

MEMORANDUM

STATE OF ALASKA

Commerce, Community, and Economic
Development

TO: Fred Broerman, LGS 4

DATE: May 11, 2026

FROM: Nick Martinez
LGS 3/ Bethel Region

SUBJECT: Trip Report
Aniak, Alaska
April 13-16, 2026

PURPOSE OF TRIP: Meet the new city staff, help draft the FY2027 budget ordinance, and attend the monthly council meeting telephonically.

PERSONS CONTACTED: Mayor Dave Bonanno, City Manager Lenore Kameroff, City Clerk Charlotte Phillips, and Public Works Supervisor Francis Vaska

OBSERVATIONS: On Monday, April 13, 2026, Bethel RUBA staff's flight was delayed until 5:00 p.m. RUBA staff arrived in Aniak at 5:50 p.m. Upon arrival, RUBA staff received a monthly financial report and finished the day by beginning to draft the FY2027 budget ordinance.

On Tuesday, April 14, Bethel RUBA staff began the day meeting with the city manager to discuss updates with the city, including public works staffing changes, upcoming projects, sales tax ordinance changes, and the addition of a librarian and part time fire chief. Additionally, the city manager advised that smaller commercial businesses had requested that the city council provide an exemption or lower the commercial landfill rate for them since they did not produce as much waste as larger businesses. RUBA staff advised it may be possible to add an additional excessive waste fee, but it will need to be precise on wording and ample notification will need to be posted before changes go into effect.

RUBA staff continued to draft the FY2027 budget using the current monthly financial report to project the final income and expenses for each item and to use these projections in the FY2027 draft budget. RUBA staff then received the FY2027 projected wages and finished the day by beginning to incorporate the projected wages into the draft budget.

On Wednesday, April 15, Bethel RUBA staff began the day by comparing the wages entered in the budget draft against the projected wages. The current budget draft had a projected loss of over \$30,000. RUBA staff then met with the city manager to discuss a levee project being implemented this summer, which should be incorporated into the budget. RUBA staff then received the projected insurance and workers' compensation amounts. The projected insurance costs had a projected loss of \$14,000. Bethel RUBA staff finished the day by reviewing the sales tax ordinance.

On Thursday, April 16, Bethel RUBA staff asked the city manager to review the FY2027 budget draft. RUBA staff was notified that the council stipends were already incorporated into the wages and did not need its own line item, which helped reduce the projected loss by \$10,000. RUBA staff and the city manager were then able to balance the budget and get it prepared for the city council meeting later that day.

