

# MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

*Sustaining our inherent rights, facing challenges together to build a strong and healthy future.*



## *OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF*

Enniska/February 6, 2019

Watkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

I'm pleased to provide you with my first monthly report of 2019. The last report I was able to share with you was in November 2018, so I also want to wish you a Happy New Year!

Throughout the month of December our Council was happy to host three community holiday dinners, with one dinner in each of the districts. There were hundreds of families who attended and everyone enjoyed a delicious turkey dinner with all the trimmings. It was great to be able to spend time visiting with family and friends. The holiday dinners were made possible through MCA's Department of Community and Social Services (DCSS). Niawen:kowa to the DCSS for sponsoring the holiday dinners and to everyone who was able to attend as well.

January was another busy month for our Council. The Mohawk Council began hosting focus meetings on Bill S-3, an act to amend the Indian Act specifically around registration. In January we hosted two focus meeting and two CKON talk shows. A presentation on Bill S-3 was also provided at the General Meeting on January 31, 2019. During the week of January 21 our Council began developing our 2018-2021 strategic plan. Please keep an eye out for additional information on both of these initiatives.

The attached monthly report covers activities for the month of November 2018. It was distributed at General Meeting on January 31, 2019 which took place at the Kana:takon Recreation Centre. The full recording from the General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/DgtiMsXlzz0>. The General Meeting had been rescheduled from the previous week due to inclement weather. So far in 2019, we have experienced many extremes in the weather, over very short periods of time. I want to extend my appreciation to the Department of Technical Service (DTS) for continuing to work hard to keep our sidewalks, roads, and parking lots clear.

In closing I hope that you have a wonderful month ahead, keep warm, and remember that spring is only another 42 days away.

Sken:nen

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Abram Benedict".

Abram Benedict  
Grand Chief

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## Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report Tsiothohrko:wa/January 2019

### NOVEMBER 1, 2018 SMART CITIES TOUR



On November 1, 2018 we hosted Marco Mendicino—Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Infrastructure and Marc Miller—Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations, who were accompanied by staff from Infrastructure Canada. We welcomed the delegation at the Peace Tree Mall and proceeded with a tour of Akwesasne. During the tour, we highlighted the impact the border has on service delivery to our community members. We visited the Kawehno:ke Water Treatment Plant to tour the facility and learn more about the technology used to keep our water safe. We ended the tour at the Native North American Travelling College and a presentation on our proposal to the Smart Cities Challenge was provided by the Akwesasne Smart Cities team.

## **NOVEMBER 1, 2018 INTERVIEW WITH STEPHANE GENDRON**



On the afternoon of November 1, 2018 I was interviewed by Stephane Gendron, a journalist from Dundee. The interview was for a documentary he is developing on the upcoming referendum for the proposed Tsikaristisere/Dundee settlement. I provided Mr. Gendron with historical background of the claim and spoke about the past 10

years of negotiations leading up to the offer and the next steps for the referendum.

## **NOVEMBER 1, 2018 NATURAL GAS EXPANSION**

As part of our ongoing campaign to provide the community with information about natural gas and the potential to expand natural gas onto Kawehno:ke, we hosted an evening information session at the Kana:takon Recreation Centre on November 1, 2018. I provided an overview of the history of the main transmission line on Kawehno:ke, the past studies that have been conducted, and the attempts to access natural gas. Our consultant provided information on the use of natural gas as a fuel and also spoke about the history of the discovery of gas. An overview of the proposed expansion project was also provided. Community members in attendance were able to ask questions and make comments about the project.

## **NOVEMBER 2, 2018 CBSA DESIGN LAB EXERCISE**

On November 2, 2018 the MCA Executive Director and I met with representatives of the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) to begin the process of a design lab exercise with CBSA and Akwesasne. Previously, on March 7, 2018, MCA met with the President of CBSA and CT Labs, a consulting firm that takes on situations/cases where there are complicated challenges and helps find innovative solutions. Additional information on the company can be found at <http://www.ctlabs.ca/>. CT Labs will interview stakeholders to better

understand the situation and then propose unbiased transformative and innovative solutions for the parties to consider. The CBSA has also offered to bring in other government departments to help get through challenges outside of the CBSA's control, such as legislation. It's anticipated that utilizing CT Labs will be beneficial, as we move forward toward our goal of finding solutions.

