

**Minutes of Special Assembly Meeting  
Held on April 16, 2020**

Mayor Stephen Prysunka called the Special Assembly meeting to order at 5:45 p.m., April 16, 2020, in the Borough Assembly Chambers.

PRESENT: PRYSUNKA, GILBERT, LARRABEE, DELONG, POWELL, DECKER, MORRISON

ABSENT:

Borough Manager Von Bargaen and Borough Clerk Lane were also in attendance.

**PERSONS TO BE HEARD**

**Brian Merritt, resident, and educator** commented that the Capital Improvement Plant to allow the schools to make repairs and then invoice the City, was a good idea; this allowed the school to carry a smaller fund balance; encouraged the Assembly to fund the school to the fullest amount possible.

**Ryan Howe, resident and educator** read a prepared statement, encouraging the Assembly to fully fund the school; spoke in opposition to having 25-30 kids in the classroom; stated that our school attendance was raising; expressed in detail, the economic impact that each teacher brings in for our community.

**Jenn Miller, resident and Evergreen Elementary School Administrator** expressed in great detail what the schools do outside of the budget; collected over five thousand dollars in Box Tops through that program for the Evergreen Elementary Greenhouse; have held read-a-thons to put books in the library; thanked the city as a whole and looked forward a continued partnership.

**Mikki Angerman, resident and educator** stated that the school has made many cuts already and the class sizes have increased; volunteers were now doing programs that teachers had done in the past; spoke in opposition to larger class sizes to 25-30 or more; percentage of those students are struggling with learning disabilities; some are struggling with mental illness; many of the students require extra time; hoping that the Assembly shows the value of the students and brings forth a plan that fully funds the school budget.

**Addy Esco, resident, and counselor** (emailed correspondence read by Clerk Lane) urged the Assembly to do what was necessary in order to fully fund and support the schools; spoke of the value of the students as a resource to the community; encouraged the community to value the children and education and to try and find a way.

**Heather Howe, resident, parent, and educator** (emailed correspondence read by Clerk Lane) encouraged the Assembly to fund the schools by city contribution and not just taking funds from the Secure Rural Schools account; has been an educator in Wrangell for over 10 years and has seen reductions in student services, resources, programs and employees, as a reduced funding for public education.

**Michelle Jenkins, educator** urged the Assembly to fully fund the school districts 2020-2021 school year; asked that the Assembly find a way to make the students and their education a priority; urged the Assembly to get creative in how they found funding.

**Laura Davies, parent, and educator** voiced her support for education and the schools in Wrangell; expressed how she has brought in books and supplies through four separate Donors Choose projects; expressed how other teachers have also used this fundraising platform and how the school teachers have held several fundraising events; have brought in volunteer guest speakers and have collaborated with local businesses on various projects; many staff members have used their own funding for their continued professional development.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Larrabee declared a potential conflict of interest since he is a teacher at the Wrangell Public School. Prysunka declared that although Larrabee received income from the school, he would not be voting on his own pay package, he did not see a conflict. There were no objections from the Assembly.

Powell declared a potential conflict of interest since his wife works for the School District. Prysunka stated that there was not a direct line to an economic advantage to his family; Prysunka declared that he did not see a conflict. There were no objections from the Assembly.

Gilbert stated that she must declare conflict of interest since she is on the Wrangell School Board and has a professional, vested interest in the support and financial contribution of the Assembly; stated that she would not deliberate or vote on the item of business this evening.

Prysunka stated that by the given definition in our code, he did not see a conflict however, it is her given right to choose not to vote.

Gilbert stated that given her past discussion with the Borough Attorney, she is essentially a Lobbyist for the School District and was therefore promoting the School Districts interest through her position on the School Board; stated that in in future, we could hopefully rewrite the conflict of interest code section.

Prysunka stated that even though he did not see a financial conflict, he appreciated that she could choose not to take part in the discussion and vote; through the years we have heard different opinions on this.

Powell asked Clerk Lane if she could opt out of voting if the Assembly declared that she did not have a conflict. Lane stated that yes, based on the attorney's advice, she can opt out.

### **ITEM(s) OF BUSINESS**



**5a Approval of the FY 2021 Wrangell Public School Local Contribution**

***M/S: Powell/Morrison to approve the FY 2021 Wrangell Public Schools Local Contribution.***

Manager Von Barga explained in detail what the School District received in FY2020; gave a review of the history of contributions in past years; explained that last year, the entire contribution to the school was taken out of the Secure Rural Schools Fund; also explained the statutory local contribution minimum and maximum amounts.

