

Report by Robert Mulluk, Jr.

Noorvik Native Community
Executive Director

Good afternoon Commissioners,

I am grateful for the opportunity to have this time to speak to this body and try and address some issue that we have in our region as well I will address some issues that mainly pertain to our Native Community of Noorvik.

Our Native Community of Noorvik is approximately 60 miles east of Kotzebue our main transportation is three ways in winter is by snow machine and commuter planes and during the summer months it is by boat and obviously plane. All our small community is connected this larger community. All the major agencies are also located here at Kotzebue. In order to provide services to our communities everything must start from the see in when we have an emergency in our out lying villages planes have to been sent with plane and weather is always a factor. Or if we have incidents that requires a state trooper again sometimes that main factor in there immediate respond is the weather. Despite all these elements and obstacles we have even more problems beyond that which is many of our villages do not have VPSO's supposively the first to address any emergencies. For a moment let me put this scenario in perspective of any community in the United States would they be quiet and allow this kind of services? Would the politicians have good night rest with those kind of services provided by there local agencies? Then why do let this go on.

You are probably well aware of our holding cells in our court system. Unfortunately, this go beyond this community I would have encourage you commissioners to see how our smaller communities had to make due with similar conditions in our smaller villages. We have been dealing with that and still have not been resolved to date. We see the media make a big deal about Iraqians being treated inhumanian; ~~is~~ is this acceptable for the Eskimos in Northwest Alaska? I hope not.

Almost everything we purchase has to be flown in. Our gas, stove oil, transportation vehicles, food, clothing, and everything also must be transported out. This has put everything we do in our community outrageously high price. By now you have heard other testimonies of the conditions we have in Kotzebue as well as our Northwest Alaska Region. My question to you commissioners is this; how can you help us out? And how soon?

Our Native Community of Noorvik is presently trying to start a traditional tribal court to address our juveniles. Despite the money which is approximately \$5,000 and you are well aware the amount of money is not enough for even one staff salary. Hopefully, this will spring board into bigger and better things for our community. All the villages are

growing and the money is dwelling down to whether we probably can declare emergency status. We presently receive AFN Wellness Grant. In order to make our police force more stable we have provided the City of Noorvik some this grant money. Despite our willingness to help our local governments we too have major funding problems. It is unfortunate that we are trying to do this kind of service for our community and yet we have no agency to cough up the money. We even our senator in Washington DC giving money to other agencies to be originally ear marked for programs like this.

We all have studied the United States Government in high school. I will only ask this question about prohibition. Our government tried to out law alcohol and it didn't work it only made the bootleggers millionaires. We all have free agency. We have tried to make our people quit drinking but all indications are that they will drink anything to drink so we must address from a different angle. I think we need to revert to educating our people and start with our children and school system.

In closing I would like to thank you commissioners to come to our region to hear our concerns. But please do not let our voice and plea stop here, but you take these concerns of ours and let the appropriate people hear our message and take action.

4. Each community must make some efforts in healing their villages. We must put all marbles on the table and start working together to accomplish togetherness. Wellness in our community will not come from one organization but a team work effort will be a good building foundation.
5. Our leaders in Noorvik have talked about having monthly village joint meeting. This would get us familiar with our local government needs and short falls. Plus this would be a prime opportunity for our community to utilize our grass root work force which we know is was very effective.
6. A village tribal court in each village would help each village to deal with issue with our juveniles locally. This may start simply by using our local elders to reinstate our tribal ways of dealing with local problems. This is a prime example of our traditional Inupiaq ways that has been ignored for too long. Our ancestors paved the way with this and we still don't allow our people to dictate a positive outcome because we rely on the state court system to intimidate us to thinking the only solution to our wellness lies with only that system.
7. For too long we have each agency exercising their powers and show us how strong or powerful they are. This made our region split in ideology. We often see and hear the church fighting over which church is true or better. But in reality this only shows us to fight amounst our selves. If we are to accomplish any goodness in our region we must become one.
8. If this region is to say that we truly believe in the goodness of our region then ~~they may be~~ needs to let some of the programs go and give us some those programs to be housed in each villages. For example, our corporation ran a non profitable hotel in Kotzebue for over thirty years so they can provide employment for Kotzebue. Why can't our corporation do something like that for our small villages? What I mean not get a business that can't make money but something that will work on a small village like ours or small scale operation.
9. I know many of you were really upset when a white man talks about regionalization yet we had this in our region from as long as I can remember. We should not let egos; power, money and self glory dictate our abilities to work together. If our Inupiaq Values poster sits idle in our office for looks this does not serve justice to our community and region. We as Nuurvikmis have many excellent programs that we do but with a little help from the other agencies we can do miracles.

10. **In closing I would like to share what my goal was to each student that I taught as an educator. "Our Inupiaq elders always tell us that anything good in life you receive, comes through sacrifice and hard work."
Taikku!**