

THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, ALASKA
SPECIAL ASSEMBLY MEETING
Meeting Minutes – June 1, 2020

MEETING NO. 2020-29: The Special Meeting of the City and Borough of Juneau Assembly held by virtual Zoom webinar, was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Mayor Beth Weldon.

I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

Assemblymembers Present: Wade Bryson, Rob Edwardson, Michelle Bonnet Hale, Maria Gladziszewski, Loren Jones, Carole Triem, Alicia Hughes-Skandijs, Greg Smith, and Mayor Beth Weldon.

Assemblymembers Absent: None.

Staff Present: City Manager Rorie Watt, Deputy City Manager Mila Cosgrove, Municipal Clerk Beth McEwen, Deputy City Attorney Robert Palmer, Deputy Clerk Diane Cathcart, and Library Director Robert Barr.

Mayor Weldon thanked Ms. Hale for observing a moment of silence during the Assembly Public Works and Facilities Committee meeting earlier in the day to honor the member of our community who passed away as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

There being no objection and no changes, the agenda was approved as presented.

III. AGENDA TOPICS

A. PUBLIC HEARING: Resolution 2897 A Resolution Opposing Options in the University Transformation Preliminary Review Process Regarding the University of Alaska Southeast.

Mr. Watt told the Assembly that University of Alaska Southeast is an important part of our civic community that provides educational opportunities for our citizens and youth from around the state. The Board of Regents and the President of the University have been evaluating options as a result of budget pressure that has been placed upon them. The Board of Regents are going to take public testimony at their meeting tomorrow night.

The City Manager recommends the Assembly adopt this resolution, so that the Assembly can take a strong statement of support in favor of maintaining UAS as an independent institution.

Public Comment: None.

Assembly Action:

MOTION by Ms. Gladziszewski for the Assembly to adopt Resolution 2897 and asked for unanimous consent.

Objection by Mr. Bryson for the purpose of a question. Mr. Bryson asked Mr. Watt to explain what the ramifications would be if UAS were to be absorbed by rest of University of Alaska.

Mr. Watt responded that this would mean reduced employment at UAS, UAS would not have a Chancellor, as well as losing other key positions in UAS staffing. He also adds that the school could become unattractive towards prospective students. Mr. Watt says that the absorption of UAS would be a significant blow to the independence and economic standing of the university.

Mr. Bryson thanked Mr. Watt for his explanation, and removed his objection.

Hearing no further objections, the resolution passed by unanimous consent.

B. PUBLIC HEARING: Emergency Ordinance 2020-27 An Emergency Ordinance Ordering People to Quarantine When Travelling into the City and Borough of Juneau from Another State or Country.

This Ordinance which would enact a local 14 day quarantine was introduced and set for public hearing because the Assembly did not know what the Governor would do to update Health Mandate 10, which is set to expire tomorrow on June 2, 2020.

On Friday night, May 29, the Governor announced that he would extend Health Mandate 10 until Friday, June 5 and that he would issue guidance documents today on new protocols which would rely on a level of testing in lieu of quarantine.

The Manager recommends that the Assembly take the following actions:

1. Receive public comments on this Ordinance.
2. Read the Governors new guidance documents.
3. Provide a list of questions to the Manager by Close of Business June 2, so that the Manager can ask for clarifications and answers from the State.
4. Continue this Ordinance until Wednesday, June 3.

The City Manager recommends that the Assembly schedule a Special Assembly Meeting for Wednesday June 3 at 6:00 p.m. to continue consideration of this Ordinance.

Public Comment:

Mr. Martin Stepetin, a Douglas resident, said that he supported extending the 14-day quarantine, saying that it could protect our community and urged the Assembly to vote to extend it.

Ms. Gladziszewski noted that Mr. Stepetin had put up a poll on Facebook, and asked him what the results were. Mr. Stepetin said that approximately 700 people participated in the poll and that roughly 500 people voted in favor of extending the quarantine, and roughly 100 people voted against extending the quarantine.

Ms. Theodora Johnnie, a Mendenhall Valley resident said that if the Assembly voted to extend the 14-day quarantine, they should also take medical professionals and staff into consideration. She added that medical staff should be able to have COVID-19 testing, as well as enough medical staff to keep local healthcare facilities open and operating.

Mr. Richard Knight, an Auke Bay resident, shared that while he supports the 14-day quarantine, he would also like the option to test rather than quarantine.

Dr. Stephen Greer, a Douglas resident, said that he is a traveling physician, and that the travel mandate has been effective at keeping the COVID-19 case count fairly low in Alaska. He mentioned the possibility of finding a middle ground between a 14-day quarantine, testing, and the Governor's plan.

Mr. Nathan Vallier, a Douglas resident, shared that he is currently traveling, and that the ability to get a test is becoming easier, but most results take 2-5 days. He also said that he has seen the costs for tests range from free to \$15 dollars. Mr. Vallier said that the requirement for travelers to get tested upon arrival makes more sense compared to a standard 14-day quarantine.

Mr. Smith asked Mr. Vallier if he paid out of pocket to receive testing, or was it covered by health insurance. Mr. Vallier said that he has seen insurance cover at least part of it, otherwise a test is \$25 out of pocket.

Mr. Phillip Thorne, a Mendenhall Valley resident, said that he prefers travelers to test on arrival, and then quarantine until the results come back. He mentioned that there is a logistical need for there to be rapid testing here in Juneau. Mr. Thorne says that the 14-day quarantine may be a solution for now, but moving forward the Assembly should focus on acquiring testing on demand. He added that it is a good balance between safety and allowing people to move with some protection.

Mr. Mike Leboki, a resident of Elfin Cove, shared that he runs a fishing lodge in Elfin Cove. He said that his business has been devastated with this mandate and that it restricts them from opening. He asked the Assembly if there is anything that CBJ will do to help those who are suffering from a loss of revenue due to the mandate. Mr. Bryson asked Mr. Leboki if he has a mitigation strategy in place for his visitors, such as implementing testing. Mr. Leboki said that he has been asking people if they would mind getting a test three days prior to entering the state. Since visitors are only at the lodge for 3-5 days, most would already be on their way back home before they received their test results.

Ms. Hale asked Mr. Leboki if he would be able to join the Assembly meeting on Wednesday, if the Assembly choose to continue this discussion to Wednesday, to see what they will decide in accordance with the Governor's plan. Mr. Leboki confirmed that he would be able to attend Wednesday's meeting.

Ms. Heather Holst, a Twin Lakes resident said she agreed with Mr. Leboki, and would like to see no more restrictions beyond what the State has already implemented. She added that Alaskans

are doing what they need to do to flatten the curve, but doing so has come at a great economic cost. She said that we need to open up the economy and follow the guidance and advisements from the Governor.

Assembly Action:

MOTION by Ms. Gladziszewski to take this up on Wednesday. She added that the Assembly needs to hear the Governor's guidance and fully understand what it is and consider this at the Special Assembly meeting on Wednesday.

Mayor Weldon asked Mr. Watt if he was able to secure any State personnel to attend the Special Assembly Meeting on Wednesday. Mr. Watt confirmed that Dr. Zink and Commissioner Crum agreed to be in attendance at Wednesday's meeting.

Roll Call Vote on Motion:

Hearing no objections, the motion passed.

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

None.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Assembly, the meeting adjourned at 6:50 p.m.

Signed: _____
Elizabeth J. McEwen, Municipal Clerk

Signed: _____
Beth A. Weldon, Mayor