


Memorandum

Acting Borough Manager George W. Hays



DATE: August 21, 2020 (for Public Release on August 28, 2020)
TO: Mayor and Assembly
FROM: George W. Hays, Acting Borough Manager 
SUBJECT: Manager's Notes to the Assembly

COVID-19 Coronavirus –

- Links to the most recent updates and information:
 - DHSS website: www.coronavirus.Alaska.gov
 - CDC website: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus
 - MSB website: <https://matanuska-susitna-borough-coronavirus-covid-19-msb.hub.arcgis.com/> and <https://msbcares.matsugov.us/>
- DHSS Press Release: \$35 million of CARES Act funding to be distributed to nonprofits in Alaska
- Letter to Governor Dunleavy and Legislators from Mayor and Assembly re CARES Act Grants, July 14, 2020
- Letter of Appreciation from Jerome Hertel, CEO, Alaska State Fair, July 21, 2020
- Emails from Karl Ohls dated August 7, and August 14, 2020 re status of federal relief programs
- Governor Dunleavy Expands AK CARES Eligibility to Help Alaska Small Business, Press Release, August 20, 2020

On August 3, 2020 Assemblymember Nowers and I were guests on Radio Free Palmer to discuss the Borough's grant opportunities. For more details on grants go here: <https://msbcares.matsugov.us/>

Response to Borough's CARES Act Small Business Grant Applications – The Phase I Application period ended Sunday, August 16 at 11:59pm. Here are the final stats for the Application period:

Total Applications Received	396
Total Kiosk Users	10
Total Calls Fielded	43

FY2021 Community Assistance Program Payments – See the attached announcement dated July 13, 2020 extending the application deadline to November 15, 2020.

Borough Manager Hiring Status – Baker Tilly closed accepting applications on August 10, 2020 and has identified the candidates that will be going forward to the Assembly for consideration. Applicant screening, assessment, recommendation of semi-finalists, and background checks should be completed by September 9, 2020; interviews are expected to occur the week of September 14, 2020. Please note these dates are subject to change with consultation and approval of the Assembly. Per Baker Tilly, under this recruitment there were 36 applicants, however one withdrew so we ended up with a total of 35 candidates. Candidate packets have been distributed to the Assembly.

Update on Grant Opportunity for Pile Sleeves at Port MacKenzie – We received the attached letter from the Economic Development Administration (EDA) dated July 20, 2020, informing us that our application for the FY19 Disaster Supplement Grant has passed the first level of review and been selected for further consideration. The EDA has requested additional information which is being gathered by staff.

If awarded, this grant would provide funding to install the pile sleeves on the port's deep draft dock and trestle and a ro-ro ramp. These sleeves would be installed to reinforce the piles and protect against corrosion and abrasion. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$9.4M. The EDA would fund \$7.5M with the remaining 20% match coming from the MSB. The Assembly appropriated the \$1.9M in matching funds in the FY21 budget.

DOT/MSB – On August 11, I met with Wolfgang Junge to discuss the status of State roads in the Mat-Su. Mr. Junge confirmed that Mr. Jim Amundsen would give a detailed update at the Aug 18 Assembly meeting.

2024 Arctic Winter Games – Attached is Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer's letter of inquiry, July 30, 2020. At the Assembly's direction on August 18, we are preparing to submit a bid to host the event.

University of Alaska Fairbanks Gravel Expansion Project at Matanuska Experiment Farm – See our attached letters in opposition to the gravel extraction project sent to Governor Dunleavy, Chancellor White, and the Board of Regents dated August 18, 2020.

Renewal of Agreement with Matanuska-Susitna Borough Employees Association – The executed agreement is attached, dated August 19, 2020.

Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communications Center Project – Attached is a letter in opposition to the project dated August 21, 2020.

Attachments:

- COVID-19 Coronavirus –
 - DHSS Press Release: \$35 million of CARES Act funding to be distributed to nonprofits in Alaska
 - Letter to Governor Dunleavy and Legislators from Mayor and Assembly re CARES Act Grants, July 14, 2020
 - Letter of Appreciation from Jerome Hertel, CEO, Alaska State Fair, July 21, 2020
 - Emails from Karl Ohls dated August 7 and August 14, 2020
 - Governor Dunleavy Expands AK CARES Eligibility to Help Alaska Small Business, Press Release, August 20, 2020
- Letter announcing FY2021 Community Assistance Program Payments application deadline extension, July 13, 2020
- Letter from EDA re Grant Opportunity for Pile Sleeves at Port MacKenzie, July 20, 2020
- Letter from Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer re 2024 Arctic Winter Games, July 30, 2020
- Letters in opposition to gravel extraction at the Matanuska Experiment Farm to Governor Dunleavy, Chancellor White, and the UAF Board of Regents, August 18, 2020
- Letter of Agreement with Matanuska-Susitna Borough Employees Association, August 19, 2020
- Letter to Governor Dunleavy re Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communications Center Project, August 21, 2020.

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DHSS Press Release: \$35 million of CARES Act funding to be distributed to nonprofits in Alaska

Alaska DHSS sent this bulletin at 07/10/2020 10:33 AM AKDT



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Clinton Bennett, DHSS, (907) 269-4996, clinton.bennett@alaska.gov

\$35 million of CARES Act funding to be distributed to nonprofits in Alaska

July 10, 2020 ANCHORAGE — The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is announcing \$35 million of funding from Alaska’s share of the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act will be used to offer grants to nonprofits and faith-based organizations that provide critical services to Alaskans. The new Coronavirus Nonprofit Relief Fund (CNRF) program will be conducted through a partnership with The Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) which will administer the program, process applications and distribute grant funds to eligible organizations.

“This partnership allows crucial support funds to be shared with Alaska’s nonprofit entities, meeting the Governor’s goal of getting funds as close as possible to the communities and groups that need them,” said DHSS Commissioner Adam Crum. “We’re thankful for all the entities that have continued to provide services to Alaskans in need, and we hope this funding support will enable them to continue to do so.”

The funding will enable nonprofits to continue providing essential services that prevent or alleviate negative impacts of COVID-19 on the economy, jobs, families and children. Applicants can receive CARES Act funding for a variety of expenses including: medical, public health, payroll, COVID-19 response

compliance, economic support or other costs necessary for the function of nonprofit agencies impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“This is a great opportunity to work with the state and distribute much-needed funds to agencies that are helping Alaskans through this health and economic crisis,” said ACF President and Chief Executive Officer Nina Kempel. “I want to thank Governor Mike Dunleavy for his direction and support for this important investment in Alaska’s communities at such a critical time.”

The CARES Act [requires that payments](#) may only be used to cover costs that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency between March 1 and December 30, 2020 and were not accounted for in the State of Alaska’s budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020.

Grants will be prioritized based on the community impact and the organization’s ability to carry out public health projects and will not be limited based on an organization’s size, type of staff or geographical location. Grant awards will range in size from \$25,000 to \$1 million through three rounds of funding. The grant term is July 1 through December 31, 2020.

Nonprofits and faith-based organizations can find more information, including eligibility criteria, and apply for a grant by contacting ACF at 907-334-6700 or visiting alaskacf.org/cnrf.

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- [DHSS_PressRelease_CARES-Act_CNRF_20200710.pdf](#)

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This service is provided to you at no charge by the [Alaska Department of Health and Social Services](#).

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MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Mayor

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Vern.Halter@matsugov.us

July 14, 2020

The Honorable Michael J. Dunleavy, Governor
Representative Bryce Edgmon, Speaker of the House
Senator Cathy Giessel, Senate President
Senate Legislative Budget and Audit Committee
House Legislative Budget and Audit Committee

RE: Removing State Restrictions on Grant Application

Dear Governor Dunleavy, Representative Edgmon, Senator Giessel, and Members of the House and Senate Legislative Budget and Audit Committee,

We thank you for the Covid-19 funding that has been sent our way already. This funding will be a great opportunity to positively impact the Matanuska-Susitna Borough residents and businesses at this critical time. You can be assured that we will move quickly through the requirements to assist those in need.

However, we are very concerned about the challenges the State of Alaska is facing with the Small Business Grant Program. Through our research, surveys and public testimony, we are finding that our local businesses loss and need are much greater than the funding available. As you are aware, local business has suffered significant lost revenue due to government mandates. A large roadblock to this assistance is the State of Alaska's prohibition on funding eligibility based upon previously received CARES loans and grants. As the elected body representing the people of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, we respectfully request that those restrictions be removed.

We at the Matanuska-Susitna Borough stand ready to assist the State and Legislature however we legally can. Time is of the essence, as many small businesses desperately need relief.

Thank you in advance for making this program alteration for the health of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough's economy.

Sincerely,

Vern Halter, Mayor

Tim Hale, Assembly District 1

George McKee, Assembly District 3

Jesse Sumner, Assembly District 6

Dan Mayfield, Deputy Mayor, Assembly District 5

Stephanie Nowers, Assembly District 2

Ted Leonard, Assembly District 4

Tamara Boeve, Assembly District 7



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JUL 21 2020
CLERKS OFFICE

July 21, 2020

Matanuska Susitna Borough

JUL 22 2020

Administration

TO: The Honorable Vern Halter, Mayor, Mat-Su Borough
Dan Mayfield, Deputy Mayor/Assembly Member
Tim Hale, Assembly Member
Stephanie Nowers, Assembly Member
George McKee, Assembly Member
Ted Leonard, Assembly Member
Jesse Sumner, Assembly Member
Tamara Boeve, Assembly Member

Subject: Matanuska Susitna Borough-OR 20-070/CARES ACT FUNDING

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Permit me to preface my remarks by apologizing for my absence at the July 14th Assembly Meeting, however, circumstances beyond my control prevented my participation.

The purpose of this message is to extend my deepest and most sincere appreciation to the Mayor, members of the Assembly, Acting Borough Manager Mr. Hays and Borough Attorney Mr. Nick Siropoulos for their assistance and the positive action taken by the Assembly Tuesday evening in regards to the Fair's request for financial assistance from the CARES ACT appropriation.

The confidence reflected by the Assembly's favorable response to our request for a "helping hand" is refreshing to the Alaska State Fair organization and the multitude of annual fairgoers, vendors, exhibitors and the many users of the fair both during and off season of the Fair.

The decision to cancel the 2020 annual Fair was difficult as well as devastating to our financial condition, however, the concern of the Board of Directors was the "safety" of the general public attending the Fair, workers at the Fair, entertainers, exhibitors etc. That concern prevailed and led to the decision to call off the 2020 Fair.

My intent, with the Board's full support, is to go forward and provide the "biggest and best" Fair possible in 2021 and because of the positive spirit of the community reflected by the borough's financial support that objective is closer to becoming a reality

In closing, on behalf of the Board of Directors and management of the Alaska State Fair, thanks to all of you, individually and collectively, for your encouragement and support for the Fair's future.

