

Last Year's Borough Budget Revised Retroactively

Friday, 17 August 2012

Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak Island Borough Assembly met Thursday night for one of their shorter meetings of the year. One of the few items on the agenda was a public hearing for an ordinance that would amend the fiscal year 2012 budget, accounting for various revenue and expenditure estimates.

Assemblyman

Mel Stephens voted against the ordinance, saying, among many things, that he didn't feel comfortable amending last year's budget after the money was already spent. Specifically, Stephens pointed at various items on the budget that weren't brought before the assembly.

-- (Borough

Assembly 1 : 43 "Now

I don't recall these things coming before the assembly. Now I sometimes forget these things, but I don't recall things like this coming before the assembly. So it looks to me like what happened was money was spent on these things by staff during the year, despite of the fact that those things were not part of the budget, and now we are coming back and saying that was ok, they're budgeted here. Now I'm not saying the money was poorly spent, and I'm not saying I couldn't be convinced to vote for this. What I'm saying is when I look at the explanation for all this, there is no explanation for all this which gives me some heartburn and leads me to vote against it.")

Stephens

listed projects like road shoulder and erosion repair and the Bayside emergency generator as examples of items not accounted for in the previous budget. In addition, Stephens said that he would humbly have to vote against the ordinance because he didn't feel comfortable voting for something he did not fully understand.

Assemblywoman

Louise Stutes also admitted to being confused with certain parts, and said if she didn't understand it then it's more than likely some members of the public didn't understand it and she would not vote for it.

Borough

Mayor Jerome Selby offered a brief explanation of the additions to the budget, citing money saving reasons for making the adjustments.

-- (Borough

Assembly 2 : 41 "I would just point out that we normally do this in June. I think everybody understands that because of short staffing, staff wasn't able to get it to us in June. But I think the primary reason that we make these year end adjustments is because it saves us money. Because if we don't do this, the auditors will do this as audit adjustments, and each one of those gets written up and it takes time and there's a charge for each one of those. So we could have staff do it, and the auditors will confirm it under part of the normal audit cost. But if they have to do a bunch of adjustments as part of the audit process it will cost us hundreds more dollars for the auditors to do it in lieu of the assembly doing it.")

In the end, the amendments to the budget were passed by the assembly in a five-to-two vote. The meeting came to an early close with the assembly taking an executive session to evaluate applications for the borough manager's position. The next borough assembly meeting will be Thursday, September 6.