

Golovin Activity Report

Josie Morrow, LGS/RUBA, Nome Regional Office

General Information:

Nome RUBA Josie Morrow made a trip to the City in October 2000. She met with the Council at a work session and helped them develop a list of duties for the City Clerk, Utility Clerk, and Utility Bookkeeper. The remainder of the trip was spent reviewing the Personnel Ordinance with the two new Clerks and training them in the calculation of leave accruals, overtime, and holiday pay. She also spent time with the Utility Bookkeeper to identify costs that should be identified for a proper calculation of selling price for gas and stove oil.

Telephone and fax assistance by Nome RUBA/LGS Josie Morrow during this period were as follows:

- Municipal election and reorganization of Council.
- Finalized purchase of computer, printer, and software for Utility Bookkeeper.
- Assisted Vice Mayor and Utility Bookkeeper with calculation of overtime for Power Plant Operators.
- Took a number of phone calls from the Vice-Mayor concerning employee travel and leave. Also received phone call from the employee. Advised the two to take up the issue at the next Council Meeting and resolve what occurred. Directed them to the Personnel Ordinance.
- Completed a worksheet for the Council with calculations of fuel and gas costs for resale with recommendations for selling price.
- Advised the Council of discussions with Alaska Energy Authority concerning Golovin's late reports and advised them on actions needed to complete Power Cost Equalization (PCE) monthly and annual reports.
- Followed up a call from IRS/Fairbanks concerning problems the two new clerks were experiencing in completing the quarterly payroll reports. Helped them through the third quarter.

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

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The Utility Clerk hired last quarter, continues to keep all water billings up to date and is current on customer collections. The Utility Bookkeeper is responsible for the Electric customer billings and collections on past due accounts. She is over six months behind in the PCE reports and has not completed the 1999 annual report. The City was put on notice this quarter that they could lose their PCE credit if these reports were not completed. The City did hire a new Utility Bookkeeper at the end of this quarter, and she was analyzing all customer accounts and pursuing past due accounts and returned checks. She expects to be up to date with these efforts next quarter.

The City and Utilities are still preparing schedules for the FY 99 and FY 00 audits. The Nome RUBA completed a FY99 Certified Financial Report for the City, and they received their FY01 Shared Revenues and Payment in Lieu of Taxes this quarter, a portion of which went to a direct payment to the fuel vendor for the Fall barge order. The Nome RUBA advised the Council Members and staff that the outstanding audits must be dealt with as soon as possible, even if it means hiring the temporary Accounting Clerk for a longer period or making an arrangement for accounting assistance with their auditor.

The City is up-to-date with its payments on insurance premiums with AML/JIA.

Accounting Systems — The newly hired Utility Bookkeeper was able to bring the electric utility financial reports up to date this quarter. She was completing all PCE reports at the close of this reporting period, and expected to be finished in January 2001. The City Clerk and Water/Sewer Utility Clerk are behind in all financial reports and need training. The Nome RUBA recommended that the City hire back the person they had as an interim City Clerk last quarter, so that she can train these two new Clerks in monthly financial reports and grant reports.

Bank reconciliations still need to be brought up to date. In addition, business office personnel need more training on reconciling quarterly payroll reports and year-end reports and forms, and computation of leave accruals and other pay issues, such as overtime. Record keeping continues to be a serious problem. A system needs to be developed and filing completed before the end of this calendar year.

Tax Problems — There were numerous letters from IRS to the electric utility that were found by the newly hired Utility Bookkeeper concerning missing reports that go back to 1998. The new Utility Bookkeeper is resolving these issues. She is also assisting the City Clerk with payroll reports and says she will spend some time next quarter with the two new clerks to train them on quarterly reporting to IRS and DOL.

Personnel System — The Council continue to have problems following personnel policies. There is not a clear line of supervision at City Hall, and quite often individual council members give orders to business office staff. The Nome RUBA has brought this matter to the attention of the Mayor, Vice-Mayor, and council members. She also recommended that the Council work through the Mayor, or Vice-Mayor, in his absence.

Job descriptions, classifications, pay scale, evaluations, and merit reward need to be incorporated into the policies and procedures. Work plans will be developed with the personnel management component being given primary consideration. Employee evaluations were done at the end of the fiscal year, but there still remain a few staff who have refused to meet with the Council concerning their evaluations.

A few of the staff continue to “shop” among the Council Members for various permissions, such as leave and early pays. The Nome RUBA recommended to the Mayor and Vice Mayor that this practice be stopped immediately and that all staff and council members be advised that these types of requests must be given to the Mayor, per the

personnel ordinance. Josie had planned to discuss these issues with all the council members during her visit to the City in October, however only three council members were at that meeting. She will address this problem during her next field trip.

Organizational Management — The past City Clerks had not codified the ordinances passed in late 1996/early 1997, nor any updates. The current City Clerk and Council remain confused about what ordinances are in effect, although there are two folders with the 1996/1997 updates in the Council meeting room. The Nome RUBA has discussed the location of these ordinances with the new Vice Mayor and City Clerk, and will do more work with the Council and Clerk to codify these ordinances. This will be a priority on Josie's next field trip.

The organization of the City and Utility needs to be put up on an organization chart for the Council and staff to analyze the lines of communication, supervision, and work duties. Currently, it appears that there is some chaos in the way the bookkeeping, sales, receipting, and reporting are being handled. In addition, the lines of authority are not clear. This charting can be included in the personnel training that the Nome RUBA will be scheduling with the Council and staff on the next field trip. Appropriate utility ordinances need to be drafted when it is determined what system(s) will be built for water/sewer. Current utility ordinances need incorporating into the correct section of the City's Code of Ordinances, and the payment and collection policies need clarification.

Leadership/Governance — Council training needs to happen as soon as possible in the new fiscal year and can be coordinated with the personnel training. The City Council has a history of acrimonious meetings and much turnover. Somehow there needs to be instilled in the Council and public a sense of pride in its city government.

Family ties between Council members and staff continue to cause much dissent in management of day-to-day affairs as well as implementation of policies. The newly elected Mayor is experiencing much stress from the constant bickering, and he has twice thought about resigning from the Council this quarter. The Nome RUBA has been in contact with him and it is hoped he can overcome the pressures of his full-time job and that of being Mayor. He has strong leadership skills that the City needs at this time.

Operation of Utility — The Water Plant Operator hired at the beginning of last quarter resigned, and the former Water Plant Operator returned after being offered a higher salary. It is still recommended that the Council recruit for a backup operator.

It was also recommended to the Council by the Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) and the Nome RUBA that the Council look at two operators working a shift of one week on, one week off. This arrangement would be more attractive to potential employees.

The City is on the Significant Non-Compliance Exception List for Surface Water Treatment Rule violations. There is no distribution chlorine residual testing, no turbidity testing, and late operator reports.

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	