Sincerely,

Jerome Hertel
Chief Executive Officer

From: Karl Ohls <kohls@northstargrp.com>

Sent: Friday, August 7, 2020 4:28 PM

To: George Hays <George.Hays@matsugov.us>; Nicholas Spiropoulos <Nicholas.Spiropoulos@matsugov.us>; Vern Halter <vernhalter@mtaonline.net>

Subject: No major progress in aid package negotiations

George, Nick, and Mayor Halter,

House and Senate negotiations appear to be stalled at the end of this week on the latest coronavirus aid package. The below story contains the details on the issues over which the two sides cannot reach agreement. An earlier story below that provides additional detail on why the two sides are so far apart on state and local government aid proposals.

Karl

Virus aid talks break down as White House weighs unilateral action

Democrats offered to cut cost of package by moving up expiration dates of relief programs; Mnuchin calls that a "nonstarter"

By [Lindsey McPherson](#) and [Jennifer Shutt](#) / Roll Call / Posted August 7, 2020 at 2:37pm, updated at 5:02pm

Coronavirus relief negotiations have officially come to a halt, with both sides saying Friday they'll only come back to the table when the other side has something new to offer.

With legislative talks at an impasse, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said they will recommend President Donald Trump act unilaterally to extend enhanced unemployment benefits, eviction and foreclosure moratoriums and student loan relief as soon as this weekend.

"It's going to take us a little bit of time for us to finalize these and process them, but we'll do we'll do them as quickly as we can because the president wants action," Mnuchin told reporters after negotiations with congressional Democrats failed to produce progress on a legislative solution.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer said after the meeting that they reiterated their offer from the previous day to meet in the middle on

the cost of the package. Democrats started with a \$3.4 trillion bill the House passed in May and Republicans with a \$1 trillion proposal released last week.

“They said they couldn’t go much above their existing \$1 trillion,” Schumer said. Added Pelosi: “I told them come back when you are ready to give us a higher number.”

Mnuchin and Meadows said Friday's meeting didn't yield any progress and they wouldn't resume negotiations until Democrats had something new to offer. “To the extent that they are willing to make new proposals, the chief and I will be back here,” Mnuchin said.

Democrats have said they'd cut the cost of the package only by moving up expiration dates of relief programs, not cutting the amount of aid they want to provide. Meadows dismissed that as a budget gimmick. “They can't come up with any significant cuts in their bill,” he said. “What they want is a \$2.5 trillion blank check.”

Meadows said Democrats have not budged at all in their demands for **giving state and local governments \$915 billion** or for extending enhanced unemployment benefits at \$600 per week.

Republicans argue **states and localities still haven't used up the \$150 billion appropriated in the March aid package**; a Treasury report said through June 30 about 75 percent remained unspent, though the amount varied overall. On unemployment benefits, the GOP cites Congressional Budget Office and other studies showing many recipients of the \$600 supplement earn more than they did while working as a reason to reduce that figure.

“I think if we can reach an agreement on state and local and unemployment, we will reach an overall deal,” Mnuchin said. “And if we can't, we can't.”

It's unclear if negotiators will return to the table this month. The House and Senate have run through the legislative weeks they had scheduled for the summer and sent lawmakers home, though with plans to call them back as soon as there is a deal. Now it's unclear if there will be legislation that would require lawmakers to return to the Capitol this month.

A deal won't be any easier to reach come September, when Congress will also be trying to figure out how to pass legislation to fund the government before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30. Mnuchin declined to speculate if the two spending bills would ultimately merge.

'Not overplaying our hand'

A few hours before the negotiations broke down, Pelosi insisted that she and Schumer weren't being unreasonable. “No, we haven't overplayed our hand,” Pelosi said Friday on MSNBC. “We are not overplaying our hand when we're factually presenting what our needs are for our families, for our teachers, for our schools, for ending the virus.”

Both sides acknowledge Trump executive orders will not provide all the relief that is needed.

“This is not a perfect answer, we'll be the first ones to say that, but it is all that we can do, and all the president can do within the confines of his executive power,” Meadows said.

Schumer said the executive orders would have limited power because Trump can't spend money without congressional approval. “It's not going to be done in as good a way,” he said.

Pelosi dodged a question in the MSNBC interview about whether Democrats would pursue legal action to block Trump's executive orders, saying Democrats are putting their energy into finding common ground.

Friday morning's employment report underscored the need for further relief while giving both parties arguments for how much or little is needed.

While the economy added nearly 1.8 million jobs last month, the pace of growth slowed substantially and less than half of jobs lost in the early months of the pandemic have returned. Permanent job losses remained steady last month, but the number of unemployed for 15 to 26 weeks -- after which typical state unemployment benefits are exhausted -- more than tripled to 6.5 million.

The report showed a bright spot in state and local government employment in July, with 274,000 jobs gained, mostly in education. But some analysts say those gains could evaporate unless states and localities get relief from Congress soon.

It's unclear even if Republicans had agreed to Democrats' offer to cut the cost of the package by about \$1 trillion if they could do that just by moving around expiration dates.

Pelosi said they'd be willing to move up the end date of provisions in the Democrats' bill that last through Sept. 30, 2021, for instance. She acknowledged during the MSNBC interview that moving up expiration dates would likely lead to more congressional negotiations when those deadlines arrive. “We could go for a shorter time and revisit the issue after the first of the year,” Pelosi said.

One obstacle to Republicans hoping that Democrats will be willing to come down further is that Schumer said House Democrats wouldn't have the votes to pass a bill that dips below \$2 trillion.

Even issues like school funding, where the parties should be able to find common ground, are proving to be difficult to negotiate.

“We had major disagreement between us on the schooling in terms of the dollar amount but also how the money would be spent,” Pelosi said on MSNBC. “The president is

insisting that most of the money that they are allocating will go to schools that are opening, actually when the evidence is that across the country school districts are saying largely, overwhelmingly that they will be opening virtually or in a hybrid fashion.”

In the Senate Republicans' relief package, **out of \$70 billion allocated to K-12 schools, two-thirds would be set aside to help schools reopen.** Overall, Pelosi wrote in a letter to Democratic lawmakers Friday, the two sides are "a couple hundred billion dollars apart" on education funds.

Pelosi also said that while the parties agree on extending an eviction moratorium for renters, Republicans have offered zero money for rental assistance.

Mnuchin offered a different take Thursday night. "We said we'd consider some payments on rental assistance as well," he said.

David Lerman, Rachel Oswald and Doug Sword contributed to this report.

Virus aid talks teeter on brink of collapse

Unclear if negotiations will continue; officials from both parties say they're still "very far apart" on the scope, size of aid package

By Jennifer Shutt and Katherine Tully-McManus / Roll Call / Posted August 6, 2020 at 3:09pm, updated at 9:42pm

Negotiations between Democratic leaders and top Trump administration officials began to fall apart Thursday night following a three-hour meeting, putting another coronavirus relief package in serious jeopardy.

After nearly two weeks of discussions, it's unclear if Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer will meet again Friday. That's the deadline administration officials had set for a breakthrough in talks before President Donald Trump attempts unilateral action to provide some temporary aid.

“We’re very disappointed in the meeting but we urge our Republican colleagues to come back and continue to negotiate,” Schumer said after the meeting broke up around 8:30 p.m.

Mnuchin said negotiators plan to speak by phone again Friday and would decide then whether another in-person meeting was worth it. “I think there is a lot of issues we are close to a compromise position on, but I think there’s handful of very big issues that we are still very far apart on,” Mnuchin said. Mnuchin said the administration offered to provide some rental assistance funding on top of an extended eviction moratorium, as

well as additional money for state and local governments to address coronavirus-related expenses.

Mnuchin said there remains **a wide gap on state and local aid**. House Democrats proposed \$916 billion in direct funding as part of their sweeping \$3.4 trillion package that chamber approved in May. But Trump and many Republican senators have been forceful in rejecting that approach, which would **let states and localities use the money to close general revenue shortfalls**.

"On things like state and local this is obviously a big issue, we're still very far apart on that. **The president is not going to do a deal that has a massive amount of money to bail out state and local**," Mnuchin said. "The president is prepared to do something for state and local that deals with the issue of additional coronavirus expenses, that deals with the first responders, the hospitals, the police and fireman all have proper funding, and the school teachers."

Pelosi concurred with Mnuchin's assessment of the stalemate: "We are very far apart. It's most unfortunate."

If the outlines of a broader deal don't emerge by Friday, Trump has told his two negotiators to try to work out a so-called "skinny deal," which Democrats have repeatedly rejected. Barring that, Trump said Thursday he's prepared to issue an "executive order" likely to involve a payroll tax cut, an extended eviction moratorium, student debt relief and some way of keeping unemployment benefits flowing.

When compared to legislative action by Congress, Trump's negotiators admitted during the closed-door talks that executive orders would not help as many people, according to Schumer. "They said the president may go ahead and do a few executive orders, but even they admitted that would leave out millions and millions of people," he said.

Trump, frustrated with the pace of talks, told reporters at Joint Base Andrews before leaving for Ohio earlier in the day that although a deal was still possible, he's prepared to announce executive actions "probably tomorrow afternoon" or on Saturday morning.

The White House has already unilaterally acted in the case of the eviction moratorium from the March aid package. Those protections for renters in federally backed housing technically lapsed late last month but were extended through Aug. 31. Also in March, Education Secretary Betsy DeVos temporarily set interest rates on federal student loans at 0 percent and gave student borrowers the option to suspend payments.

The legal authority for potential moves to cut payroll taxes and renew emergency unemployment benefits is less clear. Tax experts say the White House couldn't unilaterally declare a payroll tax holiday, let alone backfill the lost Social Security trust fund revenue without an act of Congress. And repurposing unspent funds for unemployment insurance could run afoul of appropriations law provisions preventing funds transfers without congressional approval, though the administration's diversion of military funds for the border wall hinges on specific legal authorities that are still being litigated.

White House Deputy Press Secretary Judd Deere wouldn't go into detail about what kinds of legal means the administration might use to extend relief. "A legislative solution is the priority, but negotiations are a two-way street and Democrats are unfortunately playing politics, which is why President Trump is fully prepared to use his executive authority to help those who continue to be impacted by this virus from China," Deere said.

Senate Finance Chairman Charles E. Grassley, R-Iowa, earlier said he didn't believe Trump will actually go through with unilateral actions. "I assume he's contemplating it to send a signal that he's sick and tired that Democrats aren't negotiating. I doubt if he's serious about doing it," Grassley said. He declined to say whether Trump has the legal authority to move money from other accounts to programs such as unemployment insurance. Later, however, Grassley seemingly endorsed Trump's potential executive action in a tweet, saying "I can imagine he's just fed up" with Democrats for not "negotiating in good faith" on the relief bill.

