

# North Slope Borough

## OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

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*Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor*

### MEMORANDUM

TO: North Slope Borough Assembly  
FROM: Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor *Charlotte Brower*  
DATE: March 4, 2014  
SUBJ: Status Report

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Good evening and thank you President Aamodt, Assembly Members and the listening audience. The month of February was filled with challenges and accomplishments and I'm appreciative of dedicated staff that worked hard to serve our residents.

On February 19, we received good news when the Alaska Supreme Court affirmed the Superior Court's valuation of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline for the 2006 tax year. The Supreme Court affirmed that the value of TAPS in 2006 was \$9.9 billion. This result means that the North Slope Borough does not have to return the \$34,778,712 in taxes and interest received as a result of the Superior Court case to the TAPS owners. It should be understood that this funding is still the subject of litigation between the State of Alaska and the affected municipalities, and should therefore remain protected until all litigation is completed.

The **Department of Administration and Finance** met with Bond Rating agencies to present our case on the proposed Revenue Bond for the new utility plant at SA 10. We received a rating of A-/Stable for the revenue bond, but also affirmed our General Obligation Bond rating at AA-/Stable. In the rating document, our administration was recognized for taking action for SA 10 from losing revenue on an annual basis, to producing significant cash returns. In affirming our AA-/Stable General Obligation rating, our bonding agencies also recognized that the Borough's practice of only levying 18.5 mills of our 20 mill capacity added great security to our debt. Administration and Finance will now work with Key Bank and Bond Counsel to price the Revenue Bonds by March 11, with a tentative bond closing date of March 19. This fits well within the project schedule, and should allow for construction to commence in early summer of this year.

The **Department of Public Works** continued to work hard to provide snow-removal services across all of our villages and initiated its spring fuel-haul project. Work also continued on power grid upgrades in Nuiqsut, Anaktuvuk Pass, and Point Hope. In addition, the Department's weatherization crew mobilized in Kaktovik during the month to begin to weatherize 12 eligible homes in the village.

Severe weather during the month also caused Atqasuk to experience a power outage involving seven homes, and I want to commend Public Works, Risk Management and the **Department of Search and Rescue** for successfully bringing the needed linemen through the severe winter weather conditions so that power could be restored in a timely fashion.

The **Department of Health and Social Services** reached a large milestone in February as its Community Health Aide Program is now 95% CHAP Board Certified. This means 95% of the health aides employed by the Borough have passed their certification through Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. This is a big success for the program and our communities we serve! The Department's AWIC Program also worked to bring the Green Dot staff to Barrow to talk to school assemblies and conduct training on the Green Dot Program. Green Dot is an awareness program to help prevent domestic violence. I also want to personally thank Health Department staff for the support they provided for our students, families and community during the tragic events that impacted us this last month.

The **Department of Wildlife Management** staff was busy attending conferences and workshops as well as working on technical papers. This included participating in AEWC, Arctic Marine Mammal Coalition and IWC meetings. Department Staff have also been working to make preparations for the 2014 field season of the NSB/Shell Baseline Studies Program. This will include the placement of floating nets to capture ice seals as well as studying the density of the wolverine population in the northern foothills of the Brooks Range. The Department also submitted a proposal to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) for a 5-year cooperative agreement to continue the NSB Polar Bear Deterrence Program. Lastly, the Department is gearing up to send 5 students to participate in the 2014 North Slope Borough/Mystic Aquarium Exchange Program. Three students from Point Lay, one from Point Hope and one from Barrow were selected to take part in this exciting program for our youth.

The **Department of Planning & Community Services** continues to oversee permits and planning and zoning activities. Department staff are facilitating the annual Capital Improvements Program process with our communities and departments, and I want to commend the department for their hard work.

The **Capital Improvement Program Department** is nearly complete with its Kali School major renovation project and was issued a substantial completion certificate. A final inspection and open house hosted by the Mayor's Office and CIPM occurred on February 28.

During the month of February the **North Slope Borough Police Department** responded to 2,503 calls for service and submitted 53 cases to the District Attorney's office for review. The Department also saw success with its drug and alcohol interdiction program and was able to seize over 1/3 pound of cocaine along with other hard drugs and alcohol throughout our communities. I'm thankful for the hard work that our police officers perform on a day to day basis to make our communities healthier and safer places to live.

The **North Slope Borough Law Department** filed a motion for summary judgment (with NVB, ICAS, ASRC and NANA) in the Bearded Seal litigation challenging NOAA for listing the Bearded Seal as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. The Department also also filed a motion opposing a request for a temporary restraining order to halt construction at CD-5. The

parties are waiting for the decision on the previously filed motion for summary judgment, which will determine the outcome of the litigation.

This concludes my report for the month of February.