### **NOVEMBER 1, 2018 CALL WITH MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS SERVICES**

On the evening of November 1, 2018 I received a call from Jane Philpott—the Minister of Indigenous Services to inform me that she could be announcing the creation of federal child welfare legislation in the coming days. The Minister explained that based on the dialogue sessions the government has hosted they would now develop principal based legislation with the intent to have it passed into law by spring 2019. While on the phone with the Minister I explained to her that Akwesasne has been pursuing a 10-year grant but was very concerned that the 10-year grants wouldn't have financial escalators build into the grant. The Minister acknowledged that having financial escalators is a common concern and that she would be working with the Treasury Board to secure funding.

### **NOVEMBER 2, 2018 INDIAN REGISTRAR FOR CROWN-INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND NORTHERN DEVELOPMENT**

On the morning of November 5, 2018 I met with Nathalie Nepton—the Indian Registrar for Crown-Indigenous Relations and Northern Development. Back in September of 2018 our Council had met with Nathalie Nepton and other representatives from the Indigenous Relations on the development of a machine readable status card. On November 5th we discussed the concerns that had been raised in September and reviewed a number of options to address those concerns. The representatives explained to me that they were working to address the concerns and that Nathalie Nepton had assigned staff to this particular file. Future meetings will be established to continue the roll out of a pilot project for the machine readable cards.

## **NOVEMBER 5, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING**

- Dr. Horn provided Council with an overview of the health needs of the community and explained the jurisdictional challenges of services delivery.
- Council set the General Meeting agenda for Saturday, November 17, 2018 at the Kawehno:ke Recreation.
- A briefing was provided on a recent meeting with Indigenous Services Canada on the 10-year grant and possible cannabis lobby efforts for revenue share.
- MCRs passed: Approval of additional allocation of funding to support the 2018/2019 Elders Emergency Fund; Approval of signors for Mohawk Council BMO Harris Bank account; Approval of signors for Mohawk Council Bank of Nova Scotia account; Approval of signors for Mohawk Council Bank of Montreal Resident Trust Account; Approval of Declaration of Compliance report with Ministry of Health and Long Term Care; Approval of amendment to MCR outlining criteria for Overseers of the Akwesasne Community Settlement Trust to clarify minimum age.

## **NOVEMBER 6, 2018 EASTERN ONTARIO LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

On the afternoon of November 6, 2018 I met with Leslie O'Shaughnessy—Cornwall Mayor and Kathryn Wood—a representative from the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council. The purpose of the meeting was to learn more about the Eastern Ontario Leadership Council and the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Strategy. Earlier in 2018, Ontario announced \$135,000 in Grant funding to refresh and plan for the implementation of the Eastern Ontario Economic Development Strategy. Kathryn explained what the strategy included and asked for Akwesasne's input into the implementation of the strategy. A future meeting will be established to continue the dialogue.

## **NOVEMBER 7-14, 2018 VACATION**

From November 7-14, 2018 I was away from the community on vacation and spent time with my family.

## **NOVEMBER 15, 2018 OACAS BOARD MEETING**

The board for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) met on November 15, 2018 to conduct its regular monthly business. The OACAS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provided the board with an update from a recent governors' forum where a number of board members from different agencies came together to discuss the current state of the child welfare sector in Ontario. The CEO updated on the change management approach and the response from staff on the incoming CEO for the OACAS. An update was also provided on the 3-day leadership meeting held with board representatives and Executive Directors from the sector. The main theme over the three days was transformation of the Child Welfare system and potential reform in Ontario. Following the discussion and presentations, updates were provided on the OACAS finances, the governance committee, executive committee, and from the intra-zones. The next meeting for the OACAS is set to occur on January 17, 2019.