'Freight train'

The White House may be using the threat of executive action as a negotiating tactic. But Pelosi and Schumer didn't seem fazed, using a joint news conference earlier Thursday to try to put pressure on their GOP counterparts. "We have to move more quickly because the light at the end of the tunnel might be the freight train of the virus coming at us," Pelosi said while declining to put a timeline on an agreement.

Pelosi and Schumer challenged how much Trump could do with an executive order. "I don't think they know what they're talking about," Pelosi said. "The one thing the president can do is to extend the moratorium [on evictions], and that would be a good thing if there's money to go with it. And that's what we keep telling them."

Senators left Washington earlier Thursday amid the ongoing impasse over a pricey aid bill that neither party wants to leave hanging until after Labor Day. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he's staying in town, but anyone choosing to head home would have 24 hours' notice before floor votes.

Many of the senators preparing to leave for their home states on Thursday were optimistic for an agreement in the coming days.

"If I had to guess, I think I'd guess we have an agreement by the end of this week and something to vote on by the middle of next week. But I'd sure hate to bet anything I couldn't afford to lose on that," said Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo.

Republican senators are supposed to get updates on the talks every weekday around 5 p.m., according to Utah Sen. Mitt Romney.

Florida GOP Sen. Marco Rubio, one of the architects of the Paycheck Protection Program that provides forgivable small-business loans, was concerned that if an agreement on extending that program isn't reached soon, there could be another spike

in layoffs. “As they run out of their eight weeks of payroll cash, they may not have enough to keep their folks around, and you may start to see layoffs and unemployment as a result of it if we don’t do a PPP Two,” Rubio said. “If they believe that one is on the way, they might hold the line for a couple more weeks. But if they believe there’s no chance of another one, I think you’re more certain to see small-business layoffs start.”

Senate Appropriations Chairman Richard C. Shelby, R-Ala., summed up the situation by saying, “There’s optimism, and then there’s pessimism.”

Clyde McGrady, Niels Lesniewski, Lindsey McPherson and David Lerman contributed to this report.

Karl A. Ohls

Senior Policy Advisor

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From: Karl Ohls <kohls@northstargrp.com>

Sent: Friday, August 14, 2020 1:20 PM

To: George Hays <George.Hays@matsugov.us>; Nicholas Spiropoulos <Nicholas.Spiropoulos@matsugov.us>; Vern Halter <vernhalter@mtaonline.net>

Subject: No progress on federal aid package

George, Nick, and Mayor Halter,

The House majority and the White House apparently made no progress this past week on resolving their differences over the latest coronavirus relief package. Underscoring this situation, the Senate gaveled out of session yesterday to start its August recess. The story below from The Hill describes the breakdown in negotiations. After that, the question of "what happens next?" is addressed in a story from Roll Call. It explains how the Congress will need to make decisions on continuing funding for federal government operations in September and one possibility is that additional pandemic aid could be combined with an appropriations continuing resolution.

Karl

Senate leaves until September without coronavirus relief deal

BY JORDAIN CARNEY / THE HILL / 08/13/20 03:16 PM EDT

The Senate left Washington, D.C., on Thursday until September — the latest sign that a deal on a fifth coronavirus relief package is, at least, weeks away.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) had kept the chamber in session this week, which was technically the first in its August recess, as a last-ditch attempt to create space for the administration and congressional Democrats to get an agreement.

But with talks stalemated, senators argue there is little reason for them to keep holding daily, roughly 1 1/2-hour sessions. The House already left town and isn't expected to return until Sept. 14.

"We will have our regular pro forma meetings through the end of the state work period. If the Speaker of the House and the minority leader of the Senate decide to finally let another package move forward ... it would take bipartisan consent to meet for legislative business sooner than scheduled," McConnell said as he wrapped up the Senate until next month. McConnell added that he hoped the Senate would be able to "act sometime soon."

Senators will get at least 24 hours notice to return if congressional Democrats, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows are able to break the impasse and votes are scheduled. Otherwise, the Senate will formally reconvene on Sept. 8.

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa) predicted during a conference call on Tuesday that if negotiators didn't restart by Thursday, the administration's executive orders would be the only action that takes place until early September. "If it doesn't happen in the next 48 hours, I think this is all you're going to see until Congress gets back into session after Labor Day," Grassley told reporters.

There's little reason to think a deal will be reached before then.

The four key negotiators have not met in person since Friday, when the talks officially collapsed. And the only contact to take place this week — Mnuchin calling House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) on Wednesday — resulted in dueling statements that only illustrated how stalemated the negotiations on coronavirus relief have become.

Democrats entered negotiations with a package of approximately \$3.4 trillion to \$3.7 trillion and have offered to reduce that price tag by \$1 trillion. Republicans and the White House have refused to move from roughly \$1 trillion.

"We are miles apart in our values," Pelosi told reporters on Thursday. "Perhaps you mistook them for somebody who gave a damn. That isn't the case. This is very far apart." Asked when her next talk would be with Mnuchin and Meadows, Pelosi responded, "I don't know. When they come in with \$2 trillion."

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow, speaking to reporters on Thursday, said the talks are at a "stalemate." "As Secretary Mnuchin said yesterday, the Speaker wants a \$2 trillion commitment from us. We're not going to give it. There are too many things, too many asks on their side that don't fit, don't have anything to do with COVID, for that matter," he said.

Beyond a top-line figure, the two sides haven't resolved how much weekly unemployment benefits would be, **how much money to give state and local governments** or how to address McConnell's red line of liability protections for businesses that open back up. **School funding**, both the amount and how it's divided up, remains a sticking point as well.

The inaction comes as the unemployment rate is at 10.2 percent, down from a peak of 14.7 percent in April but still slightly higher than the peak during the Great Recession. And the country continues to report tens of thousands of new coronavirus cases per day, including reporting nearly 1,500 coronavirus deaths on Wednesday in what is the highest number of daily deaths since mid-May.

Mnuchin and Meadows have been providing daily updates to Senate Republicans, but senators have said there is little reason to think a detente between congressional Democrats and the administration is on the horizon. "Basically, not much new movement," said Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) after a call this week.

The stalemate is taking place less than three months before the November election, injecting more politics into the dynamic compared to the four previous coronavirus relief bills that passed the Senate with either no opposition or only a handful of "no" votes.

Vulnerable incumbents in both parties have sent warning signals this week to leadership that they need to cut a deal. Rep. Max Rose (N.Y.), a freshman Democrat in a district President Trump won in 2016, told CNN that "I share the concerns that I'm hearing from my constituents: I'm pissed. I'm angry. ... At this point, it's a middle finger to the American people."

Sen. Susan Collins (R-Maine) — who faces a tough reelection bid as one of two GOP senators running in a state won by 2016 Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton — said on Thursday that she thought the Senate should reconvene next week to try to work on an agreement and force members to vote on coronavirus relief proposals. "Have people step up to the plate," she told the Sun Journal.

But even though the Senate has been in session the week, the Capitol has largely slid into its normal summer routine with only a handful of senators spotted around the chamber. Instead, the brief sessions have largely been used for senators to trade blame over the inability to get a deal, providing a daily look at how far apart the two sides are.

McConnell on Thursday accused Democrats of holding an agreement "hostage" and "barely even pretending to negotiate," while warning that voters were watching. "By now the whole country knows what I'm talking about, the absurd issues which the Democrats have turned into sticking points," he said.

Sen. Tim Kaine (D-Va.) shrugged off the comments, noting the GOP leader is facing his own headache with, by McConnell's own estimate, up to 20 senators prepared to vote against any deal. The GOP divisions captured the political spotlight for weeks, and undermined the negotiating hand for Meadows and Mnuchin. "He's gotta say something," Kaine said. "And, you know, I think he's done what he can do with the Senate GOP. When he candidly acknowledged, 'look, there's gonna be at least 20 members of Congress who won't vote for a single dollar's worth of aid,' he basically at that point is saying, 'Dems, you gotta work it out with the White House.'"

Senate backlash on pandemic aid sets up September stopgap fight

GOP spending pushback led to Democrats' hard line in talks; Trump executive actions intended to buy time

By [Paul M. Krawzak](#) / Roll Call / Posted August 14, 2020

If coronavirus relief talks are at a stalemate, as top administration officials and Democrats said this week, it may be a divided Senate GOP that set the first dominoes tumbling. And it may take the threat of a partial government shutdown next month to get things back on track.

The next deadline to force action is Sept. 30, when Congress has to pass a [continuing resolution](#) to keep federal agencies operating at least through the November elections. Combining stopgap funds and pandemic relief into one bill could be a less painful vote for Republicans than separate votes on each.

"I think it would be better for Republicans, instead of taking two expensive votes, to take one expensive vote and make it a little more convoluted with the [continuing resolution]," said a GOP lobbyist who asked for anonymity in order to speak candidly. "Do a bunch of COVID stuff on a CR and call it a day."

Senate Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Chairman Roy Blunt, R-Mo., who helped write a major piece of the Senate GOP's \$1 trillion series of relief measures, told reporters Wednesday it was likely that negotiations bleed into the stopgap funding talks after Labor Day. Blunt said a deal could be reached sooner if Democrats agreed to drop about one-third of the nearly \$3.4 trillion House-passed relief bill, which he said "had nothing to do with COVID-19."

Blunt's GOP colleagues contributed to the impasse. Once Majority Leader Mitch McConnell publicly admitted he'd lose some 20 votes from his own caucus for the proposals he rolled out late last month, Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer thought they had Republicans in checkmate. "As you have seen from the majority leader, Mr. McConnell, they don't have the votes," Pelosi said on MSNBC on Aug. 5. "They have votes for practically nothing."

The lack of a firm negotiating position and the vulnerability of GOP senators facing tough reelection battles would ultimately force Republicans to capitulate, the thinking went. But Pelosi and Schumer's hard-line stance ultimately pushed Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows, the GOP's top negotiators, away from the table.

Two days after ridiculing McConnell on MSNBC, Pelosi was asked on the same network whether she and Schumer had overplayed their hand. By then the White House had already set the stage for executive actions which President Donald Trump formally signed on Aug. 8 that could provide some modest relief at least into mid-September. That includes a \$300 weekly unemployment benefit supplement funded out of disaster relief coffers, though some states are warning of delays in getting that program up and running.

Meanwhile, the stock market is up, jobless claims are down, lawmakers are home for the August recess, and Trump flatly predicted this week that "a deal is not going to happen."

'Not finished with our country'

But there is acknowledgement among most Republicans and all Democrats that additional pandemic relief is needed. "Coronavirus is not finished with our country, so Congress cannot be finished helping our people," McConnell said Thursday before closing up the Senate until Sept. 8, unless any "unanticipated votes" are necessary.

Given that the price tag is likely to creep up — Pelosi and Schumer say they won't agree to anything south of \$2 trillion — McConnell could ultimately be faced with a difficult choice: whether to put a bill on the floor without

a majority of the majority on board. The stakes couldn't be higher so close to the elections, given Republicans could get the blame for any government shutdown as well as failure to provide pandemic relief if the Senate can't pass a bill. The GOP stance is a stunning turnabout from five months ago, when the Senate passed a roughly \$2 trillion aid package by a vote of 96-0.

