
RE: ANIAK Sanitation Project Status Update for 2023Q4

1 message

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To: cityofaniak <cityofaniak@gmail.com>

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Hi Missy,

Once again, congratulations on your new position as City Manager. I enjoyed our telephone meeting on November 8th to review projects that are in the works and the possible timing and logistics of traveling to Aniak to finally meet in person. I hope that you had a joyous and rejuvenating holiday season. Here's an update for work the Village Safe Water (VSW) Program has completed on behalf of the community of Aniak during the fourth quarter of 2023. Please note that I have added to the recipient list of this update for the first time: Bruce Werba (Remote Maintenance Worker, or RMW, with the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation) and Fred Broerman (Rural Utilities Business Advisor, or RUBA, with the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community & Economic Development) who are assigned to work with Aniak as needed in their respective fields of expertise.

Activities During This Quarter:**1. Drinking Water:**

- **First Time Provision of a Community Water System (Planning Project)** — the VSW grants team has continued the grant application process to acquire the Rural Alaska Village Grants (RAVG) funds from the USDA Rural Development Program. This had entailed working with the City of Aniak to post a public notice regarding the intent to file an application for this planning project starting in November and, on December 8th, the City of Aniak provided documentation of posting. The Cooperative Project Agreement was sent to the City of Aniak on December 5th, and it was fully signed on December 12th by both parties. Therefore, the front-end process required of the grant was completed in December. VSW initiated drafting the scope of work in December and, as a result, the VSW team is poised to begin soliciting engineering consulting firms to develop a preliminary engineering report (PER) to evaluate options for providing a potable water system for the community of Aniak.

2. Wastewater:

- **Wastewater Treatment Upgrades (Planning Project)** —
- **Project Name and Scope Change:** this was previously referred to as the "Lagoon Expansion or Relocation". Because we will be looking at the potential to relocate the lagoon, which is not an insignificant endeavor, I did not want to limit the scope of this planning project to just wastewater treatment by facultative lagoon because there have been improvements to wastewater treatment systems since the lagoon system was originally installed. Therefore, I am broadening the scope of this project to include the evaluation of other potential methods of wastewater treatment to give the community of Aniak more options to contemplate and choose to be the best solution for the community.
- **Funding:** the Indian Health Service (IHS) funds for this project have been disbursed to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). ANTHC works cooperatively with the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (the Department) VSW Program to develop sustainable sanitation facilities. On behalf of the Department Director of the Division of Water, the VSW grants team sent a Cooperative Project Agreement (CPA) to the City of Aniak on November 14, 2023 and it was fully signed on November 20th by both parties. There is not requirement to public notice this wastewater planning project as there was for the potable water planning project because of the differences in requirements of the funding sources. As a result, the VSW team is poised to begin soliciting engineering consulting firms to develop a preliminary engineering report (PER) to evaluate options for wastewater treatment upgrades for the community of Aniak.

3. Solid Waste:

- **Solid Waste Upgrades Project**— this project is for equipment and materials: signage, a #10 burn cage, fish totes for storage of collected household hazardous wastes, and a skid steer. IHS has indicated that it has

allocated funds for IHS-eligible portions of this project, however, we are still waiting for the funds to be released. In the meantime, because other communities in Alaska have also requested similar equipment and materials, VSW is contemplating methods to efficiently procure these items in bulk, instead of on a community-by-community basis.

4. Other Items for the Good of the Community:

- **Training Opportunity** — On October 14, 2023, VSW forwarded information from the Department regarding webinars on amended 18 AAC 72 Wastewater Treatment and Disposal regulations that became effective October 1, 2023.
- **Energy Resource and Funding Opportunity** — On November 8, 2023, VSW sent an email with links to US Department of Energy resources regarding alternative energy projects. As usual, my disclaimer is that energy is outside of Village Safe Water's direct purview; however, VSW hopes that the information will spark some ideas and lead to contacts for how Aniak can pursue similar projects to improve its energy reliability, resilience, and lower its costs.
- **Online Clearinghouse of Federal Funding Opportunities** — On December 29, 2023, VSW forwarded a news release from the US Department of the Interior announcing the development and online availability of a clearinghouse of federal funding opportunities for Tribal governments, Tribal enterprises, Native entrepreneurs, and Native Community Development Financial Institutions. Although it was developed with the intent of gathering Tribal and Native funding opportunities, this clearinghouse also includes funding opportunities for which non-Tribal government organizations of underserved communities are also eligible.

Activities Anticipated for the Next Quarter:

1. **Drinking Water: First Time Provision of Community Water (Planning Project)** — VSW has prepared an initial draft scope description of the planning process we anticipate for the water system. The scope of work will be reviewed internally within VSW, then it will be provided to the community of Aniak for review and comments. VSW anticipates issuing a Request for Proposals from interested consulting and design engineering firms during the first quarter of 2024; however, please refer to the wastewater treatment upgrades project anticipated activities description below for additional information.
2. **Wastewater: Wastewater Treatment Upgrades (Planning Project)** — VSW will be preparing a scope description of the planning process we anticipate for the wastewater treatment upgrades. As with the planning project for a potable water system, the scope of work will be reviewed internally within VSW, then it will be provided to the community of Aniak for review and comments. VSW is contemplating combining the drinking water and wastewater planning projects into a single solicitation. While VSW anticipates issuing a Request for Proposals from interested consulting and design engineering firms during the first quarter of 2024, the decision-making process regarding how to solicit the two planning projects may delay its issuance into the second quarter of the year.
3. **Solid Waste:** None required at this time. Waiting for funding to come through and for a DEC-internal decision regarding purchasing strategy.

Action Items for the City of Aniak:

1. **Drinking Water: First Time Provision of Community Water (Planning Project)** — There is no immediate action required. However:
 - a. When the scope of work description is provided to the community of Aniak, VSW would very much appreciate review and comments from the entire community of Aniak, not limited to just the City. VSW wants to ensure that the product from this planning project will be aligned with the community's needs and desires.
 - b. As noted in the previous quarterly update, it would be helpful for the City to identify one or two parcels of land that could be used as the basis for cost estimates of a water treatment plant and washeteria (as a possible alternative) and appurtenant piping. This information would be useful for the engineering firm that is selected to perform the project and will probably be needed around the second quarter of 2024.
2. **Wastewater: Wastewater Treatment Upgrades (Planning Project)** — As noted in the previous quarterly update, it would be helpful for the City to identify one or two parcels of land that could be considered for potential wastewater treatment relocation options. As with the drinking water planning project, this information would be useful for the engineering firm that is selected to perform the project and will probably be needed around the second quarter of 2024.
3. **Solid Waste:** None required at this time.

As usual, if you have any questions, think I've overlooked anything or if you would like to pursue other drinking water system, wastewater system or solid waste management improvements for Aniak, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Cheers,

Anita Erickson, P.E.

Village Safe Water Program