

Deering Activity Report

General Information:

Kotzebue LGS/RUBA Margaret Hansen has been working with the City this quarter on revising their code of ordinances. She provided training and reviewed with them their entire code of ordinances including water/sewer & utility board ordinances which the Council adopted. During this review she also provided training on how to follow through with their laws especially pertaining to policies for water/sewer knowing that they will need to receive the revenue monthly to pay for operation and maintenance costs. She also reminded the Council that the homeowners are responsible for the system from the main throughout their home. Margaret also gave them examples and advice as we went along on incidents they brought out so they know how to handle them in the future. Margaret provided them with their final draft on diskette and will complete copying 10 of the final. In addition Margaret provided the Utility Manager and Administrator with a new Utility Manager job description to include the water/sewer function of her job.

In August Margaret traveled to Deering with Commissioner Deborah Sedwick who was able to see first hand the new water/sewer system being installed in Deering and talk with the community on their needs including possible economic development projects. Margaret stayed an additional two days to provide onsite training on Quickbooks for monthly reporting, water/sewer project budget coordinating with VSW engineer, quarterly tax reports and grant reports. We also discussed the possibility of applying for a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) grant for water/sewer needs since they need \$600,000 more to complete the project. In addition Margaret worked with the Human Resource Specialist on gathering information pertaining to artifacts that were taken out of the community in the 1950's.

In September Margaret provided assistance to the Clerk on elections and provided assistance to the Administrator on personnel policies pertaining to discipline which meant researching and coordinating with AML before terminating anyone.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City had developed a separate budget for the new Water/Sewer Utility during Margaret's June trip and had combined the Water/Sewer Utility with the Electric Utility under the Electric Utility Manager. The City is still administering the washeteria funds but the next trip will be to review with the Council the revised job description of the Utility Manager and transfer this accounting to her. In addition we will start to do an assessment on a rate study to determine if they are collecting enough revenue to cover their expenses. The water/sewer was installed to 50 homes and turned on August 10th so by December 31, 1999 we should have good data to determine this.

Accounting Systems — The City has been using QuickBooks pro and are doing very well. Margaret provided training and assistance to the Administrator on computer monthly reporting for the council in comparison to the budget.

Tax Problems — There are no tax problems.

Personnel System — Margaret had planned to update their personnel policies and job description which was changed to possibly in October after the new Council has been sworn in. Transfer of the Water/Sewer responsibility to the Electric Utility Manager will affect a number of job descriptions, including the City Administrator, City Clerk, Utility Manager, and Water Plant Operator. All job descriptions need to be reviewed, revised where necessary, and classified into a wage scale. An evaluation procedure needs to be implemented and Council and staff trained in the process. The only job description that has been revised is the Utility Manager.

Organizational Management — The City has adopted an ordinance for a unified Utility under one Board. Organization charts need to be reviewed with all staff to reflect the change in Utility Management and departments. New lines of communication and supervision need to be clear to Staff, Council, and Utility Board. This task has been changed to October during personnel policy review.

Leadership/Governance — Although some training was provided during the ordinance review, once the new Council has been sworn in an assessment of new members needs will be done and workplan revised to incorporate those training needs.

Operation of Utility — The City Administrator will be working on monthly operations reports to be submitted by the Water Plant Operator or the electric plant. With the new water/sewer system coming on-line this winter, appropriate reports for all operations need to be developed. The utility foremen has been attending Council meetings to answer questions and will provide the council with a financial report. The Utility Manager does need to attend a Utility Management Workshop and an Operator In Training (OIT) class. The Council needs to make sure she attends the Utility Workshop on Organization set for November 1999 in Nome.

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	