

MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH WASTEWATER & SEPTAGE ADVISORY BOARD

Bob Walden, Vice Chair
Gina Jorgensen
Dan Tucker

Amanda Fleming
Matthew Midgett

Terry Gorlick
Danny Noland

Minutes

REGULAR MEETING

March 6, 2024

MSB Assembly Chambers
350 E. Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645

2:30 p.m.

I. CALL TO ORDER

This regular meeting of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough (MSB) Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board was held on Wednesday, March 6, 2024 at the DSJ Building at 350 East Dahlia Avenue in Palmer, Alaska. The meeting was called to order at 2:36 p.m. by Mr. Bob Walden, P.E.

II. ROLL CALL AND DETERMINATION OF A QUORUM

Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board members present and establishing a quorum were:

Mr. Bob Walden

Ms. Gina Jorgensen (arrived at 2:41 pm)

Mr. Danny Noland

Mr. Dan Tucker

Mr. Terry Gorlick

Mr. Matthew Midgett

Ms. Amanda Fleming

III. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Motion to adopt the agenda, by Mr. Danny Noland. Seconded by Ms. Amanda Fleming.

Motion to amend the above motion, to adopt the agenda with the amendment to add a continuation of the previous discussion on water as an item under "Unfinished Business", by Mr. Dan Tucker. Seconded by Mr. Danny Noland. No objections.

VOTE: No objections. The agenda was approved as amended.

IV. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mr. Bob Walden.

V. BOARD MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

A. Mr. Terry Gorlick

Representative for environmental position. Previously on the State Architects, Engineers, and Land Surveyor's Board. Following engineer rules but not an engineer (P.E.), a guy with background.

Has been involved in the water wastewater industry for 34 years. Since 2013, has been to every water/wastewater facility in the state. Owned Alaska Pump and Supply and is still involved in the industry.

His interest in this Board is to keep the environmental components and concerns such as the fecal issues on lakes in mind and potentially pass some resolutions to the Assembly.

B. Ms. Amanda Fleming

Staff Representative. Relatively new to the water and wastewater field. Bachelor's degree in environmental studies with emphasis in water. Associate degree in water and wastewater with the focus on the operator side.

Ms. Fleming is currently the supervisor for Talkeetna Sewer and Water System. Excited to get more involved in the larger scene of the Borough.

C. Mr. Matt Midgett

Representative for the City of Palmer. Utility foreman for Palmer. His experience in water and wastewater comes from working at the Palmer utility.

Mr. Midgett looks forward to being on the Board to stay informed with what is going on in the Valley and to be prepared for it.

D. Mr. Dan Tucker

At-Large Representative on the Board. His experience comes from having been a pumper and installer. Involved in NOWRA (National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association). He helped to write and edit the national septage installer manual. He has been an excavator putting new tanks in and digging up tanks that were put in incorrectly.

His interest in the Board is to make sure the Borough has good clean wastewater operations.

E. Mr. Danny Noland

Representative of the Septage Industry. Owns Royal Flush Septic. Installing systems and installing commercial water and wastewater lines.

F. Ms. Gina Jorgensen

Representative for the City of Houston. Ms. Jorgensen has been on the board for 10 years. She wants to see the Board's efforts through. She appreciates seeing new people on the Board with a lot of experience.

G. Mr. Robert Walden

Representative for the City of Wasilla. Works currently for the City of Wasilla. Professional engineer in the valley to support companies in design and inspections. Trying to solve the issue of septage going to Anchorage and not being treated here in the valley. This was the Board's original objective and he would like to drive it home in the next few years. Started out in construction and putting tanks in.

VI. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A. Chair

Motion to nominate Mr. Bob Walden for the position of Chair, by Mr. Dan Tucker.

Seconded by Ms. Gina Jorgensen.

VOTE: No objections. Mr. Bob Walden was elected as Chair.

Mr. Bob Walden accepted the nomination.

B. Vice Chair

Motion to nominate Mr. Danny Noland for the position of Vice Chair, by Mr. Dan Tucker.

Seconded by Ms. Gina Jorgensen.

VOTE: No objections. Mr. Danny Noland was elected as Vice Chair.

Mr. Danny Noland accepted the nomination.

VII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING

A. December 13, 2023

Minutes for the December 13, 2023 regular meeting were reviewed by the Board.

Motion to approve the minutes as presented, by Mr. Dan Tucker.

Seconded by Ms. Gina Jorgensen.

VOTE: The minutes were approved without objection.

VIII. REVIEW OF BOROUGH MANAGER'S COMMENTS FROM WSAB SPECIAL MEETING ON 11/30/2023

Mr. Walden summarized the Borough Manager's comments from the 11/30/2023 meeting.

The Borough Manager's input focused mainly on adding the responsibility of water to the Board. Mr. Bob Walden as the representative of the City of Wasilla confirmed that there are efforts to combine the Wasilla and Palmer water systems by adding booster stations. Funds have been received and he hopes to get an Request for Proposal out as soon as possible. Mr. Dan Tucker agrees that water and wastewater belong together and that this is the way to go to become functional as a Board. Mr. Terry Gorlick suggested a name change from Wastewater and Septage Advisory Board to Wastewater and Water Advisory Board, since septage is included in the wastewater component. Mr. Danny Noland weighed in that

the key focus and original purpose of this board is to find a place for the sewer other than hauling it to Anchorage, and that purpose should not be forgotten.

