

# DENALI COMMISSION MEETING

via ZOOM videoconference  
Anchorage, Alaska

**January 30, 2023**

## MEETING MINUTES

### PRESENT:

#### **Commissioners**

Garrett Boyle, Federal Co-Chair/Meeting Chair  
Tyson Gallagher, State Co-Chair  
Nils Andreassen, Commissioner  
Julie Kitka, Commissioner  
Pat Pitney, Commissioner  
Alicia Amberg, Commissioner

#### **Absent**

Joelle Hall, Commissioner

#### **Staff/Others**

Jocelyn Fenton, Director of Programs  
Katie Conway, Energy Program Manager  
Liza Mack, Village Infrastructure & Transportation Program Manager  
Kristen Reardon, Water/Sanitation, Victims of Crime, and Health Facilities Program Manager  
Anne Stanislawski, Administrative Officer  
Betty Caudle, Kron Associates

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Federal Co-Chair, Garrett Boyle called the meeting to order at 12:05 p.m. and welcomed the Commissioners. No agenda presented. Meeting for discussion purposes.

### **2022 YEAR RECAP**

Federal Co-Chair Boyle provided an overview of the past year's updates since the last meeting on March 28, 2022.

The commission has relocated to a new space located in the Atwood Building, Suite 1230. Federal Co-Chair Boyle thanked everyone who made the move happen, with special thanks to State Co-Chair Gallagher. Federal Co-Chair Boyle stated that the Commission will now realize cost-savings of \$350,000.00 per year, because of that office move/relocation, which is better stewardship of taxpayer resources.

In 2022, the commission obligated about \$19.5 million in awards and leveraged over \$40 million for a total of just about \$60 million dollars. Federal Co-Chair Boyle provided an overview of the success of the programs and small investments that are going a long way and making an impact.

The funding opportunity put out in April 2022 resulted in 169 applications, requesting a total of \$136 million dollars and the commission will award just under \$30 million to 60 different projects.

### **ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 WORK PLAN**

The commission is slowly getting back to being a more impactful organization and base appropriations have increased from \$15 million up to \$17 million, with appropriations for waterfront improvement program, the valley access transportation access program and solid waste management planning. Federal Co-Chair Boyle is hopeful the \$17 million will be considered baseline funding going forward.

Federal Co-Chair Boyle stated that he would like the commissioners' input on where to spend the additional \$2 million for the 2023 Work Plan. He commented on Senator Murkowski's desire to see the commission do more to alleviate the solid waste burden in the villages. Senator Murkowski's senior position on the appropriations committee and her relationship with ranking member Senator Collins will be helpful.

At Federal Co-Chair Boyle's request, the staff program director and managers provided summaries of progress in the various programs that they manage in the areas of energy, housing, transportation, and victim's services.

All program managers and staff addressed commissioner's and co-chair questions and provided detailed information about needs, where dollars are being spent, proposed funding, outreach and future projects, and paths forward in each of their programs.

Lengthy discussion ensued about allocation of and application of the additional \$2 million available in FY23 budget. Areas discussed were AVTEC lab upgrade, the energy program with an overview of assessment, distribution of village bulk fuel, power plants, tank farms and Scammon bay Tank farm, sanitation, and waste programs in the villages.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Kitka moved to approve the expenditure of \$2 million dollars for the following projects:

1. AVTEC lab upgrade for plant operator training.
2. Statewide distribution system inventory and assessment of power plants and tank farms.
3. Scammon Bay tank farm and village sanitation programs.
4. Variety of solid waste projects.

**SECONDED:** Commissioner Nils Andreassen

**VOTE:** Motion passed unanimously.

## **FY24 DRAFT WORK PLAN DISCUSSION**

Federal Co-Chair Boyle advised the plan was sent out to all for review and asked for questions, comments and concerns. There was clarification that is the federal fiscal year calendar, starting next September.

The draft work plan is very similar to FY23 operating on the assumption that funding will include the additional two million, with additions to energy, workforce development and the remainder into a flexible fund.

Federal Co-Chair Boyle responded to a question about clarifying where the funds are allocated and that the emergency funding has been tremendously helpful.

A discussion took place about additional federal highways monies flowing to the commission again this year. It was discussed that after a long process there is now a MOU in place as a result of previous funding, that should make funding going forward faster. As a result, state legislators may be more open to discussion on that topic.

State Co-Chair Gallagher spoke on behalf of the administration to confirm that the administration is interested in participating in the federal highway program and open to approaching legislators. With \$15 million flowing to the commission, it was confirmed that the commission could handle projects of that size, considering similar past projects in that range. The commission will be hiring another transportation program manager.

Discussion took place about making funding opportunities more visible and available to those looking for funding in rural areas and creating one-stop shopping via a new website being developed.

Commissioner Kitka shared her views about also including funding for volunteers and volunteerism in the villages. Commissioner Kitka used search and rescue as an example, which self-fund and have little to no funding for their search and rescue needs. These are fragile systems, and the commission needs to make an effort to support these programs.

Commissioner Pitney asked about a housing task force as she had been approached to participate, but did not have the availability to do so. Both Commissioner Andreassen and State Co-Chair Gallagher shared the names of individuals heading up housing tasks forces that are getting underway as Dennis McMillian and John Springsteen.

Commissioner Kitka discussed the concern about billions and billions of dollars in the federal government that have not yet been allocated together with the steps being taken and platforms, such as the National Strategy on the Arctic, being used to draw attention to Alaska. Commissioner Kitka emphasized that it would be useful for the commission to conduct more outreach and figure out how to get those dollars flowing to Alaska. Federal Co-Chair Boyle agreed and advised that both he and his staff are involved in some areas but will do further outreach.

## **ADJOURN**

Federal Co-Chair Boyle asked if there were any other questions or comments. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.