

Chair Constant Report Archive, Q1 2024

March 19, 2024

[View the recording](#) of the remarks.

Good evening everyone and welcome. Happy spring equinox! I hope everyone is enjoying and making good use of the growing daylight.

Washington D.C. Visit

Last week, Member Brawley and I visited Washington, D.C. to attend the National League of Cities annual conference and meet with our Congressional Delegation to discuss Anchorage priorities, namely the HUD funding formula for providing homelessness resources. Member Brawley and I were joined by the Congressional Delegation in a meeting with HUD leadership to continue to press our case that Anchorage and Alaska are getting left behind by HUD. We are continuing to make progress on this and keep the pressure on HUD to respond to our needs. I thank Senators Sullivan and Murkowski, and Representative Peltola for their leadership on this issue.

Alcohol Tax Strategic Plan

Now that we are several years into the new alcohol tax, the Assembly is conducting a strategic plan to help us better identify how to prioritize and fund work through the tax. A team has been going to community meetings and other gatherings to collect input from community members and they have a booth in the lobby tonight. I encourage you to visit the booth to learn more about the work and provide your input.

Food for Thought and We'll Be Back Soon

On Friday, we welcomed community partners – the Anchorage Folk Festival and Sundown Music Festival – for the first in our lunchtime worksession series “Food for Thought,” focused on the good things happening in our community, so that we in more creative conversations about our role as a legislative body and as a municipality in fostering what makes Anchorage vibrant.

Following the beat of that drum, I'm proud to announce that tonight, folks tuning into our meeting online and on TV will enjoy the launch of “We'll Be Back Soon,” a program featuring local music on our meeting broadcast when we break for intermission. The program is amplifying the work of 12 local musicians through 20 songs that reflect the broad range of tone, tenor and voice in our city. From laughter and love to heartbreak and grief, our community has been through a lot in the last few years. Music is a way to share in those feelings and find common ground. I hope you enjoy this new program.

Elections

And now, my final reminder about the upcoming election as today is the last meeting before the election. All ballots have now been mailed, so if you haven't received your

ballot yet, you can call 907-243-VOTE or 8683 to request a new ballot. The last day to vote is Tuesday, April 2 at 8pm at any of the multiple drop boxes, accessible voting centers or through the mail, as long as it is stamped before 8pm. The mayor, several school board seats, service area board of supervisor seats and the open District 2 Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly seat will be on the ballot, as well as a proposed Charter amendment and several bond propositions.

I encourage you to sign up for Ballot Tracks, which is an amazing tool where you can sign up for text notifications of when your ballot leaves the mail house, when it is delivered to your home and when it arrives back at the Election Center. You can sign up at AnchorageVotes.com.

March 5, 2024

[View the recording](#) of the remarks.

Good evening everyone and welcome.

First, I want to say Godspeed to the Municipal Attorney who is flying to Washington, D.C. now to stand in for our illustrious former attorney Bob Owens in front of the Court of Claims in the Appeals Court on the question of the appeal by the federal government on the \$365M judgment from the Court of Claims on behalf of the Municipality. For those of you following the Port story, a very significant event happens this Friday in Washington D.C. and that is that the Appellate Court hears the appeal by the federal government against our victory in the Port settlement, which we hope they will sustain.

Food for Thought

I'm pleased to announce that the Assembly is launching "Food for Thought," a series of worksessions over the Friday lunch hour to take a step back from the timely business at hand and welcome community partners to our table to discuss the good things happening in our community. Often our focus is on things that are going wrong, and things that aren't working right, so I want to take some time to appreciate the many things that are going right.

The first session will be on March 15 at 11:30am and will focus on Anchorage's music economy. We'll hear from community partners organizing festivals and our opportunity to amplify local music.

Future sessions will include innovative new programs to house people who've long struggled with homelessness, and a presentation from a delegation who recently visited Oulu, Finland to learn about snow removal and non-motorized transportation ideas.

State Legislature

Next, onto Juneau and the State Legislature. Tonight, you'll see a number of resolutions of support on the agenda for bills in the state legislature. Issues like housing affordability, child care, and supporting families so that parents can remain in the workforce are critical to the future of Anchorage, and issues that the Municipality has done our best to address.

However, some issues are too big for local solutions and we need the state to step up and do their part to ensure the vitality of our economy, schools, workplaces and local communities. I want to thank our colleagues in Juneau, especially the Anchorage Delegation, for listening to the Municipality's concerns and working to find statewide solutions to some of our toughest problems.

