

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brent Johnson, Assembly President
Members, Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly

FROM: Tyson Cox, Assembly Member (B) for Tyson Cox

DATE: September 6, 2022

SUBJECT: LAYDOWN Motion to Appoint Mike Navarre as Interim Mayor (Cox)

I will make a motion to appoint Mike Navarre as Interim Mayor during our Regular Assembly meeting tonight. I apologize for the short notice with a LAYDOWN motion, but time is of the essence.

Reasoning

After reading through Mr. Kelley's memo regarding the vacancy in the office of Mayor and the transition and succession process to follow, I began to think about the following questions.

1. How can the Assembly help to make this process as seamless as possible for our Borough employees and residents?
2. Who could reasonably accomplish the tasks of the Mayor, especially when the FY24 budget is right around the corner?
3. Should the Assembly consider appointing someone who would also be planning to run for Mayor during the special election?

As I was pondering these questions, residents of the Kenai Peninsula started calling me with suggestions of who might be able to successfully take on this important role. The name brought up most was Mike Navarre. I contacted Mr. Navarre to see if this was even something he would consider. Mr. Navarre stated that he would be willing to step in as an Interim Mayor, but would have no interest in running for Mayor during the special election.

I believe Mike Navarre to be our best option to appoint as Interim Mayor. The following reasons are how I came to this conclusion.

1. The Assembly can help to make this process as seamless as possible for our Borough employees and residents by appointing a Mayor with past experience and understanding of municipal budgeting, local & state politics, and the duties required of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor. As can be seen in the attached resume for Mr. Navarre, he is more than qualified to accomplish these tasks noting his service as Borough Mayor for three separate terms. Mr. Navarre also already knows many of the borough employees and staff members as he was the Borough Mayor before Mayor Pierce was elected in 2018.
2. Mr. Navarre could reasonably accomplish the tasks of the Mayor, especially when the FY24 budget is right around the corner. Again referring to Mr. Navarre's resume and how it shows his extensive government experience. Mr. Navarre has been KPB Mayor through nine budget cycles. He was a House Representative for the KPB in the Alaska State Legislature for 12 years with two years as House Majority Leader, six years on the House Finance Committee, and two years as House Finance Committee Chair. As discussed with Finance Director Brandi Harbaugh, Mr. Navarre would be someone she could work with during the FY24 budget process as they had worked together during his previous term.
3. The Assembly should not consider appointing someone who would also be planning to run for Mayor during the special election as it would not be fair to Kenai Peninsula residents. Appointing someone who plans to run for Mayor gives this person an obvious advantage when it comes to being an incumbent during an election. This person would also be distracted with campaign obligations while trying to learn the KPB budget process. One would end up being neglected. Either would be a disservice to KPB residents. Mike Navarre has stated he does not plan to run for the office of Borough Mayor.

With the resignation of Mayor Charlie Pierce, appointing Mike Navarre as Interim Mayor is a logical solution to our current dilemma. He is one of very few number of people who can "hit the road running" as Mayor with as minimal of a learning curve as could be asked for in such a position.

Your consideration of this motion is appreciated.