

# DENALI BOROUGH

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*Clay Walker, Mayor*

## **September 2022 Mayor’s Report to the Denali Borough Assembly**

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

### **Clear Fire Ongoing Recovery Efforts**

- The borough has spent a little over the \$20,000 allocated from the Disaster Contingency Reserve Fund to assist in recovery efforts such as debris removal. Next, we have garnered a commitment from Team Rubicon, a volunteer disaster response team, to assist with remaining debris and hazard tree removal. We appreciate their generous effort in support of our impacted residents. Thank you, Team Rubicon!

### **Denali Regional Airport Planning**

- The borough, State DOT, and Doyon, Inc., who have partnered to further this planning process, are meeting regularly. We met with a Transportation staffer in Sen. Murkowski’s office this month. The Federal Aviation Administration’s guidebook to the Airport Improvement Program includes programmatic restrictions for this type of development which present hurdles to utilizing this program. The group will continue to pursue potential paths forward.

### **Infrastructure Week hosted by Sen. Murkowski, AML, and AFN (Sept. 6-9)**

- I participated on the 7th via Zoom and Teresa Floberg attended “Transportation Day” on September 9<sup>th</sup>. Staying tuned in to programs as they are developed and considering future requests are important roles for the borough, as we learned more about this generational funding opportunity.

### **State Homeland Security Grant Program (SHSGP)**

- In February 2022, the Assembly approved Resolution 22-09 which authorized the administration to pursue a SHSGP application for funds to “assist with a street name signage project and a mobile radio upgrade project.” I am happy to report that the Denali Borough has been awarded the full request, which was about \$45,000 for the street addressing project and \$55,000 for the mobile radio upgrade for the Volunteer Fire Departments.

### **Kobe Area Easement Disputes**

- The borough has been involved, with both the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Department of Public Safety, in resolving a dispute regarding the location of a platted public access easement and its use as a right-of-way. I mention this in the event that further work is necessary on this question and also to notify the Assembly that DNR is assisting in what they consider “a borough matter.” We are newer to “managing” the publicly platted easements within

the borough, but that is exactly what DNR expects going forward with the responsibility assumed in becoming a borough and standing up a platting authority.

### **DOT Projects – Parks Highway MP 231 Safety Enhancements**

- Highway paving concluded on September 7<sup>th</sup> and guardrail installation and striping is expected to be completed by the end of September. Pathway, Wayside components, and full project completion is expected in June 2023.
- Up-to date project information can be found at: <https://www.alaskanavigator.org/projects/parks-highway-mp-231-enhancements>.

### **Solid Waste Updates**

- The State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has issued the Denali Borough a new five-year Operating Permit for the Denali Borough Landfill. The permit does stipulate requirements regarding updates to our groundwater monitoring program, some of which were not included in the current FY23 budget. Also, the permit mandates a new monitoring program in the future for Landfill Explosive Gas (methane).

### **Spruce Network Land Inquiry**

- Along with Superintendent Polta, I met with representatives from the Spruce Network, a local group interested in building and operating a community recreation center. The location the group is most interested in is a borough-owned parcel, dedicated to school use, located in Healy between the Community Center and DOT, to the south of School Road. Mr. Polta's inquiries revealed that since the property is borough owned, the borough could enter its public process on land use and designate this land for another public purpose.

### **Anderson School Roof Project**

- This completed project was funded by the State within the current budget and Superintendent Polta has signed the Project Agreement. The Denali Borough will, via a future allocation ordinance, provide the local participating share of \$253,894 out of the Major School Maintenance Reserve Fund.

### **Alaska Municipal League Summer Legislative Conference August 10-12**

- The City and Borough of Sitka did a fantastic job hosting Summer AML Conference. On Wednesday, with other Mayors, I attended site visits to Sitka's Blue Lake Hydro Power Plant and learned about re-development efforts and process at their former Pulp Mill site. The Alaska Conference of Mayors that afternoon focused on Healthy Communities with sessions on economic development, housing, education, and transportation. On Thursday, we focused on legislative priorities and policy priorities. On Friday, we developed AML's position statements, engaged with Sen. Murkowski and I participated in a separate meeting of the Board of Directors.

### **December AML Annual Local Government Conference**

- Annual conference is different this year – different dates (December 7-9) and different location (the Dena'ina Center in Anchorage). Assembly members interested in attending this valuable conference and trainings should contact the borough office for travel authorization and planning.

**National Association of Counties** – I was re-appointed to service on the Public Lands Steering Committee

### **Candidate Packets – November 8, 2022 Election**

- The following seats are to be filled and candidate packets are due in the borough office by September 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 pm:

- Assembly Seat C, Healy Area
- Assembly Seat D, Healy Area
- Assembly Seat H, Anderson/Clear Area
- Assembly Seat I, Anderson/Clear Area
- School Board Seat A, Cantwell Area
- School Board Seat E, Healy Area
- School Board Seat I, Anderson/Clear Area

**Other activities of note:**

- I met with Clear Space Force Commander Lt. Col. Castle. We discussed ways and ideas in which to better integrate base and our communities.
- I attended a ceremony at the Denali Visitor Center opening a new exhibit of a Bear Spear, which was originally within the park and since has been in Tanana and Nenana. A potlatch followed with strong participation from Cantwell and Nenana native tribe members. The spear is estimated to be over 100 years old and is quite a relevant artifact and exhibit at the Visitor Center.

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

- Clay