



Public Safety Commission  
Regular Quarterly Meeting Minutes  
May 22, 2014

Northwest Arctic Borough Assembly Chambers – Kotzebue, AK

**CALL TO ORDER**

**By Sally Custer @ 9:15 AM**

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present During Roll Call:

Louie Commack	Leroy Adams	Alex Sheldon	Eric Swisher
Thomas Pungalik	Sally Custer		

Unexcused Absence

Timothy Gavin	Ron Moto Sr.	Ely Cyrus	Enoch Mitchell
Joe Arey			

**INVOCATION/MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Mr. Alex Sheldon provided the invocation.

**INTRODUCTION OF STAFF AND GUESTS**

Sgt. Stone (AST)	Sarah Schaeffer	Jackie Hill	Chris Hatch
Kenny Gallahorn			

**ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

**Mr. Eric Swisher moved to approve, seconded by Alex Sheldon to adopt the agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes presented for November 4, 2013 for approval.

Sally Custer it says I was unexcused and I could not get in, I would like my name taken off of unexcused to excused.

**Mr. Alex Sheldon moved, seconded by Mr. Eric Swisher to approve; motion carried unanimously.**

## **SELECTION OF ALTERNATE PUBLIC SAFETY COMMISSIONERS**

Lena Ferguson discussed the application process. Also have a letter of resignation from Thomas Pungalik Sr.

Sally Custer reviewed letter of resignation. Also mentioned that it is hard to get through to employees.

Louie Commack also raises concern of no one answering the telephone here at the Borough.

**Mr. Louie Commack moved, seconded by Mr. Alex Sheldon to accept Thomas Pungalik's letter of resignation. Motion passed.**

## **REPORTS**

### **Public Safety VPSO Report**

Chris Hatch gave a brief report. Mentioned the visits with the City and Ira Council's in Ambler, Kiana, Noorvik, Noatak, Kivalina and Selawik and have plans to visit all of the other villages within the next couple of months. Gave an update on staffing of VPSO's. Also gave an update on VPSO equipment and housing.

Louie Commack what exactly are you saying? The city should have some funds available?

Chris Hatch explained the partnership with the State and City.

Louie Commack suggested the building at the Ambler airport.

Alex Sheldon in Kobuk we used to have a VPSO housing that belonged to the city and OTZ telephone took over and I talked to the owner of the house those guys working on the school last summer were renting it, I asked her if they can lower the rent to \$500 so the VPSO can stay there and she said ok, her name is Eva Cleveland her phone is (907) 948-2265.

Sally Custer suggests ETT and AED training for villages.

Leroy in the short time that Chris has been here he is making a good impact.

## **SAR, Fire and Trail Staking**

Lena Ferguson gave a brief report, Dan Douglas has stepped down after 41 years of service, Raven Jackson is the President and Moody Barr is the Vice President. In Buckland Tim Gavin has stepped down after 32 years of service, Charles Foster is now the President and Calvin Brown is the Vice President. Thanks Tim Gavin and Dan Douglas. We're trying to get first aid instructors out to the villages not only for the Fire Department and Search and Rescue but open to the public so we can get some training out there. Gave an update on Searches. The Northwest Arctic Borough Fire Department is now registered with the State of Alaska, we are now in the process of ordering more fire extinguishers, smoke and CO detectors to send out to the villages. We sent out First Aid Kits to all Search and Rescue Presidents to take with them on searches in addition they always take their SAT Phones with them when they go out on searches. Gave an update on fire training. Also gave an update on village travel.

## **Alaska State Troopers Report**

Sgt. Stone Sadly I will be going away, I will be retiring. There is a child advocate office here and they no longer need to go to anchorage and now the SART exams are being done here instead of anchorage. Also gave an update on VPSO's and Chris Hatches plans. Were only here to help you, we cannot do it all so without your support and without assistance we cannot be in every village and we cannot be there all the time, were getting a record number of calls on importation, Chief Swisher has a second WANT officer and we've provided on through the state, we have done a lot of work to get people trained on DARE. We have assigned troopers to two villages and people now know who their troopers are and who to call. We now have a 2 on 2 off in Selawik, unfortunately one of the troopers from Selawik retired and one was injured so we have been a month or so without a trooper out there, when he was there the calls were down and arrests were down. With physical presence the calls are down. We need to get the troopers out in the villages and have them on a 2 on 2 off and try to have them in every of the villages, 80% of the time my troopers are in the office doing paperwork. Also mentioned housing.

