

Brevig Mission

General Information:

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

- Assisted the City Clerk to determine eligibility of various employees for leave accrual. He continues to have difficulties with the wording in the Personnel Ordinance and needs follow-up. Also provided the Bookkeeper with a copy of the Personnel Ordinance and reviewed with her the leave accrual provisions.
- Discussions with the Bookkeeper concerning consolidation of Utility Bank Accounts resulted in an agreement that the AVEC bank account would be kept separate from the consolidated sanitation bank account in order that the Mayor can see that there are not enough funds in the AVEC account to allow payroll advances to the Power Plant Operators.
- An application of administration costs to all utility departments was discussed, and it was decided to consider this cost allocation when Josie next visited the community and could review the prior years' and current financial reports.
- Assistance was given the City Clerk to balance the FY00 City budget. He also required instructions for introducing an amending budget ordinance.
- A number of personnel questions arose in September concerning terminations. The appropriate sections of the Personnel Ordinance were reviewed with the Bookkeeper, with instructions to find out more details.
- Small claims filings were reviewed with the Bookkeeper and she was advised where to get a more up to date book and forms.
- Upon Josie's strong recommendations concerning employee advances and cashing of employee checks, the Mayor wrote notices to all employees that both practices would cease immediately.
- The Bookkeeper had a number of questions about the VSW questionnaire and Debt Summary Statement, which Josie helped her complete.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City has a 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. As of 6/30/99 the City also owed PHS/ANTHC \$29,802 for the purchase of a JD tractor. The City was to pay back this amount owed to PHS/ANTHC through equipment rental revenues earned in the 1999 Construction season.

The City has been in the practice of depositing grant monies into the general checking account. Currently, the City owes the Heavy Duty Equipment Grant Fund \$14,802 for a reimbursement that was used to pay off the back payroll taxes. In addition, the City

needs to transfer a \$5,000 advance on the 1999 CMG back into the Grant Fund. This dangerous practice was discussed with the Bookkeeper, and the FY00 RUBA work plans will have provisions for better grant reporting and cash controls.

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 are past due on their accounts. The Bookkeeper is diligently contacting customers for payback agreements, voluntary assignments of permanent fund dividends, and has even started small claims procedures against some. She has been successful this year in reducing the old electric utility past due accounts by over 1/3. The Bookkeeper expects that all past due accounts will be reduced even more once the permanent fund dividends are received.

Accounting Systems — The City Clerk had been doing the City's books, but he was never able to keep up with financial reports, reconciliation of bank accounts, and payroll reports. The City Bookkeeper was hired this past Fall, and since that time has caught up all financial reports, reconciled all 7 bank accounts, and bills customers on a monthly basis. 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.

Tax Problems —The City Bookkeeper continues to keep all payroll taxes up to date. She did have to pay a penalty for late reporting of the 1997 W-2's in the amount of \$1,260, which happened before her hire. She has ordered all 1999 year end forms from IRS and plans to file all reports early in January.

Personnel System — The City Clerk continues to have problems understanding the Personnel Ordinances. He has had to correct payouts of personal leave and those eligible for that leave, as well as those eligible for holiday pay. The City Clerk resigned in mid September and his replacement is a very inexperienced employee. The City Bookkeeper has been taking the lead and does show a strong grasp for personnel matters. She has organized the Council in starting the evaluation process for all employees and has been instrumental in stopping pay advances.

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.

Filing and records management is poor. The offices for City employees are one small room off the Bingo hall. Consideration for more space and office furniture will be

brought up to the Council this next fiscal year. 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. There is a workshop in Nome in November for Utility Organization Management, and the City will be encouraged to send two appropriate people to this training.

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. It is expected that with a new City Clerk, positive changes can be made in these areas.

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.

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	