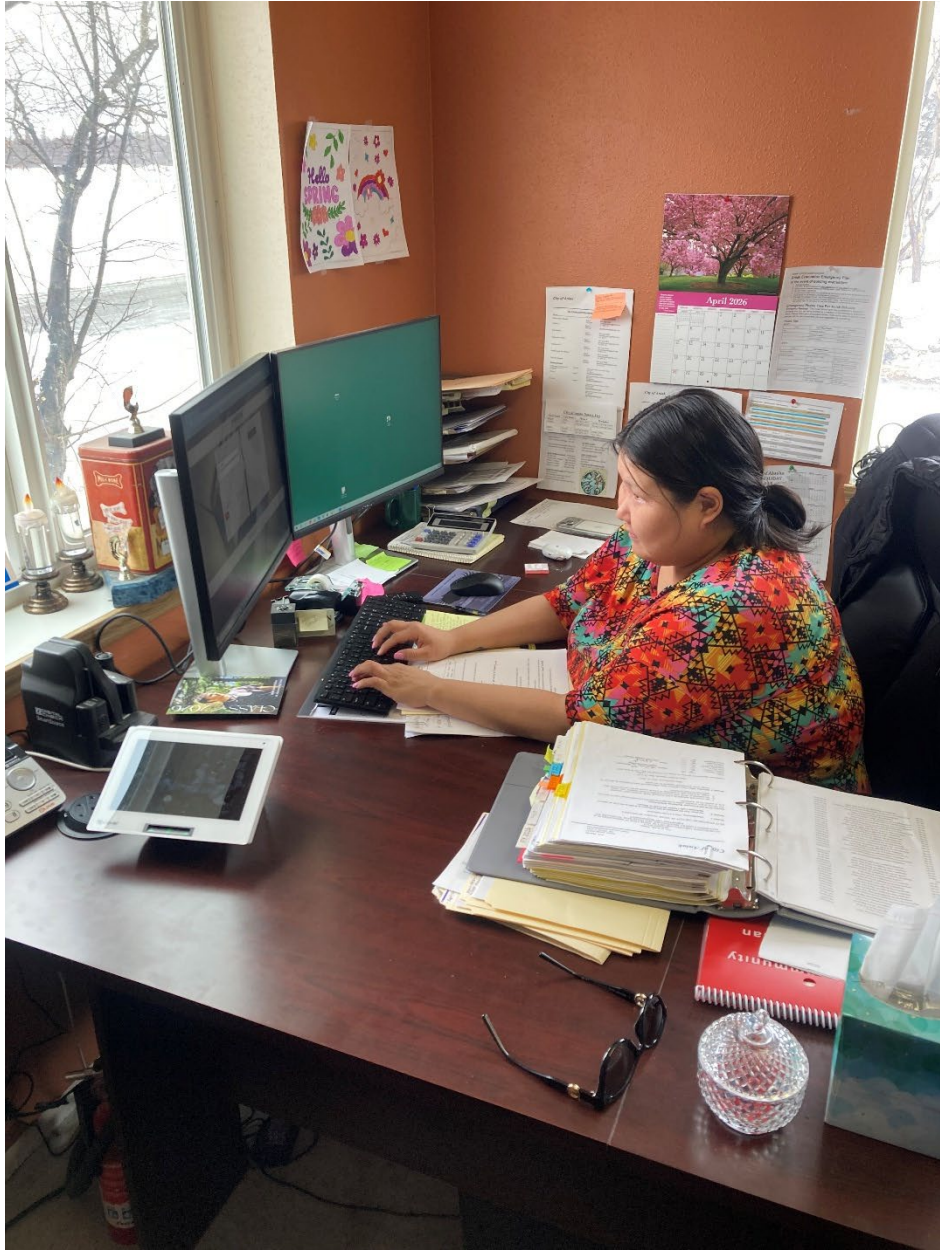
RUBA staff then worked with the city clerk to review the sales tax section of the municipal code. The city council had wanted to remove some exemptions to keep the sales tax code up to date. RUBA staff began to draft the sales tax amendment and provided a draft to the city clerk for review. Additionally, RUBA staff went over the ordinance process on how ordinances are passed. Bethel RUBA staff then met with the city clerk and manager to discuss ideas about the excessive waste fee for bigger commercial businesses to bring them to councils' attention. Bethel RUBA staff then went to the airport and departed Aniak at 4:35 p.m., arriving in Bethel at 6:00 p.m. RUBA staff then called in to the monthly city council meeting and provided an explanation for the FY2027 budget ordinance. Bethel RUBA staff went over the revised budget, highlighted items that had increased in expenses, and discussed the addition of library and fire department staff. RUBA staff then finished by answering any questions the city council had about the budget and any other topics discussed in the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Aniak city council should decide how to implement an excessive waste fee for larger commercial businesses. The council should consider what circumstances would trigger an excessive waste fee and what the process would be for smaller businesses to apply for an exemption or a lower rate. Additionally, the city council should consider how many small businesses may apply for the exemption and if the excessive waste fee would be sufficient to cover any loss of revenue caused by these exemptions. The process to apply for these exemptions needs to be clear, and the city council should review applications at each monthly meeting. Notice about the proposed fee should be posted and sent to commercial businesses, as previous fee proposals have received push back from businesses. Giving them notice to attend the meetings can be helpful to explain the reason for the fee.

CC: Mayor Dave Bonanno and Aniak City Council
Anita Erickson, Village Safe Water Project Engineer
Lynn Kenealy, Division of Community and Regional Affairs, RUBA Program Manager



Aniak City Office



City Clerk Charlotte Phillips