David McIntosh, president of the conservative Club for Growth, a free-market advocacy group, said Republicans had voted for previous rounds of aid because something needed to be done to support the economy. "But now people are realizing the biggest impediment to the economy is that things are not reopening that fast," he said. "And they don't really support Congress throwing another \$1 trillion at it, especially because half the money they appropriated before hasn't been spent."

According to federal data through June 30, of the \$2.6 trillion in total resources enacted since March, there's \$1.1 trillion that hadn't yet been committed.

Some Republicans fear a tea party-like backlash against the trillions of dollars in spending Congress approved, said Robert L. Bixby, executive director of the Concord Coalition, a deficit watchdog group. "I just think that they are very much afraid that their constituents are going to revolt over the size of the money that's being spent," Bixby said. "I think they're going back and thinking about the summer of Obamacare, when there was a backlash against the Democrats."

The August recess in 2009 turned hostile for Democrats as constituents expressed concerns about the new health care program, which became law in March 2010. Democrats lost 63 House seats and control of the chamber in the 2010 midterms.

'Breaking point'

Garrett Bess, vice president of governmental relations and communications at Heritage Action for America, said many conservatives have focused on "cultural" issues such as immigration during the Trump presidency. But that does not mean "any of their fiscal concerns ever melted away." He said the \$1 trillion Senate package led to a "breaking point" where spending restraint returned as a priority.

That camp includes conservative Senate stalwarts like Rand Paul of Kentucky and Ted Cruz of Texas. Paul and Cruz have been GOP presidential contenders before, and are oft-mentioned as likely to run again at some point. Their opposition to the McConnell package contrasts with another onetime and possible future presidential candidate, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., who helped draft the small-business relief provisions with Maine's Susan Collins, one of the most vulnerable GOP senators this cycle. Rubio has warned of a surge in small-business layoffs if Congress doesn't approve more business loans.

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., another possible future presidential candidate, has also said more economic support is needed. That includes **aid to cities and states to support overtime for police and hospitals and clinics**, though Cotton opposes using federal dollars to "pay off long-standing fiscal mismanagement" by state and local governments.

Ron Johnson, R-Wisc. — a potential gubernatorial candidate in 2022 if he decides not to seek a third Senate term — told Breitbart News he was glad the relief talks had broken down, given the potential deficit impact. "It's very good news for future generations," said Johnson.

Ben Sasse of Nebraska, Mike Braun of Indiana, Rick Scott of Florida, James Lankford of Oklahoma and Patrick J. Toomey of Pennsylvania are other Senate Republicans who criticized the GOP relief package in whole or in part. None of them are up for reelection this year except Sasse, whose seat is considered safe.

Arrayed against the spending hawks are advocates of a robust package, such as Collins, whose priorities McConnell needs to carefully manage given the implications for his party's hold on the majority.

McConnell himself is in a surprisingly tough race against former Marine Corps pilot Amy McGrath, up by 5 points against his challenger in a Quinnipiac poll released last week. And races to watch extend into other deep-red states like South Carolina, where Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham was tied with Democratic

challenger Jaime Harrison in the same Quinnipiac poll. Graham was a vocal opponent of the \$600 added weekly unemployment benefit that lapsed last month, saying in April it would be extended “over our dead bodies.” Graham filed an amendment last week to keep the benefit going at \$500 a week, however, and eventually work out to 100 percent wage replacement as long as it doesn’t go over that \$500 cap.

Sen. Steve Daines, R-Mont., along with Collins wants to provide the cash-strapped Postal Service with \$25 billion to cover revenue losses. That’s a position in line with Pelosi and Schumer rather than Trump, who said Thursday the money would be used to deliver “fraudulent” mail-in ballots. Daines and Collins are each considered “tossups” to win in November, according to Inside Elections with Nathan L. Gonzales.

Karl A. Ohls

Senior Policy Advisor

North Star Group

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202-544-6355 DC office

WWW.NORTHSTARGRP.COM - *Click here for more on the North Star Group Network*

Mike Dunleavy
Governor



Office of the
Governor

www.Gov.Alaska.Gov

Juneau, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
20-101

Governor Dunleavy Expands AK CARES Eligibility To Help Alaska Small Businesses

August 20, 2020 (Anchorage) – Taking additional steps to better expedite the AK CARES Act Funding for small businesses in need of help, Governor Mike Dunleavy today notified the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee that he is submitting modifications to the AK CARES Grant Program to expand the eligibility for applicants. The expanded program details, delivered by the established Revised Programs Legislative (RPL) Review Process, was sent alongside other routine business for the committees consideration in response to mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Currently, applicants for AK CARES Grant funding are restricted from applying if they received more than \$5,000 in other federal assistance or if the business is a source of secondary income. The original intent of AK CARES, to provide support for those Alaska businesses that did not receive substantial assistance either through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) or Small Business Administration relief (EIDL) efforts. Based on the total of applications received to date, the State has determined that there will be capacity remaining in the grant program after the original pool of applicants have been funded.

“Alaskans deal with adversity better than anyone, and we have shown that throughout this pandemic,” said Governor Dunleavy, “but as COVID-19 remains, and challenges continue to mount for our job creators, we need to provide them with tools to meet those challenges, and to do it as soon as possible.”

The new changes lift the \$5,000 restriction, as well as those on secondary income businesses. Other restrictions, such as requiring that businesses must be Alaska based or that businesses cannot have more than 50 employees, remain in place at this time, but may be amended in the future based on authority granted in the RPL.

“AK CARES was crafted with the finest mesh to help those businesses who fell between the cracks when the door closed on them to other federal relief efforts,” said Governor Dunleavy, “We accomplished opening that door, and we are now expanding that relief to other small Alaska businesses in real need.”

Under law, the proposed changes can happen in 45 days at the latest. However, the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee can meet before then, and take action on the proposed changes. If the committee does take action, the expanded relief for businesses can take effect immediately.

“We are hearing very clearly from businesses throughout Alaska that relief needs to come now,” said Governor Dunleavy. “Through no fault of their own, entrepreneurs in our state are in jeopardy, and we need to be there for them, their workers, and their families.”

Applications for grants can be from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. If approved by the Legislative Budget & Audit Committee, businesses can apply through the AK CARES Grant portal at <https://www.akcaresonline.org>.

Click here to access the link to the letter and attachments for the RPL package.

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/08202020-AK-Cares-Update-RPL.pdf>

Media please click below for audio comments from Governor Dunleavy.

<https://gov.alaska.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/AK-Cares-Update-08202020.mp3>

###

Media Contact: Jeff Turner, jeff.turner@alaska.gov (907) 310-4961



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Commerce, Community,
and Economic Development

Division of Community and Regional Affairs
Juneau

Matanuska Susitna Borough

JUL 17 2020

Administration

P.O. Box 110809
Juneau, AK 99811-0809
Main: 907.465.5541
Toll free: 877.769.4539
Fax: 907.465.4761

July 13, 2020

RE: Fiscal Year 2021 Community Assistance Program Payments

Dear Official:

The Community Assistance Program (CAP) application deadline has been extended to the earliest of November 15th, or when the governor determines there is no longer a health emergency disaster. Because, as of June 30, 2020, all applications have not been received by potential recipients, the CAP payment calculation cannot be run in accordance with the statutory formula.

Since the CAP fund balance as of June 30th supports payment of the base amounts, we will begin distributing the base payment to municipalities and communities that have met all program requirements the week of July 13, 2020. Once the extended deadline is met, the payment calculations will be run according to formula (base + per capita) and the balance due municipalities and communities will be distributed.

Base payment amounts per entity:

Borough: \$300,000

City: \$75,000

Unified Home Rule and Consolidated Borough: \$375,000

Unincorporated Community Outside Borough: \$25,000

Unincorporated Community Within Borough: \$15,789

For questions contact Jean Mason at 907-465-5647 or jeanine.mason@alaska.gov.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Economic Development Administration
915 Second Avenue, Room 1890
Seattle, Washington 98174
Fax: 206.220.7669
Voice: 206.220.7660

July 20, 2020

In reply refer to:
EDA Control No. 114768

Theresa Dolan
Port Operations manager
Port Mackenzie
Matanuska Susitna Borough
350 E Dahlia Ave
Palmer, AK 99645

Dear Theresa:

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) is pleased to inform you that your application has been reviewed for merit and selected for further consideration. **Please, note that this notification of further consideration is intended to inform you of EDA's competitive preliminary selection of your project, but does not guarantee final approval or legally bind EDA to make an award.**

Subject to the availability of funds, your proposed project, estimated to cost \$9,487,740 will be considered for \$7,590,192 in EDA funding under the FY 2019 Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity, authorized under section 209 of the Public Works and Economic Development Act of 1965, as amended (42 U.S.C. Section 3121 *et seq.*).

By acceptance of this letter, you agree to provide all additional information requested below, and any other additional information that may be requested subsequently. You also acknowledge that final approval and the timing of such an approval are subject to EDA's acceptance of all required information and the availability of EDA funding.

Additional Information: Please provide the following information to Michele Ko by August 21, 2020:

Environmental

- Need and purpose section for the Environmental Narrative
- Permitting requirements for Ro/Ro cargo ramp
- Documentation of NEPA/NHPA and floodplain public notices, please see templates attached for your use.
- Copy of 2017 Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Assessment

Legal

- Confirmation whether there are additional governing council consents or approvals necessary before the match funding becomes available

- Copy of a signed Attachment I, Part II Felony/Tax Certification; a copy of this certification can be found on .pdf page 40 of the FY 2019 Disaster Supplemental Notice of Funding Opportunity

The information requested above will supplement your application and enable EDA to proceed with processing your application. Failure to meet this deadline, or the submission of incorrect or incomplete information, will jeopardize approval of your application. If you cannot meet this deadline, please, advise Michele Ko, Economic Development Specialist, as soon as possible. EDA will assess the additional information provided upon receipt. EDA's assessment of this information may determine one of the following:

1. No additional information is necessary;
2. Additional information is required, because the submission is incomplete, inaccurate, or otherwise unacceptable to EDA, and the applicant(s) must revise the submission before EDA will consider processing the application further; or
3. EDA will discontinue considering the application for funding, because the information submitted does not present a project that complies with applicable law(s), regulations or policies.

Your organization must comply with EDA's Regulations under 13 C.F.R. chapter III, as well as the FY 2019 Economic Development Assistance Programs Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Final approval of an award is conditioned upon EDA's assessment of the additional information requested, project feasibility, funding priorities, and the availability of funds for obligation.

If you have questions regarding the requested information or status of your application, please do not hesitate to contact Michele Ko at 206-940-5781 or mko@eda.gov.

