



CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA

ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS
330 Harbor Drive
Sitka, AK
(907)747-1811

Minutes - Final

City and Borough Assembly

Mayor Steven Eisenbeisz
Deputy Mayor Thor Christianson,
Vice Deputy Mayor Valorie Nelson,
Kevin Knox, Kevin Mosher, Crystal Duncan, Rebecca
Himschoot

Municipal Administrator: John Leach
Municipal Attorney: Brian Hanson
Municipal Clerk: Sara Peterson

Thursday, February 4, 2021

6:00 PM

Assembly Chambers

SPECIAL MEETING

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. FLAG SALUTE

III. ROLL CALL

Nelson participated by videoconference.

Present: 7 - Christianson, Knox, Mosher, Nelson, Eisenbeisz, Himschoot, and Duncan

IV. CORRESPONDENCE/AGENDA CHANGES

None.

V. PERSONS TO BE HEARD

Richard Wein spoke to Alaska's economic decline and stressed the need to plan for Sitka's future.

VI. NEW BUSINESS:

A [21-019](#)

Discussion / Direction / Decision of local support of education to the Sitka School District contained in the proposed FY2022 General Fund Budget and other issues pertaining to the financial support of educational related activities *(this item was previously discussed at a special meeting on February 4)*

Finance Director Melissa Haley reviewed the process and law pertaining to local funding of public education and told of possible funding scenarios. She noted it was ideal to agree on school funding early, stated the maximum allowable local contribution cap had increased, and reminded Secure Rural Schools money had not been reauthorized.

School Board President Amy Morrison summarized the District's budget assumptions and told of the projected \$1.8 million plus deficit. School Board Members Rioux, Van Cise, Teal-Olsen, and Hames expressed support for students, staff, and urged the Assembly look at school funding as an investment as opposed to an expense. Superintendent John Holst told of ways in which to help balance the budget: reduction of three positions, a projected enrollment increase, the renewal of Secure Rural Schools, and the use of undesignated reserves.

The Assembly discussed funding scenarios and reminded of the cruise ship cancellation announcement for the season. Eisenbeisz suggested starting conversations at a flat funding level. Mosher agreed. Christianson spoke in support of funding to the cap. Duncan and Himschoot spoke in support of the schools and expressed hesitation in making a decision this evening. After hearing of the cruise ship cancellations, Nelson said she could not support funding more. Christianson disclosed his wife worked for the School District, however, the position was grant funded. Himschoot disclosed she worked for the District. Mayor Eisenbeisz ruled no conflict.

A motion was made to fund to the cap but later withdrawn after it was determined the Assembly desired to have more time and scheduled an additional meeting on February 25.

Speaking to the motion, before it was withdrawn, was John Holst, Paul Rioux, Blossom Teal-Olsen, Eric Van Cise, Amy Morrison, and Tim Pike. Richard Wein reminded of the cruise ship loss and noted it was fiscally irresponsible to make decisions with only partial information.

VII. PERSONS TO BE HEARD:

Richard Wein spoke to school funding, told of city deferred maintenance, and said the basis for closing the achievement gap was study, challenge, and work.

Blossom Teal-Olsen reminded schools were the foundation of the community.

Kevin Mosher thanked everyone for their civil discourse and was pleased with the evening's conversation.

VIII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

None.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Christianson to ADJOURN. Hearing no objections, the meeting ADJOURNED at 8:45pm.

ATTEST: _____
Sara Peterson, MMC
Municipal Clerk