

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

April 8, 2022

9:01 a.m.

9:01:57 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Stedman called the Senate Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Click Bishop, Co-Chair
Senator Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Senator Natasha von Imhof
Senator Bill Wielechowski
Senator David Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Donny Olson

ALSO PRESENT

Beth Weldon, Mayor, City and Borough of Juneau, Juneau; Dr. Tim Quigley Peterson, Self, Juneau; Dan Habeger, Juneau Reentry Coalition, Juneau; Jay McCune, Cordova District Fishermen United, Juneau; Brenda Stanfill, Executive Director, Alaska Network on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, Juneau.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Cynna Gubatayao, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, Ketchikan; Lacey Simpson, City Manager, City of Ketchikan, Ketchikan; Carol Rushmore, Economic Development Director, City and Borough of Wrangell, Wrangell; Cathy Renfeldt, Cordova Chamber of Commerce, Cordova; Nancy Bird, Self, Cordova; Pat Branson, Mayor of Kodiak, Kodiak; Tom Brice, Self, Juneau; Tony Jackson, Self, Sitka; Ken Jones, Self, Cordova; Rowena Palomar, Advocates for Victims of Violence, Valdez; Nate Taylor, Chief of Cordova Police Department, Cordova; Maggie Winston, Independent Living Center, Kenai; Roxanne Murphy, Borough Manager, Kodiak Island Borough,

Kodiak; Douglas Olerud, Mayor, Haines Borough, Haines; Iva Brand, Volunteer Caregiver, Ketchikan; Janet Johnson, Self, Cordova; Heather Peterson, Self, Kodiak; David Allison, Mayor, City of Cordova, Cordova; Chief James Kerr, Petersburg Police Department, Petersburg; Dennis Zadra, Self, Cordova; Jonathan Estes, Self, Juneau; Kristen Carpenter, Prince William Sound Economic Development District, Cordova; Mike Vieira, Sitka Education Assn., Sitka; Jordan Flory, Self, Ketchikan; Jody Tow, Petersburg Borough, Petersburg LIO; Tom Williams, City Administrator, Gustavus, Gustavus; Danny Carpenter, Self, Cordova; Kim Phillips, Parents As Teachers, Haines; Tyrell Rettke, PATH Homelessness Shelter, Ketchikan.

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.

PUBLIC TESTIMONY: SOUTHEAST, PRINCE WILLAM SOUND, KODIAK, AND OFFNETS

#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."

[9:02:14 AM](#)

^PUBLIC TESTIMONY: SOUTHEAST, PRINCE WILLAM SOUND, KODIAK, AND OFFNETS

CYNNA GUBATAYAO, KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of the school bond debt reimbursement program and an increase to the Base Student Allocation (BSA). She explained that 100 percent of the area-wide property taxes in Ketchikan were directed toward education. She spoke in support of roads to support housing.

[9:06:28 AM](#)

LACEY SIMPSON, CITY MANAGER, CITY OF KETCHIKAN, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for failing infrastructure, specifically for culvert rehabilitation in Ketchikan. She spoke in support of the raw water project in Ketchikan. She spoke in support of wastewater rehabilitation projects in Ketchikan. She stated that there were many deferred capital projects that needed attention.

[9:08:38 AM](#)

CAROL RUSHMORE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR, CITY AND BOROUGH OF WRANGELL, WRANGELL (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for a new water plant. She testified in support of funding to meet the wastewater mandate

deadline. She spoke in support of funding for community jails.

[9:10:21 AM](#)

CATHY RENFELDT, CORDOVA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the harbor rebuild. She stated that the business community of Cordova almost completely relied on the fishing industry. She stressed that the harbor rebuild was necessary to create more room for vessels, and the current harbor was ten years past its lifespan.

[9:12:34 AM](#)

NANCY BIRD, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for rebuilding of the harbor. She remarked that the harbor was severely dilapidated and unsafe. She shared that the harbor supported the local economy. She stressed that the investment would have long impact on the economy. She opposed the amendment to restrict the use of Medicaid for abortions. She urged forward funding for education and transportation.

