

# Tanana (Too'gha) Activity Report

## Community Overview

Lead RUBA Staff: Irene Catalone, Fairbanks Office

2001 Population: 308

Region: Interior

Local Governments: First Class City



Water and sewer utilities are operated by Too'gha, Inc., a non-profit. Water is derived from three wells near the Yukon River, and four watering points are available. In 1970, 55 individual wells were drilled, but due to permafrost and poor water quality, the project essentially failed. Nearly all residents now haul their own water from the washeteria and use privies and honeybuckets. In 1976, a piped water and sewer system was constructed to serve the school, teacher's quarters, clinic, senior center, and IRA Council building. Funds have been provided to overhaul portions of the City's piped systems. A new washeteria and water treatment plant were recently completed. However, the foundation for the treatment plant is failing and may threaten the new building. Construction has begun to replace the failing pipes in 40 homes downtown. The landfill uses an incinerator, and provides recycling services.



## RUBA Activity This Reporting Period

RUBA provided requested information and samples for consideration and use. Samples provided included grease trap information, deposits, billing and customer services. As an incentive the utility provided one month of service free for new hook-ups. During this period of time the board asked for customer information and a workshop was provided by OEH and Too'gha. The board agreed to accept ownership of the new washeteria building from VSW.

## Capacity Indicators

### Finances

#### Essential Indicators

| Yes                                 | No                                  |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | All revenue and expenses for the utility are listed in the utility budget.                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The utility has adopted a balanced realistic budget.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Monthly financial reports are prepared and submitted to the policy making body.                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The utility is receiving revenues (user fees or other sources) sufficient to cover operating expenses. |

#### Sustainable Indicators

|                                     |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | The utility is receiving revenues (user fees or other sources) sufficient to cover operating expenses and Repair & Replacement (R&R) costs. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | YTD revenues are at a level equal to or above those budgeted.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | YTD expenditures are at a level equal to or below those budgeted.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | A monthly manager's report is prepared.   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Budget amendments are completed and adopted as necessary.   |

**Finances Comments:** User agreements are in place and user and deposit fees are being charged. People were provided one month's free service as a "hook-up" incentive. It remains to be seen how this goes, but folks have gotten their first bills and first notices for non-payment have gone out.

### Accounting Systems

#### Essential Indicators

| Yes                                 | No                       |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The utility has adopted a collection policy and actively follows it.                                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The utility bills customers on a regular basis.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An accounts receivable system is in place which track customers and reports past due accounts and amounts. |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | An accounts payable system is in place.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The payroll system correctly calculates payroll and keeps records  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A cash receipt system is in place that records incoming money and what it was for.                         |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The Utility has a cash disbursement system that records how money was spent.                               |

#### Sustainable Indicators

|                                     |                          |   |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | A chart of accounts is used that identifies categories in a reasonable, usable manner.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Monthly bank reconciliations have been completed for all utility accounts.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The utility has a purchasing system that requires approval prior to purchase, and the approval process compares proposed purchases to budgeted amounts. |

**Accounting System Comments:** QuickBooks is used. They have been getting along with two staff. There is a problem in that this has worked up until now. There may be some problems shortly.

### Tax Problems

#### Essential Indicators

| Yes                                 | No                       | NA                                  |  |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                     | The utility has a system to accurately calculate, track, and report payroll tax liabilities.             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                     | The utility is current on filing tax reports.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                     | The utility is current on making tax deposits.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | If there are any past tax liabilities, a repayment agreement has been signed and repayments are current. |

**Tax Problems Comments:** Except for some late filings, no problems. Procedures have been put in place to correct these errors.

**Personnel System**

**Essential Indicators**

Yes No

The utility has a posted workers compensation insurance policy in effect.

**Sustainable Indicators**

- The utility has adopted and uses a Personnel Policy, which has been reviewed by an attorney, AML, or DCED for topics and language.
- The utility has adequate written job descriptions for all positions.
- The utility has adopted and follows a written personnel evaluation process that ties the job description to the evaluation.
- The utility has an adequate written hiring process.
- The utility has personnel folders on every employee that contain at least: I-9, Job Application and Letter of Acceptance.
- The utility has a probationary period for new hires that includes orientation, job-training/oversight, and evaluations.
- The utility provides training opportunities to staff as needed and available.

**Personnel System Comments:** The Board needs to follow consistently applied policies and procedures that are performance based. The Manager has given notice of quitting and this information was provided to the Board. There has been no direction given on how to proceed. This will be on the agenda for the next meeting.

**Organizational Management**

**Essential Indicators**

Yes No

- The entity that owns the utility is known and the entity that will operate the utility is set.
- The policy making body is active in policy making of the utility.
- The policy making body enforces utility policy.
- The utility has an adequately trained manager.
- The utility has an adequately trained bookkeeper.
- The utility has an adequately trained operator(s).
- The utility has adopted the necessary ordinances (or rules and regulations) necessary to give it the authority to operate.

**Sustainable Indicators**

- The utility has adopted an organizational chart that reflects the current structure.
- The policy making body meets as required.
- The utility complies with the "Open Meetings Act" for all meetings.

**Organizational Management Comments:** Adequate bookkeeping, managerial and operator training have been provided to staff. The problem is with staff. The present Manager will be leaving this position in the next quarter. It is unclear who will be the Manager. This will be discussed at the next board meeting. The Operator has taken his level one, it is not known whether he has passed this or not. The Operator is slated to come in for OSHA training.

**Operation of Utility**

**Essential Indicators**

Yes No

- The utility operator(s) are actively working towards necessary certification.
- The utility has a preventative maintenance plan developed for the existing sanitation facilities.

**Sustainable Indicators**

- The manager receives a monthly O&M report from the utility operator and routinely “spot checks” the facilities to see that the maintenance items are being completed.
- The utility has a safety manual and holds safety meetings.
- Utility facilities have not suffered any major problems/outages due to management issues that are still unresolved.
- The utility is operating at the level of service that was proposed.
- The operator provides status reports to the manager on a routine basis.
- The utility has completed and distributed its Consumer Confidence Report (CCR).
- The utility is not on the Significant Non-Compliance (SNC) list.
- The utility maintains an inventory control list.
- The utility maintains a critical spare parts list.

**Operation of Utility Comments:** The utility needs an certified Operator, a Manager on location, and needs to enforce policies and procedures. Customer agreements and fees have been adopted and enforced. There are many needs that need to be addressed. The Board wants the present Operator to be the Operator/Manager. The Operator does not want to be the Manager. The present Manager needs some direction from the board.

**RUBA Activities for the Coming Quarter**

Continue to monitor. Travel is planned to Tanana in the next quarter.