

Summary of Planning Meetings January 2018 Petersburg Borough

In December of 2017, the Petersburg Borough Assembly approved the Borough Manager to conduct three public meetings in January of 2018 to solicit ideas and comments regarding ways in which the Borough could reduce expenses or increase revenues. 30 local citizens attended the three meetings held on January 8, 18 and 27th. The meetings were held on different days of the week and at various times to help make it easier for the public to attend. In addition, a temporary email address was set up so citizens unable to attend the meeting could submit ideas through email. During the process the Borough Assembly further clarified at an Assembly meeting of January 16 that no comment would be entered into the record if it was not clearly noted who was the submitter of the information. After the final meeting, the Borough Manager prepared this summary of the ideas and comments for review by the Assembly.

Public Submissions (includes employees, and department heads)

Revenue Comments/Ideas;

Amend Chapter 9.28 of the Municipal Code to allow the sale of fireworks inside of Service Area 1 for a reasonable date range. Allow them to be set off between July 1st and 5th, and on December 31st. People are already setting them off anyway, but this way the owner of the fireworks stand will double their revenue and double the sales tax collected.

Allow Side by Sides to be used on Borough roads and charge a registration fee

Allow ATV use by persons with a motorcycle license and Charge a registration fee

Have the Harbor Department start enforcing parking regulations. They are really good at it.

Reduce/Review sales tax exemptions on(for) Seniors; (9) needs based

limit the exemptions to include essential products; food, fuel oil, medical care, clothing. (2)

I do not support a fee or a repeal of the sales tax exemption for seniors. As a small retailer, I see quite a few seniors not using these benefits. I feel that if you charge a fee for the cards you will see an increase in the use of these benefits. Seniors deserve these benefits.

Make the Senior citizen **property tax** exemption needs based.

sell more Borough Property (3)

Would like to see us capture income from summer transient population; (2)

Capture income from out of town retirees

Remove/Change tax cap (2)

Tax Fish/Commercial/Live Aboard Boats (4)

Attract a small Log Cabin builder (see Hoonah Log Cabin House builders). With the increased amount of land, we could guarantee a certain amount of log sales to this company.

Create a loan program with a low APR of 3% to attract younger professionals.

Specifically targeting the Tiny house movement. Set aside an area specifically for Tiny homes, to create a community. This would present an affordable living area for the young, elderly, etc.

Using the economic development fund to survey the land and create the loan program could help expedite this process.

Charge the bad guys more to stay in jail. Increase fines. Increase duration of jail time. Deter the bad guys. This could make money for the department.

I would pay a nominal fee for a business license.

Define Household before passing the senior card fee ordinance. If two unrelated seniors share housing, they should be treated as separate households for the income requirement.

Issue the senior cards every three years not every year. Increase the \$20,000 household to \$30,000. To keep it at 20,000 prohibits having house mates to reduce their cost of living. (4 in favor of fee)

\$100 is excessive and would appear to be a "tax" for the senior card fee. (3 feel the fee is too much, 1 felt it was too little)

Forget the proposed sr exemption (card) fee

Change the Investment Strategy (risk factor) for our investments.

Develop plan to utilize the 14,000 Acres of land and its resources once the land is conveyed to the Borough

Develop the land beyond the airport road – sell lots, open a road passable to vehicles to expand housing and business opportunities.

Consider land lotteries such as Yakutat conducts, to allow lower income residents an opportunity to purchase property and sell more Borough parcels.

Increase tax on alcohol. Why? As a community we have a HUGE cost center with our Police Department. Alcohol very common in Police dealings equals large dollars. Use the increased funds to support community services (dry beds, counseling, safe home, etc.) and to address addiction.

Cost Reductions;

Reduce public hours to become more efficient

Karl can run the electric department (3)

Fewer Paid Holidays for employees

Reduce school funding by \$200k but keep the 200k funds in the rural schools account. Erika is the best superintendent the district has had in the 25 years I have been in town. She can easily handle the work load with 2 principals which will save well over 100k and give her an option to get rid of a poor principal. We had 3 principals for 750 students when I was with the schools and it was the easiest principal position I had in my 25 years in education, so this cut is very doable.