[9:14:15 AM](#)

PAT BRANSON, MAYOR OF KODIAK, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for structural enhancements for the fire station. She remarked that there was necessary funding needed to keep the building safe. She remarked that there was already a professional services agreement with an architectural firm.

[9:16:10 AM](#)

TOM BRICE, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the critical mineral, energy, and health care initiatives at the University of Alaska. He also spoke in support of the deferred maintenance at the University.

[9:17:11 AM](#)

TONY JACKSON, SELF, SITKA (via teleconference), shared that he was a care provider, and spoke in support of Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL). He explained his wife's situation, who received a chair from SAIL to keep her

mobile. He remarked that SAIL had provided assistance for many with disabilities.

[9:18:49 AM](#)

KEN JONES, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for harbor replacement project. He stressed that there had been assured funding, but it had previously fallen through. He noted that the harbor supported many different industries in Cordova.

[9:19:56 AM](#)

ROWENA PALOMAR, ADVOCATES FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE, VALDEZ (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for victims of domestic violence and sexual assault, specifically for the emergency shelter in Valdez. She remarked that the shelter were at capacity 100 percent of the time. She shared that there had been an increase in costs for utilities. She stressed that there would be victims without a safe place to stay without the fully operational system at the shelter.

[9:22:05 AM](#)

NATE TAYLOR, CHIEF OF CORDOVA POLICE DEPARTMENT, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for community jails. He remarked that the Cordova jail was almost completely full of pre-trial inmates. He stressed that there was not staff funded to monitor the inmates.

[9:23:13 AM](#)

MAGGIE WINSTON, INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTER, KENAI (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the senior disabilities grant. She shared that she relied on the community services, because she was almost completely limited in her mobility. She remarked that the disability services provided many services to the community, which ended up saving the state money in medical costs.

[9:24:58 AM](#)

ROXANNE MURPHY, BOROUGH MANAGER, KODIAK ISLAND BOROUGH, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of school bond debt reimbursement, school construction, the community assistance fund, increased funding to support villages, and

forward-funding K-12 education. She spoke in support of assistance for the high cost of fuel.

[9:25:48 AM](#)

DOUGLAS OLERUD, MAYOR, HAINES BOROUGH, HAINES (via teleconference), spoke in support of the dock rehabilitation project. He stated that the borough had already raised \$2 million for the project. He remarked that the dock was constantly in disrepair. He was asking for \$3 million for the completion of the project.

[9:27:07 AM](#)

IVA BRAND, VOLUNTEER CAREGIVER, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for hazard pay. She stressed that pay for caregivers were not adequately paid to take care of loved ones.

[9:28:56 AM](#)

BETH WELDON, MAYOR, CITY AND BOROUGH OF JUNEAU, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for three projects: the State Office Building parking lot; the second crossing to open up housing; and the Capital Civic Center, which was a remodel of Centennial Hall.

[9:31:17 AM](#)

DR. TIM QUIGLEY PETERSON, SELF, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for the Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) program. He stressed that those who had lived here and gone through the program resulted in longer retention in the medical field in Alaska. He also testified in support of funding for more slots in WWAMI.

[9:32:59 AM](#)

Co-Chair Stedman stated that the WWAMI program might not handle too large of an increase.

[9:33:24 AM](#)

DAN HABEGER, JUNEAU REENTRY COALITION, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for behavioral health treatment and recovery grants; and behavioral health prevention and early intervention. He stated that the items would help to ensure

the inmate release support for those reentering into the community.

[9:35:25 AM](#)

JAY MCCUNE, CORDOVA DISTRICT FISHERMEN UNITED, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for \$7.5 million for the South Harbor in Cordova. He shared that there were extreme drastic issues that have made it difficult to start the project.

[9:36:42 AM](#)

JANET JOHNSON, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for hazard pay, and funding for caregivers. She remarked that her daughter had moved to Anchorage, but the caregivers there had been leaving the field because of stress and low pay.