***Dr. Lancaster, Wrangell Public School Superintendent*** stated that she appreciated the ongoing cooperation between the school district and the city; requested that the city consider funding the school \$100,000, as was done last year; stated that the school's Maintenance Director today who had discovered a drainage problem at the Elementary School; having the additional \$100,000 funding would help with that.

***Elena Begojevic, CPA*** hoping to end the year in a positive net income; due to COVID-19, looking at where to cut or freeze; traveling is not happening; not spending money on supplies; on a spending freeze; looking much better than they were a few months ago.

Larrabee asked if the school had an additional list of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) items that they could address if given the additional \$100,000.

Lancaster stated that the flooring in the elementary school cafeteria was in desperate need of replacing.

Von Barga said that she believed that the carpet replacement would be over \$25,000 and should be submitted to the Borough for the CIP list.

Ms. Begojevic stated that the income for the first eight months of the year (to March 31, 2020) was roughly \$128,000 and that the beginning fund balance was \$578,000, so the estimated ending balance should be roughly \$707,000.

In response to Von Barga, Ms. Begojevic clarified that yes, they would be ending the school year with more than they had anticipated.

Decker stated that she appreciated the level of communication and the detail that went into creating the School District Budget this year; provided a lot more information so that the Assembly could make an informed decision; believed that the community values kids; would like to see the Assembly consider the additional \$100,000; continue to see increases in personnel and benefits even with decreases in expenses; seeing the same thing happen in the City's budget.

Prysunka stated that he believed that people will begin to move and live where they can afford to live; cautious with moving forward in creating budgets based on the expectation of student numbers; not sure what the Spring will bring; sustainability is paramount;

schools are our source of pride but with resources shrinking, it will become more difficult to do the basics that are expected.

Morrison commented that the School's Budget was a lot easier to read and understand than in other years' past.

Decker stated that she was not sure if she wanted to take all the funding from SRS; would be in favor of taking the 1.3 million from SRS and 100,000 from Sales Tax Fund.

In response to Larrabee on what the amount of SRS funding would be, Von Bargaen stated that it was estimated

***M/S: Decker/Morrison to amend the motion to include the wording "in the amount of \$1.3 million dollars to come from Secure Rural Schools, plus \$100,000 for maintenance, to come from Secure Rural Schools."***

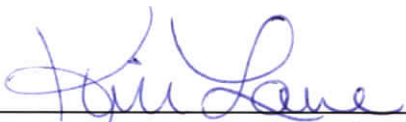
***Amendment to the main motion was approved unanimously by polled vote.***

Powell requested that Dr. Lancaster speak with the Borough Manager about the carpet at the Elementary School.

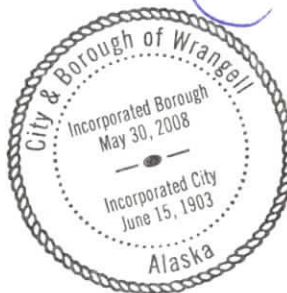
***Main Motion, as Amended, was approved unanimously by polled vote.***

Special Assembly meeting adjourned at 7:18 p.m.

ATTEST:

  
Kim Lane, MMC, Borough Clerk

  
Stephen Prysunka, Mayor

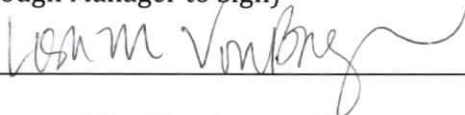


**REQUEST FOR SPECIAL EMERGENCY ASSEMBLY MEETING**

I, (We), Lisa Von Bargen, DO HEREBY REQUEST THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE WRANGELL BOROUGH ASSEMBLY BE CALLED BY THE BOROUGH CLERK, ACCORDING TO WRANGELL MUNICIPAL CODE, SECTION 3.04.090, FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE FOLLOWING SUBJECT MATTER(S):

**a. Approval of the FY 2021 Wrangell Public School Local Contribution**

SPECIAL MEETING WAS REQUESTED BY **Lisa Von Bargen** (Two Assembly Members, Mayor, or Borough Manager to Sign)

  
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Signature/ Lisa Von Bargen, Manager

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Signature (If Assembly Member)

Signed April 16, 2020

(Sec. 3.04.090: Special meetings shall be called by the Borough Clerk on the written request of the MAYOR, BOROUGH MANAGER, or of any TWO MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY. At least forty-eight (48) hours written notice shall be given designating the time and purpose of a special meeting.)

Received/Date: April 10, 2020

Borough Clerk: 

Date assigned: April 16, 2020

Time assigned: 5:45 p.m.

Notice out: April 10, 2020 @ 11:00 a.m.