

Brevig Mission

Josie Morrow, LGS/RUBA, Nome Regional Office

General Information:

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

- Helped the City Clerk rewrite sections of the Utility Ordinances to delete all provisions for a Utility Board. The amending ordinance was adopted in May.
- Helped the City Clerk amend the Utility Ordinance to clarify collection policies, including deductions from gaming proceeds within City limits. This ordinance was also adopted in May.
- Gave direction to the Utility Bookkeeper concerning voluntary employee deductions for past due utility accounts. The employees were hired for the Water/Sewer project and were being paid through a contract accounting firm. Coordination needed to happen with the City offices, project foreman, new employees, and accounting firm.
- Strongly recommended, again, that all cash receipts be deposited daily. There was another overnight robbery at the Washeteria in May. The Bookkeeper also expressed concerns she had about other cash receipts, such as those at the Teen Center. Josie recommended that all cash receipts be turned in to the Bookkeeper on a daily reconciliation sheet, so that the Bookkeeper could make daily deposits part of the routine.
- Assisted the IRA Bingo Manager on a question she had concerning amending the use of net proceeds. Also explained to her the legality of the new provision the City made regarding collection of past due utility bills from gaming winnings within the City limits.
- Recommended to the City Clerk that a Rate Schedule be developed and adopted for the Utility Ordinance. Also recommended that the metered rate for the School District be reviewed and an increase be considered.
- Reviewed the current payday policy and assisted the City Clerk in drafting a resolution specifying the City's payday for employees.
- Advised the City Clerk about doctors' releases for employees on leave due to injuries and/or illnesses.
- Once again, reviewed with the City Clerk the calculation of leave accruals for employees with fluctuating schedules due to budget cutbacks. He agreed that Josie would do a short session with the Council and him and the Bookkeeper on these calculations when she does the Personnel work sessions in August.
- Completed the 1999 Consumer Confidence Report on Water Quality.

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. In addition, there are many FY00 bills outstanding at year-end. None of these debts and unpaid bills were included in the FY01 budget. Josie has

notified the Mayor and Council of these oversights and will be working with the City Clerk/Administrator to amend the FY01 budget in the latter part of next quarter.

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

21% of the Cable TV and 48% of the Trash/Honey Bucket customers continue to be seriously past due on their accounts. The Bookkeeper is diligently contacting customers for payback agreements, voluntary assignments of permanent fund dividends, and has turned over accounts to the City Clerk/Administrator for small claims procedures. As of this quarter, the Clerk has not followed up on these small claims actions. The City's recent amendment to its collection policies to include gaming winnings has resulted in reduction in some of the past due accounts. The City Bookkeeper reports that the collections from gaming winnings are making a positive impact. At the end of this quarter, past due accounts totaled \$27,791 and consisted of: Honey Bucket and Trash Haul - \$16,355; Cable TV - \$3,456; Washeteria - \$726; NSF Checks - \$977; Building Rentals – \$1,670; Per Diem and Course Fees – \$439; Medical Loans - \$44; and old Electric Utility - \$4,124.

Accounting Systems — The City Bookkeeper continues to keep monthly financial reports and all bank reconciliations up to date. All records are on manual systems and the bookkeeper always feels rushed. This quarter the City came to an agreement with the Water/Sewer Project Manager for purchase of a new computer, printer, and accounting software for the City Bookkeeper. Training will be provided through a consultant and is scheduled to begin early next quarter. Implementation of the accounting software will not begin until the new calendar year.

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. The new accounting software will eliminate these transactions. In the interim, Josie will help the Bookkeeper to revise her manual reports so that these transactions are accounted for in a different manner.

The City Bookkeeper and Gaming Coordinator attended the Introduction to City/Utility Financial Management workshop in Nome at the end of May that addressed Payroll/Personnel Policies and Reporting Requirements, Budgets, Gaming Reports and Regulations, and 1999 Consumer Confidence Reports.

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

Personnel System —Pay advances were prohibited in an ordinance last quarter, but the Council has not been consistent with applying this policy. They are allowing Bingo employees to take advances. Josie did discuss this with the Clerk and Bookkeeper and

will discuss it with the Council during her next field trip. The City Clerk and Council need intensive training in the evaluation process and the understanding of the Personnel Ordinance. The Council and Clerk also need intensive training in confidentiality of payroll/personnel issues, executive sessions, and due process. In addition, all employees need to review the Personnel Ordinance and understand the City's policies. This will be done at the two-day work session scheduled with the Nome RUBA in August.

Organizational Management — There continues to be serious problems with employees being on the City Council. That organizational impact will have to be examined more closely when the review of the organization is done with Josie in late August. The City did eliminate all provisions for a Utility Board in an amended ordinance this quarter.

The City has a Code of Ordinances, but it is still unavailable to the public and employees. Josie did provide a hard copy of the Code to the City Clerk for proofing his copy that is currently on the computer. Josie has recommended to the City Clerk 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 have come to an agreement with the Water/Sewer Project Manager to expand the offices this summer.

It was recommended at the end of the calendar year 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 still not working out at all, due to continuing absences by the City Clerk/Administrator and his total disrespect for the Bookkeeper. On Josie's 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. The City Council did amend the utility ordinance this quarter to include a special provision for mandatory collections on past due accounts out of Gaming winnings. Application of this provision by the Mayor and City Clerk has not been according to the ordinance and Josie will be reviewing the situation with the Council on her next field trip in August.

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. A work session regarding these concerns is planned in August by the Josie and City Council.

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 City Bookkeeper/Project Liaison completed the 1999 Consumer Confidence Report at a RUBA workshop in Nome in May. The reports were distributed to all City residents, and the Certificate of Compliance was submitted to DEC in a timely manner.

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 Contractor on the project has made provision for development of Utility Management capacity and has hired a consultant to work with the City on these issues. The consultant began contact with Josie in late June, and they will be developing work plans to include the consultant’s scope of work.

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