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**THE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY / THE ANCHORAGE SCHOOL BOARD**

**Assembly Conference Room  
First Floor, City Hall**

**Minutes for Joint Meeting of May 14, 2004**

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

The Joint Meeting of the Municipal Assembly and the Anchorage School Board was called to order by Chair Traini at 11:00 a.m. in the Assembly Conference Room, Room 155, City Hall, 632 West 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Anchorage, Alaska.

**2. ROLL CALL**

**ASSEMBLYMEMBERS**

PRESENT: Anna Fairclough, Brian Whittle, Dick Tremaine, Dan Sullivan, Dick Traini, Allan Tesche, Ken Stout, Pamela Jennings, Debbie Ossiander and Janice Shamberg.

ABSENT: Dan Coffey, excused.

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:**

PRESENT: President Tim Steele, Vice President Mary Marks, Jeff Friedman, Jake Metcalfe and Macon Roberts with Crystal Kennedy and John Steiner arriving shortly after roll call.

**ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT MEMBERS and OTHERS PRESENT**

PRESENT: Superintendent Carol Comeau, Assistant Superintendent George Vakalis, Mayor Mark Begich, Deputy Municipal Manager Michael Abbott, Assembly Budget Director Elvi Gray-Jackson, Municipal Clerk Barbara Gruenstein and others.

**3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE** Ms. Marks led the pledge.

**4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS JOINT MEETING**

4.A. Minutes of Joint Meeting of February 13, 2004.

It was agreed to take up action of the Minutes later in the Meeting, to allow members time to review them.  
(Clerk's Note: Continued to next meeting.)

**5. ADDENDUM TO AGENDA**

Chair Traini called for additional items to be added to the Agenda. Ms. Ossiander requested a discussion of Yosemite Drive. Mr. Sullivan proposed discussion of the School District's art display policy and School District taxing authority. President Tim Steele requested discussions of the request for proposals (RFPs) for the administration facility and the revised school calendar. Mr. Tesche requested a short report on the Youth Assessment Center. Chair Traini assigned these items Agenda Numbers 6.C, 6.D, 6.E, 6.F, 6.G and 6.H, respectively.

**6. ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

6.A. **April 2005 Election Conflict-HSG Qualifying Exam Testing**

Superintendent Comeau stated that the State of Alaska had changed the date of mandated testing to the week of the Municipal Election, April 5, 2005. It would cause a conflict with the students and the schools used as polling places. She requested that the Assembly allow her to work with the Commissioner of Education and the Clerk to see if those

1 dates could be changed to another time. To Mr. Tesche, Ms. Comeau responded the scheduled Spring Break was  
2 March 21 through March 25, 2005. Chair Traini viewed this as a "hot" issue, and asked her to work with the Education  
3 Commissioner and the Clerk, to correct the conflict.

4  
5 **6.B. Bonds Debriefing**

6  
7 Superintendent Comeau stated they were still analyzing the bond question and school renovations issues. She  
8 thought there was enough support for the new middle school. She wanted to inform the Assembly what they were  
9 reviewing and that Mr. Vakalis was in communication with the Clerk.

10  
11 Municipal Clerk Barbara Gruenstein responded that the state would not allow municipal bond issues to be on a state  
12 ballot. A mail-in ballot election would allow more options to consider, getting the bond issues to the voters. Mr. Steele  
13 stated that this had been discussed for some time and he was curious about the mail-in ballot method. Mr. Sullivan  
14 thought the mail-in method had been successful in other states. Ms. Fairclough did not agree with a one-hundred  
15 percent mail-in ballot for an appropriation issue. Mr. Tesche urged the Assembly and the School Administration to  
16 follow through on investigating this issue. Chair Traini asked Mayor Begich to be involved with communications with  
17 the State of Alaska.

18  
19 Ms. Shamberg stated that she had received calls from voters who thought there was too much money being spent on  
20 design and construction of the administration facility. She asked if it would be possible to break down the ballot to list  
21 each proposed project, for the voters to have the choice. Mr. Steele stated that Ms. Ossiander had already requested  
22 a copy of the survey that had been conducted, showing public interest for the various, proposed school projects.

