

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 7, 2022

9:03 a.m.

[9:03:32 AM](#)

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Bishop called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Donny Olson (via teleconference)
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator David Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

ALSO PRESENT

Dan Britton, Interior Gas Utility, Juneau.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Josh Verhagen, Mayor, Nenana; Anne Bailey, Self, Anchorage; June Rogers, Self, Fairbanks; Dewey Hoffman, Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks; Luke Graham, Littoral Power Systems, Anchorage; Helen Adams, Alaska Chapter, ACEP, Anchorage; Hannah Hill, Executive Director, The Bread Line, Fairbanks; Deborah Bennett, Fairbanks North Star School District, Fairbanks; Jessica Stossel, Executive Director, Center for Nonviolent Living, Fairbanks; Kara Carlson, Deputy Director, Center for Nonviolent Living, Fairbanks; Howard Maxwell, Self, Fairbanks; Melissa Williams, Kluti-Kaah Head Start, Glennallen; Mark Detter, City Manager, Valdez; Clay Walker, Mayor, Denali Borough, Healy; Shallin Sickles, Self, North Pole; Dean McDaniel, Helping Alaska, Fairbanks Homeless Coalition, Fairbanks; Jim Williams, Mayor's Office, Fairbanks; Jon Erickson, City Manager, Yakutat; Tom

Chard, CEO, Alaska Behavioral Health Association, Fairbanks; Nicole McKee, Self, Fairbanks; Laura Bonner, Self, Anchorage.

SUMMARY

SB 162 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

SB 162 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 163 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

SB 163 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 164 APPROP: CAP; REAPPROP; SUPP

SB 164 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#sb162

#sb163

#sb164

SENATE BILL NO. 162

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and loan program expenses of state government and for certain programs; capitalizing funds; amending appropriations; making reappropriations; making supplemental appropriations; making appropriations under art. IX, sec. 17(c), Constitution of the State of Alaska, from the constitutional budget reserve fund; and providing for an effective date."

SENATE BILL NO. 163

"An Act making appropriations for the operating and capital expenses of the state's integrated comprehensive mental health program; making capital appropriations and supplemental appropriations; and providing for an effective date."

SENATE BILL NO. 164

"An Act making appropriations, including capital appropriations, reappropriations, and other

appropriations; making supplemental appropriations;
and providing for an effective date."

[9:04:06 AM](#)

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: INTERIOR, FAIRBANKS, COPPER RIVER
VALLEY, and OFFNETS

[9:05:28 AM](#)

JOSH VERHAGEN, MAYOR, NENANA (via teleconference), testified in support of the Alaska Long Trail Project. He stressed the benefit of the project. He remarked that recreation is an important component to the community because it would enhance tourism.

[9:06:52 AM](#)

ANNE BAILEY, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), supported fully funding school bond debt reimbursement; fully capitalizing community assistance; fully funding of school construction and major maintenance; and funding the Harbor Bond Debt Reimbursement. She focused her testimony on the Harbor Bond Debt Reimbursement.

[9:08:33 AM](#)

JUNE ROGERS, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of establishing a collaborative organized trust of \$10 million for the Alaska State Council on the Arts (ASCA), the Alaska Humanities Forum, the Alaska Native Heritage Center, the Alaska Cultural Foundation, and the Alaska Community Foundation. She spoke in support of \$50 million for the Alaska Coalition on Housing and Homeless. She also spoke in support of community revenue assistance, and felt that "community revenue sharing" was a better title for the program.

[9:10:37 AM](#)

DEWEY HOFFMAN, TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of fully funding education, specifically school repairs. He also testified in support of public broadcasting and a long term fiscal plan for the state.

[9:11:51 AM](#)

LUKE GRAHAM, LITTORAL POWER SYSTEMS, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of the power system funding request for the University of Alaska Fairbanks AEA U.S. Department of Energy for the hydrokinetic project.

[9:13:27 AM](#)

HELEN ADAMS, ALASKA CHAPTER, ACEP, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding of the Alaska Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) Program. She stated that she had completed the program in 2015, and more than 50 percent of the people in her class were currently practicing in Alaska. She pointed out that many of her classmates were still in training, and intended to return to Alaska to practice.

[9:15:05 AM](#)

HANNAH HILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE BREAD LINE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of food security networks and food source funding. She shared that feeding meals to those in need had increased greatly recently. She remarked that there were aging facilities.