Elections

Finally, my ongoing reminder about the upcoming election. Ballots will be mailed to voters on March 12, and the last day of voting is Tuesday, April 2 at 8pm at any of the multiple drop boxes, accessible voting centers or through the mail, as long as it is stamped before 8pm. The mayor, several school board seats, service area board of supervisor seats and the open District 2 Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly seat will be on the ballot, as well as a proposed Charter amendment and several bond propositions.

I encourage you to sign up for Ballot Tracks, which is an amazing tool where you can sign up for text notifications of when your ballot leaves the mail house, when it is delivered to your home and when it arrives back at the Election Center. You can sign up at AnchorageVotes.com.

February 27, 2024

[View the recording](#) of the remarks.

Good evening everyone and welcome.

Anchorage Priorities for the State Legislature

Last week, we had a delegation of Assembly Members and staff fly down to Juneau to take Anchorage's 2024 Legislative Program to the Legislature. I want to thank Members Brawley, Rivera, Johnson and Sulte, and staff member Brandi Heasley, for adding to your usual duties to represent the case for Anchorage to the state legislature.

The delegation pushed for the Municipality's top three priorities, which are the Port Modernization, increasing housing supply and addressing homelessness, and supporting mental and behavioral health needs. You can learn more about the top priorities, as well as other municipal and district priorities on the Assembly's website from the "State Support" button at www.muni.org/assembly. I look forward to hearing more as the legislative session continues.

Eklutna River Restoration

The Eklutna Dam project has been in the news a lot lately, so I won't belabor the point, but I wanted to reiterate the Assembly's call to slow the process for at least two years to have a more transparent deliberation on the matter. There are serious unaddressed concerns about public use of funds, budget assumptions, effects on water supply, the engagement of important stakeholder like the Native Village of Eklutna, as well as the actual effectiveness of the plan in meeting the terms of the 1991 agreement.

As the Assembly said in a resolution we passed on February 2, the issues at play are too significant to our community to rush to judgment or exclude key stakeholders. The residents of the Municipality deserve a measured and comprehensive approach guided by respectful coordination to reach a solution that enjoys the broadest consensus possible among the affected parties.

Elections

Finally, I want to issue my regular reminder that the Municipality will hold a vote at home election this March and April. The last day to register or update your registration is this Sunday, March 3rd. On February 26th, Municipal Elections mailed out 909 ballot packages to military & overseas voters and on March 12, 2024, Municipal Elections will send out 206,727 ballot packages to all Anchorage Voters, including voters who are here in Anchorage and voters who are out-of-state for the election. The last day of voting is Tuesday, April 2. The mayor, several school board seats, service area board of supervisor seats and the open District 2 Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly seat will be on the ballot, as well as a proposed Charter amendment and several bond propositions.

Anchorage also utilizes an innovative tool called Ballot Tracks, which is an amazing tool where you can sign up for text notifications of when your ballot leaves the mail house, when it is delivered to your home and when it arrives back at the Election Center. You can sign up at AnchorageVotes.com.

February 13, 2024

Assembly Member Felix Rivera Chaired the 2/13 meeting and offered the following remarks:

[View the recording](#) of the remarks.

Good evening everybody and welcome.

Before we begin this evening, I want to take a moment to recognize the passing of a dear friend to the Municipality, Bob Owens. Mr. Owens has been with the Municipal Attorney's Office for over eighteen years and played a critical role in many important

municipal issues over those years. He always offered wise and thoughtful legal advice and was a true public servant to the people of Anchorage.

His passing has been quite a shock. I want to offer my condolences to his wife Suzanne, his family and friends, and the staff in the Municipal Attorney's Office who have lost a valuable colleague. We will do a longer recognition in the future when his family can be here, but for tonight, we've placed flowers on the dais in his memory.

Elections

Next, I want to issue a reminder that the Municipality will hold a vote at home election this March and April. The last day to register is March 3, ballot packages will be mailed to qualified voters on March 12 and the last day of voting is Tuesday, April 2. The mayor, several school board seats, service area board of supervisor seats and the open District 2 Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly seat will be on the ballot, as well as a proposed Charter amendment and several bond propositions.

Online Checkbook

An exciting new development this week was the launch of the Online Checkbook, an online record of municipal transactions. The Online Checkbook will update monthly, posting recent transactions, unaudited revenue and procured contracts with historic information dated back to 2018. This is a major milestone in the Assembly's effort to make our local government more transparent and accessible to the public.

I congratulate my colleague Chair Constant for seeing one of his top goal's to fruition and also thank Members Cross and Volland for your sponsorship of the legislation that created it. Finally, I want to recognize and thank the team at IT and Finance, especially Sandra Fern, Brendan Babb and Heather Holland, and the Assembly implementation team, Chair Constant, Member Brawley and former Budget Analyst Desirea Camacho, for their incredible hard work to pull this off in under a year.

