

North Slope Borough

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Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor

MEMORANDUM

TO: North Slope Borough Assembly

FROM: Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor

DATE: April 7, 2015

SUBJ: March Status Report

Good evening Assembly Members and listening audience.

I am pleased to report on following accomplishments achieved by my dedicated staff during the month of March:

Staff from the **Mayor's Office** Division of Government and External Affairs responded to an invitation by U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski to testify in front of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Mayor Brower testified and responded to questions on the importance of economic and infrastructure development to North Slope communities. In addition, Mayor Brower was invited along with Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young to address the Pacific Northwest Economic Region forum about the current needs of Arctic communities and opportunities for economic development. The Mayor emphasized the need for OCS revenue sharing and touted the role that Voice of the Arctic Inupiat could play in making sure the local voices are heard clearly by our federal government.

I would also like to take a moment to thank everyone in the community for their efforts to assist during the recent water/sewer problems. I realize that a lot of people did a lot of extra work to take care of the families that were impacted by the situation and these efforts are very much appreciated.

The **Department of Search and Rescue** had six personal locator beacons (PLB's) activated and an additional four overdue travelers/welfare checks/satellite phone search requests. All searches were closed successfully with positive outcomes and no injuries. The primary helicopter flew 16.7 hours this month, the Lear Jet flew 45.9 hours and the King Air flew 23.1 hours this month.

The **Department of Inupiat History, Language and Culture (IHLC)** was used heavily; four whaling crews put new skins on their whaling boats, and there were a total of 1,413 customers including groups, whaling crews, tourists and arts & crafts bazaar participants. IHLC held a qatignisi (whaling

parka covers) in collaboration with Iļisaġvik's Uqautchim Uglua and targeted young people. There were about 16 participants taught by Sadie Rexford and two volunteers.

A special edition of Uĩñiq on the whalers of Cross Island was completed and distributed through the postal service this month. Photo-journalist Bill Hess documented this historic tradition of the community of Nuiqsut through Edward Nukapigak Jr.'s whaling crew. The department continues to align its work with the IHLC commission and will host an Iļũpiaq Language Summit July 20th and 21st. The goal of the Summit is to continue the development of a systemic plan of language preservation as North Slope Iļũpiaq language is one of the world's endangered languages.

The **Department of Administration and Finance** was incredibly busy with the budget. In addition to all of the work put into the budget from every Department from Directors, Deputy Directors, Division Managers and every other employee involved in the budget process - I would like to acknowledge Sue Howard and Jaysun Cox for their long hours and the assistance they provided from the Budget Office to ensure that the budget was completed thoughtfully and in a timely fashion.

The **Department of Wildlife Management** staff have been preparing for several field projects in 2015. In April, two staff will travel to Point Hope to collect samples from harvested belugas and bowheads. Also, staff will again work with the hunters of Point Lay to collect biological samples from subsistence harvested belugas during June/July. While in Point Lay, they will attempt to live-capture and attach satellite transmitters to several belugas.

Wildlife staff and members of the NSB Fish and Game Management Committee traveled to the Alaska Board of Game meeting in Anchorage to present testimony on State proposed changes to caribou harvest regulations on the North Slope of Alaska. The staff and Committee members supported an amended version of the State generated proposal. The amendments were derived from hunter meetings held in Anaktuvuk Pass, Barrow, Wainwright, Atqasuk, and Point Lay as well as from the NSB Fish and Game Management Committee meeting held in February 2015. The Alaska Board of Game unanimously supported the amended proposal which helps to hasten the recovery of the Teshekpuk and Western Arctic Herds while still providing opportunity for hunters to provide for their communities.

Plans were made to assist with developing new techniques that will use environmental DNA (eDNA) to identify individual bears using snow on which a bear has walked. Once this technique is perfected, it will be possible to sample snow from bear tracks and identify which bear made the track. Such data can be used in mark/recapture models that can generate an estimate of population size. This could be a "game changer" with respect to polar bear research because data collection should be less costly than darting bears from a helicopter, and should also be able to provide a larger sample size.