Sincerely,



Digitally signed by A SMITH
DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=Department of
Commerce, ou=Economic Development Administration,
cn=A SMITH,
0.9.2342.19200300.100.1.1=13001000886842
Date: 2020.07.20 21:42:20 -07'00'
Adobe Acrobat version: 2017.011.30171

A. Leonard Smith
Regional Director, Seattle Regional Office

c: Shirley Kelly, Economic Development Representative



Matanuska Susitna Borough

JUL 30 2020

Administration

Lieutenant Governor Kevin Meyer
STATE OF ALASKA

July 30, 2020

Mayor Vern Halter
Matanuska-Susitna Borough
350 E. Dahlia Ave.
Palmer, AK 99645

2024 Arctic Winter Games – Alaska Hosting

Dear Mayor Halter,

The State of Alaska is scheduled to host the Arctic Winter Games in March of 2024. As the premier multi-sport and cultural event for youth across the circumpolar world, the Arctic Winter Games International Committee is now in a position to begin the host site bid selection process. Accordingly, we are asking interested communities to submit an ‘Expression of Interest to Host’ no later than September 10, 2020. Letters are to be submitted to:

Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1700
Anchorage, AK., 99501

Each community expressing an interest in bidding will then be invited to an information/planning session, either in person or by virtual meeting hosted by the AWGIC. Following that session, the interested communities will be required to submit a formal bid package, by November 30, 2020, prepared in accordance with the attached Bid Manual.

Bid packages are to be submitted electronically to the President of the AWGIC and the Operations Coordinator to dlandry@arcticwintergames.org, (emailed, OneDrive or other shared media). Once received, the International Committee reviews the bids, visits the communities if necessary, and selects a host site.

- Information Session for interested communities to be held Mid-September 2020;
- Bids submitted and received by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee by November 30, 2020;
- International Committee Directors will do site selection tour of bidding communities in January or February of 2021, if required.
- Successful bidder and selected hosting community for the 2024 Games formally announced in March 2021.

Further details on hosting an Arctic Winter Games can be found in the Staging Manual available on the International Committee website (www.arcticwintergames.org). Questions may be directed to the AWGIC Operations Coordinator at dlandry@arcticwintergames.org.

Both Arctic Winter Games International Committee Alaska directors, are also available to answer questions:

Mr. John Rodda, Vice President/Treasurer of the AWGIC by email at johnawg@gmail.com or by telephone at 907-317-7436.

And Mr. John Estle by email at sportalaska@pci.net.

Sincerely,



Kevin Meyer
Lieutenant Governor
State of Alaska

Attachment: Bid Manual

cc: AWGIC Directors via dlandry@arcticwintergames.org



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Mayor

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8682 • Fax (907) 861-8669

Vern.Halter@matsugov.us

August 18, 2020

Governor Michael J. Dunleavy (via email: Todd.Smoldon@alaska.gov)

State of Alaska

PO Box 110001

Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Re: Matanuska Experiment Farm - Gravel Expansion Project

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

We are seriously concerned about the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Gravel Expansion Project on the Matanuska Experiment Farm located in Palmer, Alaska.

The Matanuska Experiment Farm is an underutilized asset at the entry point of the Matanuska Valley. It is a key marker for the Matanuska Valley Colony history, with several hundred acres of cultivated land used for growing food, as well as testing vegetables and grain varieties. We understand that a University of Alaska Fairbanks contractor has already begun digging in two areas: an existing gravel pit on the farm, and a 70-acre parcel along the Greenbelt trails. The attached map shows the 70-acre area. Please note, not indicated on the map is an area south of Johnson Lake, that we understand is also being tested for gravel extraction.

The Matanuska Experiment Farm comprises a third of the Matanuska Greenbelt, a 33-mile trail system that, as noted in UAF's 2019 long-range farm plan, provides the "largest uninterrupted public space in the core of the Mat-Su Valley." As noted in UAF's plan: "A report published in 2015 concluded there is a \$5.00 return for every \$1.00 of real estate value for maintaining public open spaces in the Mat-Su Valley and not developing the land into private or commercial facilities." The 70-acre parcel identified for gravel extraction sits at the center of the Greenbelt, and includes a major connecting trail that, if blocked, would create a major disruption to use of the area.

The lack of an opportunity for public engagement on this issue is concerning. The notice to the public and surrounding land owners, including the Borough, was sent late in the afternoon of August 3, less than 24 hours before the excavator began digging test pits on the farm and trail system. This does not seem representative of UAF's values to meaningfully engage stakeholders and the community.

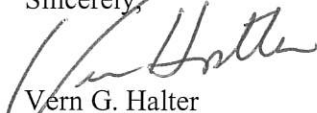
The Mat-Su Borough values the UAF, including the farm and Mat-Su College, as a key neighbor and strategic partner in the area's long-term growth. Our hopes are that the UAF likewise views the Borough as an important stakeholder in its long-term vision. As noted in UAF's 2019 long-range plan for the farm, "Geographically, the farm links UAF to Southcentral Alaska which is projected to have the highest population growth (77%) in Alaska, over the next thirty years."

There is no doubt UAF and the state are facing grave financial times. However, this gravel project has the potential for severe negative consequences that would far outweigh the dollars potentially gained.


We urge UAF to find economic solutions which do not include looking for short-term gain, through gravel extraction of farm land, that would take away valued land use for future generations. We would like to engage in a meeting with you, the many stakeholders, and the public who value this property, to discuss options for using and producing revenue from this important community asset.

Thank you for your partnership and consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



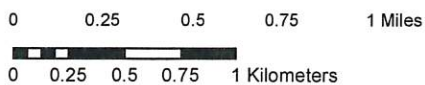
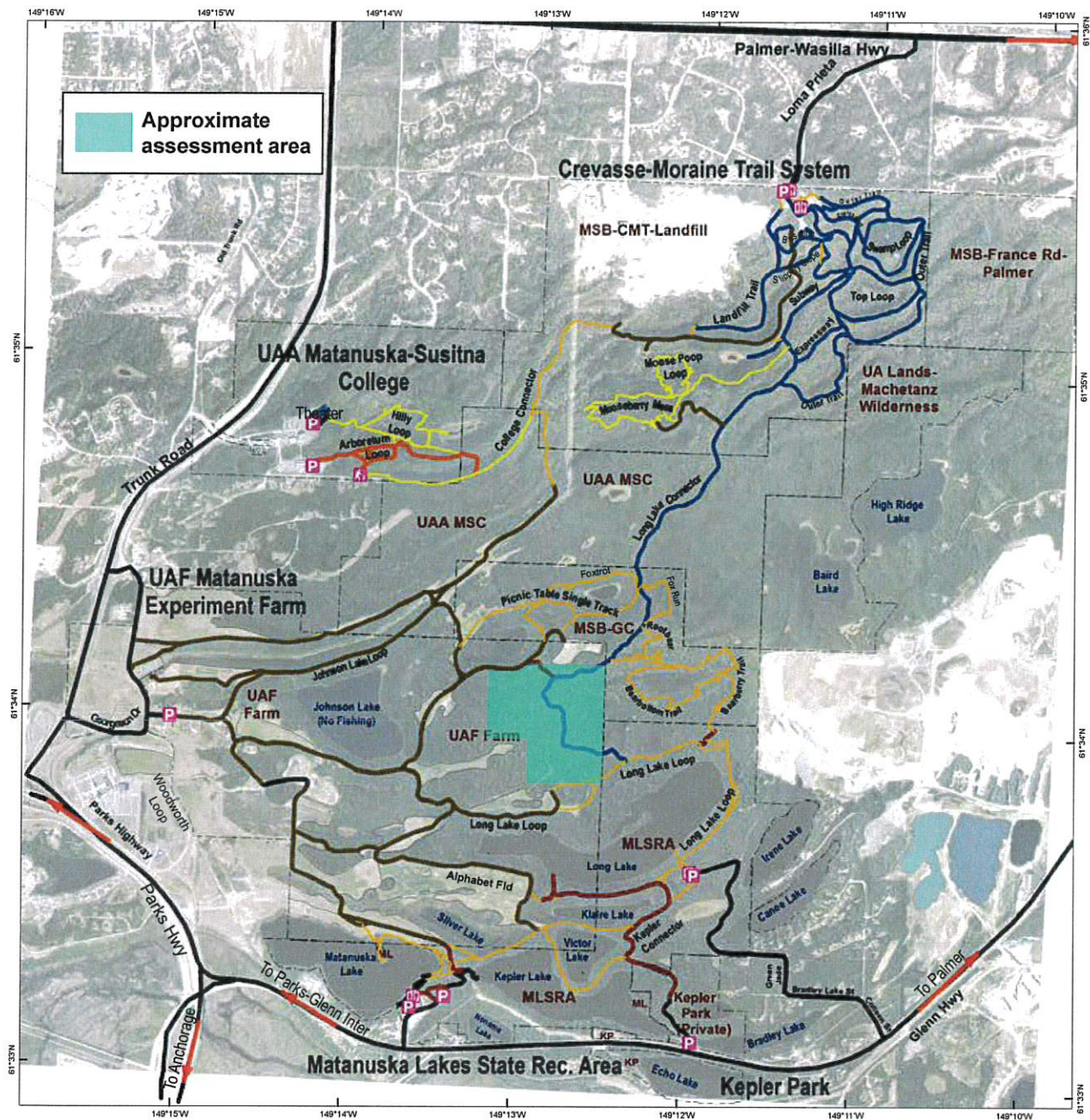
Vern G. Halter
Mayor



George W. Hays
Acting Borough Manager

cc: Assembly
Senator Shelley Hughes
Representative DeLena Johnson

Matanuska Experiment Farm resource assessment project



Crevasse-Moraine Trail System (MSB-CMT-Landfill) - Turn south (left coming from Palmer, right coming from Wasilla) on Loma Prieta off Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Managed by Matanuska-Susitna Borough, which also manages Greenbelt Central (MSB-GC). MSB-France Rd-Palmer is presently leased by Palmer, but could be used for trails in future.

Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area (MLSRA) - Turn north (left coming from Anchorage, right coming from Palmer) off Glenn Highway about 0.5 mi east of Glenn - Parks interchange. Managed by Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

University of Alaska Anchorage Matanuska-Susitna College (UAA-MSC) - Access parking near Glenn Massay Theater or behind Snodgrass Hall. Please respect the privilege of being able to access their non-motorized trails. Horses are not allowed.

University of Alaska Fairbanks Matanuska Experiment Farm (UAF Farm) - Active research farm. Please respect their fields and on-going research. Please yield to farm equipment and operations. The area is non-motorized for general public. Please respect the privilege of using these areas and stay on trails.

Kepler Park is a private park in southeast corner of greenbelt that encourages non-motorized access. Please check signs at trailhead for more details on access.

