

City Fares Well in Governor's Budget

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

On Thursday, Governor Sean Parnell proposed a \$12.4 billion state budget for next year, which would tap into almost \$1.1 billion from savings. The budget for the current year is \$13.4 billion.

The Associated Press reports that Parnell's plan includes big-ticket items like \$10 million for the proposed Susuitna-Watana dam and about \$20 million for the completion of university engineering buildings. While they boast much smaller dollar amounts, some of Kodiak's capital projects were also included in the governor's budget.

The city's number one project, repairing the Monashka pump house, was fully funded. Mayor Pat Branson said that is good news as far as the city is concerned.

"We lobbied for that last year as well. But the governor put it in his budget at \$2,570,315, which will take care of the project. And that project is most important for not just the city of Kodiak residents, for all the island residents, in that it takes care of our water supply for everyone. So we're very happy about that."

Branson congratulated the hard work of the city's public works staff for making the project feasible over the past few years.

The pump house wasn't the only project on the city's capital wish list to get funding. Branson said the Aleutian Homes water and sewer replacement project was awarded \$3,044,465.

While the governor's budget isn't necessarily what the final budget passed at the end of this year's legislative session might look like, Branson said she's optimistic the city's projects will fare well through any changes made by legislature.

"When you have a capital project that's been put into the governor's budget, it's like having your foot in the door with getting the project through, and least one department, the executive department. So that's a very good kick off, if you will. For the legislature to not fund that, they certainly would have the right to do that, but very optimistic. Especially with the governor having line item veto, since he's got the project in there to begin with. It's not assured. Nothing is assured, of course, until it goes through the checks and balances of both departments or divisions. But you certainly have your foot in the door with congratulatory notes in that this project might be funded."

Branson said there are still a couple of items on its capital list that weren't included in the budget, including replacing the E-911 equipment. She said that project will most likely be bumped up to number one now, and the city will probably work with the borough to find funding for it.