

Savoonga Activity Report

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General Information:

There was one field trip to the community this quarter. In mid-March the Nome RUBA accompanied the QuickBooks Pro consultant to the City to begin the Utility's software implementation and training. Other assistance to the City/Utility were through phone and fax and consisted of gathering information needed for the QuickBooks conversion. While at the City in March, Josie assisted the Utility Clerk in completing the insurance exposure questionnaire for their workers compensation and liability carrier.

The City sent its Utility Manager and Utility Clerk to the Utility Planning Management workshop in Nome the week of January 29th.

Observations and Recommendations:

Finances — The City has a strict collection policy for the new water/sewer hookups, and there are no late paying customers as of this quarter. The Honey Bucket/Trash Haul Utility is a disaster, and a stronger ordinance will have to be adopted to enforce collections and restrict private hauls.

The City carries insurance with AML/JIA and is up to date with its premiums. The insurance coverage is considered adequate.

The City has a past due fuel loan from 1999 with the Alaska Energy Authority in the amount of \$4,551.

The Nome RUBA will look into the finances of the City more closely on the next field trip. The City Clerk's office was vacant when Josie traveled there in March. The Mayor was unable to tell Josie much about the City finances; but Josie reports that there were numerous bills scattered on the Clerk's desk as well as numerous unopened letters from IRS.

Accounting Systems — The City Clerk resigned early in the prior calendar year, and there has not been a permanent Clerk hired in her place. As a result the financial reports for the City are not up to date. The Mayor had indicated to Josie that he was expecting to hire a new Clerk in early April. The Council had two applicants for the position.

Tax Problems — IRS had not contacted the Nome RUBA about any tax problems prior to this quarter. However, Josie called the agent in Fairbanks after noticing all the unopened letters on the Clerk's desk. IRS is levying the Utility for back payroll taxes incurred by the City of Savoonga, dating from 1998 through 2000, in the amount of \$65,425. The Utility itself is up-to-date on all payroll taxes and reports. However, the levy against their

revenues will seriously hamper their ability to operate. This situation is being addressed by the Nome RUBA and Utility Manager with the Council in April.

Personnel System — The City Council and Utility Manager need training in the City's Personnel Policies and Procedures. The City needs to classify positions and institute a pay scale. Supervisory training and the evaluation process will be incorporated into subsequent training sessions.

Organizational Management — All ordinances need to be reviewed by the Council, City Clerk, and Utility staff in a joint meeting. The Nome RUBA is scheduling that workshop later this fiscal year. Consideration of amendments to the utility ordinances will be included in the local workshop. An organizational chart will be developed at the same time.

The Council hired a Utility Manager this past fiscal year and disbanded the appointed Utility Board. The new organization is working well, with better communication between Utility staff and the Council. However, it is now apparent to the Nome RUBA that the Mayor is not telling the City Council everything that is going on, especially the tax situation. Josie will be recommending to the Council that they institute immediate checks and balances and that the Vice-Mayor and Secretary/Treasurer take a more active role in monitoring the mail and correspondence.

Leadership/Governance — The Council is still having difficulty leaving family ties out of the work place and basing their decisions on what is best for the organization. There is a need for the Council and staff to sit down together and review the City's Code of Ordinances. They need to do this with the Nome RUBA fairly soon.

Operation of Utility — There were no reported problems with the system this quarter. Two new water plant operators were hired this year, but the alternate recently resigned. The RMW reports that the City has been sending in all tests and reports as required for daily and monthly monitoring. Fluoride treatment has been discontinued until the new operators are certified at a level to assure safe treatment.

(Continued on next page.)

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	

Anticipated Activity:

Two field trips are scheduled to the City/Utility next quarter. The QuickBooks consultant will be making her second training trip in April, and the Nome RUBA and QuickBooks consultant will make another training trip later in the quarter. Josie will be working with the City to determine their financial obligations and to develop a FY02 budget.