[9:16:19 AM](#)

DEBORAH BENNETT, FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR SCHOOL DISTRICT, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of forward funding of education. She stressed that the funding would encourage consistency and enhanced preparation for education.

[9:17:34 AM](#)

JESSICA STOSSEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR NONVIOLENT LIVING, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of flat-funding for the anticipated increases in utilities costs at the Center for Nonviolent Living.

[9:19:15 AM](#)

KARA CARLSON, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR NONVIOLENT LIVING, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of flat-funding for the anticipated increases in utilities costs at the Center for Nonviolent Living. She

echoed the comments of Ms. Stossel. She also spoke in support of the Alaska Housing Trust.

[9:20:27 AM](#)

HOWARD MAXWELL, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of permanent funding increases for K-12 education. He shared that he was a forty-year resident of Fairbanks, and his children attended public school. He also shared that he was a former teacher. He remarked that there were stresses that were caused because of the lack of funding. He felt that there needed to be continued forward funding of education to reduce stress and employee turnover, and an increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA).

[9:22:43 AM](#)

MELISSA WILLIAMS, KLUTI-KAAH HEAD START, GLENNALLEN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for Head Start. She shared that her daughter had been able to attend a Head Start class. She remarked about the importance of early childhood education. She shared that students that attend preschool have higher success rates in schools.

[9:24:45 AM](#)

MARK DETTER, CITY MANAGER, VALDEZ (via teleconference), spoke in support of the Harbor Matching Grant Program. He also testified in support of community jails, full funding of school bond debt reimbursement, and the community assistance program.

[9:25:46 AM](#)

CLAY WALKER, MAYOR, DENALI BOROUGH, HEALY (via teleconference), spoke in support of the recapitalizing of the community assistance program to the full \$90 million. He spoke in support of the school major maintenance project program. He testified in support of the backup generator project at the Tri-Valley School. He also spoke in support of the Alaska Long Trail Program.

[9:28:06 AM](#)

SHALLIN SICKLES, SELF, NORTH POLE (via teleconference), spoke in support of hazard pay. She remarked that she had

worked with individuals with higher needs and disabilities. She stated that caregivers were essential to a quality of life enhancement for those that need services in their homes.

[9:30:51 AM](#)

DAN BRITTON, INTERIOR GAS UTILITY, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the conversions from oil to natural gas to help meet the air quality standards in the Fairbanks North Star Borough. He also spoke in support of funding for transportation infrastructure, specifically the Port Mackenzie Rail Extension.

[9:32:45 AM](#)

RECESSED

[9:48:34 AM](#)

RECONVENED

DEAN MCDANIEL, HELPING ALASKA, FAIRBANKS HOMELESS COALITION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for housing assistance. He remarked that there were no new building for low income housing. He shared that many other states have state housing trusts. He advocated for considering a state housing trust.

[9:50:33 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:52:00 AM](#)

RECONVENED

[9:52:28 AM](#)

JIM WILLIAMS, MAYOR'S OFFICE, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of forward funding for education. He testified in support of the school bond debt reimbursement. He also spoke in support of the Alaska Long Trail Project.

[9:55:25 AM](#)

RECESSED

[10:20:08 AM](#)

RECONVENED

[10:20:27 AM](#)

JON ERICKSON, CITY MANAGER, YAKUTAT (via teleconference), testified in support of the Harbor Matching Grants. He spoke about a new boat harbor in Yakutat. He spoke in support of programs to help with the rising housing and utilities costs.

[10:21:56 AM](#)

TOM CHARD, CEO, ALASKA BEHAVIORAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), spoke in support of increased operational funding for behavioral health grants. He stressed that behavioral health treatment enhanced quality of life, and saved money down the line for other medical services.

[10:23:31 AM](#)

NICOLE MCKEE, SELF, FAIRBANKS (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for hazard pay and additional hours for caregivers. She shared that she is a caregiver for her sister, but cannot maintain her livelihood to care for her family.

[10:25:33 AM](#)

RECESSED

[10:32:39 AM](#)

RECONVENED

LAURA BONNER, SELF, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for a reasonable Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD), and not overdrawing the Earnings Reserve Account (ERA). She felt that there needed to be a reasonable amount appropriated in the capital budget. She spoke in support of \$8 million for caregivers.

SB 162 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 163 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 164 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

#

ADJOURNMENT

10:35:03 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.