

Mayor's Report by Mayor Tom Morphet

The law firm of Chandler, Falconer, Munson and Cacciola, currently representing the Haines Borough, has notified the borough that it will end its current contract with the borough July 31. Three other firms have submitted proposals to represent the borough. The assembly should schedule a committee of the whole meeting to consider those proposals and select new representation.

Resident Jerry Lapp has resigned as a member of the Board of Equalization, reducing to 7 the number of BOE members. Code stipulates the BOE as between 5 and 9 members. If the assembly wants to take action to replace Lapp on the BOE, there are two applicants who were not appointed: Jennifer Canfield and John Nettleton. John is the husband of Barb Nettleton, who already has been appointed to the BOE.

Final comments on the Haines Borough's Comprehensive Plan are due 5 p.m. Friday, April 26.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on property tax assessments on Wednesday April 17 finalized its recommendations on Board of Equalization procedures, to be adopted by the assembly as policy. Most of the procedures, as recommended, already have been adopted into code by the assembly during the past three months. The staff requested time to check the policy against code to ensure language uniformity. The finalized policy titled "BOE procedures" will be submitted to the assembly for approval on May 14.

The mayor and deputy mayor traveled to Klukwan on April 17 to discuss with SEARHC board chair Kimberley Strong the potential for a Critical Access Hospital in Haines. Such a facility would include 3-5 holding beds and 14 beds for long-term care, including end-of-life care. This facility would replace the existing SEARHC medical clinic which is too small for current needs and regularly floods in the basement. The hospital would add to existing service, CATSCAN

capabilities and expand diagnostic equipment and procedures (such as colonoscopies) as well as add 24-7 emergency room care and a cafeteria and outdoor exercise area for patients. SEARHC has requested borough help identifying or providing a location for the facility, which would require an estimated 6-7 acres close to town.

The mayor wrote a recent letter to Port Chilkoot Co. that the borough faces increasing pressure to address large, unoccupied buildings in Fort Seward and urged the firm to take action before further deterioration occurs.

Assemblyman Kevin Forster has requested to make public the recording of the March 26 executive session regarding the lawsuit against the borough by Chilkat Valley Rural Residents Borough attorney Charles Cacciola is reviewing the transcript of that session to see if such action is advisable. The lawsuit is consolidated with another lawsuit against the borough by plaintiff George Campbell.

The annual Community Cleanup, sponsored by the Haines Chamber of Commerce and Haines Borough, occurs Friday, April 26 through Sunday, April 28. Bright yellow pick-up bags are available at the Chamber office in the Gateway Building on Main Street and at the Haines Borough office. Citizens are encouraged to help pick up the town. A drop-off station for filled bags will be located at the swimming pool parking lot starting Friday, April 25. Refreshments and prizes also will be offered at the drop-off station during the weekend.

The mayor hosted First Friday at City Hall on Friday, April 5. Eight guests enjoyed snacks and a trivia quiz about previous Haines city and borough mayors. Future "First Friday" events may be moved to "Last Fridays," as it's difficult to compete with First Friday's other all-star events.