

Akiachak Activity Report

General Information:

Leroy Seppilu, RUBA staff in the Anchorage office, traveled to the community in July to make an assessment of how Akiachak Native Community (ANC) runs its administration and utility departments and draft a workplan. While there, the tribal ordinances were reviewed with emphasis on how much power the tribal judges have. There are 3 judges appointed by the IRA Council. This includes one appointed from the administration department. The judges meet to hear civil cases.

At the request of DEC-VSW, a letter was drafted to demand that certain requirements be met by Akiachak Native Community before 12/31/99 in order to continue the water and sewer utility project in Spring of 2000. FFY97 and FFY98 audits have not been completed as promised by the tribe's CPA. A honey bucket and trash haul ordinance must also be drafted, passed and implemented by the Council as well. This ordinance would help determine if utility customers are willing to commit making payments for utility services. The tribe is to charge \$10 a month for the utility service. The accountant found the tribe already had a sanitation haul ordinance in which customers are charged \$10 a month. However, billing and collections efforts had not been seriously followed and a majority of the customers were not paying.

The CEO, Jackson Lomack, mentioned that he had been trying to contact the CPA hired to do audits for FFY97 and FFY98 without success. A letter of complaint was filed with Alaska Society of Certified Public Accountants to address this issue. The CPA finally called back and promised to complete the audits "very soon." A verbal agreement was made. RUBA staff advised ANC to do a follow up letter outlining what was agreed to.

The CEO informed RUBA staff that the Council wants to form a non-profit organization to operate and maintain the water & sewer utility. The Council invited RUBA staff to make a presentation on how to form a non-profit organization during its October meeting.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The tribe has several grants that are active and need to either close or start implementing before the deadlines arrive. The CEO, Jackson Lomack, was made aware of the grants that need to have quarterly reports made whether there were activities or not. The biggest is a fisheries disaster grant of \$250,000 that needs to be used by June 30, 2000. The CEO thought he had another 2 years before the deadline to spend the money.

Accounting Systems — A new accounting software program is being reviewed by accounting department.

Tax Problems — RUBA staff found out from Dept. of Labor that ANC was behind by at least 3 ESC quarterly report payments. Reports were being submitted without payments. Efforts were made to correct this discrepancy ASAP.

Personnel System — The tribe’s accountant did training on basic accounting procedures. During a preliminary test, an observation was made by RUBA staff that the accounting department’s staff need extensive financial training.

Organizational Management — Draft job descriptions for a utility clerk and water & sewer plant operators were reviewed with the CEO. We played with the idea of having the current accounting department send and collect w/s utility bills.

Leadership/Governance — The tribe wants to form a non-profit organization to run the water & sewer utility system. RUBA staff believe the tribal council wants to continue the water & sewer project despite its internal financial problems.

Operation of Utility — RUBA staff did a limited review of the washeteria rates and fees. The tribe charges \$0.25 per minute for showers or \$2.00 for unlimited use, \$2.00 per washer load and \$0.25 per minute for dryer use. A review of revenues and expenditures was not made to determine if the washeteria was operating in black. This will be done in the near future.

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	