. Thank you to the public for engaging in this process.

Critical Concerns

Addressing Repeat Violations of Marujana Licenses

In response to community concern, the Assembly has begun exploring how to deal with marijuana establishments with multiple NOVs (Notice of Violations). It has been Assembly practice to review NOVs quarterly at the Community and Economic Development Committee. But we've never refused a license or renewal based on NOVs and impact to the neighborhood, but two licenses we discussed recently with multiple NOVs have highlighted the need to come back to this conversation.

Changes to Studded Tire Season Postponed

The Assembly postponed action on an ordinance proposed by the administration to shorten the season for studded tires by two weeks. The season would begin October 1, instead of September 15, citing a study done by a UAA professor which states that, statewide, studded tires cost roughly $2M in road damage annually.

Based on our changing climate, the study proved that we could shorten the season and save money on road maintenance. The ordinance would be enforced through parking – so those parked in the Municipality with studded tires on before October 1 would be ticketed. This item will come back to the Assembly at the next regular meeting on December 3.

Assembly Issues Policy Guidance on AFD Closures

The Assembly passed a resolution giving policy guidance to the administration regarding the management policy of rolling closures of AFD (Anchorage Fire Department) apparatus, which is triggered when a firefighter or paramedic calls in sick or requests time off for extenuating circumstances. The Assembly respectfully requested that management find an alternate solution to closing the almost $4M deficit within the department and to end this policy.

Assembly Passes Resolution on Coastal Infastructure Bond

The Assembly passed a resolution authored by Assembly Members Felix Rivera and Suzanne LaFrance urging the state legislature to approve a coastal infrastructure bond for the November 2020 ballot. This resolution will go to the Alaska Municipal League, a coalition of local governments, later in the month to get their support. Hopefully the support of a statewide coalition will convince the legislature to consider this matter.

Infastructure Updates

Proposed Port Tarriff Increase

The Assembly will be deliberating a proposed increase to the Port of Alaska terminal tariff at our regular meeting on December 3. Action will likely be postponed to allow for more time to absorb the information and hear from affected parties. The tariff increases are meant to assist with completion of the PCT (Petroleum Cement Terminal).

Midtown Congestion Relief

The Assembly recently held a worksession regarding the Midtown Congestion Relief project. We heard from the State DOT and DOWL, both of which were seeking support from the Assembly for this project. Concerns from community members were addressed, including right-of-way acquisition, funding, timing, need, and others. We will continue to weigh in on this project as it moves forward.

ML&P Sale Before the Regulatory Commission

The Assembly held a special meeting recently to approve a stipulation regarding the ML&P sale to Chugach electric. The stipulation, which is a negotiation document between all the parties with a stake in the sale, lowered the price of the sale and provided for $15M for the Alaska Center for Treatment, which has been stalled due to the lack of capital funding. Our Municipal Attorney is still before the Regulatory Commission of Alaska, defending the stipulation and overseeing the recall of witnesses before the body. We expect a decision before the RCA in February

Purple Heart City

Assembly Members Forrest Dunbar, Austin Quinn-Davidson and John Weddleton, worked on a resolution to proclaim Anchorage as a Purple Heart City. Addtionally, the members worked with the Anchorage Community Development Authority to offer free parking in Easy Park garages on “purple” levels for Purple Heart recipients.

Quick News

Joint ASD/Assembly Worksession

The Assembly and School Board held our first-ever joint worksession on a specific topic, in this case the Climate Action Plan, to discuss ways we can collaborate. With the school district being the largest building owner in the Municipality, there seems to be a lot of opportunity for energy efficiency and savings for ASD.

Bag Ban Loophole Closed

Assembly Members Christopher Constant and Crystal Kennedy worked to close a loophole and correct confusion in the plastic bag ban in regards to poly-woven plastic bags which are regularly sold by businesses and used by customers. The Assembly did decide unanimously to keep the $.10 fee for now, with studies showing that the fee needs to be in place for up to 3 years to allow the changes to sink in.

Safe Contracting Changes

Assembly Members Chris Constant, Austin Quinn-Davidson, and Forrest Dunbar have put forward an ordinance to assure contracts within the Purchasing Department are awarded to contractors who comply with fair wages and do not have a history of workplace safety violations.

Give Thanks

As we gather this Thanksgiving to celebrate together, please remember to extend thanks and honor the history of the Dena'ina people. We live on the ancestral lands of the Dena'ina, which they have tended for thousands of years.

Collective Bargaining Negotiation Guidance

The Assembly will be deliberating changes to the labor bargaining guidelines proposed by Assembly Members Felix Rivera, Forrest Dunbar, and Meg Zaletel. These guidelines give guidance to the administrative when bargaining with the various bargaining units (unions) within the Municipality. Public hearing on this item will be on December 3 and deliberation is planned for December 17.

Can't get enough?

The Clerk's office is a great place to go for the most up to date info on many municipal issues. Follow the Anchorage Municipal Clerk on Facebook:

facebook.com/ANCMuniClerk/