[9:39:02 AM](#)

HEATHER PETERSON, SELF, KODIAK (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for caregivers and hazard pay. She remarked that there was stress and low pay that have caused people to leave their care giving jobs. She wanted to bring to light of the hardworking caregivers. She stressed that most caregivers had an extremely low wage.

[9:41:15 AM](#)

DAVID ALLISON, MAYOR, CITY OF CORDOVA, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for the harbor project in Cordova. He also spoke in support of funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS), and school bond debt reimbursement.

[9:41:54 AM](#)

CHIEF JAMES KERR, PETERSBURG POLICE DEPARTMENT, PETERSBURG (via teleconference), testified in favor of community jail funding. He shared that cuts made in 2016 had had a detrimental effect on his community. He said that the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT) provided 48 percent of the funding and the community provided the rest. He spoke of actions in the other body and hoped the committee would follow suit.

[9:43:46 AM](#)

DENNIS ZADRA, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in support for the south harbor in Cordova.

[9:44:14 AM](#)

JONATHAN ESTES, SELF, JUNEAU (via teleconference), testified in support of funding for personal care services. He relayed that difficulties in retaining providers and access for those in need due to cost. He hoped that funding for the program would be increased.

[9:45:34 AM](#)

KRISTEN CARPENTER, PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT, CORDOVA (via teleconference), testified in support for harbor funding.

[9:46:31 AM](#)

MIKE VIEIRA, SITKA EDUCATION ASSN., SITKA (via teleconference), testified in support for an increase in and inflation proofing of the base student allocation. He lamented that the community was having trouble retaining teachers. He relayed that the state of Washington had recently provided raises for teachers and hoped Alaska could do the same. He expressed fear that the Sitka High School staff would

[9:48:43 AM](#)

Co-Chair Bishop wanted to know whether there had been a decrease in consumables in the loan debt programs.

Mr. Vieira replied that there had been a decrease in consumables in the loan debt programs.

[9:49:13 AM](#)

JORDAN FLORY, SELF, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), shared her experience with caregiving and urged support for adequate pay for services provided. She related that the lack of pay was not due to non-profit agencies but simply lack of funding from the state. She urged funding for hazard pay and increased pay for care providers.

[9:52:05 AM](#)

JODY TOW, PETERSBURG BOROUGH, PETERSBURG LIO (via teleconference), spoke in support of the school bond debt reimbursement. She stressed the importance of community assistance payments. She spoke in support of funding for school major maintenance and construction projects.

[9:53:35 AM](#)

TOM WILLIAMS, CITY ADMINISTRATOR, GUSTAVUS, GUSTAVUS (via teleconference), testified in support of Power Cost Equalization (PCE). He spoke in support of community assistance. He also testified in support of the AMHS.

[9:56:33 AM](#)

DANNY CARPENTER, SELF, CORDOVA (via teleconference), spoke in support of funding for the harbor in Cordova. He stressed that the harbor is unsafe, which would result in someone getting severely injured or killed.

[9:57:29 AM](#)

KIM PHILLIPS, PARENTS AS TEACHERS, HAINES (via teleconference), spoke in support of Parents as Teachers and pre-K education programs. She shared that the program supported family through a strength-based approach. She shared that the program provided services and support for families, and encouraged families to become advocates for their children. She stressed that there was a heart to the home visiting program.

[9:59:53 AM](#)

BRENDA STANFILL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ALASKA NETWORK ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL ASSAULT, JUNEAU, spoke in support of funding for critical services for domestic violence and sexual assault. She shared that stressed that victim services programs need adequate funding to ensure that programs do not cut services. She requested adjusting the current numbers to those proposed by the House. She stressed that the services can often be the difference between life and death for many victims.

[10:02:15 AM](#)

TYRELL RETTKE, PATH HOMELESSNESS SHELTER, KETCHIKAN (via teleconference), spoke in support of the initiative to create a state housing trust. He stressed that there were many shortfalls in housing, and hoped that the program would help to solve the problem. He remarked that a large number of people suffered from homelessness, because of the lack of affordable housing.

10:03:19 AM

AT EASE

10:07:34 AM

RECONVENED

Co-Chair Stedman discussed housekeeping.

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

10:08:18 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