## **NOVEMBER 16, 2018 CANADIAN BUSINESS HALL OF FAME**



On November 16, 2018 I attended the Canadian Business Hall of Fame 2019 inductee announcement luncheon at the Royal Bank Plaza in Toronto. I was invited by Chief Clarence Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band to attend the announcement. Claude Lamoureux—Retired President & Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan, Chief Clarence

Louie of the Osoyoos Indian Band, Stephen J.R. Smith—Chairman & CEO of First National Financial, and Annette Verschuren—Chair & CEO of NRStor, Inc. were all announced as inductees to the 2019 Canadian Business Hall of Fame.

### **NOVEMBER 17, 2018 GENERAL MEETING**

On the evening of November 17, 2018 we hosted our monthly General Meeting at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Centre. The evening started off with a presentation and update from the Entewatatha:wi Nation Building program manager who spoke about Akwesasne's proposed fiscal relationship with Canada. Representatives from the Aboriginal Rights and Research Office (ARRO) provided the community with an update on the Tsikaristisere/Dundee Claim and the ongoing referendum process. The Akwesasne Smart Cities Team gave the community an overview of Akwesasne's Smart Cities proposal. To end the evening, our consultant provided an overview of the proposed natural gas expansion onto Kawehno:ke. If you'd like to watch a recording of the General Meeting, it can be found at: <https://youtu.be/QE856HNgbrE>

### **NOVEMBER 19, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING**

- Legal Counsel for MCA briefed Council on possible next steps for the continued development of the Akwesasne Cannabis Law.
- MCA leasing officer briefed Council on a proposed payment solution for Akwesasne leases, to eliminate delays. The leasing officer also briefed Council on past resolutions, related to leasing, that conflict with one another. Portfolio will review and make a recommendation for Council's consideration.
- A request for additional information on application processes will be made available for the upcoming MCA Open Houses.
- Council discussed the need to form a committee that will lead, plan, and propose a memorial or monument to commemorate the Kawehno:ke Easterbrook Settlement, for community consideration.

- A briefing was provided on an upcoming presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on proposed amendments to the Customs Act under Bill C-21.
- Council identified Chief Mitchell, Chief Jacobs, and Chief Roundpoint to sit as directors on the Akwekskowa Corporation.
- A briefing was provided on a recent waste management conference attended by portfolio.
- MCRs passed: Approval of assignment of lease on Pilon Island; Approval of assignment of lease on Hamilton Island; Approval of (4) Council Meeting minutes.

### **NOVEMBER 20-22, 2018 COO SPECIAL CHIEFS ASSEMBLY**

On November 20, 2018 I traveled to Toronto to participate in a three-day Chiefs of Ontario Special Chiefs Assembly. The first day consisted of an update from the sovereign wealth committee on the current status of the Sovereign Wealth fund and its investments. The Chiefs committee on restructuring of the Chief of Ontario office provided a brief update on the restructuring project, but the committee also highlighted the challenge in the lack of clarity on the mandate of the committee. The Chiefs in Assembly provided input and direction to continue the restructuring project.

On the second day of the assembly, the Chiefs held an in-camera discussion on the proposed Indigenous Rights Framework. Over the last year, the federal government has been engaging with communities on the development of federal legislation to recognize First Nations Rights. In the in-camera session, the Chiefs received a presentation on the framework and discussed options. Following that, the Chiefs received a presentation on the current funding challenges the communities face in the child welfare sector. The Chiefs debated the need to create a north funding formula but also discussed the impacts to non-northern communities. The Chiefs agreed, after much discussion, that the formulas would remain status quo unless the government could examine all formulas and ensure equity.



On the final day of the Special Chiefs Assembly, COO staff provided the assembly with updates on housing, water, and environment. A number of resolutions were considered by the Chiefs to provide direction to COO.

