

## Koyukuk Activity Report

### General Information:

The Koyukuk City Council held a teleconference meeting in Fairbanks to discuss their water/sewer demonstration project with Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), RUBA, and Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC). The Council decided to go with a demonstration project of five flush haul units. Five units are arguably below the economies of scale feasibility for any flush haul project and the Council was so notified. In addition, one of the big problems of the flush haul system is the lack of home ownership in Koyukuk. It seems that the City had a platted subdivision and allowed residents to move in and construct housing. However, no title was ever conveyed by the City to the residents. Therefore, ANTHC has a problem with constructing improvements in housing not owned or leased by the occupants. It was anticipated that this problem would be solved by a City land disposal, however so far the Council has shown no inclination towards land disposal training or addressing the problem.

The former utility operator has been rehired. This is a plus, since the former operator has a great deal of knowledge regarding the system. The former operator's leaving was tied to a conflict with an earlier administrator who is no longer on staff. The new Administrator is actually the former Acting City Administrator, a situation which has continued for the better part of two years. The Administrator came to the DCED office in Fairbanks to work with John Fischer, RUBA staff, on the Koyukuk budget and Certified Financial Statement (CFS). Financial statements were brought up to date as of that point (September 1999.)

Problems continue to surface with the fact that the Council is next to inactive. An example of this is the fact that the City Administrator called the Fairbanks DCED office at the hour before the requests for water/sewer grants were due to seek assistance in answering the grant questionnaire. Obviously, these are decisions which Council input is mandatory and she was told as much. The Council did hold an emergency meeting and sent the questionnaire on its way. The Council has not been meeting regularly. The City Administrator appears discouraged with the position and the Council, for reasons of their own, has not been supportive. It is likely that this Administrator will resign or be replaced in the near future. The Mayor has been out of state and difficult or impossible to contact. Messages have been left, few have been answered. John Fischer, RUBA staff in the Fairbanks office, has tried in vain for the past three months to set up a joint Council meeting with RUBA, DCED, and RMW personnel in regards to the City administration and the upcoming flush haul system.

The time may be at hand to hold a community meeting to discuss dissolution and the responsibilities that the local citizens have in conducting their affairs. It is essential to determine what resident's desire in the way of city services. It may be that the Tribal Council is in a better position to conduct the services or it may be that the residents simply do not desire governmental services. Either way, it is essential to solve this dilemma prior to the advent of the flush haul system.

## Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The budget has been completed and the financial statements brought up to date as of September 1999. This is only a small step towards working out Koyukuk’s financial problems. It may have been induced more by the requirements of the State Revenue Sharing Program rather than any long term desire towards financial stability.

Accounting Systems — Still inadequate. More centralization needed. Community needs to work with the hand Model Financial Record Keeping System (MFRKS) system before any additional attempts are made to computerize the system. City staff still fail to see the relevancy between the various components of the accounting system.

Tax Problems — Yes there are problems on the horizon. The amount of IRS problems are small at this point but will escalate greatly if allowed to go unchecked.

Personnel System — Much time has been expended on the Koyukuk personnel system with very little to show for it to date. The primary problem continues to be confusion over who supervises whom. This has been repeatedly reinforced by organizational charts and training, including massive assistance with the personnel system and job descriptions. However, many problems continue to surface over “who is in charge.”

Organizational Management — Very poor and inconsistent.

Leadership/Governance — Council meetings are not being held on a regular basis. Council leadership can be present but is not exercised on a consistent and continual basis.

Operation of Utility — A major plus is the re-hiring of the former utility operator. A major minus is that no progress has been recorded in working towards an equitable school agreement or financial accountability. The utility finances drift from severe cash flow problems (generally in the Spring) to periods of relative complacency among the staff members (early Fall). The staff apparently observes no correlation in this cyclical lack of accurate tracking and budgeting.

**Ranking**            1 = Inadequate  
                              4 = Adequate to meet minimum requirements  
                              7 = Exceeds requirements

<b>Category</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>
Finances		<b>X</b>	
Accounting Systems			<b>X</b>
Tax Problems		<b>X</b>	
Personnel System	<b>X</b>		
Organizational Management	<b>X</b>		
Leadership/Governance		<b>X</b>	
Operation of Utility		<b>X</b>	