Thomas Pungalik thanked Sgt. Stone for his work.

Leroy Adams thanked Sgt. Stone.

## **Kotzebue Police Report**

Chief Eric Swisher gave an update on stats of calls for service. The federal grant was awarded to us for the school resource officer and that allows us to keep a permanent full time position that is assigned to our school and she is there during the school day from elementary, middle to high school, she patrols the halls interacting with the kids and staff, teaching the education classes for alcohol, drugs and dating. We also were awarded a state grant the state receives a drug grant and we were able to get that to put another officer out there to combat drug and alcohol trade in our borough, even

though he is a Kotzebue Police officer he is assigned with the trooper unit and not only patrols Kotzebue but our villages in our Borough and also in Point Hope when they need it. We've also filled a position that took a number of years to fill and that is our major crimes investigator position, without this position being filled the patrol officers were doing the majority of the felony cases such as Sexual Assault, Sexual Abuse of Minors which realistically did not do the case justice as far as follow up if the office was on night shift, so with the major crime investigator position being filled by Hall Henning we have found that our success rate with the major felony's has improved greatly and he has only been here since the fall time. Also mentioned that he needs to break in 10 minutes to have a teleconference with the individuals we are looking at doing our enhance 911 system which if you call 911 even in our villages it comes through to our primary answering point which is our Kotzebue Dispatch center that's located currently In our jail, were looking at upgrading to the new system hopefully by the end of summer and have it fully operational by the end of fall of FY 15 which starts in July, it will also help us track locations of calls, with the villages address system enhance 911 they have ant alley which is the automated numbering identification, if you call from a number it pops up the number in the computer, if your calling from a home phone it pops up your address which is automated location but sometimes the villages don't have a good numbering system on the houses so that makes it troublesome for the telephone companies to get their addresses to where we can auto populate or enhance 911, that is something we need to look at borough wide, Kotzebue has some issues as well with the numbering system.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Jackie Hill with Maniilaq Association one of the programs that Sgt. Stone talked about was our Child Advocacy Center that we just started up in July and what I decided to do was to start making the rounds and making people aware of the center that Maniilaq operates, the nurses at the hospital already started the ground work since they had the SART program at the hospital and decided that they wanted to continue on and they went and got the peds training so that they were able to see kids that had been sexually assaulted and the hospital decided to go ahead and they adopted their own protocol for dealing with kids that were reported either physically or sexually assaulted and we carried it one step further and along with Sgt. Stone and Chief Swisher they had officers on staff that were able to do the interviewing of the children which is a key component of having a center so the only thing was to sit down and move forward and say were going to start so last year I think the end of July was when we decided we were going to open up the center, but what I need to let you know is we don't have a single grant that operates the program, we've drawn from many different departments to help keep the program going, we've applied for grants cause we would like to have our own facility and right now I'm the director, I oversee the program and realistically we should have a fulltime person that just oversees and directs the program but we don't,

We have to have an advocate position but I'm drawn from some of my other programs so I never drew to have an advocate available, we have an MDT a multi-disciplinary team in place and it's a well-functioning group, we meet once a month, so I need to

start letting people know that the service is available. I think since we started the program the nurses reported they had seen up to 15 cases that were reported and interviewed at the center that's 15 more than I would like to have seen there but the reality is that there's a lot more out there that are not being reported. Like Sgt. Stone said if they see a face like the troopers that come into the village then they report them at that time or they just don't know where to go, so I'm here to start spreading the word that we do have the services available and we don't send anybody out to anchorage any more, we try to follow up with social services and we follow up once a month, we make phone calls to all the families to follow up and see how the kids are doing. We all need to be aware of it and let people know in our communities that this type of behavior that's effecting our kids is unacceptable, that we need to stop it I would prefer that we don't see any of our kids in a center like this because in the long run as they grow up to be adults, young adults believe it or not it affects them and the way they grow as an adult, alcohol and drug abuse and all these different behaviors could be because of what had happened to them as a young child. We do have the services and hopefully we will get a grant, we did receive some money this year from the state for renovating a facility so were going to start working on that, we applied for another grant for operations and hopefully we will be able to hire a fulltime person to run the program. I have not gone to KOTZ and I know I need to, and ill set it up but it's such a, that's why I say I need a full time person that can make all these types of announcements and it's just going from day to day ensuring the program is a viable program, we will in the future as far as outreach and letting people know the services are available to them.