In addition to its normal workload, the **Department of Public Works** has been tracking renewable energy projects. The Atqasuk transmission line and Kaktovik wind-diesel projects each had Phase 3 recommended to the State of Alaska for funding by the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA). Phase 3 is for Final Design and Permitting work. Phase 4 (final phase) will be Construction. To meet the Governor's budget target of \$15 million, and following consultation with the Renewable Energy

Fund Advisory Committee on regional distribution, the AEA recommended 34 top-tier projects from all over Alaska - both projects made this list. We now await the conclusion of the sessions for the final results of funding at the State level.

During the most recent winter storm in Kaktovik, a group of dedicated individuals helped restore power when 14 transformers went out due to power lines making contact with each other. It was a team effort that battled against the storm to get power back on. A lineman happened to be in Kaktovik but getting him to the power plant included issues with cars not starting, snow machines breaking down, and ultimately having to walk to the plant. A resident was kind enough to allow the workers to stop and warm up in their home part of the way through the walk but the team still arrived at the plant with clothes frozen solid. Addressing the situation went well beyond the lineman, there were many employees, residents and representatives from other organizations who assisted. On behalf of the North Slope we would like to thank everyone who assisted in these efforts.

The **Planning Department** received a complaint about NordAq Energy and a potential spill or debris at their permitted pad and snow trail. A Permitter and Field Inspector were assisted by Search & Rescue to perform a site inspection. There was no evidence of a spill or significant tundra disturbance or impacts on the pad or snow trail.

The Planning Department was notified of a major spill in Milne Point, Tract 14, Hillcorps. The Planning LMR division actively participated in the Unified Command and cleanup via Teleconference and on site. The spill was caused by a Pipe Spool Failure. The activities commenced on February 28, 2015 and the LMR staff returned to Barrow on March 26, 2015. Activities performed during the cleanup are as followed:

- Upon arrival the staff was briefed by the Unified Command on the status of the spill
- Ice Ramp and Ice Pad were constructed on Tract 14 and a Containment Pit on G-Pad was established near Tract 14 in support of the cleanup operations — 106 Barrels
- Sampling by a 3rd party confirmed areas and size of the spill
- NSB Personnel was reduced to Field Inspectors once the spill was confirmed under control
- Daily monitoring and documentation was performed by NSB Inspectors
- A follow up at a later date will be scheduled for a Site Visit

The **Police Department** responded to 2,137 calls for service this month. 643 calls were dispatched and 1,494 were officer initiated. There were 45 traffic related contact with 8 citations written, and a total of 32 criminal cases were submitted to the District Attorney. Officers seized 45.25 bottles of alcohol and 362.58 grams of marijuana. Officers conducted frequent walkthroughs of various basketball games being held in Barrow and the villages, and interacted with school children and elders. In anticipation of the United States assumption of chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the FBI has formed the Law Enforcement Arctic Working Group. This group brings law enforcement leaders from around the Arctic (including Alaska, Canada, Denmark, and Greenland) together to discuss issues of common concern. Chief Owen has been invited to join this working group.

The **Department of Health and Social Services** entered into a contract with Arctic Slope Native Association to work on long-term care for elders and physically disabled. This collaboration will

further expand and enhance the existing services on the North Slope. Also, childcare team members, Health Administration, ASNA and Maniilaq will travel to Point Hope on April 14, 2015, to conduct a roundtable discussion on health and social services, as well as childcare for Point Hope.

The annual Choose Respect walk took place on March 26, 2015 in partnership with the State of Alaska Governor's Office. Lieutenant Governor, Bryon Mallot, attended the event with the NSB Mayor Brower and the City of Barrow Mayor Harcharek.

The **Fire Department** had members from outlying villages participate in a Hazardous Materials Operations course. This course is a requirement for candidates to test at the State of Alaska Firefighter I & II levels. All participants successfully passed the practical exams and are currently waiting for test results for the written exam.

The Barrow Fire Department recently fought two home fires. The fires spread quickly and unfortunately the damage was too significant for the homes to be occupied. The fire fighters saved as much of the homes as possible, and most importantly there were no casualties or injuries due to the fires. These occurrences remind us of the gravity of the work the Fire Department performs, and I would personally like to encourage our residents to consider giving back to their communities by volunteering.

This concludes my summary report for the month of March. Thank you!