

Citizens to have say in Safety

"It is a chance to hear both sides of the story. To really get to the bottom of things. We hear the complainant's side and we hear Public Safety's side. We then make recommendations to the Mayor if needed." That is how James Nageak, Acting Chairman of the North Slope Borough Interim Public Safety Review Board, explains the Board's purpose. The Board has been set up to review incidents of alleged misconduct by the North Slope Borough's Public Safety Department.

"It is an interim Board pending the creation of a Public Safety Internal Review Committee," says North Slope Borough Mayor Eugene Brower. "The Review Committee will then audit the activities of the Public Safety Department on an ongoing basis."

Right now the interim Board has five members — Acting Chairman James Nageak, Carol Omnik from Point Hope, Judy Boster of Wainwright and City of Barrow Mayor Nate Olemaun. Public Safety Director John Winjum and Borough Attorney Harold Curran act as the nonvoting staff for the Board.

"I think once the Review Committee is implemented and it is publicized that people have a forum for their complaints, it will prove very use-

ful," continues Mayor Brower.

Public Safety Director John Winjum strongly supports an avenue for impartial review of Public Safety activities. He sees it as another method of improving relations between the community and Public Safety, something he has been committed to since taking on the Director's position last March.

Nageak also thinks it is a way to hear the other side of the story, "You hear a lot of things about Public Safety but never get down to hearing both sides. This is where we can do it."

"It opens up some doors over there too. It keeps Public Safety on their toes. It gives the public access to what is going on over there."

Nageak reports that the Public Safety Department has been willing to show the Board members what their operations are like. In fact, Board members have been invited to ride with police officers on patrol to see what the procedures are.

If anyone has a complaint against Public Safety, they can bring it before the Interim Public Safety Review Board by filling out a form available from Margaret Opie in the Mayor's Office in Barrow, or from Public Safety or the village councils.