Not for navigation or legal purposes.
Google road map: <http://goo.gl/maps/RAsl>

Trail types

- Trail Tread**
- Hardened-asphalt, gravel
 - Dirt roads
 - Groomable ski
 - Wide track
 - Wide track-no horses
 - Single track
 - Single track-no horses



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Mayor

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8682 • Fax (907) 861-8669

Vern.Halter@matsugov.us

August 18, 2020

Chancellor Daniel M. White (via email: dmwhite@alaska.edu)

University of Alaska Fairbanks

3rd Floor Signer's Hall

PO Box 757500

Fairbanks, AK 99775

Re: Matanuska Experiment Farm - Gravel Expansion Project

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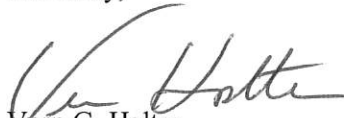
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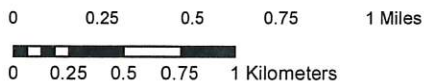
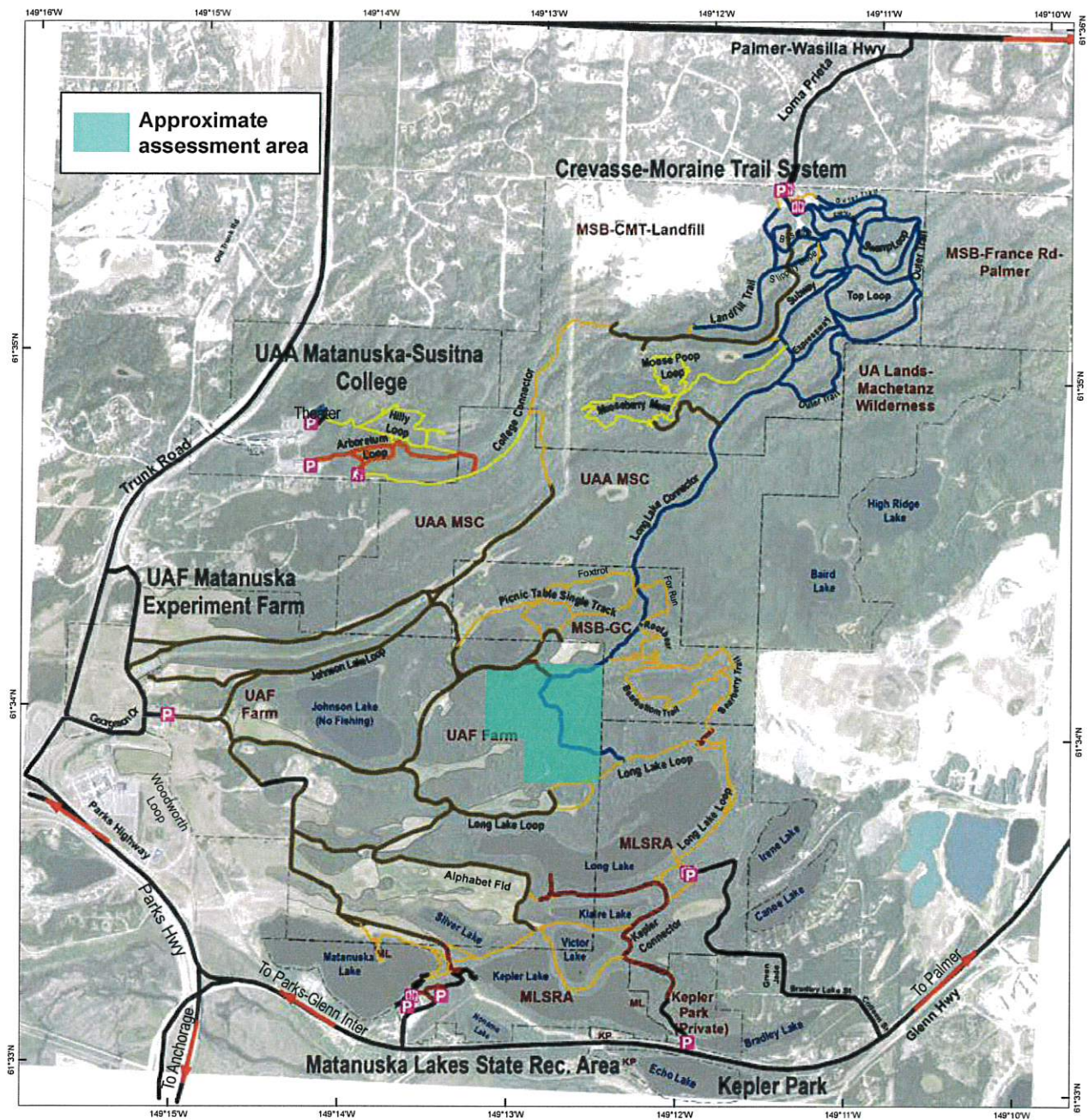
Vern G. Halter
Mayor



George W. Hays
Acting Borough Manager

cc: MSB Assembly
Senator Shelley Hughes
Representative DeLena Johnson

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Office of the Borough Mayor

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Phone (907) 861-8682 • Fax (907) 861-8669

Vern.Halter@matsugov.us

August 18, 2020

Ms. Sheri Buretta, Chair (via email: sburetta@alaska.edu)

Board of Regents

University of Alaska Fairbanks

19530 Wingham Circle

Eagle River, AK 99577

Re: Matanuska Experiment Farm - Gravel Expansion Project

Dear Board of Regents,

We are seriously concerned about the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Gravel Expansion Project on the Matanuska Experiment Farm located in Palmer, Alaska.

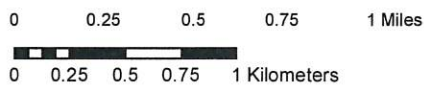
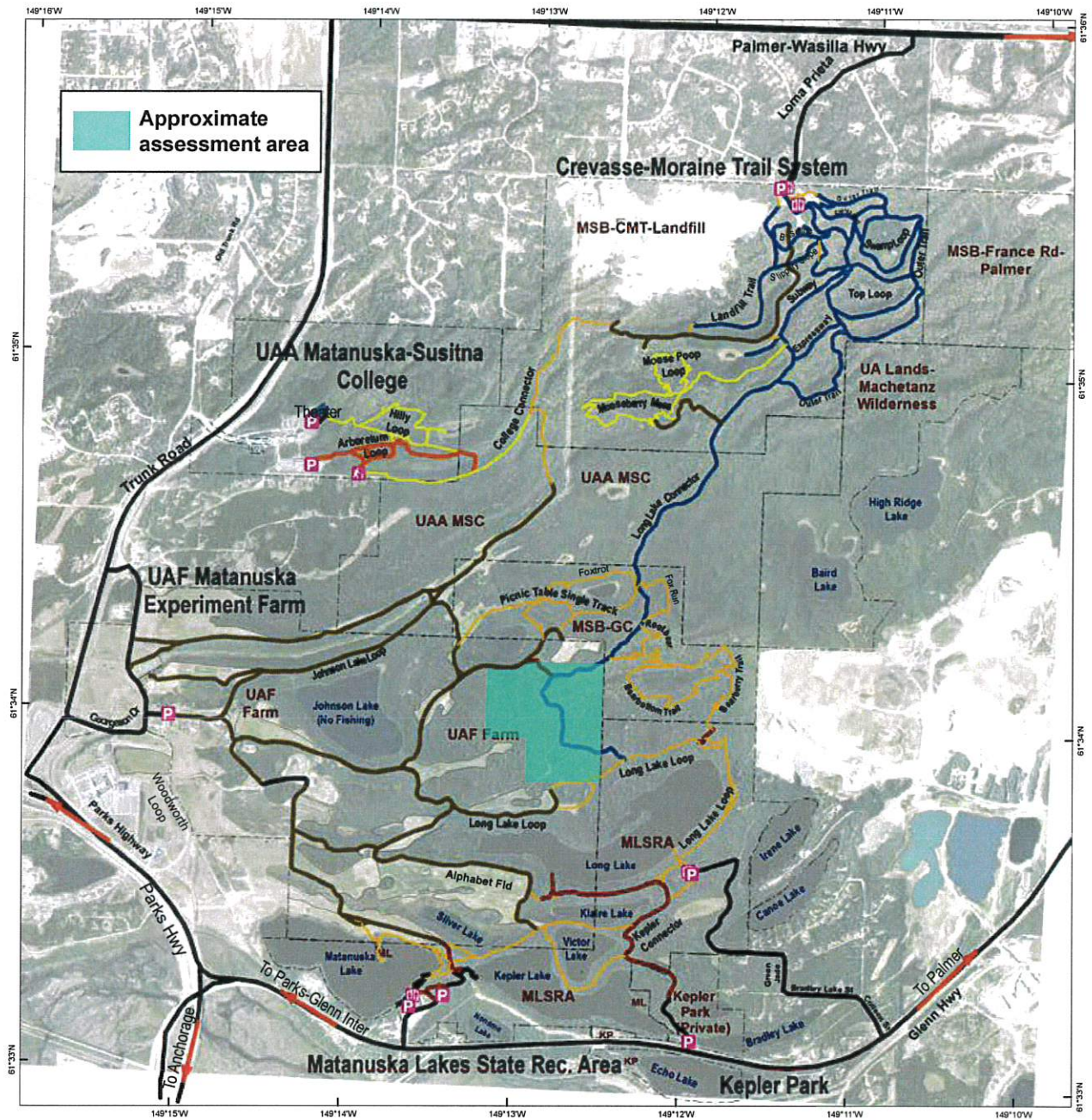
The Matanuska Experiment Farm is an underutilized asset at the entry point of the Matanuska Valley. It is a key marker for the Matanuska Valley Colony history, with several hundred acres of cultivated land used for growing food, as well as testing vegetables and grain varieties. We understand that a University of Alaska Fairbanks contractor has already begun digging in two areas: an existing gravel pit on the farm, and a 70-acre parcel along the Greenbelt trails. The attached map shows the 70-acre area. Please note, not indicated on the map is an area south of Johnson Lake, that we understand is also being tested for gravel extraction.

The Matanuska Experiment Farm comprises a third of the Matanuska Greenbelt, a 33-mile trail system that, as noted in UAF's 2019 long-range farm plan, provides the "largest uninterrupted public space in the core of the Mat-Su Valley." As noted in UAF's plan: "A report published in 2015 concluded there is a \$5.00 return for every \$1.00 of real estate value for maintaining public open spaces in the Mat-Su Valley and not developing the land into private or commercial facilities." The 70-acre parcel identified for gravel extraction sits at the center of the Greenbelt, and includes a major connecting trail that, if blocked, would create a major disruption to use of the area.

The lack of an opportunity for public engagement on this issue is concerning. The notice to the public and surrounding land owners, including the Borough, was sent late in the afternoon of August 3, less than 24 hours before the excavator began digging test pits on the farm and trail system. This does not seem representative of UAF's values to meaningfully engage stakeholders and the community.

