

Golovin Activity Report

Josie Morrow, LGS/RUBA, Nome Regional Office

General Information:

Josie Morrow assisted the City through phone and fax this quarter in the following matters:

- Converted leave accrual to a percent on hours worked that could be understood by the Council members and City and Utility Clerks. Ran them all through some exercises with actual examples so that they could understand the calculations.
- Advised the acting Mayor how to extend a probationary period and assisted her with some Council/Staff personnel problems.
- Reviewed use of executive session with acting Mayor and one Council Member.
- Explained evaluation process to the new City and Utility Clerks. Advised them to meet with the acting Mayor to clear up what the Council had done on their evaluations and to make sure that the personnel actions were very clear to them and the Council and Mayor. Referred them to the Personnel Ordinance.
- Answered numerous questions from the acting Mayor concerning termination of an employee who may seek recourse; interference from relatives of this employee who are currently on the Council; and continuing problems from one Council member who circumvents the Mayor with staff. Referred her to the appropriate sections of the City's ordinances, and faxed over to her sections she could not find.
- Followed up with IRS concerning overdue reports.

The Council appointed Norma Lewis to the vacant Council seat. Bernice Brown, the Vice-Mayor, was appointed to the vacant Mayor's office, and Dora Smith was appointed Vice-Mayor.

The City sent its City Clerk and Utility Clerk to the Utility Planning Management workshop in Nome the week of January 29th.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The Utility Bookkeeper hired late last calendar year has caught up all the PCE reports and is up to date on all electric billings and past due accounts. The Utility Clerk, who handles the water/sewer customers, went on maternity leave late this quarter. She was able to bill all customers before she went on leave, and the City Clerk, with the assistance of the Utility Bookkeeper, will do the billings until her return to work.

The City and Utilities are still preparing schedules for the FY99 and FY00 audits. The Council Members and staff were advised that the outstanding audits should be dealt with as soon as possible.

Accounting Systems — The newly hired Utility Bookkeeper continues to keep the electric utility financial reports up to date this quarter. 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 — Last quarter 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 has resolved these issues. This quarter she assisted both the City and Utility Clerks with all outstanding payroll reports and forms. IRS reports that the City and Utility are now in good standing.

Personnel System — 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 are being done on a more timely basis. Probationary periods are being extended where there is seen a need.

Organizational Management — The Council continues 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. A few of the staff continue to “shop” among the Council Members for various permissions, such as leave and early pays. The 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. The new Mayor is stopping this practice.

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 RUBA has discussed the location of these ordinances with the new 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 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 resigned from the Council early this quarter because of this constant bickering. The Vice-Mayor, who has now been appointed to this vacant office, is adamant that she will change this state of affairs.

Operation of Utility — The City is operating with only one Water Plant Operator. It is still recommended that the Council recruit for a backup operator, and they have advised the RUBA that they are recruiting for the position.

It was also recommended to the Council by the Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) and the 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 | |

Anticipated Activity:

The Nome RUBA will be assisting the City/Utility in obtaining a consultant to implement QuickBooks Pro in the City/Water Utility Office sometime in April-May-June. In addition, Josie will be developing a work plan with the newly appointed Mayor to begin a comprehensive training plan with the Council and staff next fiscal year in financial and management capacity development.