

Tribal Council and Self-Governance

American Indian and Alaska Native tribes are sovereign nations that maintain the right to form and carry out the duties of tribal governments. The powers held by Indian and Alaska Native tribes include the right to establish a form of government, determine membership, administer justice, charter business organizations and other rights and responsibilities as a self-governing nation. Nome Eskimo Community (NEC) is governed by an elected seven member Tribal Council. The NEC Tribal Council is comprised of a president, vice-president, secretary/treasurer, and four general members. All members serve three year staggered terms. Members are elected by enrolled tribal members during the annual election.

In 2005, NEC entered into a P.L. 93-638 Self-Governance Compact agreement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to exercise the tribes' self-determination and provide needed programs and services to our tribal membership and Nome Native residents. Self-Governance is the government-to-government relationship that exists between Indian and Alaska Native Tribes and the United States as sovereign nations. Tribes have always been recognized as independent sovereign nations with the authority to conduct their affairs under their inherent powers. In 1988, Congress authorized a demonstration project called Self-Governance which allowed for many programs and services formally administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to be transferred to the Tribes themselves.

Self-Governance is very successful. The key to this success is that the Tribe is provided maximum flexibility in meeting the needs of the community and tribal members and can redesign programs and funding to meet those needs which the Tribe has determined are its priorities. It has also greatly strengthened our tribal government and program operation by making the Tribal Council accountable for these funds rather than a governmental agency such as the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) or the Indian Health Service (IHS).

Tribal Council Members

Dawn Salesky, President

Albert Sahlin, Vice-President

Josie Bahnke, Secretary/Treasurer

Wallace Johnson, Member

Joel Craft, Member

Austin Ahmasuk, Member

Clifford Johnson, Member

