Borough to Vote on Minimum School District Funding

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Jennifer Canfield/KMXT

During a work session Thursday evening, the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly discussed a resolution that will set the minimum amount at which the borough would fund the school district. The cap is set at $10.3 million and the resolution calls for just over $9.9 million as the minimum contribution from the borough.

Borough Mayor Jerome Selby proposed adding $400,000 that would come from increased revenues from the fish and severance taxes. The extra money would bring the borough within about $50,000 of fully funding the school district.

"Rather than pass a resolution that lowballs it in effect and then come back at the June meeting of the assembly and changing the number to some other number, I think that misleads the community. I'd rather be up front. We know right now tonight that you've got $400,000 of additional revenues that you can recognize and put into this budget. I didn't hear anybody talking about some other place we needed to spend that extra $400,000 and it's sitting there."

Assemblyman Dave Kaplan spoke in favor of fully funding the district or at least following through with the mayor's proposal.

"I'm

tired of hearing about this national education defunding train. I don't think we should be on that. As I said, our kids, our education, that's our best investment. I just can't see us growing as a community if we defund our schools and our teachers. I would like to go to the cap if at all possible. If not, I would support the mayor's proposal."

Hesitating to commit a windfall to the school district, assemblyman Mel Stephens suggested leaving the amount as written in the resolution and discussing a potential increase at the next regular meeting when the borough's FY 13 budget will be presented

"I don't like the idea of taking monies now that we are undoubtedly going to need in the very near future and putting it into the school district. I think the better time for the discussion of increasing above the figure that is in this resolution would be at the next regular meeting."

The assembly agreed to leave the language of the resolution as is and will discuss it further at this Thursday's regular meeting. The borough will meet with the school district to discuss its budget June 7th.