

DENALI BOROUGH

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Clay Walker, Mayor

October 2023 Mayor's Report to the Denali Borough Assembly

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

73rd Annual Alaskan Local Government Conference Dec. 6-8 Dena'ina Center, Anchorage

- Mark your calendars for the Annual Local Government Conference hosted by the Alaska Municipal League (AML). Seats on the AML Board of Directors will be open for election. As I step away from serving as a Past President and nine years on the Board, it will be important for the Denali Borough to remain active in this statewide municipal advocacy and support organization. The Newly Elected Officials training, provided free online November 29 and in-person at cost on December 4th, is always very worthwhile.
- I will be presenting on Public Lands and the National Assn. of Counties' advocacy for public land policy.

EMPG Grant Award

- The Emergency Management Performance Grant, which helps fund our Emergency Manager position, has been awarded at a higher level than in previous years. This year we are set to receive \$30,000 through this program, which includes training, attendance, and reporting requirements.

SHSP Grant Award

- Generators! As many of you know, we have been pursuing back-up generator projects, focused on emergency shelter locations and Fire Departments, for some time now. We are very excited to receive preliminary approval for three back-up generator projects throughout the borough. Obligating awards are still to come, but we have been approved for \$197,750.00 through the State Homeland Security Grant program to install back-up generators at the Cantwell Volunteer Fire Department, McKinley Volunteer Fire Department/McKinley Community Center, and Tri-Valley School.

2023 Full Value Determination

- The borough received our 2023 Full Determination from the State Assessor, under the Division of Community and Regional Affairs. The 2023 full and true value of all real and personal property within the borough is \$396,962,058. This is a small decline from our 2022 determination of \$398,632,167. This figure directly relates to the borough's Required Local Contribution (RLC) to the Denali Borough School District as current statute sets the RLC at a 2.65 property tax mill rate. So, we can expect our RLC to be about \$1,051,949, or about \$4,500 under what we budgeted.

Interior Community Health Center (IHC) Communications

- After the September Assembly Resolution 23-23 requesting IHC public outreach was postponed indefinitely, I accepted an invitation to meet with the IHC Board of Directors and discuss community concerns. I brought copies of the public comments provided and we spent more than an hour discussing level of service provided, requirements and constraints of the grant program

used to supplement the costs of providing primary care, and their interest in continuing to serve our community.

- ICHC expressed an interest in seeking additional funds to construct a new clinic in Healy, for the \$2.5 million in received Congressionally Designated Spending does not meet the full amount needed. As ICHC considers additional grant funding requests, local support (likely via resolution) will be a necessary component of those applications. Executive Director Cheryl Kilgore requested the Assembly consider whether that support would be provided for future applications. We have heard from some residents that their level of service (primary care, with staffing challenges) does not meet our needs. Do the services they do provide (they had over 1000 clinic visits in 2022) compel the Assembly to offer some level of support? More on this later...

State Medical Board Communication

- The State of Alaska Medical Board solicited public comments regarding proposed changes to regulations which would place additional limitations on the license of a Physician Assistant regarding care provisions and extend the training hours needed prior to delivering rural services. The borough submitted comments opposed to the proposed changes due to the negative impacts these changes would have on service provision by PAs, specifically in rural settings, and the additional burden those changes would place on local EMS responders.

Borough Subdivision Planning

- At their September 27th meeting, the Denali Borough Planning Commission approved moving forward with a next phase of subdivision planning, which is to bring the conceptual design of a potential Lignite Road subdivision of borough land to the public for comment.

November 3 Vaccine Clinic

- The borough is working with the Department of Public Health and others to provide a local flu vaccination clinic. Tentative schedule is for 3 pm to 6 pm at the Tri-Valley Community Center. Early voting in the borough elections will also be offered at this time.

November 7 Denali Borough Election

- Early in-person voting will begin October 18th in the Denali Borough office on the second floor of the Tri-Valley Community Center from 9 am to 4 pm Monday through Thursday. Per borough code, ballots will also be mailed to all eligible voters. In person voting on Election Day Nov. 7 will be at the four borough polling locations, from 7 am to 8 pm. For more information, visit: www.denaliborough.org/election.

Happy October, happy ease into winter.

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

- Clay