

## RUSSIAN JACK COMMUNITY COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

6:30 PM, Wednesday, February 9, 2022

At Zion Lutheran Church – 2100 Boniface Parkway

Present: Ed Leach, Kathleen Plunkett, Dan & Sherry Wright

Present via ZOOM: Kendra Kloster, Keelin Baughman, Thomas Fenoseff (ASD), Ted Eischeid, Fred McLeary, Dora Wilson, Lindsay Hajduk, Jessica Parks, Junior Aumavae, Kengo Nagaoka

Meeting was called to order at 6:33 pm by President Kendra Kloster.

### 1. Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

2. Anchorage Police and/or Fire Station Report - Kendra reported that she had met with the new police chief. Public Safety Advisory Commission will meet on February 18<sup>th</sup> from 1-3 to discuss body camera policy. They also meet the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday monthly from 6 – 8 pm.

### 3. Legislative report (3 minutes each)

Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson (Keith Bauguess) – submitted her report electronically (attached).

Sen. Bill Wielechowski - We have the worst 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading skills in the nation. Senator Begich' bill will help change that statistic. They are working on the budget in the morning, legislation in the afternoon. PFD had a 29% return. Retirement had a slightly less return. 50% of PFD payment and some math gimmicks are going on to provide a balanced budget. We can't cut our way into the future. 10 year Governor's plan had similar ideas – cuts to PERS/TERS is included in his plan and kicking back ASD funding to communities (which will raise property taxes). Shifting over 100 million dollars in projects to last year's budget. 3.7 million upgrade to public safety communication systems. His staff created a database to go along with his bill that will provide transparency in spending (online checkbook for any expenditures over \$1000). East Anchorage property taxes went up – various other areas stayed the same or were lower.

Kendra – she has been hearing from DPS about funding for vehicles, etc. Kathleen had a question on property tax increases – interested in a follow up on that.

Sen. Tom Begich - CAPSIS requests got in and optimistic that some of those will pass this year. Meetings with Governor stressing support for funding issues the community is seeking. Pretty good bipartisan relationship on budget issues and committed to a responsible fiscal plan. Legislators discussed raising property tax on oil & gas companies, which would have been revenues of approximately \$270 million, but met with hearty opposition. This could have provided some relief on Anchorage resident property taxes. Redistricting trial should provide a preliminary plan on February 15<sup>th</sup>, Supreme Court April 15<sup>th</sup> and an interim map available roughly in May. Legislation he is working on: essential worker bill provides free tuition for those on the COVID crisis front lines, temporary employment for those that lost work to complete a 4 year degree (funded by COVID monies); property tax bill; getting a seat on Legislative Budget and Audit Committee. Working on trust issues with the native community that allows universal pre-K. This bill has had 26 hearings on this bill with 150 supporting testifiers. Reading skills are a primary target for this bill, in whatever language is needed.

Ted had a comment as a former educator – supports the pre-K reading bill. Thanks!

Rep. Geran Tarr –work going on with fiscal plan. Higher oil prices have allowed for an additional billion dollars, giving a great opportunity to plan for another six months. Legislation on elections, dividend, corrections, education. HB 118 improves computer access for inmates (re-entry work to help with transitioning back to life outside prison). Corrections issues hits our area greatly – Geran hears a lot while going door to door. Correction reforms, consent defined, invasive species issues are personal bills. Bridge naming update – survey will be on our Facebook page.

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz (Meagan Holland provided the report) – Transportation improvement program deadline is 2/14/2022 - Northern Lights/Bragaw intersection to be nominated as a spot. Top priority bills: advanced practice permit for dental hygienist; use of telehealth to be made permanent; statutory split of PFD draw to appoint a portion for education and fiscal certainty.

Lindsey – bicycle committee has interest in Northern Lights/Bragaw intersection (chat room comment).

Dora – telehealth is an important resource for families with children with mental health needs and special needs children as providers can be limited in Alaska.

Rep. Andy Josephson (Tristan Walsh) – no report

#### 4. Assembly report (3 minutes each)

Pete Petersen – New Police Chief (been on the force over 20 years). Reapportionment process is going on at the local level as well. 10 draft maps have been created. [www.reapportionanc.org](http://www.reapportionanc.org) April 5 is annual municipal election. Legislative program includes: \$600 million on Port of Anchorage that must be done in the next five years; \$15 million for homelessness; \$6 million for bridges. A safety corridor study on Tudor Road (Baxter/Patterson has had a number of fatalities) may be needed.

Ted – Library Director is needed. Concerns about censorship by the Deputy Director. What is the assemblies plan to deal with this? There is a search going on for a new Library Director.

Kathleen – when will the propositions for the ballot be published? Pete thinks it should be available on the MOA website.

<https://www.muni.org/departments/assembly/clerk/elections/pages/ballotinfo.aspx>

Forrest Dunbar- no report

5. School board report (3 minutes each) – Dora Wilson thanks legislators support for education. Goal to increase the reading levels in school and giving students a good start in K – 3. Tentative agreement with Anchorage Education Association and hope to soon have a contract.

Superintendent search is going on. Community survey was published in nine languages to allow maximum input. February 21<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for applications for Superintendent. Parent Teacher Conferences: 2/16 & 2/17/ Online Scheduler--

<https://apps.asdk12.org/ConferenceScheduling/StudentScheduleStartExt.aspx>

ASD Spring Lottery Opened-- <https://www.asdk12.org/lottery> Black History month is going on this month. COVID testing locations are available on the ASD website. Education bond proposition benefits 25 schools around the district. Looking for community support. Security vestibule in the elementary schools is one area for improvements. Russian Jack Elementary roof project.