Tonight's Meeting

To my fellow members, with several members absent from the meeting tonight, I ask that if there are any controversial or lengthy items on the agenda, we consider postponing to March so we can hold a worksession on the topic and have all of the members present to participate in debate and voting. Two items tonight fit this theme, items 14.B. AO 2024-14 (regarding right turns on red) and 14.F. AO 2023-94 (regarding Title 17 code on Animals) will be pushed to meetings in March, so if you are here for those items, the public hearings will not be heard tonight. At the request of the Mayor, I want to give the Clerk directions to add him as a sponsor to items 10.A.1. and 10.A.4, two honorary resolutions on the agenda tonight.

January 23, 2024

[View the recording](#) of the remarks.

Good evening everybody and welcome.

Elections

As you've hopefully heard by now, the Municipality of Anchorage will hold a vote at home election this March and April. I want to remind everyone of some important dates – candidate filings for Mayor, Assembly, School Board and Service Area Board of Supervisors close this Friday, January 26 at 5 pm. Candidates can register at the Clerk's Office between 9am- 3pm or at the Election Center between 8am and 5pm. The last day to register is March 3, ballot packages will be mailed to qualified voters on March 12 and the last day of voting is Tuesday, April 2.

The mayor, several school board seats, service area board of supervisor seats and the open District 2 Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly seat will be on the ballot, as well as a proposed Charter amendment and several bond propositions. The Assembly approved several items last week to put on the ballot and will review the remaining few items this evening.

As I've said before, local elections have a direct impact on our daily lives, including the efficiency of our snow plowing, the health of our parks, and the strength of our public safety, so I encourage everyone to follow the issues closely and vote by 8pm April 2nd.

Anchorage Requests to Legislature

The legislature convened in Juneau last week and with that, the Municipality submitted a legislative program with our 2024 requests to the Legislature. Late last year, the Anchorage Assembly worked alongside the Administration to develop shared legislative priorities, including focused capital asks, statutory recommendations and district-specific priorities.

The Municipality's top three priorities this session are the Port of Alaska Modernization Program, increasing housing supply and addressing homelessness, and supporting mental and behavioral health needs. You can learn more about the top priorities, as well as other municipal and district priorities on the [Assembly's website](#).

Property Valuation Notices

Next, it's that time of year when residents receive green valuation slips in the mail, detailing the Municipality's assessment of residents' property values. Property valuation is a public process, and property owners should be aware of their options to participate.

If a property owner believes that their property valuation was calculated in error, we invite their engagement in the appeal process. The deadline to appeal is February 12. If a property owner qualifies for an exemption that is not reflected in the property valuation, the property owner has until March 15 to file for the exemption.

You can learn more and check your property valuations online at www.property.muni.org.

January 9, 2024

[View the recording](#) of the remarks.

Good evening everybody and welcome. This is the first regular Assembly meeting of 2024. I hope everyone enjoyed the break and I'm glad you can be here tonight. We're starting the new year off with a bang and have a really packed agenda tonight. There are lots of people here for different agenda items, so we'll do our best to keep on track and move efficiently through all of the items we have to get done tonight.

Year in Review

I hope you saw last week's Assembly newsletter that contained a recap of our 2023 accomplishments. The Assembly, with thanks to the Administration and all of our partners saw progress in all of our 2023 priorities, including advancement of the Port of Alaska modernization, passage of several initiatives to spur housing development, expansion of the Fire Department Mobile Crisis Team and Police Department Mobile Intervention Team, passage of the "Open Checkbook" to create an online dashboard of municipal spending, and nearly one hundred percent recovery from FEMA of the funds we spent on the pandemic.

At our Rules Committee meeting this week, the Assembly will develop our work plan for 2024 and we'll release that to the public by next month so you can follow along with our work over the next year.

Elections

Next, with the beginning of a new year comes the beginning of a new election cycle. The Municipality of Anchorage will hold a vote at home election this March and April and the Mayor, several school board seats, and the open District 2 Chugiak-Eagle River Assembly seat will be on the ballot, as well as a proposed Charter amendment and several bond propositions.

Candidate filing opens this Friday, January 12 at 8:00 a.m. and closes on Friday, January 26 at 5:00 p.m. The Assembly will be approving the bond propositions over the next two meetings and the last day of voting is Tuesday, April 2. Local elections have a direct impact on our daily lives, including the efficiency of our snow plowing, the health of our parks, and the strength of our public safety, so I encourage everyone to follow the issues closely and vote by this April 2nd.