IX. AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION (*Three minutes per person*)

None

X. AGENCY AND STAFF REPORTS

A. City of Wasilla – Mr. Bob Walden, P.E., Public Works Deputy Director

The City of Wasilla is working on the fiscal year 2025 budget and on a \$5 million grant to expand their facility. They purchased 43 acres and an additional 3.7 acres to eventually build a commercial headworks building and treatment facility. This gives them the opportunity to turn some of the effluent from the ponds into the new treatment system when its nitrate and ammonia counts get too high. Lots of commercial pumping going on right now, which all has to go to Anchorage and be paid by the businesses themselves.

B. City of Palmer – Mr. Matthew Midgett

The City of Palmer closed its first bid today for a booster station which brings water to Colony High School and Colony Middle School. The goal is to extend it to Trunk Road and to the Mat-Su Hospital. Additionally, the City is applying for loans to update their treatment system.

C. City of Houston – Gina Jorgensen

Nothing to report.

D. MSB Talkeetna Sewer & Water Systems– Ms. Amanda Fleming

Ms. Fleming discussed the sewer and water systems for downtown Talkeetna. In the past few years, they have been under a consent order to upgrade their wastewater facilities due to failure of meeting the effluent water quality parameters. They now have anaerobic cells prior to the lagoons. They treat with chlorine and sodium bisulfite and re-aerate before discharge. The treatment facility is under tight discharge parameters because they discharge into the Talkeetna River system.

One of their main goals has been to reduce the amount of septage hauling needed. With the current design, they have to clean out the anaerobic cells much more frequently which adds expense and requires hauling to Anchorage. The treatment plant is operated seasonally May 1 through October 31st.

The water system has received a lot of federal money to pursue adding a storage tank to store treated water. They currently have a hydropneumatics tank that pressurizes the system, but there is no stored treated water. They are working with Mr. Mike Campfield to identify a location for a new storage tank.

XI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Continuation of Discussion on Water

Mr. Tucker would like the Board to propose to the Assembly that the Board's role be expanded to capture domestic water and the Board's name changed to include domestic water or water as well as wastewater and septage. That would help to clarify the Borough's intentions for the Board so the Board can work toward that goal.

Motion to direct Borough staff to prepare legislation that would change the title of the Board to Water and Wastewater Advisory Board, by Mr. Dan Tucker.

Seconded by Ms. Gina Jorgensen

The Board had some discussion about clarifying the Assembly's intended objectives for the Board and what steps should be taken to work toward a name change. Also discussed similarities and differences of various terms within the industry such as septage and wastewater, and terms should be included be when proposing a new title for the Board.

Objection from Mr. Danny Noland.

VOTE: Motion passes with five ayes and two nays. Staff directed to prepare legislation as noted above.

XII. NEW BUSINESS

A. None

XIII. COMMENTS FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Danny Noland: Speaks regarding his objection to changing the title of the Board. The board should not lose sight of its original purpose, which is to find a place for the wastewater. That goal has not been accomplished yet. Changing the board's name will change the dynamic of the Board where people will think there's another group out there and we could lose support. He sees some good in the direction the Board is going, but does not want to lose sight of the original goal and wants to make his objection noted. Also notes that haulers are hauling septage; not wastewater.

Ms. Gina Jorgensen: No comment.

Mr. Bob Walden. Important not to forget the septage component even if it might drop out of the Board's title. It is still a very important component in the Board's discussions.

Mr. Dan Tucker: Sees some redundancy between the terms of septage and wastewater. Hopes the Board can bring more change more quickly. Not sure that the name change will make that happen, but it might bring more emphasis on the Board's activities. The Borough has no power, no authority, no compelling reason to do anything about septage because there is nothing in Code that says that the Borough is responsible for it. The Board is in the middle of the issue between the source (septic systems) and the State, who says septage has to be dealt with. This needs to become something that the Borough must act on instead of just acknowledging and talking about it.

Mr. Matthew Midgett: No comment.

Ms. Amanda Fleming: Lots of history to learn, having only worked for the Borough since 2021. We have a lot of experts at the table who can help navigate these larger projects and considerations for communities within the Borough. Understands there is major concern what to do with the septage for the entire Borough. That is a large topic, and it still will be the number one concern of this Board.

Mr. Terry Gorlick: Agrees with Ms. Fleming; septage will be the elephant in the room. He would support expanding the facilities we have versus building a new one. If all haulers

were to stop hauling, the Borough would be in a world of hurt. The infrastructure component has to be defined a bit better, versus what are our options are and what the various components of those options are. The Board's name is not what is going to define that, but hopefully we on the Board can define it, and educate and empower the Assembly and community through our expertise.

XIV. NEXT MEETING

A. Wednesday, June 12, 2024, 2:30 p.m., MSB Assembly Chambers

XV. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn the meeting, by Mr. Danny Noland.

Seconded by Mr. Dan Tucker.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:23 p.m.



Mr. Robert Walden, P.E., Chair

ATTESTED:



Elaine M. Flagg, Board Administrative Support