

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

July 2023 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

This report speaks primarily to non-agenda items. Agenda items will be discussed in meeting.

State Budget and Vetoes

- Since our last meeting, Governor Dunleavy used his line-item veto authority to reduce state operating and capital budget line items by a combined total of \$200M.
- Several items which were identified as Denali Borough priorities were reduced:
 - Major School Maintenance Grant funding was reduced by \$10M. The remaining amount funds the top five projects from the priority list. The Denali Borough's Tri-Valley School Partial Roof Replacement Project is currently ranked number 16 on that list.
 - The Community Assistance Program will be fully funded but not recapitalized. \$30M in recapitalization funding was vetoed, which impacts the future of the program.
 - The one-time Base Student Allocation increase approved by the Legislature was cut in half – to \$87.5M. The Governor's budget, the starting point at the beginning of legislative session, included no increase. So, while the cut is disappointing to many, the result is significantly more than the starting point.

Kickoff Meeting with Design Alaska regarding Subdivision Planning

- On June 28th, representatives from Design Alaska joined borough representatives to visit borough land in the Lignite Road area with an eye toward developing a conceptual plan for a new subdivision. Existing trails, lot number and sizes, and other recommendations from the public and the Planning Commission will be considered in developing the conceptual plan. The conceptual plan will then undergo review from the Assembly, Planning Commission, and public, prior to development of a final plan.

Community and Outdoor Recreation Committee

- This committee met on June 26th. The Community and Outdoor Recreation Survey garnered 245 responses. The next meeting is in August, when the committee plans to identify projects from the input received, which will then be prioritized.

Street Address Project Update

- Street name signs are being installed by the contractor. Over 200 street number signs have been received and those applicants will be contacted to pick up their number signs.
- Reminder that to receive a street address one must first apply – either online or in person.

Interior Alaska Transportation Plan Comments

- As part of their planning process, I submitted comments to help inform this section of their plan. I focused on projects identified and prioritized in the 2022 DOT Cantwell to Ferry Planning and Environmental Linkage Study and added needs north of Ferry and aviation needs.

State of Alaska Broadband Office

- The borough submitted a letter to the office requesting they revise the State broadband map to use the latest data from the FCC which provides more granular information and reveals that many areas of the Denali Borough are either unserved or underserved in terms of access to broadband.

State Assessor Visit to Denali Borough

- It's been over four years since the last State Assessor visit. As one of four Alaskan boroughs without local assessment, the State Assessor is tasked with assessing the Full and True Value of all Real and Personal Property within the borough. That figure will then inform our mandatory local contribution to the Denali Borough School District.

PILT (Payment In Lieu of Taxes) Payment from DOI (Department of Interior)

- This payment went down this year due to our lower population count from the 2020 Census. A later budget amendment will revise this revenue figure.

Grant Application and Project Updates

- As part of the Healthy and Equity Communities Grant we received, the borough is engaging an engineer to develop plans for a vaulted toilet at Otto Lake Park.
- We did not receive the RuralCap Thriving Communities grant submitted to upgrade the Anderson School outdoor basketball and tennis court.
- We were not awarded a US DOT RAISE grant for the MP 235 at-grade Railroad Crossing Realignment project.
- We were not awarded a HRSA planning grant to develop a rural mobile integrated health care network.

Alaska Municipal League Summer Legislative Conference (Aug 9-11 in Homer)

- Conference information and agendas can be found here: <https://www.akml.org/conferences-events/summerconference/>
- Conference overlaps with the August 9th Assembly meeting, so I will attend that meeting remotely.

Happy July, happy summer days!

As always, feel free to contact me or staff with any questions.

- Clay