

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

October 2021 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

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

Street Naming Meetings and Next Steps

- Outcomes from the April virtual road naming meeting were to change code language (addressing duplicate and non-conforming names) and to schedule a second round of in-person meetings.
- Those in-person meetings were held in late September in each of our three ambulance service areas – one in Cantwell, one in Healy, and one in Anderson.
- New maps, which have been available online, were produced for the meetings. Comments have been received electronically and in person.
- The Planning Commission will consider the first round of approvals of “official street names” at their October meeting – the list of “no change” names.

Brush Collection Site Treatments

- This newer program of accepting brush from residential fire-wising efforts at all three solid waste locations has proved a success in terms of usage. The piles at Healy Transfer Station (which was built up over two years) and Cantwell Transfer Station (which was chipped last year) were both sizable. The borough received a \$20,000 grant from Forestry to assist with chipping and/or other disposal. I am happy to report that all brush has been addressed and the grant was well used. Thanks to volunteers at McKinley VFD and Tri-Valley VFD for their assistance, and to Forestry.
- Three different treatment methods – chipping, mulching, and burning- were all employed. Going forward, the Healy collection site will shift to the south side of the facility where future piles can be burned. The west side collection site could not be burned due to the overhead power lines, therefore it needed to be chipped and mulched. The chip piles will be available to the public when the program resumes next May.

Denali National Park Road Issues

- I attended a few different sessions with NPS and stakeholders regarding the road challenges at Polychrome. NPS is hosting public meetings October 13 and 14 which will include presentations and acceptance of public comment regarding a proposed action plan to build a bridge spanning the landslide. For more information, see: <https://www.nps.gov/dena/getinvolved/polychrome-plan.htm>

2021 Full Value Determination (FVD)

- We received our annual FVD which the State Assessor provides the borough. In 2021, the “full and true value of taxable real and personal property” within the Denali Borough is \$400,181,141.

- This is the first time the figure has exceeded \$400 million. Last year the FVD was \$385 million. This will increase our required local school district contribution, which is currently 2.6 mills of the FVD.

Solid Waste Update

- The recycling trailers at HTS and CTS will be hauled for the last time for the year when they are full. Winter recycling will be accepted at CTS through the Native Village Recycling program. We anticipate the pilot program of the trailer collections will resume in May.
- The Denali Borough Landfill will change to its winter hours of operation on October 15th, meaning the Thursday hours will be subtracted. Open 9-4 Tues, Wed, Fri and Sat.
- The scrap metal pile at the landfill was hauled away by salvage company. A pile of soil and metal remains to be dealt with, prompting some operational changes to the program. No small items (nuts, bolts, etc) will be accepted.
- Final tonnage reports for FY21 show our lowest acceptance level in many years. Since 2008, we have averaged just under 4,000 tons annually. This past year we accepted 2,508 tons. This is very good for the lifespan of the facility. And a little challenging for the balance sheet, where many costs, such as well monitoring expenses, are fixed.

Memorandums of Agreements (MOAs) with the Dept. of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

- DHSS accepted the borough's requests to amend our two MOAs, which pay for free COVID testing and vaccine service provision in the borough. We extended the date on one and increased the dollar amount by \$100,000 on the other. Through these MOAs, the borough believes we have the capacity to support free COVID testing and vaccination through next March.

Horizon Medical Partnership

- Horizon is the contracted partner to deliver these services to the community. Their location has changed with the seasonal closure of the Canyon Clinic. The borough, paid for by an MOA, is renting the former bank space in Tri-Valley Community Center and Horizon is using that as their base. COVID testing will continue in the trailer while the former ATM space is converted to serve that purpose.
- October COVID Vaccination Clinics are scheduled for:
 - Monday October 11: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
 - Monday October 18: 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.
 - Monday October 25: 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
 - To schedule, or for more information, visit www.horizonmedicalak.com or call (907) 750-4182.
- October hours for COVID testing are:
 - Monday 2:30 - 6:30 p.m.
 - Tuesday 9:00 - 11:00 a.m.
 - Wednesday 2:30 - 6:30 p.m.
 - Thursday 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.
 - Friday 9:00 – 11:00 a.m.

New Partnership with the Healy Lions Club to support individual COVID costs

- The borough entered into an agreement with Healy Lions Club to help offset individual expenses due to COVID-19, which may include medical expenses. The club is receiving applications and will allocate up to \$10,000 of Denali CARES funds to help impacted residents. The borough is hosting their application on our website.

Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant (BBBRC) Application

- The borough is a member of a coalition which is advancing the Alaska Regenerative Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Project to the U.S. Economic Development Administration. Our component project is the Denali Gateway Corridor, which focuses on bringing improvements and increased access to Denali's frontcountry areas. This is a competitive grant with applications due Oct. 19.

Legislative Redistricting based upon changing population

- As reported earlier, both versions of draft legislative redistricting maps proposed by the Alaska Redistricting Board merge the Denali Borough with populations to the south, primarily the Susitna Valley. Alternative proposals are being accepted and public meetings are scheduled. For more info, go to: www.akredistrict.org

Personnel Policy and Procedure Manual

- Management is working on an update to the Policy Manual, which was last updated in 2015. Expect the updated version on your agenda for consideration of approval at the November meeting.

Election Reminder

- On November 2, the borough will conduct a local election. The ballot includes Assembly and School Board seats as well as a ballot question regarding meeting attendance. Per code, there are three ways to vote: in person early voting at the borough office during regular office hours beginning October 13, by-mail voting, and in person on Election Day.

Annual Local Government Conference November 15-19

- The Alaska Municipal League is hosting this annual conference in person in Anchorage. Portions will also be available for online viewing, including the session on training for newly elected officials. Call the office if you are interested in attending in person, or see the website for more information: www.akml.org/conferences-events/annual-local-government-conference

Happy October, happy fall project time. As always, feel free to contact me or staff with questions.

-Clay