

Gambell Activity Report

Josie Morrow, LGS/RUBA, Nome Regional Office

General Information:

Telephone and fax assistance by Nome RUBA/LGS Josie Morrow were provided this quarter with the municipal election and a subsequent runoff election, application of sales tax to certain sales of ivory, and a recommended procedure for collecting fines resulting from the VPSO or VPO issuing citations for violations of certain sections of the City's Code of Ordinances.

The City sent its Utility Clerk to the Utility Organization Management workshop in Nome the week of November 13th.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The Utility continues to set aside \$500 per month in a separate bank account for capital improvements and emergency repairs. They have put away approximately \$23,000 in this fund. The Utility drew down some of these funds last quarter to pay for their annual fuel order, but the Utility Clerk reimbursed these funds this quarter. The City invests these funds in an interest bearing account with the local bank.

The City carries its insurance with AML/JIA and is current with its premiums.

There are very few customers who are not current in their utility billing payments. The Utility Clerk is very diligent in following up on past due notices and cutoff of services. She said that customers seem more willing to pay their accounts because they understand the new bills that are being sent out from the QuickBooks Pro software.

Accounting Systems — The Utility Clerk is utilizing the QuickBooks Pro accounting software and is becoming quite an expert with the system. Last quarter she did set up the Bingo/Gaming Account onto QuickBooks Pro and the Gaming Manager is very pleased with the results. This quarter the Utility Clerk began converting the General Fund account over to QuickBooks Pro. She did have some difficulty reconciling the payroll tax computations from the hand generated payroll checks with the payroll reports, which slowed her down in the conversion, but she expects to have all City accounts up to date early in the new year.

The Utility Clerk does maintain the manual customer accounts receivable ledger cards as a check on the computer generated accounts. The Nome RUBA will be reviewing this process with the Utility Clerk sometime in the new calendar year, so that she will have more confidence in the computer reports.

The City Clerk has not been current with monthly budget reports. The Utility Clerk taught her how to do the reports on an Excel spreadsheet, but the Nome RUBA says she

has reservations about the accuracy and completeness of these reports. All Utility reports are done in a timely manner, and the bank accounts are reconciled monthly. The Utility Clerk did reconcile all of the City bank accounts this past quarter and states that current financial/budget reports for all City departments should be happening at the end of January 2001.

The Nome RUBA and Utility Clerk have discussed the need for the City to have one bookkeeper for all departments. Currently, the City has three bookkeepers: The City Clerk, the Ivory Coop Manager, and the Gaming Manager. The Utility Clerk is a fourth bookkeeper and is the only one to have any kind of aptitude for the work. This concept of one Bookkeeper will be discussed with the City Council and staff on the next field trip. The City Administrator and Utility Clerk see the practicality of the suggestion.

Tax Problems — The Utility and City payroll tax deposits are timely and up to date.

Personnel System — The City/Utility still needs to adopt job classifications, pay scale, and revised personnel policies and procedures. Additional training sessions in Personnel Management, Evaluations, and Supervision will be conducted next winter by the Nome RUBA.

Organizational Management — The Utility Ordinances need updating to reflect current rates. All Utility Ordinances need reviewing with the Utility Board and Council for clarification. There are approximately twenty homes on the water/sewer system that do not have utility agreements on file. The Utility Clerk will be obtaining those agreements as time permits. User agreements need to be updated to include appropriate information and legal considerations.

The City Council is desirous of eliminating the Utility Board, and had requested assistance from the Nome RUBA with this issue. Josie drafted an amending ordinance in December, but the City Council tabled the ordinance due to lack of support from the Utility Board. The Mayor and Administrator have requested that Josie discuss the issue with the Utility Board and Council on her next field trip to the City.

Leadership/Governance — The City Council has requested that there be a work session sometime this current fiscal year to read all ordinances, such that there can be a better understanding of the Code. A field trip in the third quarter of the fiscal year is planned by the Nome RUBA to read ordinances and review the budget for FY 2001.

Operation of Utility — There have been no major problems with the system this past quarter. Any operational problems are handled speedily by both Water Plant Operators.

Both operators are OIT certified and are planning to attend the next Level 1 course in February. The Nome RMW states that he is nominating both operators for Outstanding Operator of the Year for the Region.

(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	

