

ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC UTILITY SERVICES OF YALA TOWN MUNICIPALITY

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The administration of public utility services of Yala Town Municipality is limited to two services--water works and electrification. These two services are the compulsory functions which the town municipalities must provide and maintain in their locality.

By the Municipal Report of 1958 we find that of a total 120 municipalities only 66 operate electrification, and 19 water works. Most of them are the responsibility of the Department of Public Works. It is clearly understood why many town municipalities are unable to operate the compulsory functions of this kind; one reason is that the public utility services require enormous capital, and the other is the cost of operation is so high.

Public utilities are very important to the community as a whole for the service is of the indispensable type. Since its purpose is the good of all, they should be owned or operated by some agency of the government or the municipalities. Their characteristic of a natural monopoly necessitate regulation by a franchise to ensure proper services.

From the study, some important matters are discussed; namely; the organization of franchise regulations, operating of the public utility services, the public utility services, control and supervision, revenue and payments, the policy of government concerning the public utility.

Chapter II presents the general background of Yala Town Municipality its history in relation to the history of Yala province. Its rivers are indicated as the sources of the water supply system of Yala Town Municipality. This chapter shows the administrative organization; Municipal Clerk's Office, Treasury Section, and the Engineering Section. The Municipal Clerk's Office has 5 sub-sections under its supervision and control, and the Electric Works Sub-section and the Water Works sub-section are under this office.

Most striking perhaps is the fact that the operating personnel of the sub-sections of Electrification and Water Supply system are of the technical extraordinary category personnel. The personnel regulations of technical extraordinary category are different from those of the ordinary and the extraordinary category personnel; such as the license requirements and educational qualifications, etc. This chapter shows the technical requirements of electrification and water works personnel.

Chapter III is a major one to describe how the electrification subsection is organized, this deals with the work of the electrification the franchise regulations, a period permitted, the construction and installation of all important plant, repair and maintenance, the operation which includes generating unit, distribution unit and the executive unit which operates accounting and revenue collection.

Revenue derived from electric works is fairly high as compared to the income of the water works. However, the debts are very high and so are the capital requirements. Revenue and payments of the public utilities are placed in the special budget.

The electric rates are not too high as compared to those of other municipalities. Rates are fixed by the Department of Public Works. Control and supervision is also a big problem, the public utility is strictly regulated by the franchise regulations, and the Ministerial regulations. The Board of Public Utility of the Ministry of Interior is concerned as it initiates the public utility services of Yala Town Municipality. The other control and supervision is from Changvad Governor, and the Municipality itself. The control and supervision from the Department of Public Works is of the technical type and the Changvad and the Municipality supervision is of the disciplinary character.

Besides this, the transfer of the electric works to the Provincial Electric Authority puts the municipal public utility in a state ownership, the municipality is no more a generating unit but an executive unit of the Electric Authority.

Chapter IV describes the water which is another sub-section of the Municipal Clerk's Office. The municipalities are less interested in the water supply system than the electric works because of its low income. The importance of a safe water supply for the public health presents a reason for municipal ownership. It requires more skilled technicians than electrification, for its purpose is sanitation and good health of the people. The franchise regulations of the water supply system are the same as those of the electrification. The purpose is to master the standard of work and qualifications.

Some weaknesses occur in the water works, that is the lack of the water work supervisor who will be responsible for all works of the water supply system. This is due to weakness of the franchise regulations or the Department of Public Works to seek a technician for the water works. The Municipal Clerk unavoidably assumes this function.

The water supply system is of small size and temporary service. The consumers are of low number. Revenue of the water works is low in figure as compared to that of

the income of the electric works, but the revenue is preferably higher than the operating costs. Rates are fixed by the Department of Public Works for insuring sufficient revenue to provide for operation and maintenance costs, Special rates are applicable only to the public buildings and the municipal units. The plan for improvements and new construction is going on now.

Chapter V concerns with the government policy on public utility as expressed on the National Economic Planning B.E. 2504-2509, this chapter concludes the whole subject of Yala Town Municipality as its problems in franchise regulation, organization, personnel, control and supervision, technical problem and so on. In this chapter we find that the public utility is a national responsibility and are vested in many programme of economic planning.

The trend of national public utility will reflect to the trend of municipal public utility as shown in the national economic planning; the municipality must emphasis its functions on public utility by investing money in this service as much as possible. The administration of public utility services is on an efficient and effective line.

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