



**SOUTHWEST ALASKA MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE
BOARD MEETING**

November 21st, 2012 at 9:30 a.m.
Call-in information: 888.550.5602
Passcode: 2722 0305

AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order**----- **Marquardt**
Meeting was called to order at 9:40 AM by Ruby, filling in for Marquardt.

- II. **Roll Call** -----**Varner**
Board present: Layton Lockett, Patrick Jordan, Alice Ruby, Kathleen Totemoff, Louise Stutes, Trevor Brown & Glen Gardner; quorum established; *Staff present:* Andy Varner & Erik Obrien.

- III. **Approval of Agenda** ----- **Ruby**
Ruby moved to approve agenda, motion to approve by Brown, 2nd by Stutes; Agenda approved.

- IV. **Consent Agenda**-----**Ruby**
 - A. *Board minutes for September 21, 2012*
Ruby moved to approve consent agenda, motion to approve by Gardner, 2nd by Lockett; Agenda approved.

- V. **Policy and Program Issues** ----- **Varner**
 - A. *SW Alaska Economic Geographic Study*
Staff met with Northern Economics to discuss updating 2004 SW Alaska Economic Geography study. Varner had hoped to receive revised scope and budget, but with holiday weekend has yet to hear back. Patrick Burden remembers the document, and recalls basic framework of project and believes that updating should be relatively straight forward if no new survey data is required. In addition, NE has some new tools and insights to include with updated document. One economic indicator that was suggested was ratio of SW GDP contribution to state, relative to Railbelt. Due to the low response rate and high costs of surveys, rather than conduct an entirely new survey we could update figures based on previous response, and include other publicly available data. Ruby expressed concern that spending on energy has increased and should be included to determine disposable income; and that digital feedback should be preferable to snail mail. Obrien suggested including the costs of a “basket of goods” as the expenses that local consumers endure. Totemoff suggested that any surveys need to be short; Brown agreed that limiting spending on the survey would be good; Lockett agreed. Following Jordan’s comments, Varner explained the trade-offs between contacting individual vendors, such as box stores and fisheries industries for good information, and the total number of companies we could include in this study – more individual companies - better data, more costs. Lockett suggested Costco and Fred

Meyers were important. Ruby suggested that a group in Anchorage, or DCRA was collecting information about a sales tax may have already collected this information – Ruby will provide contact info. Totemoff mentioned the Tax Division of Revenue would also have much of this info, based on cost of living statistics; Ruby agreed and mentioned the file *Alaska Taxable*, is available at State Asser’s Office. Varner will take these suggestions to NE, and reminded Board that Ruby, Cotton, Sullivan had expressed interest in forming an Economic Geography Committee, which he will follow up on as the project progresses. Varner recalls the previous study costing about \$75,000 and was hopeful that limiting surveying costs would help manage costs.

B. Annual Conference Updates

Keynote speaker DJ Vanas remains unconfirmed (Update: since confirmed). Although there is interest to have him participate, his high cost will need to be covered. SWAMC is trying to offset costs by sharing time with SE Conference, or asking for special sponsorship from the Native Organizations. A discussion of the Transportation panel addressed adding new speakers. These included the FAA, managing Essential Air Service, and the Post Office, managing Bypass Mail. Ruby suggested that maybe someone from our congressional delegation could speak to the importance of maintaining these subsidies; she thought Begich’s Office was taking a lead on both these issues. Varner really liked the idea, but wondered how such a large panel might best be organized.

VI. Governance Issues-----Varner
Nothing to report

VII. Financial Report-----Varner

A. October 2012 Financial Statements

Varner stated that our finances are good. After receiving final EDA grant, Varner added funds to High Yield account, which increase that amount to over \$500K. SWAMC exceeded Membership goal, by funding level, but just shy on total members. Ruby moved to approve Financial Statement, motion to approve by Brown, 2nd by Jordan; Financials approved.

VIII. Staff Report----- Staff

IX. Board Comments

X. Adjourn ----- Marquardt
Meeting adjourned at 10:33am.

Next Meeting
December 20th, 2012 @ 9:30am