Sally Custer I agree with you and wish there was no need for such a facility where our kids can be safe but in this day and age you never know what's going to happen the next day. For folks like you reaching out for the safety of our children, I thank you very much.

Jackie Hill I will say that chief swisher and Sgt. Stone was really a big part of pushing, I keep wanting to push back the date for opening and he kept saying no, no lets go, Sgt. Stone has been a big part in getting the group going and pushing us forward so I want to thank him and I wish he wasn't going, we need that type of person here in our region to look at all these types of services and following through and ensuring that our community members are safe it's a big job and I really applaud him and his department for supporting what we have been trying to accomplish and this is a service that is going to take some time to build up the program and having people feel comfortable and coming to us and talking to us about this type of subject, it's really uncomfortable but it has to be dealt with.

Alex I just want to thank Jackie, when we have a tribal meeting come up to our meeting about ICWA, we really thank you about the kids from Kobuk, the ones your helping, may the good lord bless you for your hard work.

Jackie Hill thank you very much. That is another one of my responsibilities is I'm the ICWA coordinator for Kobuk and that's another job that's really a hard one, I told them boy I have more of appreciation like for Sally who is also a ICWA coordinator, in that role you are dealing with kids that have been taken away from their homes for one reason or another.

Sally Custer for the record Mr. Mitchell came in at 10:00AM

Jackie Hill also with me is Sarah Schaeffer who is the outreach coordinator for our women's shelter here in Kotzebue and she would like to talk to you about the services at the shelter.

Eric Swisher request to be excused.

Sarah Schaeffer I am the new outreach coordinator, I just started in march and I am slowly trying to have the women's shelter here more recognized for who we are and what we do and the services we provide, currently we are trying hard to get safe homes in each of the villages, we know it's out there, we get calls to where women don't know where to go, they are not from that village, they don't have nowhere to go so we are slowly working our way to get safe home providers, they are needed out there, we do have a shelter, we have 3 rooms for 8 women and children, we do provide services for men in town because we know it does happen but they don't report nearly as much but we cannot house them, we can provide protective orders for them, follow them to court. I am a part of the SART team, I am one of the advocates that attend to a victim when there is a sexual assault that happens, and we have been going to court a lot making sure she's comfortable and not scared and understanding the legal system. We also provide help with the victim's compensation application so when there is a violent crime they have to have medical treatment or counseling that if they can't afford it we can help get funding to afford it. We aren't open during night any more our crisis line is available so if something is happening in middle of the night we have our crisis line open so if a victim needs help or needs to get some place safe we can come into the shelter if needed and on weekends we are no longer open either which we would still be providing services if the call is made that just recently started. We do help victims if they are out in the villages to come to Kotzebue to stay at our shelter if they want to, to start over in their life and get ready to leave their abuser with their children if needed.

Sally Custer on the weekends when you're not open and in the late evenings where would the call be made to for assistance?

Sarah Schaeffer it would still be made to our crisis line, we have an advocate who is on call during the weekends.

Sally Custer from the village say a mother with two children wanted to come down to stay at the crisis center to get away from the abuser where would we find travel funds? Would that come from your program? All they would have to do is call the advocate?

Sarah Schaeffer yes.

Alex Sheldon I used to be a safe home parent while we were younger and I don't think there's anymore in the villages and I would be glad if they started again, it used to be good to have appointed people that you can trust in the village to be a safe home either for the kids or the mother.

Sarah Schaeffer yes, we are taking application for the safe home providers in the villages, the one thing were having trouble with is getting them down here to train them, for the background checks and going out to the villages to do the home visit.