Kathleen - How much retiring? 100.2 million What is the total bond debt?

Thomas Fenoseff of ASD posted in the chat room: As of June 30, 2021, the District had \$452 million of outstanding bonds, down \$249 million from the same time 10 years ago. In the last two fiscal years, ASD has paid off \$115.67 million of debt. During that time, the District received voter authorization to incur approximately \$82.833 million of new debt to fund capital improvements. In the next five years, the District anticipates paying off approximately \$207.95 million in principal, averaging about 41.59 million each year.

6. FCC report – Kathleen Plunkett provided the report on the January meeting. The vacancy for VP was filled by Linda Chase from Rogers Park. Property appraisal green cards are out. ASD Superintendent search. Allen Kemplen will present on the community fabrication lab, if invited to council meeting. February meeting agenda – ballot trax system for MOA elections and park grants.

7. Report from JBER Public Affairs – no report

8. Neighborhood/Community Announcements Sherry Wright told about the Bike for Women coming up May 1<sup>st</sup>. Registration opens February 15<sup>th</sup> and is limited to 725 racers.  
[www.bike4women.com](http://www.bike4women.com)

Keelin Baughman – Events at Mountain View Library: Valentine’s Craft Day on Feb 11 from 3-5pm. Leap into Science on Feb 16 from 3-5pm. Storytime every Tuesday at 6pm. Winter Reading Challenge runs from Jan 24-Mar 7. Pick up a bingo sheet in person at any branch. Every completed row or column earns you an entry into the grand prize drawing. All APL branches will be closed on Feb. 19th. For more info, please call or email [keelin.baughman@anchorageak.gov](mailto:keelin.baughman@anchorageak.gov) or (907) 353-2904

Lindsey Hajduk ideas for working in the neighborhood – landscaping will occur this spring. In addition to that is Neighbor Works project “Paint the Town” and plans to work in Russian Jack neighborhood. Garden opportunity is still on the table with a matching grant for funding of \$7000. March 17<sup>th</sup> is the deadline for applications. Wrapping planting, spring cleanup and Paint the Town will allow some volunteer helpers.

Kengo Nagaoka role with AK Literacy Program (located off DeBarr & Rudakof). Started a new adult education program (GED course) through State of Alaska. Successful last quarter and looking to keep classes small and full. They offer online classes. Kengo can help people get set up on that.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 9th at 6:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by:  
Sherry Wright, Secretary



**Senator Gray-Jackson's Notes  
Russian Jack Community Council  
February 9, 2022**

## Happy Black History Month Everyone!

I want to take a moment and reflect on this month-long celebration of Black History Month. I was honored to see the passage of Senate Bill 40, an act establishing the month of February, each year, as Black History Month. This month honors and recognizes the contributions that African Americans have made in Alaska and the United States.

### **Ranked Choice Voting**

On January 19th, the Alaska Supreme Court ruled that Alaska's new ranked-choice voting system and non-partisan primaries are legal and can be used for the 2022 elections.

#### **How does Ranked Choice Voting works?**

In each race, voters will rank their choices in order of preference. The top four candidates who advanced from the primary election will appear on the General Election the ballot. If voters would like to vote for a write-in candidate, they may do so and include that candidate in the ranking. For a candidate to win, they must receive a majority (50% + 1 vote) of total votes cast. If no candidate receives most votes in the first round of counting, more rounds of counting continue until a candidate reaches a majority.

#### **How are votes counted in Round 1?**

Only the vote for your 1st choice candidate is counted.

- If a candidate receives more than 50% of first-choice votes, that candidate wins.
- If no candidate wins in Round 1, the counting goes to Round 2.

#### **How are votes counted in Round 2 and subsequent rounds?**

The last place candidate from each race in Round 1 is eliminated and their supporter's 2nd choice selection is allocated to the remaining candidates on the ballot. This vote redistribution process continues until one candidate reaches over 50% of the votes or until there are two candidates remaining and the candidate with the most votes, wins. In each round of counting, each voter gets one vote. You can find additional information at <https://www.elections.alaska.gov/>

## Committee Membership

I continue to sit on the following committees:

- Alternate Senate Comprehensive Fiscal Plan Working Group
- Member Senate Health & Social Services (Fin Sub)
- Member Senate Commerce, Community & Economic Dev (Fin Sub)
- Member Senate Community & Regional Affairs
- Member Senate Labor & Commerce

## State of the State Address

On January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022, Governor Mike Dunleavy gave his fourth State of the State speech.

A few of his speech's highlights are:

- How he envisioned Alaska as a state that is a leader in renewable energy.
- He sees Alaska finally developing its vast stores of natural gas on the North Slope.
- He also called for the settling of the dividend issue.
- The Governor spoke of the redistricting plan what is currently under litigation, and where 59 of the Legislature's 60 members face election this year: including himself.
- The Governor spoke of his administration's handling of the pandemic, as its goal is to make sure our healthcare system is strong and that we have the tools available for each of us to take care of ourselves.
- Governor Dunleavy talked about how oil prices in the recent months have been among their highest levels during his administration.
- Dunleavy also urged lawmakers to prove to Alaskans wrong who think nothing will get done this is an election year.
- Speaking of his vision, Governor Dunleavy said that that "The test is going to be, how serious is that vision and is the administration going to put the work in on being here in the Capitol for the next 90 days, guiding us through and working with us."

**I was honored to have SB 80 "An Act relating to mental health education," heard in the Finance Committee on Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>. The bill was held for later discussion.**

*Always representing your interests!*



**Interim: 907 269-0174      Session: 907-465-4930**

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