



Kenai Peninsula Borough

144 North Binkley Street
Soldotna, AK 99669

Meeting Minutes - Final

Assembly

Brent Johnson, President

Brent Hibbert, Vice President

Jesse Bjorkman

Lane Chesley

Tyson Cox

Richard Derkevorkian

Cindy Ecklund

Bill Elam

Mike Tupper

Sunday, September 11, 2022

1:00 PM

Betty J. Glick Assembly Chambers

Special Meeting - Zoom Meeting ID: 884 7373 9641 Passcode: 671108

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

ROLL CALL

[Clerk's Note: Assembly Member Lane Chesley participated via telephone.]

Present: 9 - Jesse Bjorkman, Tyson Cox, Brent Hibbert, Brent Johnson, Richard Derkevorkian, Bill Elam, Lane Chesley, Cindy Ecklund, and Mike Tupper

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Hibbert moved to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda carried by the following vote:

Yes: 9 - Bjorkman, Cox, Hibbert, Johnson, Derkevorkian, Elam, Chesley, Ecklund, and Tupper

NEW BUSINESS

1. Discussion Regarding Release of Internal HR Investigation Report

Hibbert moved to go into executive session to provide direction to the borough attorney regarding the handling of a specific legal matter, the immediate knowledge of which would have an adverse effect upon the finances of the borough. Included in this executive session will be the assembly members and the borough attorney.

[Clerk's Note: Assembly Member Lane Chesley did not participate in executive session per KPB 22.40.175(B), "No assembly member shall attend an executive session by telephonic means."]

The motion to convene in executive session carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Bjorkman, Cox, Hibbert, Johnson, Derkevorkian, Elam, Ecklund, and Tupper

Abstain: 1 - Chesley

Hibbert moved to end executive session and reconvene the regular meeting.

[Clerk's Note: Assembly Member Lane Chesley did not participate in executive session per KPB 22.40.175(B), "No assembly member shall attend an executive session by telephonic means."]

The motion to end executive session and reconvene the regular meeting carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Bjorkman, Cox, Hibbert, Johnson, Derkevorkian, Elam, Ecklund, and Tupper

Abstain: 1 - Chesley

Hibbert moved to release the Internal HR Investigation Report.

[Clerk's Note: Assembly Member Lane Chesley abstained from the vote as he did not participate in the discussion held during executive session. KPB 22.40.175(B).]

The motion to release the Internal HR Investigation Report failed by the following vote:

No: 8 - Bjorkman, Cox, Hibbert, Johnson, Derkevorkian, Elam, Ecklund, and Tupper

Abstain: 1 - Chesley

2. [KPB-4594](#) Discussion regarding Disclosure of Items Discussed in Executive Session on August 23, 2022

Hibbert moved to approve the release of a written statement of the assembly.

[Clerk's Note: Assembly Member Lane Chesley abstained from the vote as he did not participate in the discussion held during executive session. KPB 22.40.175(B).]

The motion to approve the release of a written statement of the assembly carried by the following vote:

Yes: 8 - Bjorkman, Cox, Hibbert, Johnson, Derkevorkian, Elam, Ecklund, and Tupper

Abstain: 1 - Chesley

PUBLIC COMMENTS[KPB-4595](#) Public Comments

President Johnson called for public comment.

The following people addressed the assembly:

Cindy Roque

Julie Denison

Lauren Hollers

Lynda Paquette, Lowell Point

Representative Ben Carpenter

Renee Wall, Sterling

Michele Vasquez

There being no one else who wished to speak, the public comment period was closed.

ASSEMBLY COMMENTS

Assembly Member Elam thanked everyone for attending. He stated he felt this matter could have waited until the next meeting and it could have been handled a little better. Mr. Elam stated that an internal investigation was being conducted; however, business was still going on and that we would work through this together as a community.

Assembly Member Cox stated that this whole situation sucks. He stated it was unprecedented that a borough mayor resigned. He stated there was not a lot of guidance in borough code or statute regarding an appointment process. Mr. Cox stated he thought one thing the assembly could have done differently was issue a statement before the assembly voted on an appointment. He stated it was important to know why the assembly made the choices they made. Mr. Cox stated he made the choice he made and was standing by it.

Assembly Member Tupper echoed the comments that were previously stated. He stated that transparency was the most important value that the Assembly was adhering to. He stated the speculations from the public was turning into a runaway train on what the real situation was, so the Assembly was attempting to maintain transparency through this process. Mr. Tupper wished everyone the best.

Assembly Member Derkevorkian stated that in 2019 the Assembly tried to remove the power of the voters by attempting to appoint a borough manager. He stated luckily that movement failed. Mr. Derkevorkian stated that on Tuesday the borough got its wish and appointed an unelected official as the head of the borough. He stated

that it successfully removed the people having a say in who controls the borough's finances. He stated the appointment should have been postponed to the September 20, 2022 meeting and if it had, we would not have had to hold this meeting.

Assembly Member Bjorkman stated that the statement the Assembly issued explained why we were all here. He stated that the borough needed a remedy to a situation that was deeply harmful to its employees, deeply harmful to the process of government and the delivery of core essential government services. He stated he felt it was important to tell the whole story, not only the story that makes you look good. Mr. Bjorkman stated as an elected official it was important for him to be accountable for the decisions he made and why he made them. He stated there have been accusations that the assembly broke the law and encouraged those to bring their evidence forward so they could be addressed. Mr. Bjorkman stated he appreciated the work the that assembly did and thanked everyone for their participation in the process.

Assembly Member Ecklund stated she made her decisions both at the last meeting and this meeting based on her promise to the public to be open and honest when asked questions. She stated that this was a busy time for borough employees and hopefully the actions made at this meeting would help us all.

Assembly Member Chesley stated he listened remotely. He thanked the assembly for meeting and thanked the public for attending.

Vice President Hibbert stated he agreed, it stinks to hold a meeting on Sunday. He stated the reason why everyone was here was because of the actions of the mayor. He thanked everyone for attending.

President Johnson thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to attend and appreciated their participation in government. He stated he did not believe he could add to the eloquence of the previous speakers, so he won't.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to come before the assembly, President Johnson adjourned the meeting at 3:26 p.m.

I certify the above represents accurate minutes of the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly special meeting of September 11, 2022.

Johni Blankenship, MMC, Borough Clerk

Approved by the Assembly: _____