

Brevig Mission

Josie Morrow, LGS/RUBA, Nome Regional Office

General Information:

Assistance was provided this quarter by Nome RUBA/LGS Josie Morrow through telephone and fax and was as follows:

- Helped the City Clerk rewrite sections of the Personnel Ordinance defining permanent and part-time employees, those positions eligible for accrued leave and holidays, and clarification of payroll advance policy.
- Assisted the Mayor with the resolution of an employee grievance. Explained to him the use of executive sessions and an employee's right to be present.
- Gave direction to the City Clerk on job descriptions, leave accruals, and payroll deductions.
- Assisted City Clerk with a determination of Council member qualification. This resulted in a vacancy on the Council and reelection of the Mayor position.
- Clarified overtime eligibility for personnel working holidays.
- Assisted the City Clerk in drawing up an organization chart.
- Provided direction for amending the FY00 Budget.
- Talked the City Clerk and his alternate through a search of State Statutes on the Internet.
- Reviewed with the City Clerk the calculation of leave accruals for employees with fluctuating schedules due to budget cutbacks.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City continues to carry back debt for fuel and gravel to the local store in the amount of \$27,760. These amounts were budgeted in the FY99 budget, but no paybacks had been made. The FY 00 budget did not take these debts into consideration.

The City has been obtaining its insurance from AML/JIA and is up to date in the payment of its premiums.

27% of the Cable TV and 13% of the Trash/Honey Bucket customers continue to be past due on their accounts. The Bookkeeper is diligently contacting customers for payback agreements, voluntary assignments of permanent fund dividends, and continuing with small claims procedures against some. She has been successful in reducing the old electric utility past due accounts by over 1/3. At the end of this quarter, past due accounts for Honey Bucket and Trash Haul are \$9,070 and Cable are \$1,740. Other Accounts Receivable Past Due at March 31st are Washeteria - \$776, NSF Checks - \$388, Building Rentals – \$970, and Per Diem – \$285.

With assistance from the City Bookkeeper, the City Council amended the FY00 Budget this quarter.

Accounting Systems — The City Bookkeeper continues to keep monthly financial reports up to date. All records are on manual systems and the bookkeeper always feels rushed. It is time the City/Utility looked at computers and software suitable for their needs. The FY01 RUBA work plans have an automated accounting system as a priority.

The City has been using some unusual accounting practices in recording refunds and reimbursements and changes on revenue payments. The recording of these transactions have overstated expenses and distorted revenues. In addition, there are fund transfers between each bank account that appear on the budget reports. Josie will work with the City Bookkeeper and help her develop a better way of accounting for these transactions on the manual bookkeeping system.

Tax Problems —The City Bookkeeper continues to keep all payroll taxes up to date.

Personnel System —Pay advances were discontinued this quarter. Stronger language disallowing pay advances was incorporated into the Personnel Ordinance.

The City Clerk and Council need intensive training in the evaluation process and the understanding of the Personnel Ordinance. All employees need to review the Personnel Ordinance and understand the City's policies. This will be done on one of the RUBA field trips later this summer.

Organizational Management — The City Code of Ordinances has provision for a Utility Board, but has never voted one in until the 1998 municipal election. As of this date, the Utility Board has not met, and the Council has put the concept on hold until Nome RUBA, Josie Morrow, can review with the Council and Utility Board the concept/costs involved in this form of management. There is a serious problem with employees being on both the City Council and Utility Board. That organizational impact will have to be examined more closely when the review of the organization is done with the Nome RUBA/LGS. With the return of the prior City Clerk to the position of City Administrator, respect and consideration for the Bookkeeper's observations and recommendations has been eroded.

The City has a Code of Ordinances, but it is not available to the public and employees. Josie did discuss this situation with the returning City Clerk/City Administrator, and he said he had made a copy available in his office. Josie recommended to him that he make a copy available where everyone could access it, as well as putting one in the school library. This has not happened as of the end of this quarter.

Filing and records management continue to be poor. The offices for City employees are one small room off the Bingo hall. Consideration for more space and office furniture was brought up to the Council and they are looking at remodeling a section of the Bingo Hall to make room for the Bookkeeper and her files.

It was recommended last quarter that the City Council consider a City Administrator position. The Council assigned the City Administrator position to the City Clerk. Josie's

observation is that this designation is not working out at all, due to continuing absences by the City Clerk and his total disrespect for the Bookkeeper. On her next field trip she will be discussing the situation with the Council. The current Bookkeeper was designated as the Utility Project Liaison.

Utility Ordinances, User Agreements, and other related documents need to be reviewed and updated in appropriate ordinances this year.

Leadership/Governance — The City Council meets on a monthly basis, but the City Clerk/City Administrator reads everything to them. They do not get financial reports and correspondence before the meeting so they can review the material. Meetings are way too long. The agendas include reports from employees, but this happens after all the other business matters. The utility operators do not make monthly reports. The Council defers to the City Clerk and it is observed that he is really running the meetings. Correspondence is opened and screened by the Clerk, and those of special interest to him, such as grants and workshops, make it to the agenda. RUBA work plans will include training for Council members, along with the City Clerk, to cover various roles, responsibilities and duties.

Operation of Utility — The City is a model for trash and honey bucket haul. Visitors are always impressed by the cleanliness of the community, and the City is to be commended on the diligence of their employees in this matter. Both Water Plant Operators are OIT certified. The alternate Water Plant Operator needs to attend OIT training. She keeps the Washeteria and Plant in pristine order and should be encouraged to continue in this field.

The Water/Sewer project is a PHS/ANTHC project and began this summer with construction of a water treatment plant and well house improvements.

The primary Water Plant Operator was chosen by the Nome Region RMW as Operator of the Year in the Nome Region. Congratulations, Steve.

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

