Brevig Mission

General Information:

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

- Recommended that the Bookkeeper compile a list of the employees due evaluations and include the date and amount of last raise. The Council addressed the list in early November and brought evaluations and merit increases up to date.
- Researched the City Clerk's question concerning employees running for City Office and advised him on the provisions in Title 29 and the City's Code.
- Advised the City Clerk on the eligibility of Bingo employees for holidays and leave accrual. Had him locate the specific sections in the Personnel Ordinance and read them.
- Explained the use of executive sessions and the employee rights for notice and attendance.
- Answered an employee's question about the grievance process and referred that employee to the appropriate sections of the City's Personnel Ordinance.
- Advised the City Clerk as to the taxability of Council stipends and Election Judge reimbursements. Also recommended to the Clerk and Bookkeeper that they need to start calling the IRS agent for such determinations and to document the conversation.
- Advised the newly hired City Clerk he had to go through the probationary period, per the City Ordinance. Had him read the appropriate section and ask questions about anything he did not understand.

The City Clerk position became vacant in November and the prior City Clerk was rehired to the position.

The City sent the Bookkeeper and a Council Member to the Utility Organization Workshop in Nome the week of November 15th. While at the workshop, the Bookkeeper completed the City's 1998 Consumer Confidence Report with Steve Schreiber from the National Rural Water Association.

Congratulations to the City Bookkeeper who was chosen one of the Governor's WorkStar Employees of the Year.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City has 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 as of 6/30/99. The FY00 budget did not take these debts into consideration. During this quarter the City paid back PHS/ANTHC $29,802 for the purchase of a JD tractor. The City used equipment rental revenues earned in the 1999 Construction season to settle their debt with PHS/ANTHC.

The City has been in the practice of depositing grant monies into the general checking account. As of 6/30/99 the City owed the Heavy Duty Equipment Grant Fund $14,802 for a reimbursement that was used to pay off the back payroll taxes. The City Bookkeeper reports that these monies were paid back this past quarter.

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 is continuing with small claims procedures against some. She has been successful in reducing the old electric utility past due accounts by over 1/3.

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 FY00 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 change 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 has been working with the City Bookkeeper and will 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 — The City Clerk who resigned last quarter, was rehired this reporting period. He continues to have problems understanding the Personnel Ordinances. Pay advances that were discontinued last quarter have been proliferating this quarter. The City Clerk interfered with certain evaluations that were done during his break of employment with the City, and at least one grievance has developed. The Council and City Clerk need more training in Personnel issues and understanding the Personnel Ordinance.

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. The City did send the City Bookkeeper to the Utility Organizational Management workshop in Nome the week of November 15th. However, with the return of the prior

City Clerk, 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, 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.

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 is also recommended that the City Council consider a City Administrator position. The current Bookkeeper is acting in that capacity, and this informal structure needs to be recognized as a workable alternative for the City and its evolving Utility.

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 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 Operator In Training (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.

(Continued on next page.)

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		