

Hooper Bay Activity Report

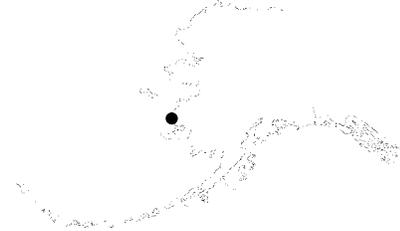
Community Overview

Lead RUBA Staff: Paul Chimiugak, Bethel Office

2001 Population: 1,014

Region: Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta

Local Governments: Second Class City



The City of Hooper Bay operates multiple watering points, operates a honeybucket haul service and sewage lagoon. The City Council is the policy making body for the utility.

Residents currently haul treated water from the washeteria or other watering points. Three new wells were drilled in 1997, 3 miles northeast of town. The school uses its own water system. Honeybuckets are dumped at collection points, then hauled by a 4-wheeler and trailer. The large majority of homes are not plumbed, with the exception of the new HUD housing subdivision, which uses a flush/haul system. The City is beginning major improvements for a piped water and sewer system. A new water treatment/washeteria facility is under construction. Access roads and construction pads are completed. The landfill was expanded in 1997, and includes a new sewage lagoon; the combined site is nearly 20 acres in size.



Watering Point

General Information

The new City Council has been very active this quarter after elections. The goal of this new Council is to develop a good working relationship with the other entities in the community. With this, the City Council immediately received pressure by the local Tribal Council to relieve the administrator of his duties in November of 2001. The City office administration was not very pleased with the decision by the City Council of giving in to the demands of the Tribal Council. For the first time in history, the office staff wrote support letters to the Council to have him reinstated. The City went through a formal hiring process. The best candidate was offered the job, it ended up being the Administrator that had been let go. Despite all this internal conflict, the administration has continued to function.

Observations and Recommendations

Finances — The City has a budget and some of their expenditures are exceeding the spending levels. The washeteria is one example: the revenue expected is never realized and the expenditures exceed those budgeted. The monthly financial reports are produced when requested by our office. The administrator is going to direct the bookkeeper to start producing this report for the Council on a monthly basis starting in January 2002. The monthly manager's report has not been seen from Hooper Bay. However, the administrator is going to start these reports and e-mail them to our office starting in January 2002. Revenue from washeteria operations covers the salaries of the washeteria employees, but not other operational costs. The city is subsidizing from other departments such as bingo. The expenses for the heating fuel is paid through funds received from Yukon Fuel land lease.

Accounting Systems — The bookkeeper has a good bookkeeping system through Quick Books Pro. There are still some discrepancies in the financial reports. This has to do with some of the expenditures, such as the police department. Bethel staff have brought this to the attention of the administrator to add COP's grant under revenues. The system has a past due customer accounts in place that currently shows a large sum owed by customers. This report is produced manually before entering into the computer. A copy of this list has been requested for the Bethel office file. Since the administrator has been reinstated, he has reviewed this information and is planning to present this to the Council with collection options.

Tax Problems — The City continues to keep current with their taxes according to the head bookkeeper. However, they have received a notice for late payment for last quarter's report. Bethel staff has recommended they get into the electronic deposit system. The administrator will look into this.

Personnel System — The bookkeeper has returned to work full-time to do the quarterly reports. Mark Springer has been rehired as the City Administrator.

Organizational Management — The October municipal elections seated the following people: David Bunyan, Mayor; Gabe Seton, Vice Mayor; Eric Olson, Sec/Treasurer; Paul Nukusuk, Member; Carl Smith, Member; Scott Ballard, Member and still remaining Joseph Bell, Member.

In November 2001, four council members attended the Alaska Municipal League Conference in Anchorage in November 2001. The first day covered newly elected officials workshop. A meeting was also scheduled for the Mayor and vice-Mayor to meet with the Regional office and RUBA Manager including a VSW engineer at the DCBD office in Anchorage to discuss the current situation at hand with current and projected water & sewer projects for Hooper Bay.

Operation of Utility — The City Council has been indecisive in dealing with at least one of their employees. They did not rely on their personnel policies when they made a decision to release the administrator in November. The RUBA Program has recommended several

times that the City follow it's existing personnel policies when dealing with these types of issues.

The Bethel office received a copy of an AML/JIA Insurance delinquency notice for the City of Hooper Bay. A follow up call to the City was made to remind them of this. The Administrator had contacted AML/JIA and the first payment was made. The second payment to follow in February 2002. According to the Administrator, the City still has insurance coverage.

The utility has one certified operator and an on call alternate operator who passed her OIT in Bethel in November 2001. She also holds two other positions in the administration. Currently there is one other operator who is still pursuing certification. The utility has a preventive maintenance plan that was included when the project was in the planning stages. All other criteria such as CCR reports, daily status reports, meeting testing requirements, keeping inventory and critical spare parts lists are maintained daily and reported to the administrator.

Category	Inadequate	Meets Minimum Requirements	Exceeds Minimum Requirements
Finances	X		
Accounting Systems	X		
Payroll Taxes	X		
Personnel System	X		
Organizational Management	X		
Operation of Utility		X	

Anticipated Activities

- Provide a budgeting and monthly financial training to the Council.
- Include City Clerk, Administrator and possibly the Mayor to attend the upcoming regional clerk's workshop in March. Budgeting and financial reports will be covered.
- Provide personnel management training to Council and Administrator.
- Provide direction and recommendations in hiring of City Administrator.