

Abell Reacts To Selby's Veto

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Jay
Barrett/KMXT

Kodiak
Island Borough Mayor Jerome Selby's veto of a resolution paying attorneys fees did not get much reaction at the work session late last week, but it's likely to dominate Thursday night's regular meeting.

Assemblyman Tom Abell was disappointed in the veto, after it seemed the issue had finally been put to rest:

-- (Veto
Reax 1 33 sec "bring an ugliness to a conclusion.")

Selby
listed a half-dozen reasons why he vetoed the measure, which passed on a 5-to-2 vote. Among them was the way the resolution got on the agenda; that the fees should be cleared by the courts; and what he sees as a conflict of interest on the part of three assembly members.

Selby also
said that he's not convinced the borough should pay the legal bills for assembly members Louise Stutes, Reed Oswald and Abell, who got their own attorney in the lawsuit over attendance. Selby said it is his opinion that the three effectively sued the borough themselves. Abell disagrees:

-- (Veto
Reax 2 17 sec “…
and move forward with this.”)

Abell is
the assembly’s deputy presiding officer, and put the resolution to pay
everyone’s legal fees on the agenda. He said how he did it was above-board and
legitimate, even though it wasn’t addressed at the regular agenda-setting
meeting held the week before the May 1st meeting.

Abell also
takes issue with Selby’s assertion that he, Stutes and Oswald had a conflict of
interest in voting on the payment resolution, because it applied to legal fees
for all assembly members and the mayor:

-- (Veto
Reax 3 21 sec “…is
being done by two different attorney firms.”)

Abell says
he hopes the votes are there on Thursday to override Selby’s veto:

-- (Veto
Reax 4 28 sec “…
on with what we do on the borough assembly.”)

There is the possibility that Selby may rule Abell, Stutes and Oswalt ineligible to vote on the override because of what he perceives as a conflict of interest. If he does, that would leave only four assembly members to vote, only two of whom, Pat Branson and Jerrol Friend, originally voted for the payment resolution. Sue Jeffrey and Chris Lynch voted no. The meeting starts at 7:30 Thursday night and can be heard live here on KMXT.

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