Privatize Mountain View Manor with a reputable company such as Fireweed Court or Wild Flower Court in Juneau. SEARCH may also be interested in expanding their federal dollars to take over this function. With the General Fund assistance and the amount of expenditures we would be saving approximately \$616,964 a year (according to the projected FY17/18 budget). (2)

Privatize Sanitation with a reputable company such as NW Waste Management. This will save money from future expenses, such as fleet management, upgrading the baler, and maintenance on the vehicles. Although the FY17/18 budget shows a positive balance there is no guarantee that unexpected expenses will not put sanitation into the negative balance such as it has in years' past. This would reduce the amount of expenses that the Borough has for the responsibility of 15 employees including Admin time, union expenses, and benefit costs. I recognize that the unemployment could influence our local economy however the potential is high that the incoming companies could employ them.

Focus on taking care of existing infrastructure. Do not spend money on unnecessary things that add to maintenance costs for the Borough (new landscaping, fancy fixtures, unnecessary space in new buildings).

Borough (and State) need to be more practical in their planning to spend "free money". Example, We spend a million dollars on a bulkhead that hardly ever gets used but we have a popular facility at Papke's that's falling apart and nobody wants to spend money to fix it.

Population decreased from 3600 to 3100. I have lived here for 23 years. Fishing difficulty – main industry – warming waters. Capital Projects, we don't need.

buy fewer new cars in the Police Department

Review all policy regarding vehicle use, expense, and repairs and replacement. Don't replace vehicles just because you have the money in the enterprise funds.

Pick up garbage and recycle every other week (2)

Be more prudent in spending for the Harbors. The town is getting smaller.

If needed could reduce the hours at the Library

Keep existing programs, but do not expand services unless they are self-sufficient in Parks and Recreation. Only add classes where the fee to participate covers all the costs.

As positions vacate, consider changing tour of duty wages to reduce by a few hours, with an appropriate wage decrease where possible.

Reevaluate Wellness Programs in Parks and Recreation

Prioritize use of Police force. Seems too huge a cost for such a small community.

Team with PIA/Local groups, etc to work at Borough Parks. Build Park groups to help with tasks.

Mapped GIS inventory for Public Works and Power & Light utilities – water, sewer, electric and all their counter parts, with details of materials. Having this inventory eliminates guess work, crew labor, upper management labor, resources and liability when locating services for a “Call Before You Dig” request or when Borough crews are servicing, adding, refurbishing, ordering parts, seeing what parts are part of a recall, etc.

Data for employees on a shared location (data library or web portal), with read permissions for all. Saving data duplication, saving on multiple data creations of the same data. Knowing that you are looking at the most up to date information about that topic. This saves countless labor hours when sharing data borough wide.

Do away with the recycling program since it is already, by China's non-interest going away anyway. I feel badly about this since Karl and I started it while I was at PIA.

amp up the recycling program. the borough can enhance participation in the program and increase the cost savings that the program is intended to produce.

Go to the recycling area of the borough’s website, and you’ll find nothing in the way of activity reporting. Well, almost nothing. There are copies of special reports prepared for the assembly in 2015 and historical figures from 2013, but no aggregate data quantifying garbage and recycling activities, weights, and dollars since the blue carts were introduced. Such feedback reinforces good behaviors. Charities know this. That’s why they send you solicitation letters and emails saying, “Just \$2.00 will provide a meal to a homeless person” or “Your \$25.00 donation will neuter a feral cat.” Feedback connects an individual’s behavior with a desired outcome. I bet Karl keeps all kinds of fascinating garbage and recycling data. Put it in a spreadsheet and post in on the recycling area of the website every fiscal quarter. It might be worth the cost of putting it in the paper too, as it would reach more people. This simple action will take just a few minutes and will close the information gap. Right now, people are recycling on faith. Give us facts.

