

Kotlik Activity Report

General Information:

City Manager, Rose Cheemuk, now has dual position of Utility/City Manager. She was appointed recently as the City Council is setting plans to restructure the Kotlik Joint Utilities Department. In the past, the Council had been considering doing away with the Kotlik Joint Utilities Board to save money and to compensate for SRS/SAFE Communities cuts. The City Council wants full responsibility of operating and maintaining the utilities.

Emmanuel Keyes has been elected as Mayor of City of Kotlik. Mayor Keyes has many years of public service experience. He is currently the President of Bill Moore's Slough Traditional Council.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) engineer asked John Fischer, RUBA staff in the Fairbanks office, for an opinion on which computer software program the City should use for the upcoming water and sewer utility project. RUBA staff suggested that we shop around and try out a couple of software programs before we decide which one to use. RUBA recommended that QuickBooks Pro (series) be tried since it is easy to use and is being used by more and more cities. We are also looking into what computer software program Nome Joint Utilities is using for billing customers. The City and the utility offices have fairly new computers, but only use Word 6.0 for word processing and Excel 5.0 for basic monthly financial statements.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City is in fairly good financial shape right now. The City collects 3% sales tax and 2/3 of that is placed into the general account and 1/3 of it is placed into a savings account to help subsidize the monthly water and sewer utility bills. ANTHC has estimated the monthly water and sewer utility bills to be over \$100 a month. The City hopes to charge at least \$60 a month with subsidies included to make water and sewer services more affordable to the customers.

Accounting Systems — ANTHC, which is running the water and sewer utility project, is considering purchasing Quickbooks Pro 99 software program for financial record-keeping purposes. RUBA staff recommended that they wait and try it out first since it may be too complicated for them. The main Utility Clerk's computer experience is minimal and my concern is that (even) Quickbooks Pro might be too complicated for her. She is good with manually sending out bills, so she just might catch on.

Tax Problems — The City has been keeping current with its payroll tax reports.

Personnel System — Rose Cheemuk, the City Manager for at least 15 years, has been appointed City/Utility Manager. The City is trying to cut costs as SRS/SAFE Communities funds continue to be cut. Rose told me that the reason why the main Utility Clerk has not

been training the alternate utility clerk with billing is because she feels she might lose her job and be replaced if she trains the alternate. She has been reassured that she will not be replaced.

Organizational Management — The City is in the process of reviewing and passing the proposed water and sewer utility ordinance. Rather than incorporating it into the current joint utilities ordinance, RUBA staff has recommended that the water and sewer utility ordinance be a separate chapter.

Leadership/Governance — Emmanuel Keyes has been elected as Mayor. I have worked with him a couple of times before and found him to be a laid back type of a person but has good leadership qualities. He has been the Past President of Bill Moore’s Slough Traditional Council. Most of the people originally from Bill Moore’s Slough live in Kotlik.

Operation of Utility — The Utility Clerk and alternate have asked RUBA staff to train them with water and sewer billing. The Clerk already knows how to send electricity bills to customers, so this should be a fairly easy process.

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	