

City of Mountain Village
P.O. Box 32083
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Friday, October 05, 2007

Senator Donny Olson
State Capital Rom 514
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Honorable Senator Olson:

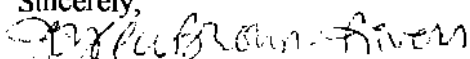
As City Manager of Mountain Village I am writing on behalf of City of Mountain Village regarding the specific problems that involve law enforcement for the community of Mountain Village.

First of all the Village Public Safety Officer and Village Police Officers are the first responders to all crisis calls ranging from domestic violence, rape cases, theft, many break-ins, assaults, driving under the influence, search & rescue, fire, and many death cases, most cases inspired by alcohol and drugs. With the size of our community it will never stop, it has been going on even before Mountain Village first got incorporated. Depending on the urgency of a call, in which most cases the strength level of call varies and where the limit of contacting the State Trooper takes over is always on a depended level, meaning troopers don't handle misdemeanor cases just the felony cases.

Secondly, it is very important to preserve and adequately fund the law enforcement to keep the crime rate down and ensure the welfare of our large community. Most crime cases are inspired by alcohol or illegal drugs which affect the most vulnerable-the welfare of babies, minors and elders. Without adequate funding it would be impossible to protect, serve, and control hostile environments. Remember, in all cases, Village Public Safety Officers and Village Police Officers are the first responders, which is why it is very important to preserve the funding at an adequate level.

Thirdly, all available resources to curtail the crime rate down in rural Alaska are critical such as drug/alcohol sniffing dogs that other communities are lucky to have, continued screening of airfreight, mail, suspects, and providing rewards for reporting importation would help tremendously. One life saved is worth everything to families. Lobbying the legislature on the state and federal level is critical also.

In conclusion I hope this information is most helpful in your task force meetings. Good luck in your decision-making and I hope the best decision turns out in what works best for the State of Alaska and our communities. Thank you very much for taking our testimony and attempting to see how we live and personally see what happens in our communities. It means very much to us. God Bless.

Sincerely,

Joyce A. Brown-Rivers
City Manager

Denise Liccioli

From: Buckland City Council [city_of_buckland@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2007 10:50 AM
To: Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: VPSO problems

Good Morning Senator Olson;

The City of Buckland has been having communication problems with KANA, the organization that handles our region's vpso program.

We feel that this organization is too far from our region to properly manage the VPSO positions for the NANA region.

We have an applicant who is qualified and more than willing to fill the position here in Buckland. The KANA coordinator told the applicant to negotiate what the Village of Buckland has to offer, and we feel that it's the coordinator who needs to do this.

sincerely;
Darlene B. Hadley
City Administrator

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Denise Liccioli

From: Linae Sanger [Linae_Sanger@lksd.org]
Sent: Tuesday, September 18, 2007 11:45 AM
To: Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: VPSO

My superintendent suggested I email you with my concerns about what has happened and is happening in our village in relation to your local meetings on VPSO.

When I have emergencies at school, or hear of things happening outside of school, I have not been able to get ahold of a VPSO. I heard a rumor that our village's VPSO moved to another village. I have not seen a posting for the job.

I had an incident this fall where a student who was on probation for being drunk and threatening to kill a teacher last spring showed up at school drunk. I didn't know how he was going to react when I confronted him. I called around VPSO phone number, VPO phone number, and Troopers, but got no one. This could have been a very violent situation. Finally, I got a board member at the tribal office to come to school to be with me while I interviewed the student. Luckily, the student did not get violent and we didn't have to have a lockdown at school.

Later that week, the above student was with another student who was also on probation. The 2nd student was drunk, no pants on, and had a gun. This was during the evening hours. I tried to call Troopers and left 4 messages, but no one called me back. Again, this could have escalated into an extremely dangerous situation.

When the VPO who had been out of town finally got back, I reported these incidents to her. I don't know if anything has been acted on or not.

The troopers came to our village the following week, but did not pick up these two for violation of probation.

My main concern is that we need someone to respond when we have emergencies at school or in the village, especially those involving violence/weapons.

Thank you,

Linae Sanger, Site Administrator
Chief Paul Memorial School
Box 19
Kipnuk, AK 99614
Phone: 907-896-5011
linae_sanger@lksd.org

Denise Liccioli

From: Nellie Wesley [nellie.wesley@nautaaq.org]
Sent: Tuesday, September 04, 2007 11:29 AM
To: Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: Public Comment - AK Rural Justice

Please accept this as a comment to the Rural Justice department...

Rural Alaska is in dire need of public safety in the field of policing. Our community in Noatak went without a VPSO for many years even while KANA in Kodiak is advertising the position for several years now. We have couple locals that want the job but because of their background check they don't qualify for the position, even what happened in their past was almost 20 years ago and their lives are changed and alcohol free today. Can that background check be cleared after so many years?

