



Communication Skills-Key to Any Success

Good communication skills are key to success in life, work, and relationships. Without effective communication, a message can turn into an error, misunderstanding, frustration, or even disaster by being misinterpreted or poorly delivered. Communication is the process by which we exchange information between individuals or groups of people. It is a process where we try as clearly and accurately as we can, to convey our thoughts, intentions and objectives. Communication is successful only when both the sender and the receiver understand the same information. In today's highly informational and technological environment it has become increasingly important to have good communication skills.

Important steps for acquiring good communication skills:

1. Know what you want to say and why.

Understand clearly the purpose and intent of your message. Know to whom you are communicating and why. Consider any barriers you may encounter such as cultural differences or situational circumstances (gender, age, or economic biases). Ask yourself what outcome you want to achieve and the impression you want to leave.

2. How will you say it?

We're all aware by now, that it's not always what you say, but how you say it that counts. Begin by making eye contact. You inspire trust and confidence when you look a person in the eyes when you speak. Second, be aware of your body language since it can say as much, or more, than your words. By standing with arms easily at your side you tell others that you are approachable and open to hearing what they have to say. If instead, your arms are crossed and shoulders hunched, it suggests disinterest or unwillingness to communicate. Good posture and approachable stance help make even difficult communication flow more smoothly. Make sure you speak in a cooperative, non-adversarial tone. Be non-judgmental.

3. Listen

Communication is a two way street. After you've said what you have to say, stop, listen, and look for feedback and clues of comprehension. While the person is responding avoid any impulses to cut them off or listen only for the end of the sentence so that you can blurt out more ideas or thoughts that come to your mind. Respectfully give them your full attention. When they are finished, to ensure that your message has been clearly and correctly understood, ask open questions and encourage discussion. Fine-tune your message if necessary.

4. Reach understanding, agreement or consensus.

Once you have had the opportunity to discuss your message and the feedback to it, re-visit the purpose of the interchange. Have you reached common ground, solved a problem, or clarified your position? If the purpose was to teach or instruct, have you accomplished your goal? To communicate well is to understand and be understood. Make sure your message has been received as intended and that any questions or concerns have been alleviated. You can even agree to disagree. There are no guarantees that your communication efforts will be met with total compliance and agreement. As long as you understand each other, are cordial and respectful, you can still have a successful exchange. (Excerpts from www.essentiallifekills.net)

Construction/Excavation in the Right-of-Way Permits

Another season of construction and maintenance is drawing near, so here are some points about construction/excavation permits for Service Area Commissioners to keep in mind.

- Permits are required for any excavation taking place in a service area right-of-way within the Fairbanks North Star Borough. This includes, but is not limited to, new driveway excavations, utility installations and maintenance activities requiring excavation in the road right-of-way.
- A copy of the permit and conditions are sent to the Service Area Chairperson.
- The Service Area Chairperson needs to contact Ann Worhatch (by phone at 459-1333, or by email at aworhatch@fnsb.us, if work is taking place and you have not seen a permit.
- **PLEASE DO NOT** wait until the work is completed to call and ask about permit information. It is much easier to get problems corrected during construction, than afterwards.
- A Service Area Commissioner may approach the constructor about not having a permit, but should still follow up with a call to Ann. Sometimes the constructor will say he will get the permit, but doesn't follow through.
- Please try to provide enough information when you call in non-permitted work so that Ann can contact the constructor.
- Let service area residents know permits are needed for any construction to take place within the right of way, so they can contact you about new construction taking place.
- Don't expect any road improvements from a permit, the permittee is only required to match the existing conditions.