23  
24 **6.C. Yosemite Drive, Assemblymember Ossiander.**

25  
26 Ms. Ossiander had received a number of calls concerning the width and design of Yosemite Drive. She stated that  
27 traffic by the school was a concern. Mr. Steele responded the study process involved consultants and traffic analysis  
28 and they had received recommendations, taking into consideration all contributing factors. Mr. Steele stated the  
29 Department of Transportation was analyzing the issue. He stated the School Board would receive those  
30 recommendations soon and that he would keep Assemblymembers informed. He added if the recommendations  
31 involved road widening, drainage, sidewalks or street lighting, they would consider asking developers of the  
32 subdivisions to be involved. Ms. Ossiander stated this issue was a top priority. Ms. Fairclough thought this issue was  
33 on the AMATS, as was the intersection of Highland Road and the Glenn Highway.

34  
35 **6.D. School District Art Design/Display Policy, Assemblymember Sullivan.**

36  
37 Mr. Sullivan stated that he had received calls concerning the recent art display in the library of East High School,  
38 depicting gay politicians. He wanted to know the display policy for the district. Ms. Comeau responded that the photo  
39 display was shown at all six high schools and Steller. The display was based on historic, famous people and each  
40 school principal had agreed to the display. Ms. Comeau stated that she would be available to talk with anyone who  
41 had questions about the photo displays approved to be shown in the schools.

42  
43 **6.E. Taxing Authority, Assemblymember Sullivan.**

44  
45 Ms. Comeau explained that the Governor had confirmed that he would sign the bill, allocating \$27 million for education  
46 funding. She stated the revision of the ASD Budget, to include Anchorage's portion of the money, would go before the  
47 School Board on May 22, 2004, and their goal was to reinstate instructional programs as soon as possible. They were  
48 predicting there would be no layoffs.

49  
50 Ms. Fairclough stated the money should go directly into a fund for property tax relief.

51  
52 Mr. Friedman stated that the ASD appreciated being given the additional funding from the state.

53  
54 Mr. Sullivan stated that this issue should be reviewed by the Finance Director, Mr. Sinz, because the MOA had already  
55 set the mill rates. He thought concerns may be resolved by the Anchorage School District giving back funds to the  
56 Municipality.

57  
58 Mr. Tesche thought that this appropriation may assist with tax relief following the appropriation cuts. He stated he  
59 would like to see recommendations from the Administration and suggested checking the effect on the tax cap if funds  
60 were used to reduce property tax.

1           **6.F. Request For Proposal (RFP) for Administration Facility, ASB President Steele.**

2  
3 Mr. Vakalis stated the School District was pursuing additional options, and had written up new RFPs for leasing  
4 options of the administration facility. There were additional options they could pursue, including a combination of two  
5 5-year leases, a nine-year lease or a first option-to-purchase with a vote from the people. He stated that the RFPs for  
6 the facility had gone out on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, due back on May 20<sup>th</sup>. The ASD Administration would then discuss the different  
7 options and decide if they would proceed with a recommendation to the School Board for consideration.

8  
9 Superintendent Comeau explained that even though the bond proposition failed at the recent Municipal Election, she  
10 felt the need had not gone away. She thought it was important to pursue the lease idea again. Chair Traini reminded  
11 them they could use the Assembly Chambers for their School Board Meetings at any time.

12  
13 Mr. Tesche questioned the nine-year lease option the School Board was considering. Mr. Vakalis responded they  
14 could pursue this lease option for 18 or 19 years and that no voter approval was needed for this arrangement. Mr.  
15 Vakalis stated that after receiving recommendations from the School Board, the next step would be to inform the  
16 Assembly. He stated copies of the RFPs would be made available to the Assembly.

17  
18 Mr. Tremaine read from the Anchorage Charter, Section 12.01, the requirements of the Comprehensive Plan. He  
19 pointed out the section that directed location of municipal, state and federal administration offices to the Central  
20 Business District. He did not think the Charter was being upheld. Mr. Vakalis responded that Title 21 provided  
21 allowances if it were in the public interest and that the building did not need to be in the Downtown District. He thought  
22 that decision could be made by the Assembly. Mr. Tremaine urged the School District to commit to placement of the  
23 administration facilities in the Central Business District. Mr. Vakalis mentioned the possible traffic and parking  
24 concerns and thought it would be challenging to meet the requirements of the Charter. Mr. Tremaine stated there was  
25 a history of disagreement on this issue and he would remain firm on his interpretation of the Anchorage Charter in  
26 respect to the location of municipal administration facilities in the Central Business District.

27  
28 Superintendent Comeau questioned if all offices, big or small, needed to be in the Central Business District. Mr.  
29 Tremaine responded that the Charter applied to all large, leased facilities.

