

Assembly Approves Emergency Plan Update

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

A contract to revise and rewrite parts of the Kodiak Area Emergency Operations Plan passed the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly last night, but not without some discussion.

Borough Manager Bud Cassidy said the contract with Risks and Rewards Management Group, LLC, of Anchorage, would update the plan that tells various entities how to react in the event of an emergency.

“It lays out plans for responders, for medical services, for sheltering services, hospital services.”)

The contract is for \$31,000, but the borough received a \$35,000 grant to cover the costs. Assemblyman Mel Stephens said he would vote against the plan because he thought it was a waste of money and includes scenarios that are far fetched for Kodiak, like droughts or enemy attacks. He argued that a good emergency plan should cater to emergencies that are more likely to occur in Kodiak.

Assemblyman Aaron Griffin disagreed and said it isn't the run of the mill emergencies that we need help with.

“We have medical emergencies, we have rock slides. The things that happen commonly we know how to deal with. What we need the plans for, what we need checklists for, what we need devised strategies to help us on the spur of the moment are the things that we don't expect are going to happen. Are the things like what happens if we have a terrorist attack on Kodiak, a major hazmat release or a WMD release, these are the things that we don't expect to happen here that there probably aren't very many people that have any type of real experience dealing with as far as boots on the ground, and certainly not here in town. So paying for that expertise I think is valid.”

Griffin was also addressing the concern that the contract is with an off island company, a point that Stephens and Assemblywoman Louise Stutes both raised.

“I know that this borough has spent at least several hundred dollars if not thousands of dollars sending different staff members over to emergency preparedness conventions, seminars, whatever you want to call it, on the mainland. And we are a unique island and the people that are going to understand it are the people that live here.”

Assemblywoman Carol Austerman said Risks and Rewards Management were the only bidders for this contract, but also pointed out something she thought voters should consider when considering a proposition on the October 1 ballot.

“I personally was very

interested in bidding on this project. It is the kind of work I've done in the past and I would have been very interested in doing this. But, we have had quite a few people from our community making complaints about borough assembly people being employed and doing contracts from the borough So one of the things that's on the ballot this time is whether or not assembly members can do contracts for the borough. And it's something to keep in mind that when we do have local expertise, sometimes those people just happen to be sitting up on the dais as well.”

The contract passed six to two with Stephens and Stutes voting against it.