Fairbanks North Star Borough RURAL SERVICES

A Division of the Public Works Department



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THE ROAD REVIEW

SPRING ISSUE, APRIL 2011

Rural Services New Manager

Welcome the new Manager, Michael Bredlie, to the Rural Services Division. Michael is the third generation of his family to be born and raised here in Fairbanks. He graduated in 1998 from the University of Alaska Fairbanks with a degree in Mining Engineering. In 1999 Michael began his career working for a national contractor in the heavy civil division. Over the next 10 years he had the privilege to work and manage many projects in many different parts of North America. From Utah to California to Alaska to Hawaii (and even western Canada) Michael's projects ranged from small to multilane freeways, from jetties to pipelines. In July 2009 Michael hired on with the Borough as a Project Manager for the Public Works Design and Construction Division focusing his time on roadway capital projects. He joined the team at the Rural Services Division in February of this year, and is looking forward to the many opportunities the position holds. While he has been fortunate to meet some of the 280 Service Area Commissioners, he looks forward to introducing himself to all.



Another relative newcomer is Diane Aslam. Diane started her tenure with Rural Services in late August 2010. Diane's family moved to Fairbanks the summer of 1970 and she's been here ever since. Diane has a strong construction background having worked for a local contractor for 15 years as their office manager, and as a project secretary for 4 years with Facilities Services at UAF. In 1999 Diane started working for the Borough as a project secretary with the Public Works Design & Construction Division. She worked on many projects, one of her favorites being the Hutchison Career Center Renovation. Diane left the projects behind to work as the Senior Secretary for Design & Construction, moving her focus away from the construction of projects and more towards the administrative side; working with ordinances, memorandum of agreements, and learning the fiscal side of projects. Diane is enjoying her new position and the many challenges and unique opportunity to work with the service areas.



Highlights

New Faces

Fiscal Year End Dates

Upcoming Training

Service Area Commissioner Renewals

Contract Renewals

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Construction/Excavation in Right-of-Way (ROW)

Rural Services Staff

Michael Bredlie, -459-1218
Manager
mbredlie@fnsb.us

Ann Worhatch, P.E.—459-1333
Engineer,
Construction/excavation permits, bids, road problems, projects
aworhatch@co.fairbanks.ak.us

Kevin Hawman—459-1217
bids, maps, annexations, road problems, projects
khawman@co.fairbanks.ak.us

April Barnes—459-1223
purchase orders, payments, commission appointments, advertising of meetings, mailing labels
abarnes@co.fairbanks.ak.us

Diane Aslam—459-1222
budgets, tax cap changes, training, administrative questions or problems
aslam@fnsb.us

The Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly on April 14, 2011 certified the following election results for the Service area Election held March 22, 2011

| | PASSED | 9 - Yes | 1 - No | 1- No Count |
|---------------------------|--------|---------|--------|-------------|
| Fairhill \$16,220 Loan | | | | |
| Parkside \$2,928 increase | FAILED | 6 - Yes | 8 - No | 0- No Count |
| Murphy \$4,876 increase | PASSED | 2 - Yes | 0 - No | 2-No Count |

"I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught." Winston Churchill (1874-1965)

TRAINING NOTICES

- Maintenance Contract training in June.
- Project Submittals and Tax Cap training in July.

You should start thinking about your 3rd. Quarter meeting in August-review of project needs and possible project submittals



FISCAL YEAR END ACTIVITIES—FY11 *TENTATIVE* CUT-OFF DATES



The deadlines listed below are **tentative** until the Finance Department and the Borough auditors finalize the dates, but they are realistic and are presented here so commissions can plan accordingly.

Purchase Orders

The last day to request a new purchase order or change notice for FY11 is Wednesday, May 25, 2011. This cut-off applies only to purchase orders for items or services that will be received or performed prior to June 30, 2011.

Miscellaneous Purchase Orders

Service area chairmen needing miscellaneous purchase orders for next fiscal year for any work other than annual maintenance should contact April to set up the PO ahead of time. We are trying to avoid procurement violations arising from non-contracted work being ordered before funds are made available.

Petty Cash

Petty cash reimbursement for FY11 must be received in our office by noon, Monday, June 27, 2011.

Reimbursement requests received after this date/time may not be eligible for reimbursement.

Payment Requests

All FY11 payment authorizations, and supporting invoices, must be received in our office by 5:00PM, Friday, July 1, 2011.