Outreach generates and sustains interest, educates on the details, and preaches a bit. Suggested forms of outreach are public service announcements (PSAs) on KFSK, maybe public presentations of some sort, even tours of the baler and landfill areas. Nagging works. Remember that charity you gave money to? They send you not one but dozens of letters every year soliciting another donation. That effort must produce results, or they wouldn’t keep doing it. One of the problems with recycling that I keep hearing about is that people aren’t doing it right. PSAs are an opportunity to educate, to fill in voids of information on micro topics: should I take all the shipping tape and mailing stickers off the cardboard

box before I recycle it, can I recycle all kinds of plastic bags including those heavily printed or only plain bags, how about fish vacuum seal bags, what happens to glass, etc. I wasn't kidding about tours of the baler and landfill areas. There are liability issues, but it can be done safely. If schoolchildren are not now going on field trips to the baler and landfill, they should be. It will give them a sobering look at the tomorrow that awaits the objects they discard today.

Encourage household burning of nonrecyclable paper

Remind people about the glass dumpster at the Public Works site on Second St. Glass is heavy so it's especially important to keep it out of the waste stream. Glass recycling would be an excellent candidate for a PSA. I suggest more visible and accessible glass dumpsters, such as in the municipal building parking lot, but that's probably not going to happen. Weight of glass recycled (and disposal cost saved) should appear on the quarterly report

Encourage household composting. In a nutshell (which is compostable), composting is removing vegetation (compostables) from the waste stream and diverting it into the soil. It's a form of recycling. Compostables enter your home as food and leave it either as garbage or future garden soil. Melon rinds, banana peels, and used coffee grounds are heavy with water. After you remove commingled recyclables from your garbage, compostables form the largest category (by weight) of the material remaining. Composting is the 800-pound gorilla of recycling. The borough needs to get started on this. Large communities down south are doing municipal composting of residential materials, which requires special equipment, dedicated carts, a special collection service, etc. It's probably not feasible for Petersburg to compost residential materials on a municipal scale. But in a small, rural town, where people often have plenty of land and a garden, we don't need the government to do our composting for us. Once again, Petersburg has a recycling advantage over more densely populated areas. The borough can encourage household composting by putting links on its website to information on how to build a compost bin and how to compost in Alaska. The borough might even locate simple compost bins and sell them to residents at cost.

Establish a monthly garbage collection schedule and proportional fee. The lack of a monthly garbage collection option is an impediment to recycling. Weekly garbage collection is based on an old model of garbage behavior. That model has changed, and the borough is trying to change garbage behavior even more. It's time to adapt the collection and fee structure to reflect and encourage change. In 2016 and 2017, the borough collected our garbage just every other month -- six times a year. That's all we needed. We're a household of two adults, we consume as much stuff as everyone else, and we pay for the smallest cart possible (32 gallons). But we're good recyclers so we generate very little garbage (remember, we reduced our garbage 75 percent by composting). Our recycling cart is only half full when the borough empties it six times a year. Each time the borough collects our garbage, it costs us about \$60.00 because we're forced to pay for eight garbage collections for every collection made. Clearly, \$60.00 per collection is excessive. The discrepancy between our need and the borough's mandatory fee for weekly collection makes the cost more of a tax than a user fee. The borough penalizes us and those like us for doing the right thing. And we subsidize the careless.