The Mat-Su Borough values the UAF, including the farm and Mat-Su College, as a key neighbor and strategic partner in the area's long-term growth. Our hopes are that the UAF likewise views the Borough as an important stakeholder in its long-term vision. As noted in [UAF's 2019 long-range plan for the farm](#), "Geographically, the farm links UAF to Southcentral Alaska which is projected to have the highest population growth (77%) in Alaska, over the next thirty years."

Matanuska Experiment Farm resource assessment project



Crevasse-Moraine Trail System (MSB-CMT-Landfill) - Turn south (left coming from Palmer, right coming from Wasilla) on Loma Prieta off Palmer-Wasilla Highway. Managed by Matanuska-Susitna Borough, which also manages Greenbelt Central (MSB-GC). MSB-France Rd-Palmer is presently leased by Palmer, but could be used for trails in future.

Matanuska Lakes State Recreation Area (MLSRA) - Turn north (left coming from Anchorage, right coming from Palmer) off Glenn Highway about 0.5 mi east of Glenn - Parks interchange. Managed by Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

University of Alaska Anchorage Matanuska-Susitna College (UAA-MSC) - Access parking near Glenn Massay Theater or behind Snodgrass Hall. Please respect the privilege of being able to access their non-motorized trails. Horses are not allowed.

University of Alaska Fairbanks Matanuska Experiment Farm (UAF Farm) - Active research farm. Please respect their fields and on-going research. Please yield to farm equipment and operations. The area is non-motorized for general public. Please respect the privilege of using these areas and stay on trails.

Kepler Park is a private park in southeast corner of greenbelt that encourages non-motorized access. Please check signs at trailhead for more details on access.

Not for navigation or legal purposes.

Google road map: <http://goo.gl/maps/RAsl>

Trail types

Trail Tread

-  Hardened-asphalt, gravel
-  Dirt roads
-  Groomable ski
-  Wide track
-  Wide track-no horses
-  Single track
-  Single track-no horses

LETTER OF AGREEMENT
between the
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
and the
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION,
Local #6136 (APEA/AFT, AFL-CIO)

RE: 2020 Contract Renewal


It is hereby agreed and understood between the parties that the terms and conditions of the March 21, 2018 – December 31, 2020 (as amended through letters of agreement) are renewed without change from the provisions in place on December 31, 2020, for the period of January 1, 2021 – December 31, 2021. Without change includes no changes to the percentage of healthcare contribution made by the employees.

Entered into this 19th day of August, 2020 at Palmer, Alaska.

For the Matanuska-Susitna Borough:

For the MSBEA:


George Hays
Acting Borough Manager


Sara Clemons
President
MSBEA

IM 20-163
RS 20-084



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Acting Borough Manager

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8405 • Fax (907) 861-8669

George.Hays@matsugov.us

August 21, 2020

The Honorable Michael J. Dunleavy (via email: Todd.Smoldon@alaska.gov)
Governor, State of Alaska
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Re: Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communications Center Project

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

I respectfully request your reconsideration to move the Mat-Su Valley 911 dispatch service for fire, ambulance, and emergency law enforcement to a consolidated center in Anchorage. We again emphasize that we are not in favor of this proposal, as described in our letter to you of February 28, 2020.

While I can only speak on behalf of the Mat-Su Borough fire and ambulance responders, I would like to reiterate the joint opposition with the other Alaska organizations clearly stated in the letter of February 24, 2020. As you know, the Mat-Su Borough relies on the State Troopers and the police departments of the City of Palmer and City of Wasilla for law enforcement services, because as a second class borough, we do not have the police powers to provide police services.

Our focus is concentrated on the ambulance and fire services we provide. This consolidation project for dispatch services is literally a life and death issue for citizens who will experience delays in the ability of responders to arrive timely and efficiently to medical and fire emergencies. The safety to responders, safety to the public, and emergency communications as a whole are at risk, not to mention the fiscal challenges this project presents. There is a significant advantage and benefit for our dispatchers to know the area and the transportation network of roads here. Knowledge of our road system by dispatchers is critical in getting emergency responders where they need to go in the fastest way possible.

It is in the best interest of emergency patients, fire victims, and responding personnel that this project not move forward. Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

George W. Hays
Acting Borough Manager

Attachments: February 24, 2020 Letter to Governor Dunleavy
February 28, 2020 Letter to Governor Dunleavy

cc: Borough Assembly
Amy Demboski, Department of Commerce (via email: amy.demboski@alaska.gov)

Providing Outstanding Borough Services to the Matanuska-Susitna Community

Matanuska-Susitna Borough



February 28, 2020

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy
Alaska State Capitol, Room 305
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Re: Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communications Center Project

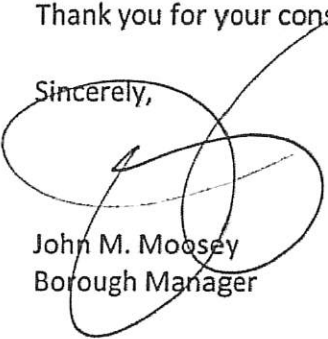
Dear Governor Dunleavy,

On behalf of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough I respectfully request your serious consideration of the negative impacts that would result from the Department of Public Safety's initiative to move Mat-Su Valley 911 service and emergency law enforcement dispatch to a consolidated center in Anchorage. This consolidation would adversely impact the safety to citizens, responders, and emergency communications in the densely populated areas of the Mat-Su Borough.

We are not in favor of this proposal. These changes would create risk of delay in patient care that would significantly impact our citizens, responders, and telecommunicators. We believe public safety is always better handled at the lowest level of government possible. This proposal would be disruptive to the flow of communication needed for timely response to critical incidents, adding extraordinary decisions and additional burden on the demands already carried by telecommunicators. Less staff will be asked to meet a bigger challenge of fielding even more non-emergency and emergency calls, reducing the ability for responders to reach serious situations promptly. The health and well-being of all concerned are not nearly worth the potential cost savings of combining these essential potentially life-saving services.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



John M. Moosey
Borough Manager

cc: Borough Mayor and Assembly





February 24, 2020

Honorable Governor Mike Dunleavy
Governor, State of Alaska
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Re: Proposed 2021 DPS Anchorage Emergency Communication Center Project

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

The purpose of this correspondence is to provide information and transparency regarding the Department of Public Safety’s initiative to move 9-1-1 service and emergency law enforcement dispatching from Southcentral and Southeast Alaska into a consolidated emergency communications center located in Anchorage. Approaching your office with decades of subject matter expertise, experience and front line exposure to public safety and emergency communications from across the state, the Kenai Borough, City of Wasilla, City of Houston, Matanuska Susitna Borough Emergency Services, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and City of Ketchikan bring forward a collaborative list of concerns pertaining to safety, technology issues, and fiscal impact. This consolidation project will have an enormous negative impact on *safety to responders, safety to the public, emergency communications as a whole*, as well as the impacts to the State’s budgets moving forward at a time of historic fiscal challenges.

SAFETY ISSUES

- **Diminished First Responder Communications:** The proposed change heavily risks diminished communications between response agencies, which is the number one cited failure in line of duty death investigations for police, fire and EMS rescuers. Resources on the same scene that can see each other will be unable to communicate in a timely manner if they are unable to do a face-to-face discussion. Incidents like these can be active assailant situations, mass casualty calls, hazmat calls, and railroad emergencies where the noise may restrict the ability to verbally communicate.
- **Delay of Definitive Patient Care:** The proposed change risks delay of definitive patient care for the public in the most at-risk communities for mass casualty and complex calls – the densely populated areas of Southcentral and Southeast Alaska.

- **Underestimated Staffing Needs:** The proposed change woefully underestimates the staffing needs of a dispatch center. The proposed dispatch center would be staffed with only 2 on-duty telecommunicators available 24-hours a day with a floating 3rd telecommunicator being available at times. The initiative's goal is to take the hundreds of thousands of calls currently answered by Matcom (which by itself has a minimum staffing of 5 on duty 24-hours a day), Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Ketchikan, and any other 9-1-1 center currently contracted by DPS and handle this volume with less staffing than any one of those dispatch centers, let alone the combined complement. Additionally, these two staffed positions would be tasked with fielding the one million plus push to talk transmissions over DPS ALMR radio systems while simultaneously juggling those emergency and non-emergency phone calls, updating records management systems for DPS, and providing judicial service and other administrative support after hours, on weekends, and holidays. This raises enormous concerns for the workload being placed on the telecommunicators, combined with the obvious risk to both public and first responders who may be calling for help and not receiving adequate attention while the telecommunicators are fielding radio traffic while on the phone and updating records management systems.

- **Lack of Medical Director Oversight:** The project summary indicates that the telecommunicators will be processing calls through Emergency Medical Dispatch and Emergency Fire Dispatch protocols. With a lack of a medical director with State oversight, the question is forced of who will be covering not only the responsibility, but the enormous liability for properly authoring, authorizing, installing, training, use and misuse of these protocols? What will these telecommunicators be doing with the medical emergency, CPR instruction, or bleed control in a rural community that has no emergency medical service provider? How would medical direction be given to an entry-level telecommunicator on when to cease CPR instructions because no emergency services will be responding?

Most importantly in the interest of emergency telecommunicators health and well-being, what toll will these traumatic calls with no emergency response capability ultimately take on the telecommunicators mentally? As it stands today, recent studies have shown an overwhelming mental health impact on emergency telecommunicators with approximately 73% suffering from anxiety and another 49% suffering from depression. The structure and direction of this project seems it will only continue to bog down and negatively impact these current findings.

