

North Slope Borough

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Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Slope Borough Assembly

FROM: Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor *Charlotte Brower*

DATE: May 6, 2014

SUBJ: April Status Report

Good evening Assembly Members and listening audience. April was a historic month for the North Slope Borough. After nearly forty years of a tax scheme that placed limits on the amount of money the Borough could dedicate towards operation and maintenance expenses versus debt service, my administration was successful in lobbying the Alaska State Legislature to amend the tax code to give the Borough more flexibility over its budget through changing the tax-cap modifier. This change will bring tremendous benefits to the people of the North Slope by allowing the Borough to operate more efficiently, increasing the amount of services offered to residents, and enabling the Borough to devote more funds to increase our permanent fund.

I would like to thank my Chief Administrative Officer, Jacob Adams, and my Government Affairs and Administration and Finance teams for working tirelessly over these past few years to help us realize this goal. I would also like to thank our two legislators, Rep. Bennie Nageak and Sen. Donny Olson for all of their help in pushing this legislation forward.

Next month, the Department of Administration and Finance will conduct a workshop to fully inform the Assembly and the general public on the financial impact that this tax cap modifier change will have on the Borough.

In addition to this historic legislation, I am pleased to report on following accomplishments achieved by my dedicated staff over this past month:

The **Department of Public Works** has been working diligently to ensure that life, health and safety issues are resolved in our communities. We thank the people impacted by the heavy snowfall, winds and changing weather conditions for their patience and understanding as Public Works staff work on these issues. The Department is also making airport and runway repairs across the North Slope. The TOS incinerator is being repaired to working condition to relieve the burden on the Barrow landfill.

Public Works weatherization crews are continuing to work in Kaktovik as the Department

received additional weatherization applications and requests for urgent assistance from residents.

The **Department of Planning and Community Services** incorporated public comments and suggestions into the Wainwright Comprehensive Plan which was approved by the Planning Commission in Wainwright. The department is moving forward and making tangible progress with the borough's comprehensive plan.

Planning department staff also compiled the 2014-2015 list of requested capital improvement projects that were presented to the Project Review Committee (PRC). This work is essential in helping the Borough identify the most critical capital needs of the Borough. I want to thank the Planning Commission, department staff and PRC committee members for their diligent efforts during this process.

The **Department of Health and Social Services** held the Healthy Living Summit April 14-16. Over 200 individuals attended the summit from all villages across the North Slope. National and statewide speakers talked to the summit attendees about suicide, drug & alcohol prevention, cultural attainment, and a variety of other topics. The Department has also teamed up with ConocoPhillips and is in the final phases of planning a special health fair for the village of Nuiqsut on May 19.

A mass dispensing clinic was held in Atqasuk during the month with the Risk Management Division to help prepare the community to deal with a major disaster. Thanks to the hard work of dedicated staff, the exercise was a great success.

The Health Department would like to remind everyone that May is the Global Employee Health Month and encourages each Department to sponsor and host a Walkin' Wednesday throughout the summer season.

The **Police Department** continued to conduct successful drug and alcohol interdiction efforts across the North Slope and elsewhere. Over 38 bottles of distilled liquor were confiscated along with 48 cans of beer. Officers also seized one and a half pounds of marijuana and a half pound of cocaine along with a large amount of currency. Police staff also participated with the Health Department in the Healthy Living Summit.

The **Fire Department** continued regular operations in all villages during April 2014. The Department is currently in the process of providing annual firefighter physicals and fittesting for firefighting equipment in all villages. In addition, the training division is working with Ilisagvik College to offer EMT certification to all individuals interesting in becoming first responders.

North Slope Borough Search and Rescue continues to maintain its mission of serving our

citizens. SAR conducted 12 medivac and 5 search and rescue flights for the month of April.

I would like to thank the Department for its efforts in rescuing whaling crews and their equipment that were caught drifting 4 miles out from their camp. Our pilots braved strong winds and near white-out conditions in order to keep our residents safe. Quyanaqpak for all that you do!

The **Department of Wildlife Management** staff are busy preparing meeting papers for the 2014 IWC Scientific Committee meetings being held in Slovenia later this month. Borough scientists will be providing presentations on Bowhead ageing, subsistence harvest summaries, descriptions of Bowhead whale calves, and an update on Bowhead entanglement and ship-strikes data.

Department staff are also busy making observations and taking measurements during the spring whaling season. Quyanaqpak to whaling captains and crews for allowing Wildlife staff to conduct this important work.

The **Department of Capital Improvement Program Management** traveled with the Mayor's Office to the village of Atqasuk to conduct a village meeting on upcoming CIPM projects planned for the village. Topics discussed included the lack of an adequate gravel source for the community. CIPM is working with other Borough departments to find a solution.

CIPM also completed the installation of the new E-911 system in Barrow. This new system will provide for more efficient emergency response. In addition, the Department has shipped out all but four remaining drums containing hazardous waste as part of the South Pad remediation project. This represents a major milestone in my administration's efforts to clean up South Pad and ensure Borough compliance with state and federal regulations.

This concludes my summary report for the month of April. I wish all of you a very happy and prosperous spring season!