Get rid of the garbage fee schedule based on volume and frequency, and charge by weight instead Equip the garbage trucks with scales and electronically record the weight of each collection (adjust for the weight of the cart). The municipal code currently requires that a record be kept each time garbage is collected, so you would just be adding a weight figure to an existing administrative task. Then

download data to the finance department where a cost multiplier would be applied to the weight figure, and onto your monthly bill it goes. This simple software function should be relatively inexpensive and, once implemented, require no additional staff time over the current system. The cost per pound can be based on a formula that reflects the need for fund revenues and expenditures to balance, is adjusted annually to correct for prior year shortfalls or overages and begins at a level that's reasonable by current standards. Charging by weight would take inequities out of the current system for conscientious (and even casual) recyclers, and it would be a powerful incentive for people to reduce their garbage through recycling. Feedback would be immediate and personal, as your monthly bill would reflect your individual behavior. The borough meters electricity and we pay by units used, not by some arbitrary unit like house size. We can do the same with garbage. Once the borough receives our garbage, I'm pretty sure it pays to ship it by weight, not by container volume and arbitrary shipping frequency. Residents should be accorded the same precision. Charging by weight also means you can forget about all that tedious wheedling and cajoling described above. The lackadaisical recyclers will now hit the blue cart every time. Glass will fly into the Public Works dumpster. In many kitchens, a bin for burnable paper will stand next to the garbage bin. Composting will be incorporated into the daily routine of many households. Even recycling refuseniks and skeptics will pay attention when their money is directly linked to their garbage habits.

All carrots, no sticks. Everything above is a positive motivator for better recycling behavior. Public acceptance should be high. There are few good ways to compel better recycling behavior. We can (and probably should) make recycling mandatory, but 95 percent of households have already signed up for blue carts. You're required to place your blue cart out after every time you place your garbage cart out, but the blue cart may contain only a single item while the garbage cart is stuffed to the max. Without draconian rules and expensive monitoring, we can't force the unwilling to recycle thoroughly or thoughtfully. All you can do is reduce their numbers through encouragement. And time. Eventually the dinosaurs die out.

General Comments:

Consider giving exemptions to Volunteers (Fire/EMS/Drivers for Elderly)

Borough does an excellent job of wisely using its finances.

Sell Land to PIA for a cultural camp

Would spend more locally if businesses were more honest with their pricing

I am for the property switch with Petro Marine. The Harbor needs a quality facility to keep Harbor up (maintenance and repair)

We decided to annex people to form a Borough, many against their will. Because of that decision, I feel an obligation to those outside service area 1. We should take as much money from the State as possible, and any Federal money that may be available, then make up the difference through a Borough wide Bond Measure. This would raise property taxes throughout the Borough and show community support for those outside service area 1. The Dock and launch ramp are the hub of activity for a fairly

large segment of newly annexed residents. Future Maintenance could be funded by taxation or user fees and not Harbor funds.

I don't know how in the dumps (pardon the pun) the program (recycling) is now, but the last time I read a disheartening article in the paper, the recycling rate was 16 percent. The municipal code sets a 40 percent recycling goal by January 2019. Clearly, we're not doing well.

Stop using an outside contractor to negotiate union contracts. This task has historically been and should remain the manager's. It shows a complete lack of respect for the employees when the boss is unwilling to sit down across the table from them.

Conduct an employee satisfaction survey annually. This can be a valuable tool in identifying deficiencies in an organization. Suggestions and comments submitted by the employees during the process can help identify ways to decrease spending and increase revenue.

Stop paying for street lights from the general fund. While it is a minimal expense, it is one that should be on power and light not public works or any other department that doesn't have light in its name.

Personal Budget – If I can't afford, it doesn't happen. Borough isn't doing that. Need rather than want. Don't see cutting expenses at all. Borough has responsibility to spend less. Cut employees, salaries, or something.

If the Borough is asking for more income, prove areas where efforts have been made to cut expenses.

I keep thinking of Gerald Lynn at the Pioneer Home. Why no space local for him, and others like him. Raised here but cannot die here surrounded by loved ones.

PSG needs to seriously work on expanding the local resources for our fishing fleet. We need a large haul out, work sites for boats to be worded on in dry dock where maintenance can be done without going to Wrangell or South.

Please remember that Parks and Recreation programs do not pay for themselves. They are not self-sufficient. They are a benefit to our entire community.

More free dump days. Do one day in the Spring and another in the fall and let me pick free at the dump because I love it.