- **Continued Diminished Communications:** Local municipally operated 9-1-1 centers would remain as the primary answering point for emergency calls, and would continue dispatching Fire/EMS after gathering information from the caller, at which point, when law enforcement is also needed (which happens very frequently), the caller would then be transferred to the DPS center. This would undoubtedly result in a safety issue and communication gap if information were to change after the caller was transferred, but prior to other emergency responders arriving. Local responders essentially lose access to that timely sharing of information. It also removes the regional knowledge that a local dispatch center would have,

- **Lack of Emergency Response Resources:** While this initiative to provide 9-1-1 services to the rural areas of Alaska is reasonable and the need undisputed, these areas would still be without the resources needed for a public safety response. Providing enhanced 9-1-1 service comes with a public perception that the caller will receive an emergency response. A centralized DPS center does not improve response times for the Alaska State Troopers. What would an Anchorage based emergency telecommunicator do with an urgent, high-priority call from a rural community that will have no response? Additionally, does the staffing model allow for that telecommunicator to be tied up on that call for an extended period attempting to give bleeding control, childbirth instructions, or CPR protocol while their one other partner in the room attempts to get a first response while fielding other emergency calls?
- **Non-Compliance with NIMS Standards:** The proposed change is not compliant with the National Incident Management System (NIMS). According to the most recent standard for NIMS and the Incident Command System (ICS), “Leadership at the incident level and in EOCs facilitates communication through the development and use of a common communications plan...Integrated communications provide and maintain contact among and between incident resources, enable connectivity between various levels of government, achieve situational awareness, and facilitate information sharing (source: National Incident Management System, 3rd edition, FEMA. [October 2017])

TECHNOLOGY ISSUES

- **Substantial Increased Risk of Failure:** Safety as it relates to potential failures in the telecommunications network – as it pertains to a 1,500 mile “network-loop” consisting of multiple layers of technology provided by multiple telecommunications providers required to ‘transport’ a 911 call from Southeast-to-Anchorage-to-Ketchikan for ultimate dispatch is one of several primary concerns in this initiative. In the Southeast, Ketchikan dispatch, for example, currently dispatches Ketchikan based Alaska State Troopers. While this call is currently transferred from a Ketchikan dispatcher to an AST dispatcher at the Ketchikan post, it is the best possible solution as it involves a maximum of approximately 20 ‘route miles’ of fiber optic cable, supported by an advanced all-IP network, all under the control of one company (KPU Telecommunications). This methodology ensures immediate response and a focused timely resolution should any aspect of the dispatch-network fail.
 - DPS’s initiative intends to relocate the dispatch function to Anchorage. Regardless of any timing delays in relying upon a system that transfers 911 calls to Anchorage, another concern is the additional technology and network topology that is being placed in the middle of the 911 call transaction (roughly 1,500 miles roundtrip).
 - The concerns are obvious in this scenario – DPS would be inserting the technical vagaries and risk of relying upon a network consisting of an additional 1,500 route miles and multiple layers of electronics owned and operated by a variety of

companies, none of which is controlled or operated locally, and all of which have failed in the past.

- The various past outages were not anomalies. The various outages represent 'the way things are' when complex networks (spanning thousands of miles) operated by multiple companies (traversing thousands of miles of mountain top, submarine and other challenging conditions) are tasked with interconnecting and operating 24/7 without fail. All 'works', but it never consistently works without fail.
- The concern cannot be stressed enough relative to the risk of off-island network outages delaying or preventing the completion of 911 calls and related attempts to dispatch a local Trooper.

- **Current Network Failures:** As recent as December 28, 2019, a serious network issue became relevant in Southeast Alaska wherein 911 calls from cell phones were failing to complete, and wherein 911 calls from cell phones to the local Ketchikan PSAP either contained incorrect telephone number information, or no telephone information at all. In short, cell phone calls to the local PSAP did not contain name, number or address information. After an hours-long troubleshooting with ACS, the company confirmed their network was 'OK' and that the network failure must be a result of issues in the lower 48. It was determined a fiber line for CenturyLink had been severed which ultimately resulted in a nearly 24-hour outage to 911 services for mobile callers spanning from Southeast and all the way up through Anchorage. These issues are prevalent, and they are ultimately unavoidable. As much as the State would like to think they can control the private telco providers in the state, this is a grossly misguided mentality; aside from the fact the State may think they would have any kind of oversight or control over providers nationally.

- **Lack of Oversight on Technological Installation, Costs & Maintenance:** Acquisition, installation, licensing, programming and implementation of radio networks, telephone networks, dispatch equipment and software, ALMR, microwave technology, CAMA phone trunk lines, databases, etc... are all areas which would undoubtedly fall on the State's Office of Information Technology (OIT). This department seems ill-prepared to absorb an additional project workload that will be ongoing annually from this initiative forward. A major concern as evidenced in the State of Alaska FY2021 Governor's Operating Budget: "Information systems: Significant reductions in experienced programming staff due to turnover and low compensation has resulted in knowledge gaps which is expected to continue throughout FY2020. Increased risks in managing legacy technologies with Alaska Public Safety Information System (APSIN) and other back office process automation software will continue to limit efforts to modernize the department..... technical staff within the department lack processes to work within the OIT structure."

- With the Department of Public Safety requesting excess of \$800,000 for personnel costs, it begs the question of status on the capitol project overall. Has the 911 phone system

been purchased, configured, and integrated with surrounding communities? Has the system proven itself to meet all needs and functionality for providing caller street addresses in communities where no addressing systems exist? What is the overall cost associated with radio equipment, phone equipment, CAD purchase and installation, ARMS, telephone demarcation equipment, and aside from all of this, what is the annual cost associated with maintenance and upgrades moving forward?

LOCATION/ADDRESSING ISSUES

- **Absence of Current Addressing and Geographic Information Systems:**

DPS's initiative is to bring "Enhanced 911 to communities that don't currently have this service".

- Enhanced 911 is defined by providing selective routing of 911 calls based on the caller's location. Selective routing requires the addition of three components to those required for basic 911:
- A Master Street Address Guide, the translation of the address of the caller to an Emergency Service Zone, and Selective Routing Database which can translate the street address to the proper Emergency Service Zone – in essence, routing to the correct 911 center based on caller's location
- The Master Street Address Guide includes all street addresses assigned through the local Geographic Information System. Unfortunately, every single unincorporated or "Rural" areas which DPS is pursuing to provide Enhanced 911 service to currently does not, and have never had, any sort of organized addressing or GIS information. This portion of the project alone would require construction, translation, and ongoing maintenance, with additional quality control of submitted databases of subscribers, working with data provided by villages, cities, and telephone companies in all areas of the proposed system. None of these aspects have been started, solved, or vetted. It seems evident that this initiative directed at DPS is to build and turn on, only then problem solve after the fact while people's safety and lives are unquestionably at risk.

- **Ongoing maintenance and Costs for GIS:** Compiling, constructing, translating, validating, and maintaining all these databases which currently do not exist will undoubtedly take years and potentially millions of currently unbudgeted funding combined with integration of these databases into a brand new and totally separate 9-1-1 call handling system.

FISCAL IMPACT ISSUES

- **Grossly Underestimated Costs:** DPS has repeatedly underestimated or misrepresented the costs associated with an emergency communications center. There are inherent costs relating to personnel, equipment maintenance, software upgrades, equipment replacement and other operational necessities that are continuous and will inevitably rise annually. To imply there will

be a cost SAVINGS is unrealistic. The scope of work DPS claims they are going to provide is absolutely not possible with the number of positions they have forecast to staff this new center.

- Were this initiative to move forward, it would be of great wisdom to conduct an in-depth analysis of the full, long-term, real costs associated with the new Anchorage based emergency communications center prior to any additional funding being appropriated or spent.

- **Fiscal Impact on Local Companies:** Local telephone providers will be forced by DPS initiative to provide technological transport over the course of a thousand plus miles to a demarcation point in Anchorage. These circuits can run upwards of \$8,000 a month which could bankrupt some of the locally owned and operated providers. Aside from this, many of the local providers have had zero communications from the DPS sponsored project managers other than a brief press release in January of 2020.

- **Current Funding Struggles:** According to Commissioner Price's testimony to the House Finance Sub Committee in early February 2020, DPS has expended approximately 50% of their allocated \$3.5 Million and are approximately 60% complete with the "engineering phase" – or putting ideas on paper. Associated costs which will undoubtedly soar over budget for the State include
 - Increased Staffing – as the current staffing model will undoubtedly fail
 - Build/Create new dispatch center in Anchorage
 - Develop, implement, purchase, consolidate
 - New Software
 - New Hardware
 - Dispatcher Terminals
 - Building Maintenance Costs
 - Technology costs which increase annually
 - Integration with surrounding municipal PSAPs

It can be easily assumed that the annual operating budget for this emergency communications center will exceed \$3.5 Million each year, not as a one-time startup cost followed by \$870,000 annually for staffing as is being projected.

- **Economic Stimulation Shifts from Rural to Urban Communities:** Current contract fees being paid to local jurisdictions to encourage wider economic development of those municipalities would be spent solely in the Anchorage and Fairbanks areas which have strong economies. The move could devastate the ability of some agencies to maintain the high level of success and safety that is currently performed daily. Many dispatch centers would lose several employment positions resulting in more burden on those that remain and a less diverse economic investment in public safety statewide. Although DPS is encouraging that the current dispatch employees

would receive opportunity to move to Anchorage, this is directly contradicted by DPS response to Representative LeBon dated January 25, 2020: *"The cost savings are found primarily in the marginal costs of local-agency provided services and recruitment of entry-level dispatchers. Local agency services to DPS come at a higher cost due to several factors; ... DPS has already experienced attrition of existing Emergency Services Dispatcher positions, so that their replacements will likely be entry level employees starting at a lower salary level."*


It is accurate to say that the proposal, as currently drafted, could result in a more efficient 9-1-1 system for DPS in remote areas of Alaska, but that efficiency will come at the enormous cost of dispatch capabilities for local municipalities and a cost to safety, risk, and potentially life. Emergency services and their activation MUST be built for resiliency, not efficiency, if we are to provide an adequate service that our residents expect and deserve. This proposal, a carryover from Governor Walker administration, mainly focused on cutting service, and being an apparent knee-jerk reaction capitol project thrown onto DPS with inadequate foundation, must be terminated and replaced with a proposal that bolsters local dispatch centers with increased cooperation, improved reliability, and insulated resilience to disaster and failure.


Public Safety is always best handled at the lowest level of government possible. Between the MatSu, Kenai, and Southeast areas, these local 9-1-1 centers currently operate in the most effective, efficient, and life-saving manner possible as it is within their own community that they are providing service and obtaining funding. To disrupt and divide this service would not only be irresponsible, but could dangerously affect each community's emergency response in the worst way.

Combined opposition to the construction and implementation of the Anchorage Emergency Communications Center under the management of the Department of Public Safety has been resounded from the Mayors of the City of Wasilla, City of Houston, Kenai Peninsula Borough, MatSu Borough Emergency Services, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, City of Ketchikan, Matcom Public Safety Dispatch, and Soldotna Public Safety Communications Center. State representatives and Senators for their respective communities are also disheartened to hear of these proceedings on behalf of their constituents. Combined professional experience and subject matter expertise of this level must be heavily weighed and valued on a matter that will negatively affect the emergency call processing for hundreds of thousands of people.


Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


For Kenai Borough Mayor Pierce


Ketchikan Borough Mayor Dial ¹

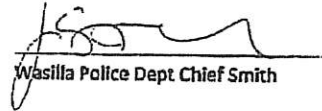

City of Wasilla Mayor Cottle


City of Houston Mayor Thompson


Matcom Dispatch Manager Butler


Houston Fire Dept Chief Hartley


Ketchikan City Public Utility Manager


Wasilla Police Dept Chief Smith


Mat-Su Borough Emergency Services Director Barkley

¹The Ketchikan Gateway Borough issued a media release on November 29, 2019, highlighting the need to retain AST services in Ketchikan. A resolution voicing concern over the proposed consolidation of dispatch services is scheduled for consideration by the Borough Assembly on March 9, 2020.