

Deering Activity Report

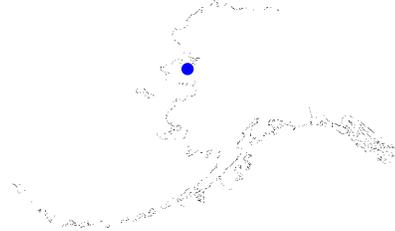
Community Overview

Lead RUBA Staff: Margaret Hansen, Kotzebue Office

2001 Population: 136

Region: Northwest Arctic

Local Governments: Second Class City



The City of Deering operates the piped water & sewer system, central watering point and water delivery haul system. The City Council is the policy making body for the utility.

Water is derived from the Inmachuk River; is treated and pumped to a 400,000-gallon insulated storage tank. Water is delivered to home tanks or hauled from the watering point. Major improvements are under construction for a water haul and vacuum sewer system. A new washeteria and water treatment plant are nearing completion. Archaeological remains were discovered while excavating for the new system. The City would like to purchase an incinerator with waste heat recovery to reduce the volume of refuse.



General Information

In October, the Kotzebue Local Government Specialist provided on site assistance and training to yet another new city clerk on tax reporting, monthly financial reports and grant reports. They still have not had anyone apply for the City Administrator position. I discussed with the Vice-Mayor the need to look at options for staffing the office and take a look at how they can retain the employees once hired. The Mayor was out of town. His seat was up for election but he opted not to run. I assisted the clerk in determining that they do need a runoff election and this Mayor was going to be on the runoff ballot for the seat no one filed for.

In November the Kotzebue Local Government Specialist provided telephone and fax assistance to the council on the runoff election. They had a few questions at the canvass committee meeting regarding votes counted and trying to determine who should be on the runoff ballot for the two seats no one declared candidacy for. I also encouraged the city to make sure the water plant operator schedules to come in for the next training session in order to keep his level I certification.

In December, the Kotzebue Local Government Specialist provided telephone and fax assistance to the city trying to get them to meet and certify the runoff election so they can reorganize. I also assisted the clerk in completing her October financial report once we were able to reconcile the bank account.

Observations and Recommendations

Finances — The Clerk provides the council with profit loss statements but has not been able to transfer these figures onto a monthly financial report that compares the data to budgeted amounts.

Accounting Systems — The new Clerk is doing very well with QuickBooks but has not been able to find the time to keep up with the monthly financial reporting. She has been receiving help on reconciling bank statements.

Tax Problems — No tax problems. She was able to complete the last quarter tax reports once trained.

Personnel System — The utility meets all the minimum requirements for this category. The council does need to take a hard look at why are having problems retaining employees. This may mean they will have to receive training on personnel and review the options they have.

Organizational Management — They still have not been able to hire an administrator this quarter. Because of the run off election, they have not been able to reorganize. The previous Mayor has been in and out of town.

Operation of Utility — The water plant operator has been able to keep his certification but we still do not have an alternate certified.

Category	Inadequate	Meets Minimum Requirements	Exceeds Minimum Requirements
Finances	X		
Accounting Systems	X		
Payroll Taxes		X	
Personnel System		X	
Organizational Management	X		
Operation of Utility	X		

Anticipated Activity

Margaret plans to travel to provide personnel management to the new council. She will provide them with options for hiring and retaining new employees.

She also is coordinating a joint council meeting with Alaska Energy Authority to provide information on their Bulk Fuel Upgrade project scheduled for the second week in February.