We need more affordable options for people or more incentive (financially; tax breaks) for people to buy property and develop land. For a new home, you're looking at \$300,000 for lot, \$10,000 for rock, water, sewer, electric, etc. You're \$100,000 in before you can start building.

We need more sites zoned for mobile homes. Not trailer parks, but small lots owned by the mobile home owner. This will be an amazing opportunity for retirees, people who are starting a family, young people and people who want simpler living but also ownership.

No new Hospital. The town is not getting larger. (2)

Recently someone asked for permission to alter the turn-around at Scow Bay. He would have paid to put in a dock. Allow them to do so. The Borough will not have to pay for it.

Support zoning for tiny houses. Make it easy to have a tiny house (or two) along with our primary home.
(2)

Review Enterprise Fund balances for appropriate needs. Charge appropriately for costs to tax payers and users.

Be more transparent with where the Borough is headed, financially, capital improvement goals. A once a week call in show/interview. Better Public Relations.

Keep Library hours and programs as is. The number of users has increased and the library has become a "must visit" for tourists to Petersburg as well. It is a safe and desirable place for youth, a quiet and monitored place for students doing homework, a magnet for our senior population, and more. They have done an excellent job presenting programs, expanding their collections, and providing services to residents and visitors. This is not the place to save money.

PEDC needs to develop a credible, focused plan to encourage new businesses, including (and especially) non-fisheries related businesses, and better marketing for Petersburg. Involve the Chamber, especially now that they receive all TRT funds.

Add a hot tub at the pool

What is being done to promote business within the Borough? What incentives are being offered?

The Assembly should direct the Borough Manager to prepare a plan that would include a taxation policy that would be based on the total valuation of all property; ie land, buildings, airplanes, pleasure boats, fishing vessels, gear, construction equipment, etc. owned by Borough residents. Level the playing field and make everyone equal in your taxation efforts. Eliminate all exemptions "is above is implemented". Reduce the mill rate to 6 mils and sales tax to 4%

Invest in employees that you now have to make these changes possible. Cost of Living increase given to employees. Over 3 years was only 2% in pay. That proposed number is not a cost of living increase. (That is only \$7 a paycheck pay increase from 2018-2021). If a job description calls for professional education requirements and professional employment – keep providing professional health benefits. High employee turn around rate if not – thus, costing the Borough money.

Having an easily navigable website with Apps or a Dashboard for quick easy fact finding or form location. This will help the public, and employees find the information they are looking for – saving going into the Borough offices or calling employees to find out information that is already on our website – or could be added to our website. Perhaps having a ChatBot application that can respond to user questions and direct them to the appropriate web pages. Faster service delivery, and happier internal and external customers.

Incorporate a preschool into Mountain View Manor. This has proven to enrich senior lives and creates an opportunity to share with new generations.

Change Sing Lee Alley (from either the ADFG building or Chief John Lot Street) into a two-way street. This will reduce traffic on the historic bridge. Also reducing the costs of maintenance. I don't see the purpose of forcing traffic down this old bridge. Chief John Lott into a two way also.

Install ladders on docks for individuals to get out of the water if they fell in.

Small communities like Petersburg, Wrangell, etc. really need to lean on the State to improve the Ferry system's ability to serve small communities. They don't hear enough from us. We must demand to have reliable and timely service year around. We must work together to overpower "Anchorage" view of the ferry system.

Be proactive in letting "outside world" know what a high level of "quality of life" PSG has to offer. Make every effort to develop a welcoming business climate to encourage small businesses and light industries. Utility rates, available property, favorable zoning, etc.

I agree with Don Koenig's comments re tax structure stated last week. A fair & universal taxation plan is a requirement. Example, why should an aviation related business pay personal property tax on aircraft and hanger while fishing business pays none – while they work equally as hard and contribute equally to the community.

Increase hours at the Library to accommodate work visits. To do this requires increase staff. Investigate use of volunteers to be trained to help. Make value of library more visible and encourage greater use. What a treasure not available in many towns our size.