You know, people CAN change, but yet we keep their records for the rest of their lives, many if not all of us go thru times in life we are not proud of one time or another, but a lot of us realize the need to change/quit drinking or other substance abuse etc. and do so, but unfortunately there are people stuck with records that stay for the rest of their lives, when changes are made like quitting drinking - the root of their problems or crimes they did while under the influence of alcohol.

Another note on that matter, when children (ICWA children) are displaced from their parents, and the grandparents want to take the children, but someone have a felony record in the household from many years back while under the influence of alcohol, same situation like the above they don't qualify to take their own grandchildren, when in fact they made a positive change and quit alcohol. Someone need to look into that situation and try to clear people's names after a period of time and not keep their criminal records for LIFE when they want to make a difference in their families or their communities (like taking grandchildren or patrolling and taking on the duties of policing).

Thank you for your consideration and taking comments from your constituents.

Respectfully,

N. Carol Wesley,
Noatak Resident
PO Box 54
Noatak, AK 99761
Phone: (907) 485-2173

Denise Liccioli

From: JStrong08@aol.com
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2007 2:15 PM
To: Denise Liccioli
Subject: VPSO Program

Hi. I am Joseph G. Strongheart, Sr., Nunam Iqua Tribal Council member. The following is my own personal feelings and ideas. Not the NITC.

For the Native Village of Nunam Iqua we do not see the benefits of the VPSO Program due to a few reasons:

1. we have not had anyone work here for a few years as a VPSO. Lack of interest, no applicants or do not qualify.
2. No housing and even if we did get a house available we probably would run into the Insurance problem and liabilities issues if we owned the house and wanted to let the person or persons use the building.
3. I like the Idea that if we do not use our existing money for the VPSO, then can we use this to have a trooper posted or stay here a few days or a day a week? This would help cut down our problems of Teen Drinking and Adults drinking and contributing to a minor. and other problems.
4. If not a trooper then someone who is a trained officer, like a certified or someone trying to get a certificate for a police job, willing to do a "FLOAT" or internship type position for Nunam Iqua come out and stay and get "ON the Job Training".

This way the money that is allocated to Nunam Iqua could be used for Nunam Iqua.

I understand that this may not seem like a solution, but, something is better than letting the problems escalate.

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Denise Liccioli

From: Carin Finch [carin@unicom-alaska.com]
Sent: Friday, August 31, 2007 7:11 AM
To: Denise Liccioli
Subject: Public comment on the VPSO Program

Nunam Iqua has been eligible for a VPSO over the years, but primarily due to a lack of housing, there has been no VPSO in the village. The result is that funding, which the legislature provided to help Nunam Iqua with public safety, does not accomplish the intended goal.

Recommendation:

VPSO funds be allocated by community.
If a community does not utilize their VPSO funds by hiring a VPSO, the funds would go to the nearest Alaska State Troopers.
The Alaska State Troopers would use those funds to provide additional assistance to the community.

Carin Finch
Box 28
Nunam Iqua, AK 99666

Denise Liccioli

From: Howard T. Amos [pantungan@yahoo.com]
Sent: Friday, August 24, 2007 10:44 AM
To: Sen. Donny Olson
Subject: VPSO Program testimony

My name is Howard T. Amos, I'm from Mekoryuk, Alaska.
I'm a former VPSO and manager as well. Today is August 24, 2007.

Village Public Safety Officer Program benefits each village that hires them. For a tribal or a City oriented communities without a VPSO struggle financially. Here are some problems:

1. A VPSO burns out because he/she is a human.
2. A VPSO supports his/her job by using own personal: Boat, 4-wheeler, vehicle, pay for their own gasoline/oil, put up troopers in their own homes.
3. VPSO's live with guns all their lives for personal/subsistence hunting. It is a crime to hire a police officer without any type of firearms protection. VPSO's lose their lives because the State of Alaska say its too risky, cost too much for insurance. Lawyers cannot say we can't handle firearms.
4. Cost of Living is astronomical in villages, everybody knows that, and yet VPSO's are like laborers. Compare their job with an Alaska State Trooper. People wonder why the turnover rate is so high, VPSO are paid pennies compared to an Alaska State Trooper.
5. Life Insurance, Retirement and other wonderful benefits that Troopers enjoy should benefit a VPSO as well.
6. VPSO's has cream of the crop, let them visit other VPSO who may be on verge of burnout to give encouragement and possibly help them do their job for several days.
6. Last but not least, We in villages are American citizens and deserve as much Police, Fire and Water safety protection as an average United States citizen.

Quyana,

Howard T. Amos
(907) 827-8621

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