

Hooper Bay Activity Report

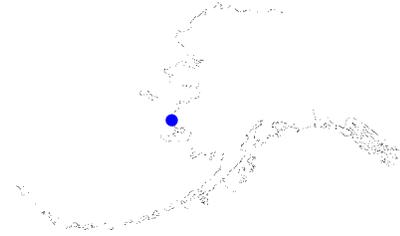
Community Overview

Lead RUBA Staff: Marita Hansen, 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 City is fully operational in all areas of services. The sanitation tariff payments have increased so more customers and business are paying their bills. The City, as in previous years toward the end of their fiscal year, has reduced work hours of staff to meet the financial crunch till July. The Administrator has been asked to review the sanitation or water/sewer ordinance to make sure it reflects the tariff rates and customer agreements.

Bethel staff made a trip to Hooper Bay this quarter to attend a public meeting and provide an elected officials workshop to the City Council on their duties & responsibilities.

Observations and Recommendations

Finances — The City is currently under going the usual end of the year financial shortage. Spending is being monitored very closely in order for the City to stretch their dollars till June 30, 2002. There has been a change in work hours from full days to half days for a couple employees. The financial reports for January and February have been received. Bethel office is waiting on a preliminary for March since the head bookkeeper is still waiting to receive figures and data to input on this report. Having low finances is also effecting the washeteria department. There aren't any funds to purchase spare parts for the washers and dryers.

The VSW grant has conditions that the community must meet. Grant condition #4 states that they collect 50% from residents on the sanitation tariff by May 2002. The City has budgeted the tariff at \$85,000 (+), if this is what VSW is going by, the City's 50% would be in the range of \$43,000. Currently, the City has collected approximately \$32,000 according to the City Administrator.

In reviewing the City's budget, the Council seems to have over budgeted in some departments. Bethel office staff have made this known to the Administrator and to the Council who had attended the elected official workshop. We recommended they do a comparison of the previous year's budget and compromise using realistic figures.

Accounting Systems —The Chart of Accounts is being reviewed by Bethel office staff and recommendations to correct this system are on going. The head bookkeeper has returned to work and all transactions have been caught up and are now input on a daily basis.

Tax Problems — No change. The City has not received any tax notices. The Administrator is thinking about switching to electronic depositing. He has yet to get information from their bank about this procedure.

Personnel System — The City has a personnel system in place. The original signed page of the personnel policies has yet to be found. The Council has indicated that they want to review this policy, update if need be and adopt with current Council signatures.

The Council still struggles with personnel matters. Outside influence from other entities tend to cause friction with current administrative staff. After the elected official workshop, Bethel office staff recommended they review their policy and understand the system, using it in everyday decisions regarding their staff.

Organizational Management — Overall the organizational structure for this City continues to function well and is in full operation. A joint meeting with other government and corporation members has taken place regarding projects for the community. One of the projects being discussed has been the Yukon Fuel tank farm. A final decision has not been agreed upon yet with these entities. Yukon Fuel has informed the City that they will pull out if the land issue isn't resolved by the involved entities within the community.

Bethel DCBD held a regional clerks workshop in Bethel. The City Bookkeeper II, Lorraine Tomaganak-Moses, attended all three days. This session was a brush up on her job duties as well as gaining some new information.

Operation of Utility — The new washeteria-water treatment plant building construction is still on going. There are not enough funds to get spare parts for the washers and dryers. The Administrator called the RUBA Manager's office in Anchorage and VSW to see if there were any grants or other funds available to provide financial help for purchasing these parts.

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

- Continue work with City staff to make corrections and improvements in the monthly financial reports.
- Follow up to the make sure the cash receipt journal is being used properly.
- Include bookkeeper in future financial management workshops for this year.
- Make sure the City is preparing the FY03 City budget, and check to see that the State Revenue Sharing (SRS) and Safe Communities applications are complete.
- Keep in touch with Roger Burleigh, VSW, on the project and any other anticipated projects for this community.