

Hydaburg Activity Report

Gina Shirey, LGS/RUBA, Southeast Regional Office

General Information:

Activity this quarter revolved around a letter Gina Shirey sent to the City on April 27, 2000. The letter contained 5 conditions for continuing RUBA participation. First, they had to send out the collection letter that had been previously drafted and shown to us on our last trip to the City. Second, job descriptions for all staff need to be typed up and a copy sent to us. Third, hire a temporary for the city clerk position while the clerk is out on family leave. Fourth, locate curbstops for all customers more than \$500 past due. And fifth, all council members need to bring their accounts less than 90 days past due by May 26, 2000.

Subsequent contact with the city has dealt with how well the City was progressing in meeting the conditions of the letter. With regard to the first condition, the city has finally sent out the collection letter although it was sent a month after the deadline and a copy was sent to our office. Second, the City Clerk said she had a job description and would fax it to me, which she hasn't done yet. She said she was the only one in the city office to have a job description. Third, a temporary clerk has not been hired yet. The person they planned to hire was not able to take the job at the last minute. They are advertising the job again. Fourth, the curbstops have been located for a vast majority of the past due customers. They are working with Tlingit and Haida Regional Housing Authority to locate the rest. And finally, several council members are still past due on their bills. One council member said he would come in and pay his bill in cash. He hasn't done that to date. Another council member promised to do some work for the City to pay off his bill. This work hasn't been done yet because he's still working on another job. One council member has a credit balance, one wasn't at the June 19th meeting, one recently quit, and the status of the last council member is unknown.

The City is in dire financial situation. They had no money for last payroll so city employees are working without pay. The only reason the City Clerk still shows up for work is that she knows no one else will do it if she doesn't do it; however, she has given the mayor the date of July 18th as her final day before starting family leave.

One bright note is that the mayor said he was proceeding with shutting off water starting July 13, 2000. Hopefully this will let customers know that the city is serious in collecting past due payments.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City is in terrible financial shape. When Gina spoke with the clerk in mid-June, they only had a couple of hundred of dollars left in the checking account.

Supposedly the FY01 budget will be completed this week and introduced at the July 17th meeting.

Accounting Systems — RUBA staff did not travel to Hydaburg this quarter so there are no comments on the accounting system.

Tax Problems — There may be a tax problem now. The clerk indicated that she paid payroll for the first part of June and didn't have enough money to pay payroll taxes. When Gina asked the mayor about this, he said the payroll taxes were paid.

Personnel System — The City lost its City Administrator due to other commitments he had made. The city administrator and office assistant positions are still vacant. The City Clerk is scheduled to leave for maternity leave beginning July 1st. No temporary replacement has been found.

Organizational Management — The city is not organized well. The only employee in the city office at this time is the city clerk who is leaving on maternity leave effective July 1st.

Leadership/Governance — The city lacks capable leadership. The mayor appears to be making some progress on the conditions of the April 27th letter. However, it appears that the council may be holding up the collection of past due accounts by not paying their accounts. According to the mayor, he has explained the importance of the council paying their bills and setting an example for the rest of the city. In addition, the mayor is having a hard time recruiting someone to take over the clerk’s duties temporarily. He said he’s advertised for the position but only a few people have applied.

Operation of Utility — There appears to be no problem with the operation of the utility other than occasional positive tests for lead.

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	