30  
31 Mr. Stout did not think administration facilities should be scattered all over town, and encouraged the School District to  
32 communicate with the public and let their intentions be known. Superintendent Comeau responded that the voters  
33 could decide.

34  
35 Ms. Fairclough stated that the Assembly had delegated the authority for site selection to the School District many  
36 years ago, and Mr. Tremaine was referring to strategy concerning rebuilding the downtown district. She thought that  
37 the public should be involved with the decision.

38  
39 Mr. Tesche stated that for the past few years the Assembly had had a collaborative relationship with the Anchorage  
40 School Superintendent and members of the School Board. He stated this process of RFPs was a disappointment to  
41 him, and saw conflict with the School District's plans and the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. He thought the process  
42 should involve at least informal communications between the Assembly and the ASD. Ms. Comeau responded they  
43 had not intended to be secret and assumed the Assembly had been informed that they would be taking public  
44 comments right after the election. They were seeking a lease, not a purchase and did not think it was something that  
45 justified a Special Meeting with the Assembly. She had communicated with the Mayor, concerning the bonds. She  
46 viewed the lack of communication to Assemblymembers as an oversight. Mr. Tesche felt the School District could  
47 present an amendment to the 2020 Plan that would clearly exempt them from the 2020 Plan requirements.

48  
49 ASB President Tim Steele stated he appreciated the comments and concern. He thought that this was a unique  
50 instance and acknowledged their failure to communicate with the Assembly, but thought it was premature to think the  
51 facility would not be downtown.

52  
53 Mr. John Steiner urged legal review by both sides, to determine what applied to leases versus ownership, before they  
54 reviewed the RFPs. He thought a waiver may be considered in this case.

55  
56 Mr. Jeff Friedman thought that Policy 79 of the 2020 Plan also stated that site selection criteria for government facilities  
57 frequented by the public could be based on financial consideration. He thought both bodies should agree what  
58 responsibilities existed. He recommended a worksession to clarify direction concerning responsibilities, including  
59 maintenance of ball fields, community council locations and long term leases.

1 Mr. Jake Metcalfe thought that Superintendent Comeau had been clear, expressing her intentions of procedures,  
2 including a public television interview following the election.

3  
4 Vice President Mary Marks agreed with what had been said. They were assuming the information was being shared.  
5 She stated the RFPs had already been released and they would follow through with their plans.

6  
7 Mr. Tremaine thought it was good news that the RFPs were due on the 20<sup>th</sup>, which would allow the School District to  
8 create an appropriate amendment to move things in the right direction in compliance with the Comprehensive Plan.

9  
10 Chair Traini stated he would support the Superintendent and was confident that both bodies could resolve the issues.

11  
12 Ms. Ossiander stated that she had spent ten years as a member of the School Board, working with the Assembly, and  
13 there was always a question of authority concerning responsibility of school construction and capital needs of the  
14 Anchorage School District. She agreed that a worksession was a good idea, to review and outline the responsibilities  
15 set forth in the 2020 Plan.

16  
17 Mr. Tesche stated he would review the 2001 law, which adopted the Comprehensive Plan.

18  
19 **6.G. Revised 2004-2005 School Calendar**, ASB President Steele.

20  
21 Time did not allow for discussion of this item. *(Clerk's Note: Continued to next meeting.)*

22  
23 **6.H. Funding For Youth Assessment Center**, Assemblymember Tesche.

24  
25 Time did not allow for discussion of this item. *(Clerk's Note: Continued to next meeting.)*

26  
27 **7. COMMENTS** None.

28  
29 **8. SCHEDULING OF NEXT JOINT MEETING** None.

30  
31 **9. ADJOURNMENT**

32  
33 Mr. Tesche moved, \_\_\_\_\_ to adjourn the Joint Assembly/School Board Meeting.  
34 Mr. Whittle seconded,  
35 and this motion was approved,

36  
37 **AYES:** Fairclough, Whittle, Tremaine, Sullivan, Traini, Tesche, Stout, Jennings, Ossiander, Shamberg, Steele,  
38 Marks, Friedman, Metcalfe, Roberts, Kennedy, and Steiner.

39 **NAYES:** None.

40  
41 The Special Assembly Meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

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49 TIM STEELE, School Board President

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DICK TRAINI, Assembly Chair

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ATTEST:

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BARBARA GRUENSTEIN, Municipal Clerk

Date Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_, 2004

MC/BG

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