



RURAL SERVICES

A Division of
FNSB Public Works



HY YOUR SERVICE AREA
NEEDS TO

HOLD MEETINGS

“DO WE REALLY HAVE TO HAVE ALL THESE QUARTERLY MEETINGS?”

The bottom line answer is “yes” — it’s Borough Code. The general provisions detailing the operations of your service area were established by Title 14 of the FNSB Code of Ordinances, included as Appendix H in your Service Area Commissioners Training Handbook. FNSBC 14.01.141(A) states that “every commission shall hold at least one regular meeting per calendar quarter.” Meetings provide an opportunity for residents/property owners to have a voice in how the service area is being run, for commissions to gather input they need to best meet the needs of the service area, and for property owners to be informed about how their public tax dollars are being spent.

That being said, let’s look at what considerations should be taken in holding regular quarterly meetings. Firstly, your meeting is a meeting of the commissioners. However, your meetings of the commission need to be open to the public, and properly noticed. The Open Meetings Act is Alaska state law. It basically says that commissioners can’t decide matters strictly among themselves; that the public has the right to know what is going on. How that public notification occurs is, again, defined by Borough Code. FNSBC 14.01.141(A) states that “the borough clerk shall publish public notice of all meetings of each commission, and all such meetings shall be open to the public.” While posting signs around the service area, placing public information ads with local radio stations and door-to-door invitations may be useful, these do not satisfy borough code. Rural Services will advertise your meeting with the Clerk’s Office. A “Meeting Advertising Notice” form is available at the Rural Services’ website, located at <http://co.fairbanks.ak.us/RuralServices/Forms/>. This form allows you to set your meeting agenda when scheduling your meeting. You can not simply call in to schedule a meeting. Meeting schedule information must be provided in writing.

Now for your actual meeting. Everyone present must sign an attendance sheet, in their own handwriting. No lists for attendees to simply check off, and no roll call. A majority of the commission must be present to provide a quorum. This number is two for commissions with 3 seats.

A meeting agenda should either be read aloud or copies passed out, as well as the minutes of the previous meeting, for commission approval. Minutes of the meeting must be taken by a secretary, elected from the members of the commission, not a member of the public. Minutes must reflect approval of the meeting agenda, approval of the minutes from the previous meeting and discussion of those items advertised as agenda items. Your minutes must reflect how each individual commissioner voted on every decision made. While it could be beneficial to poll residents at the meeting on issues, it is the vote of the commissioners on a matter that is decisive, and must be noted in the minutes. Decisions made by the commission must be voted on by commissioners present at the meeting. Conference calls to include commissioners not in attendance are not allowed.

Minutes should be turned in typed—not hand written, and must reflect the date of the meeting. They should also be signed by the person who took them. Keep in mind we must have the original minutes, so if you do send us an electronic copy, be sure you put the original in the mail to us as well. And don’t forget to also include the sign-in sheet and copy of the actual agenda with your minutes.

Rural Services wants to help you have successful meetings. We hope you find that holding regular meetings has positive benefits for your service area.

~ TIP FOR THE QUARTER ~

Tax cap election request letters will be sent to each service area’s commission chairperson on October 1, 2009. Check your mailboxes for this mailing, and schedule your 4th quarter meeting with the tax cap election request deadline of

November 25, 2009 in mind.

WHAT SERVICE AREA BUSINESS REQUIRES A MEETING?

The question has come up frequently of late as to what service area business must be decided by vote of the commission at an open meeting, and what can be decided by commissioners as part of regular administrative and managerial duties. When a situation arises that is questionable, ask yourself whether it involves using public funds in a manner that has been discussed publicly and voted on by the commission. If your answer to this question is “yes”, then you can make a decision without an open meeting. If not, hold off on action until your next open meeting where the issue can be discussed publicly and voted on by the commission.

So what actions should be postponed until an open meeting? Here’s the short list:

- Setting up the service area’s annual budget
- Budget transfers
- Capital project submittals for grant consideration
- Renewing annual maintenance contracts
- Road work beyond snowplowing, hard pack removal and grading
- Planning capital project work
- Requesting a tax cap election
- Accepting grant funds
- Borrowing from the Revolving Loan Fund

If you are undecided about something not on this list, please call our office to determine what action is necessary.

4th Quarter Service Area Meetings

should be scheduled between

October 12th and November 25, 2009

Suggested 4th Qtr Meeting Topics:

- *Tax Cap Election Requests*

**FILL OUT A
“MEETING ADVERTISING NOTICE”
AND RETURN TO OUR OFFICE TO
SCHEDULE YOUR MEETING**

REMINDER

**UNTIL A COMMISSIONER
CONTACTS APRIL BARNES (459-1223)
TO AUTHORIZE PAYMENT
OF THE COMMISSION’S COPY OF AN INVOICE,
THE ORIGINAL INVOICE WILL NOT BE PROCESSED
AND ...**



YOUR CONTRACTOR WILL NOT BE PAID .

**APRIL’S RESPONSIBILITIES DO NOT INCLUDE CONTACTING
COMMISSIONERS TO GET THIS AUTHORIZATION.**

Mark your calendars now and plan to attend the

ROAD SERVICE AREA COMMISSIONERS ANNUAL MEETING

**Held by the Assembly Presiding Officer, the Mayor, and the Chair of
the Assembly Road Service Area Committee**

Saturday, October 10, 2009

8:30 AM—12:30 PM

Borough Assembly Chambers