

## Assembly Approves Legal Contract With New Law Firm

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Kodiak Island Borough Assembly has a new attorney. During Thursday's regular meeting the assembly approved a contract with Levesque (Lev-ek) Law Group, a small firm based in Anchorage.

For the past three years the assembly has been represented by Cheryl Brooking, of the Anchorage-based Wohlforth, Johnson, Brecht, Cartledge and Brooking. That contract is set to expire at the end of the month. Brookings and Levesque were the only two firms that bid for the legal services contract.

Assemblyman Mel Stephens said the borough should try a fresh start with a new firm and said Levesque specializes in municipal law. Stephens also pointed out that Levesque's hourly rate is lower than Brookings.

"I think there is a clear difference here in cost. Joe Levesque's presentation is not only lower in hourly rate, but if you looked at the recommendations from his clients, they mention, gee, this guy is not only focused on the number of hours that he can bill. So I think we save money, I think we move up in class, and I think it would just be a good thing to start a new firm here."

The assembly interviewed Levesque and Brookings during its work session on June 13. Assemblywoman Louise Stutes said she was very impressed by Levesque.

"And it was a very, very telling statement to me during the interview when Mr. Levesque was asked a question and his response was, 'just because the municipality has the right to do something, does not mean it is the right thing to do.' And I thought this guy is exactly the kind of guy that we need, and so I definitely will support him as well."

Assemblyman Tuck Bonney said he too would support a contract with Levesque, but added that starting fresh means the assembly needs to make some changes, too.

&ldquo;We do need to start fresh, we&rsquo;ve had some issues. And I think the firm that has been representing us is a very good firm. I think that the leadership of this assembly to that firm has been very, very poor, and that&rsquo;s why we&rsquo;re sitting here right now. As an assembly, the attorney works for us. And we need, as an assembly, to take control. This is our attorney, period. And the attorney works for us, period. We hire and fire the attorney, period. We need to take it on ourselves and take the responsibility of managing the attorney a lot better than we have.&rdquo;

The assembly unanimously approved the contract with Levesque Law Group.