

Akiachak Activity Report

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General Information:

To date, the CPA that Akiachak Native Community (ANC) hired to do audits for FY96 and FY97 has not completed the drafts. In January Leroy Seppilu, RUBA staff in the Anchorage office, was told by ANC CEO Jackson Lomack that drafts of the audits were completed and the final copies would soon be available. During a trip to the community in January, Leroy asked for copies of the audits. Jackson Lomack told Leroy that the drafts were not completed yet and that changes were still being made. The CEO has promised to send copies as soon as they are available.

A trip was made on February 10-11 to meet with the IRA Council to discuss formation of a water & sewer utility department. The meeting was cancelled due to lack of a quorum. RUBA staff went ahead with the trip to discuss and review the water & sewer utility ordinance and discuss other issues related to the water & sewer utility project with Mr. Lomack. This water & sewer utility ordinance version was to have Akiachak IRA Council create a water & sewer utility department with a bookkeeper to send out bills, collect bills, take in concerns/complaints about the water & sewer utility, and other duties. We discussed the water & sewer utility ordinance in detail. Mr. Lomack suggested that there be a special water & sewer utility rate for elders. It was during this trip that he told RUBA staff that the FY96 and FY97 audits were not finalized yet and would not be available for distribution until they were finalized.

Another trip was scheduled to be made by RUBA staff on February 24th with the Village Safe Water (VSW) Engineer, but RUBA staff did not go on this trip due to illness. The VSW Engineer told RUBA staff that the IRA Council had changed its mind about forming a water & sewer utility department within Akiachak Native Community and instead would like to form an independent non-profit organization to operate and maintain a water & sewer utility system. This idea has been pursued in the past and the IRA Council did not want another entity within the community. The Akiachak Native Community CEO has said the Council is still considering other options as well.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — Apparently, the Tribe's CPA auditor still has not finalized the FY96 and FY97 audits yet. RUBA staff asked for a copy from Akiachak Native Community CEO, Jackson Lomack, but he said the audit copies he had were drafts and the figures may change. It seems like this CPA is very hard to work with. He's been making promises but not delivering. We do not know, with certainty, what amounts and to whom the Tribe owes money.

Accounting Systems — The Akiachak Native Community Finance Department still has not installed the USTI Accounting software program. There were plans during last quarter to have this software program installed so the Tribe could use it for billing and financial record keeping purposes. Sherry Hoover of Common Sense Accounting is to train them on

its use. Apparently, she is to travel there several more times to provide training. This will be good for them since the Finance Department employees still need training on their duties. Meantime, RUBA staff has never seen or been provided a financial report on ANC. The Council has asked its own staff for this information and never been provided one to our knowledge.

Tax Problems — To date, RUBA staff has not had any reports of Akiachak Native Community having difficulty meeting payments with payroll taxes.

Personnel System — Apparently, the business manager who was released from his employment with Akiachak Native Community in November 1999, is back at work. RUBA staff doesn't know the story behind it, but suspects it might have something to do with pressure from clan members to have him hired back.

Organizational Management — Still frustrating to the CEO when dealing with personnel issues since he also has to consider how to deal with relatives of the affected personnel.

Leadership/Governance — The Council is still undecided on what type of water & sewer utility ordinance to pass. First, RUBA staff was told by the VSW Engineer that the Council had decided that it wants an independent non-profit organization to run the water & sewer utility system. Now, the CEO, Jackson Lomack says the Council wants RUBA to present different options for them to consider.

Operation of Utility — The CEO has invited RUBA staff to make a presentation on at least three options of how the water & sewer utility system should be managed. The first one is to have a utility department within Akiachak Native Community and have the personnel be supervised by the CEO. The second option is to have a utility department with the personnel supervised by a utility board. The third option is to organize an independent non-profit organization with a utility board managing the water & sewer utility system. RUBA staff's preference is the first option in which a utility department within Akiachak Native Community is created and the personnel supervised by the CEO. This is the easiest to create and easiest to manage.

Ranking

1 = Inadequate

4 = Adequate to meet minimum requirements

7 = Exceeds requirements

Category	1	4	7
Finances	X		
Accounting Systems		X	
Tax Problems		X	
Personnel System		X	
Organizational Management		X	
Leadership/Governance	X		
Operation of Utility		X	