This is a very busy time of year as we process payments and close purchase orders for all 109 service areas, while at the same time opening new purchase orders for the next fiscal year. There are a few of things you can do to help us:

- Authorize payment as soon as you receive any outstanding invoices from the contractor.
- If you've completed work but haven't yet received an invoice, request one from your contractor immediately.
- If you've paid all outstanding bills and do not intend to order any more work before June 30, contact us so we can close your purchase order. You can email, fax or call us to authorize closing out a purchase order.

Each year we spend countless hours tracking down commissioners and contractors to verify any outstanding invoices. Taking a moment to contact us with this information enables us to provide more efficient service to all parties involved.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Thank you to the commissioners who took the time to attend the training sessions held by the DOT Local Technical Assistance Program. The feedback from those who attended has been very positive. While the turnout was less than we had hoped for (only 13 out of 109 services areas were represented) we appreciate your dedication to your service areas. For those who did not attend, we hope that you seriously consider attending future training offered. If there is something you would like us to cover in our training sessions, please let us know.



Check our website for copies of the handouts from these training sessions.

**Rural Services will be closed:
May 30th
July 4th
September 5th**

Start each day by affirming peaceful, contented and happy attitudes and your days will tend to be pleasant and successful.
- Norman Vincent Peale (1898-1993)



COMMISSIONER EXPIRATION AND RENEWALS



Commissioners whose terms will expire on June 30, 2011 will be receiving notification by mail shortly.

Included with your notification will be a Disclosure of Present Economic Interest form that **must** be filled out and returned to our office along with your renewal form. Commission seats are appointed for a specific period and cannot be automatically renewed or extended. If you would like to reapply for another term, please review and update the contact information as necessary and return the form to Rural Services by **5:00PM on Tuesday, May 03, 2011. Don't forget to turn in your Disclosure form with your renewal!**

If you know of any resident interested in serving on your service area commission, encourage them to apply.

All new term appointments require a notarized Oath of Office form to be completed **prior** to any official activity as a commissioner. April Barnes can assist you notarizing your Oath at our Rural Services office. Please call in advance if you require her assistance. The Oath of Office can also be processed at the Clerk's Office.

An ordinance amending Chapter 2.21 Boards and Commissions of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Code was adopted by the Borough Assembly on February 10, 2011. This amendment affects any person serving on a board or commission. A copy of Section 2.21.190 was mailed to all commissioners along with a disclosure form to be filled out and returned to Rural Services.

**CONTRACT RENEWALS FOR FY12
Letters were sent to all Commission Chairmen**

Contract renewal letters were sent to all service area contractors in February giving them the option to either renew or not renew their current contract. If your contractor opted to renew, letters were mailed to Commission Chairmen giving the service area the option whether to renew or not. If the service area chooses not to renew, a response with reason for non-renewal is requested. If you or your contractor opted not to renew, your service area contracts will be rebid, with an estimated bid date in May.

During this bidding process we will be issuing Invitation for Bids (IFB's) for annual service area maintenance contracts. To maintain the integrity of the bidding process, ensure that all potential bidders have access to the same information and that no bidder receives information that may give them an unfair advantage in the bidding process, it is essential that all bidder questions and requests for clarification of the bid documents are routed through the General Services Department.

Please do not discuss the requirements of the IFB's or your plans for work in the upcoming fiscal year (July 1 and later) with any contractors. If you are contacted by any contractor regarding these bids, please refer the contractor to the FNSB General Services Department for assistance.

ARSAC UPDATE

At the Annual Commissioner Meeting in October, the Mayor announced that a follow-up meeting would be held. The ARSAC Committee has set the date for this follow-up meeting: May 14, 2011, 10am-2pm in the Assembly Chambers. Notification of the meeting will be sent to all commissioners. The ARSAC Committee has a set agenda for this meeting. Please contact your ARSAC representative for more information.

"It's what you learn after you know it all that counts"
Harry S. Truman (1884-1972) 33rd United States President

April says: "When turning in your minutes remember they are permanent, public records and should be legible and concise. They represent your service area."