Assembly Approves LTC Facility

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A new long term care facility may be coming to Kodiak in 2014, pending approval by the state. Last night the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly voted in favor of three agenda items related to the facility, including a contractor and construction contract, a lease with Providence Health and Services and revenue bonds to fund the project. The assembly’s decisions mean the facility now rests in the hands of the state. Before any new health care facility can be built anywhere in Alaska, the state must issue a certificate of need. The long term care facility has yet to receive this, though it is expected that it will. However, if the CON does not come through, the lease between the borough and Providence, and the project, will be terminated.

Long term care facilities are often referred to as nursing homes, though it was pointed out during the public comment period that long term care can be issued at any age for any reason.

The first item up for discussion last night regarding the project was a contract for a general contractor and construction manager for construction of the care center. Despite having two more votes ahead, assembly members quickly took to discussing the facility as a whole, and stated whether they were for or against the project. Assemblywoman Louise Stutes kicked off the discussion by saying she would vote against all of the items for several reasons.

-- (LTC Meeting 1 :35 “Let me say once again and I’ve … what I’m getting.”)

During a work session last week, the assembly learned that the push for assembly action before the CON was approved came from Providence. The hope is that the facility will be up and running by 2014 so Providence can qualify for a larger Medicaid reimbursement for each patient.

Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said the project reminded him of another one he encountered 17 years ago during his first term on the assembly. He said this time around he would vote in favor of project in question.

-- (LTC Meeting 2 :47 “An excuse I hear often ... mistake twice, thank you.”)

Despite having some minor concerns with the lease, Assemblyman Aaron Griffin said he would vote in favor of the project, and added that it all boils down to a key decision the assembly needs to make.

-- (LTC Meeting 3 :37 “The question really comes … need that facility.”)

After the lengthy discussion, the assembly put the issue to a vote. The first vote related to the care center was only for the contractor and construction contract, but it set the tone for the two votes that followed.

-- (LTC Meeting 4 :23 “I will take the vote now … motion carries, 5-2.”)

The same 5-2 vote was given for the lease and the bonds, with Stutes and Assemblyman Mel Stephens voting against each item. While the project gets the nod from the assembly, the facility still needs the CON to become a reality. The state is expected to make a decision on that certificate sometime in March or April.

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