

Savoonga Activity Report

Josie Morrow, LGS/RUBA, Nome Regional Office

General Information:

Nome RUBA/LGS Josie Morrow assisted the City and Utility through phone and fax this quarter in the following matters:

- Developed a training plan for computers and software with the Mayor, Utility Manager, and ANTHC engineer.
- Arranged for a RUBA funded contract to start the QuickBooks Pro conversion at the beginning of the new calendar year.
- Wrote out a simplified version of the 5 different category of employees, permanent vs. temporary, and what benefits each type received, if any, under the City's Personnel Ordinance. Gave a copy to the Mayor, Utility Manager, and ANTHC engineer.
- Defined overtime, with specific examples, for the project engineer. Copied the Mayor and Utility Manager.
- Verified with the Mayor and Vice-Mayor that the City election process was properly posted with the required notices.
- Met with the Mayor concerning grants and funding cycles. Requested copies of financial reports for all City activities.

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.

Last quarter the City was behind in its electric bills with AVEC in the amount of \$4,422. AVEC has levied the City's FY01 shared revenues for this amount.

The Nome RUBA will look into the finances of the City more closely on the next field trip, when she can gather more information first hand. The new Utility Manager has made some reference to the City and Utility being short on funds this year, but he could not provide a list of debts or any other particulars.

Accounting Systems — The City Clerk resigned early in the new calendar year, and as a result the financial reports for the City are not up to date. The Utility Clerk had been using an old Apple computer, but stopped using it as of March. As a result, the Utility financial reports were completed only through March 31, 2000. ANTHC purchased a new P.C., printer, and backup unit for the Utility, and the system was delivered to the Utility this quarter. Nome RUBA Josie Morrow assisted the engineer with the order and developed a training plan for the proposed accounting software, QuickBooks Pro 99.

The City Council and Utility Manager and staff have committed to the software training. The accounting software implementation will be done with a consultant funded through the Department of Community and Economic Development, RUBA Program. That implementation and training is expected to begin before the end of this calendar year.

Tax Problems — IRS has not contacted the Nome RUBA about any tax problems. The Utility has an outside consultant who files all the payroll returns, and there are no amounts due IRS for Utility payroll taxes. However, the Nome RUBA is concerned that the City may have some payroll tax issues for 1999 and the current year. She will not be able to make an assessment on this situation until early January.

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 much better, with better communication between Utility staff and the Council.

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.

The Vice-Mayor and Secretary/Treasurer have been filling in for the vacant City Clerk position. The Nome RUBA recommended they hire a permanent employee as soon as possible.

Operation of Utility — There were no reported problems with the system this quarter. The second phase of water/sewer hookups is expected this Fall. Two new water plant operators were hired this year, but neither is OIT certified. They will be attending the next OIT training workshop scheduled in November in Unalakleet. 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.

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