Alex Sheldon if there is funds somebody should go to the village and try to start that and appoint parents to be a safe home.

Sarah Schaeffer we are currently working on it.

Sally Custer I remember when Shungnak had 2 or 3 safe homes and we haven't had that for the past couple of years. It sure does help when a mother with children need a place to go right now and not stay out there where its open and exposed to the elements. I thank you for your service, I thank you for reaching out to help our people to be safe.

Mayor Reggie Joule good morning, I'm glad that you are here having the discussions that you are regarding public safety, there is a couple of things that I want to mention, I think some of it is covered in some of the reports, one of our challenges in this borough and the decision that the borough has to make in order to get VPSO's in to our communities we need housing and we have issues with housing, we have shortages in the communities with housing just for people to live in let alone trying to find housing for public safety and one of the decision points and currently under the financial structure of the borough we don't have the ability unless we go through the legislative process to get housing because we don't have our own funds to do that, so were going to have to look at that, Noatak is one of the only places right now where we have borough owned facilities and if we're going to attract VPSO's in all of our communities. We need to I think as a borough address that with the assembly, do we take out loans, do we service that dept., do we take out bonds and in our current financial structure we don't have that ability, however in the next year or so the borough will be working on raising revenues from sources whether it's from a PILT agreement or whether it's through continued efforts of trying to use the proceeds from DMTS to put us in a position to where we can at least have these discussions because unless we or the state or housing becomes available in the community it's going to be a tough going, but with Chris Hatch coming on I think we're seeing some movement and trying to get VPSO's out in our communities and even looking at ways of maybe not full time but rotating schedules in our communities, we've had this discussion with Chris and Kenny started this discussion several months ago with the troopers so were trying to be innovative on how to get public safety. The other thing that we've done over the course of the last year, last year our VPO's the employees that the communities hire that saw a reduction in our budget down to \$150,000 based on the fact that the communities were not putting in the reports and submitting for reimbursements for VPO's, that changed this year we saw not only the reports coming but we had to adjust our budgets from \$150 to \$200 to cover it, were doing that and that's good news, that comes out of the general fund of the borough. One other thing that I think is a good piece of news and I can't remember the amount it's about \$185,000 if I'm correct we requested through the capital budget borough wide funds for search and rescue and through the legislative process that made it through and the governor has yet to sign

the budgets and we will be encouraging the governor to approve a couple of things that are borough wide, 1 is Regional Search and Rescue and that is to help with some of the equipment needs after sometimes when we're doing searches and the State Troopers call off a search then it's incumbent on us to provide gas because people are going to continue to search anyway, that's just the way we work, so this will allow us to help in the event the Troopers call off searches and get a good assessment of what some of the search and rescue needs are in our communities and use those funds for those purposes to help our communities, and that is specifically to public Safety, I think that's going to be helpful to our Public Services and Lena is going out and meeting with our Search and Rescue groups in all of our communities to assess in addition to some of the other things were working on but were making some inroads if we do get VPSO's into these communities even on a rotating basis initially that allows us to step up our partnership with Maniilaq in getting some of the equipment through the department of justice and getting equipment for our VPSO's to be responding to the different incidents in our communities.

Louie Commack I have a questions on the capital projects, when do you think the governor will sign or deny, what time line do we have?

Mayor Reggie Joule once the bill has been transmitted to the governor he has 20 days to sign the bill, the last time I checked was about 10 days or so ago the bills had not been transmitted to the governor but the governor will be in town today for a little while to visit with a young lady and I can't remember her name, there's a young lady Drew Nanouk entered into a choose respect competitive poster project and whatever she did won and the governor is coming up here to have an ice cream social, he should be in about 11:30, this starts at 11:45, its associated with choose respect and hopefully we will get a couple of minutes to encourage him to sign on the and not veto or reduce the request that we had made and the governors history has been pretty good in this area but there are some things and its so competitive now and is gonna get more so with less revenues coming into the state.

Louie Commack the capital project includes housing?

