

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

Assembly/School Board Liaison Committee Meeting

April 16, 2024

Assembly Chambers

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Tatsuda at 12:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were:

School District

Katherine Tatsuda, Regular Member
Stephen Bradford, Alternate Member
Michael Robbins, Superintendent
Daniel Schuler, Business Manager
Crystal Vail, School Board Clerk

Ketchikan Gateway Borough

Jeremy Bynum, Regular Member
Austin Otos, Regular Member
Ruben Duran, Borough Manager
Cynna Gubatayao, Assistant Manager
Glenn Brown, Borough Attorney

Members not in attendance: Nicole Anderson, School Board Member; Jaimie Palmer, Assembly Alternate Member

Citizen Comments

There were no citizen comments.

Unfinished Business

FY 2025 School District Request for Local Funding

Business Manager Schuler shared a summary of the District's request for local funding and responded to member questions:

- \$1.6 Million of additional funding requested from the Borough to the School District for FY24;
- Additional special education staff to keep compliance was needed and required additional funds;
- Denial of the request would result in the district having to delay payments and potential increase in debt;
- School Board requested a budget presentation based on \$5960 BSA per student;
- Lack of increase to State funding and inefficient communication requires the fiscal pressure to lay with local government;
- \$1 Million of the request is due to extra staff required to stay in compliance with Special Education;
- Recommended a joint work session regarding the budget;

M/S BRADFORD/BYNUM to take back to our respective bodies, a recommendation of holding a joint work session of both bodies at a time to be determined following the final number of the State

MOTION DECLARED CARRIED VIA UNANIMOUS CONSENT

Members discussed adjusting communication practices regarding changes in the budget.

FY 2025 Borough Budget Assumptions for Local Education Fund

Borough Manager Duran explained how the Borough assumptions were made and responded to member questions:

- Discrepancy between the District's request and the Assembly's assumptions needs to be addressed;
- Maximum local contribution fluctuates with student count and the State foundation estimate;
- School districts statewide create budgets in March for the next fiscal year with numbers that are not solidified until months later and are subject to change;

A discussion was held about the amount of spending authority remaining with the Borough. It was stated and affirmed that the amount requested by the School District did not exceed the amount remaining. Superintendent Robbins explained that the addition of staff to comply with Special Education requirements should be considered an extraordinary circumstance to ask for extra funding.

School District Health Insurance Fund Debt Repayment

Borough Manager Duran explained the background of the Borough's responsibility as the central treasury for both the Borough and School District. He reported that the Borough and District were both up to date with paying claims and current actuals. The remaining \$4.8 Million debt repayment plan had not been set and had not been rising. Superintendent Robbins clarified that the District had worked with the Borough to make current payments and has not been able to implement a repayment plan yet.

New Business

Compilation of FY 2026 Six-Year District Capital Improvement Plan for Submission to DEED

Superintendent Robbins provided examples of the projects in progress for FY24, then invited Al Jacobson, District Director of Maintenance, to the podium. Mr. Jacobson identified four substantial projects to be submitted to the Alaska Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) upon School Board approval, noting that some projects were eligible for reimbursement from DEED.

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1. Districtwide security upgrades;
2. Drainage and gym floor replacement for Schoenbar Middle School;
3. Playground upgrade at Ketchikan Charter School;
4. PA/Electronic upgrades districtwide;

A discussion was held surrounding grant funding; Member Bynum offered to follow up with Borough and District staff to find support regarding outside funding for projects; Manager Duran reminded the committee that much of the current Borough funding for these projects was derived from the dedicated sales tax.

A discussion was held regarding the portion of the sales tax dedicated to the School Bond CIP:

- The sales tax allocation to capital projects was voted on and approved by the citizens of Ketchikan;
- The School Bond CIP portion of the sales tax would sunset in 2026;
- Renewal of the tax was scheduled to go to the voters in 2025.

Borough Procurement Officer Amy Briggs reported on the bond debt reimbursement program.

Staff Reports and Communications

There were no reports given.

Committee Member Comments

Member Bynum commented that there was a lot of work to be done and that the Borough was committed to working with the District. He asked for the public to be informed during the budget process.

Member Bradford thanked the committee for the valuable conversations and thanked staff for attending.

Member Tatsuda thanked staff for their work and recognized that each entity was committed to a common goal.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 1:36 p.m.