

July 27, 2018

Mayor Ken Koelsch will pass on a second term

Ken Koelsch, elected Mayor of Juneau in a special election on March 15, 2016, announced today that he will not run for re-election on October 2.

"My commitment to this community will never cease – and yet it's time to turn the reins of leadership over to the next generation," Koelsch said.

"I am proud of what we've done for Juneau. Nothing is simple or easy but we tackled difficult and complex issues like homelessness and crime while still trying to pay attention to schools and streets and keeping taxes under control.

"I'll miss strolling the halls of the Capitol every Friday morning, talking to legislators and trying to address their concerns. It was an honor getting to know some truly dedicated and amazing lawmakers from around Alaska. Out of 60 legislators, only three are from Juneau – we're kind of outnumbered, so I thought it was important to make friends for the Capital City. Based on all the feedback I got, I think that was time well spent. "

Koelsch said he will not be endorsing anyone to succeed him.

"I understand we may have some great people stepping forward and I trust the community will make a good decision."

Koelsch taught at Juneau-Douglas High School from 1968-1996, and served as the Port Director for U.S. Customs and Border Protection for 18 years. He was on the Juneau Assembly from 1997-2003, as well as serving on other boards and commissions before winning 59 percent of the vote in a special election for mayor in 2016.

Koelsch commented on the job of a mayor:

"Being mayor wasn't on my life lesson plans when we moved to Juneau in 1968 for a teaching job. Being mayor wasn't on my bucket list when I retired from U.S. Customs in 2014 at the age of 70. But it happened thanks to the hard work of many and now I can put it on the bucket list and cross it off."

"A mayor accomplishes nothing by him or herself. It takes the dedication of eight other Assembly members, an engaged public, a City Manager and a City Attorney and a hard working group of city employees to produce the quality of goods and services expected by the public of Juneau."

"I have had the luxury of not having to be guided just by poll numbers or the loudest voices." I've had the luxury of trying to do what is right by relying on my family values and life experiences and my interactions with you." "Minute with the Mayor" occurs with phone calls, emails, letters, Assembly meetings, neighborhood meetings, walking down the street, shopping at the grocery store, going to church." Being mayor isn't theoretical.

"It's where the rubber hits the road. It's making decisions like taxing your hard earned income and spending your money, funding education, dealing with crime, providing recreational opportunities, supporting our economic engines like government, mining, fishing, tourism, small businesses and trying to ensure there is a safety net where and when it is needed."

"Thanks for allowing me the privilege of being your mayor. It will be weird to turn off the lights in my office for the last time and leave some things unfinished but that is the nature of the job and life. When I leave for the last time, it will be to go home to my wife of 50 years, Marian, and our children and grandchildren. It doesn't get any better than that."