

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

MEMORANDUM

TO: Kelly Cooper, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

FROM: Brent Johnson, Assembly Member *BJ*

DATE: March 17, 2020

RE: Resolution 2020- 025, Establishing a Work Group to Develop Recommendations Regarding Potentially Forming a Fire and Emergency Medical Service Area to Provide Services in Ninilchik (Johnson)

Ninilchik Emergency Services (NES) has provided fire protection and emergency medical services to the Ninilchik Community since 1978. Recently, the NES board of directors dismissed the Fire Chief (the only paid position at NES) and Assistant Chief. That led to a cry of alarm from the Ninilchik Community.

In response the Fire Chief agreed to continue working on a temporary basis. The Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor also responded by making sure Anchor Point Fire and Emergency Medical Service Area (APFEMSA) and Central Emergency Services (CES) would continue to provide back-up support for the Ninilchik area. And the Mayor sent Brenda Ahlberg (Community and Fiscal Projects Manager) and Patty Burley (Deputy Borough Attorney) to a February 6, 2020 town hall meeting set up by Ninilchik citizens to address the emergency.

At that meeting it was apparent the greater Ninilchik public wanted good, consistent and dependable EMS services in the future, regardless of what had caused the current problems. One way to provide that grade of service is to create a Service Area. Those organizations receive property taxes and that requires government sponsored creation, a vote of the people and on-going oversight.

Meanwhile, the NES board of director's president resigned. The board appointed new members and then the former members also resigned. The NES Fire Chief is working part time and filling in when he can. The Assistant Chief is covering those responsibilities when the Chief is gone and the volunteers continue to volunteer.

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The Ninilchik Tribal Council had been providing half of the funding for paying the Chief. They have allegedly suspended that funding.

Important questions arise: Should Ninilchik have its own service area, should it attempt to join APFEMSA, or should Ninilchik try to make adjustments and continue to operate a volunteer service? These questions are probably best answered by a Work Group—thus this Resolution.

Your consideration is appreciated.