

Retired Public Employees of Alaska
Southeast Chapter
Minutes of September 8, 2022

Chapter chair, Brenda Knapp, was out of town and Vice-president Kim Metcalfe called the meeting to order at 11:50. In attendance were 11 chapter members and Treasurer Mike Notar and Secretary Alan Davis. Ms. Metcalfe introduced our guests, Juneau Assembly members Greg Smith and Wade Bryson. They are two of the incumbents running unopposed in the upcoming municipal elections. Each gave a three-minute introductory message and then they responded to questions from the audience.

There were several topics discussed. Both commented on the process involved in deciding on and locating the proposed new city hall building. The desire to locate all city offices in one location and eliminate the multiple rental costs around town and have a newer, more efficient building has been longstanding. A new building in the chosen location was the best option available, and they urged voters to approve the bond issue for it.

The new electric bus was purchased with the help of Federal funding. There is concern about battery life, especially in the colder winter months and they are working to address that. The Assembly is looking into replacing more busses with electric ones, and are looking at other manufacturers to mitigate the battery life problem.

There was a question about mitigating the effects of tourism in town. Traffic congestion and noise were big complaints. Also, people complained about not having their concerns listened to and addressed. One person asked, "What can a citizen do to get the attention of city hall?" Both Assembly members were apologetic and said they were aware of the problems and complaints. There is a physical maximum of five large tour boats in town at one time. That will be true even with the new proposed dock. There is legacy law that forbids limiting ships or the number of visitors, so the Assembly has limited ability to control tourism. They have hired a tourism manager to see what can be done.

Another person brought up the issue of cruise ships being allowed to leave their trash and filling up our landfill, which limits its usable life. In response the speakers promised to find out more on the issue.

There were also questions about the Ironman event. It benefited some local businesses, but which brought a great bulge of tourists and traffic impacting the entire route, not just the tourism sites. The city is tackling the issue of limiting short-term rentals and its effect on available housing and to ensure that the city remains a viable

place to live. Balancing tourism and livability are constant concerns. The speakers emphasized the inter-connectedness of issues in city government. Trash issues influence housing issues, which impact tourism. And fiscal issues impact everything. The city cannot address everything to the satisfaction of everybody.

Kim brought the discussion to a close and thanked our guests. We went on to our regular business meeting. Mike Notar reported that the checking account balance is \$864.23. Before this in-person meeting we had very few expenses, but now we will have food expenses and payments to St Paul's for use of the meeting room. Donations do not cover the cost of food. We can cover the costs for the short term, but he will probably be asking RPEA for additional funds as needed.

There were no minutes available from the last meeting, so that was postponed until the next meeting.

There was a discussion of voting in the upcoming elections and the ballot propositions. There is still a need for election workers.

Aetna now has an in-town concierge person to assist with insurance issues and problems, especially problems with travel pre-authorization and reimbursement.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 PM.

Respectfully submitted by
Alan Davis, Secretary