

Goodnews Bay Activity Report

Athena Logan, RUBA, Anchorage Office

General Information:

In May, the Goodnews Bay Utility Manager called to request assistance with his Quicken accounting program. He was trying to split a paycheck between categories and it was not balancing. The Anchorage RUBA staff explained how to fix the problem. The Manager also relayed that some haul customers have come in to pay their bills in full and some paid \$100 on their past bills. The Utility Board members had planned to visit all the homes Sunday, May 7, to explain again why it is so important to pay up their bills. RUBA staff asked him to fax in a copy of the current invoices for the City and the Traditional Village Council (TVC) that had been prepared. The City was still \$1,900 behind in contributions and the TVC was paid up. In May, 23% of customers were fully paid up, 9% were current up to May month and 7% are between 30 to 60 days late. Those percentages are a significant improvement from previous months.

The Anchorage RUBA staff took a trip to Goodnews Bay in May to work with the Utility Manager. During that trip we worked on the following items:

- ✓ Drafted a note to the customers and printed it on the current monthly bills
- ✓ Completed the reconciliation of the bank account
- ✓ Reviewed the Billing System for accuracy and corrected the formatting of a few bills
- ✓ Created invoices for the City, TVC, and School
- ✓ Reviewed the Fuel Used to Date tracking sheet
- ✓ Payroll - reviewed the process for coding payroll tax deposit checks in Quicken
- ✓ Completed all the Quarterly Tax Reports
- ✓ Printed the Quarterly Financial Reports
- ✓ Discussed how to schedule At Large Elections in conjunction with an Annual membership meeting.
- ✓ Reviewed the Process to Track Leave and entered all employees leave to date.

In June, the Utility Manager from Goodnews Bay called to report progress on the collections of hauling fees. He had received over \$1,000 in fees during May, up from an average of \$180. Some customers came in and paid their bills in full and many made substantial payments on old bills. In early June, the Utility had 38% of customers with zero balances. Previously the Utility was averaging between 13% and 17% with zero balances per month.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The washeteria revenues are not enough to cover the expenses with the current operating system and rate structure. The City and the Tribal governments are still having trouble keeping up with the agreed upon contributions to the Utility. This of course makes

it very difficult for the Utility to pay their expenses on time. The City is continuing to have financial problems. The City staff continue to receive much needed technical assistance with budgeting and accounting processes from the Bethel office staff. The collection rate for the honey-bucket bin haul system is increasing. The manager sends bills regularly and also includes notes explaining why it is so important to pay their bill

Accounting Systems — All the necessary accounting systems are in place and the Utility Manager has been trained to use them. RUBA staff will continue to monitor the system to see if any changes need to be made or if further training is needed.

Tax Problems — There are no tax problems. The Utility Manager knows how to deposit the payroll taxes and can file the required quarterly reports with the Internal Revenue Service and the Alaska Department of Labor.

Personnel System — The new Operator has had on-site training and has gone to training sessions in Bethel. He has passed his OIT test. He received a raise because he is now certified.

Organizational Management — There is one person who is responsible for overseeing the day-to-day management of the utility. There are Rules and Regulations for the Utility in place and Personnel Policies and procedures have been adopted.

Leadership/Governance — The Utility Board is a recognized non-profit corporation. Its' Articles of Incorporation have been reviewed and approved by the Department of Commerce. The Board has approved the Bylaws. The Board continues to hold meetings monthly. Both the City and Traditional Village governments recognize it as the local organization that will manage and operate the system. The City and Utility Board have signed a management agreement to formalize the understanding that the Utility Board will operate and manage the City's property. The Utility Board has reviewed and approved the rules and regulations governing the operations, maintenance and management of the utility.

Operation of Utility — The new operations staff has received training operating the water plant and washeteria equipment. The office equipment is operating properly and staff have been trained how to use it.

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	