Reggie Joule no, there was not a housing request in this one there is a process for housing for public safety but it's a loan, what the assembly and the borough has to determine is, is that something we want to get into because we become responsible of the repayment of those loans and were not at the financial place to do that yet, we have something's going on and hopefully within the next year that may change, but it's going to take a lot of work and we have one of the ways we generate our funds for the borough is through the payment in lieu of taxes with Teck, that agreements expiration date is at the end of June in 2015 so between now and then we need to work with Teck and negotiate a new PILT agreement or a new agreement and we need to have the assembly and the administration of the borough on the same page so that we come from a position of strength but we have to understand and we need to communicate this to Teck and others that we have some inability to meet some of our communities needs and these are those issues and one of them is the fact that when it comes to housing if were not in a position to pay back a loan for housing for public safety then you got to go through the legislative grant and stand in line with everybody so it



becomes very competitive and so we have to be diligent on looking at ways of raising revenues and it just can't be with PILT and were looking at other ways as well, we just shot off a letter last week after months of putting something together regarding DMTS, the agreement between teck and AIDA generates revenue from that road and the borough has tried for at least since Tony Knowles was governor to get a part of those revenues and has not been successful, we shot out a proposal last week to try and be a part of that to generate some revenues for the borough and I don't know what the answer is going to be at least if they say yes we know we can move forward if they say no we can put it to bed but we need to get an answer for that and the AIDA board has three new members and Hugh Short was the chairman of the board was very supportive, they got a new chairman and I did CC the governor on our letter that we sent to Ted Leonard so that the governor is aware of it I called his Chief of Staff to let him know it was coming and to get it in front of him to get his attention and at some point I'm not sure that it will get the time to focus in on that specifically today but I will use a little bit of today to some time to meet with him to walk him through what we are looking for.

Louie Commack the other concern I have on that is the membership on the AIDA board, since our region and North Slope especially put out millions upon millions of dollars in revenue to the rest of the state I think we should seek a membership in that board from our region or north slope region. Do we have one?

Reggie Joule no we do not, the last person we had on this I believe was affiliated with Nana Development Corporation and that was Helvi who sat on the AIDA board for a while.

Louie Commack I think that's an issue that needs to be raised with the governor, you know how much money we put out there from our region and up north I think as we go through this new process and starting to use AIDA and see AIDA more in our region somebody should be on board.

Sally Custer thank you Louie and I agree

Reggie Joule thank you I hope your spring is good harvesting, one that's enjoyable, bountiful and safe.

## **CLOSING BUSINESS**

**Sally Custer** Date of next meeting will be determined by Mrs. Ferguson

Lena Ferguson I will leave it up to you and we will call on the other commissioners.

Louie Commack I have a question on the appointments I understand that there's people that there appointments are expired, how soon could they be reappointed

Lena Ferguson in your packets you have that application there and its pretty simple, straight forward on the bottom it asks what type of membership the person is seeking

so whichever is applicable so if you guys are already on the commission and you want to renew your membership there's a box to check there and I'll find out and if they are a new member there is a process, they will have to have a background check done, that's my understanding I'm pretty sure that's what it is and I will go from there. We really need to encourage and get those applications in so we can make sure we have all the seats filled.

Sally Custer I just handed her the renewal applications and I think will be given to the mayor for his consideration.

Lena Ferguson I believe so I will double check the process.

Ely Mitchell how far are we on the 5 year plan?

Chris Hatch That's a very good question I got the 5 year plan 2 weeks ago and after reading through it, it really helped me define where the program should go and where it needs to go after listening to all the comments in all the villages I've been to, unfortunately it doesn't look like it has been prosued or successfully prosued I'm sure people have worked towards it and were still in that first year of trying to get funding for housing as mayor Joule put in him and I have put a lot of discussion lately about ways to get housing that's why I didn't want to touch on it because we're not sure where it's going, there's a lot of avenues for funding, I need to sit and make a longer plan of where were getting funding where it will go first, second, third and so etc. and how to get that funding and by our next meeting I should have a better answer on where it will go even we should technically be in the 4<sup>th</sup> year.

Louie Commack I want to thank Thomas for all the service you've done for us Thomas it was a good experience service with Thomas for all these years he started in public service as a young man in Noorvik when we were growing up, it was about maybe 60 years ago, he was always active in the community and now he's about 80 years old and he's starting to slow down, his public service is commendable, 60 years at least all the way from Search and Rescue, Church, Boys and Girls Club, hunting, fishing he's been there. Thank you Thomas.

Alex Sheldon I thank Thomas too for serving and never seeing housing from public safety. At Kobuk we got only VPO so we gonna get more time in the summer time because kids start breaking the airport lights and we couldn't catch them. Another one is I know the Borough and Nana always get I don't know how much dollars from Red Dog Mine can we Public Safety Commission members ask for few dollars aside for VPSO's in the housing, not just handed to Borough and Nana cause when they hand it over there we can't handle it, for how many years we've been fighting for housing and VPSO's for villages, maybe that way we can help our VPSO's it's just a request how you guys feel, we could start it that way, somehow we got to help our VPSO's we need public safety in the village.

Thomas Pungalik I want to let people that I see every time and go to the meeting, can't see them much I can't travel like I used to, this is my last meeting I'm going to I wouldn't resign but my health isn't good any more, sometimes I wake up bad in the

morning and sometimes I wake up good, that's why I'm here I want to resign in person, that's why I came down, working with all different boys, men and women in the safety commission and policeman and troopers I work with I see Jackie here every time I got to the meeting even she's not working for the borough, she's with Maniilaq, I want to thank her for her service too.

Sally Custer thank you for your many years of service and I know you're not going to stop helping people I know your gonna keep doing what you been doing over 60 plus years like Louie said, we thank you very much. And for my report it is spring time again that time of year where young kids and teenagers want to pigaq, stay up all night, get into mischief, its already happened in Shungnak, vandalism, windows that were brought up there still in their cases shattered, how much did someone pay for those windows big size windows, plus the freight take them up there, put them away where the guys thought the kids won't bother them because we sort of hid them, hidden or not the kids found them and broke windows and we would love to know who they are so their parents can discipline them or somehow be accountable but being a kid I have been a kid once, if my dad don't want me to touch something there's got to be a reason he doesn't want me to touch that so I investigate really curiously remember those hair clippers I took them and took them apart and couldn't put them together for the life of me so I put them in a sugar sack and threw it under our house, kids are kids. Our ice breakup there was nothing to it, the ice just melted away and no flooding, no damage, no nothing. The guys are still wanting to go out and hunt, our slews and the outlets from the lakes are still packed with ice because of no water to take it out. Our VPSO is doing a fine job, doing a real good job, I talked with Mr. Hatch this morning before this meeting started and there was one issue I had with a VPSO's but you and I agreed that we will look into to get that communication upgraded so we don't have to yell and holler, our VPSO in Shungnak has real bad hearing and his telephone system if you need to call him and it has to be in a private setting report you have to yell and holler and people that are near you will know who make the call and what the call was about and that was our conversation this morning and I also questioned him about the cell phone that he may or may not have was not given out and he explained to me why that is and I understand and I will bring it to our council meeting and get that understanding out there. When I get back home I will try to get a sense of our next council meeting which I think will be in the beginning of June but I'm not sure about the date.

Chris Hatch I came up to this region in July of last year and I wanted to thank Mr. Pungalik for being so welcoming in Noorvik, you made my life in Noorvik much better and I appreciate everything you did.

Leroy Adams no comments.

Kenny Gallahorn I just want to thank Thomas for your years of service, everyone learned a lot from your wisdom, it takes a lot of time and effort and it's greatly appreciated, thank you. Just a reminder for the VPSO program if you have a special activity and would like a little more help from the VPSO program call us and we will try to set it up, this last week we had 2 or 3 folks covering Ambler, call us and let us know if you have a basketball tournament coming, anything whatever it may be call us and we will do what we can, the troopers are a big help but call us and we will make it

happen, we will do the best we can and the same thing with the Search and Rescue or Fire Department if there's anything at all we can't get you the supplies or the things you need unless we hear about it, so please call us.

Louie Commack suggest a letter be written to Thomas for the service and signed by the borough people.

**Louie Commack Moved, seconded by Alex Sheldon to adjourn. With no other business to conduct, meeting adjourned at 10:56 A.M.**