### **NOVEMBER 20, 2018 COO ENVIRONMENT MEETING**

While at the Chiefs of Ontario (COO) Special Chiefs Assembly in Toronto, on the evening of November 20, 2018 I attended a dinner meeting with the COO Chiefs Committee on the Environment. The evening began with a presentation from Dr. Dianne Saxe—the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario, who provided the committee with an update on the recent reports published by her office on the government’s failure to address climate change and meet their environmental obligations under the law. She also spoke about the recent government announcement to close the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario Office. Her concern is that without a continual reminder to the Ontario Government, the government’s actions will continue to negatively impact the environment. The Commissioner requested support from the Chiefs Committee. Following the presentation, a representative from Environment Canada provided an overview of the federal government’s carbon tax program and explained the intentions of the program.

### **NOVEMBER 20, 2018 CONFERENCE CALL ON CANNABIS REVENUE SHARE**

As part of our ongoing Cannabis regulatory regime development in Akwesasne, we asked our legal counsel to provide us with a more in depth analysis of the legislative possibilities for Canada to share the revenue they generate from cannabis sold in our community, with us. On November 20, 2018 members of our cannabis working group held a conference call with our legal counsel to review options for consideration. It was explained that current legislation only allows Canada to share excise tax revenues with the provinces or territories. The committee agreed that we would continue to push this concept with Canada.

## **NOVEMBER 23, 2018 CANNABIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ONTARIO AND HEALTH CANADA**

On the afternoon of November 23, 2018 Council welcomed representatives from the Ontario Cannabis Secretariat and the Health Canada Cannabis Licensing Division to our community. The representatives were invited to provide us with an update on the licensing and legislative rollout each government has, or is undertaking. Ontario explained that with the change in government, Ontario will no longer be selling cannabis through its own stores (like the LCBO) but rather will be licensing independent dispensaries throughout Ontario. Ontario explained that it will NOT issue any licenses in any First Nation community, without the approval of the elected Council. Health Canada explained that they have left the licensing to the provinces and they are responsible for licensing the producers (growers) of cannabis. We explained to Canada and Ontario that Akwesasne intends to license any dispensaries in our community and that we expect the Federal Government and the provinces to recognize our authority. Additional meetings will be set up with Ontario and Health Canada to continue our dialogue about licensing in Akwesasne.

## **NOVEMBER 26, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING**

- Council agreed that no Council Meeting will occur on December 3, 2018 due to the AFN Special Chiefs Assembly occurring at the same time.
- A briefing was provided on next steps for the distribution of the recent Sixties Scoop Class Action lawsuit settlement. Information meetings will be held in January 2019.
- Council was briefed on a request for assistance to change the process for changing your name with the Ontario birth registry. Further follow up will be done.
- A briefing was provided on a recent meeting with Ontario, Quebec, and Canada regarding Cannabis regulations and law. Council also discussed the current status of the Akwesasne Cannabis framework development and next steps.

- Council was briefed on an upcoming Veterans Honouring at the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly.
- MCRs passed: Approval of the development of an Akwesasne framework for fish consumption advisories; Approval of recommendations of Shareholders for the Akwesasne Harbour Development Corporation; Approval of recommendations of Directors for the Akwesasne Harbour Development Corporation; Approval of recommendations of Shareholders for the Akweks:kowa Corporation; Approval of recommendations of Directors for the Akweks:kowa Corporation.

## **NOVEMBER 26, 2018 SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE**



On Monday November 26, 2018 Chief Roundpoint, Chief Francis, and I traveled to Ottawa to present to the Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defense on Bill C-21. Bill C-21 is an Act to amend the Customs Act. We spoke about the daily impacts the border has on our community and the potential implications of Bill C-21. Bill C-21 is an information sharing bill that allows for Canada and the USA to share information on who left each country so that it can be cross referenced with return times. We explained to the committee the possible implications of the Bill to Akwesasne residents who reside in Tsi Snaihne or Kana:takon where there are no customs processing stations. Following the presentation, we followed up with letter to the

ministers' responsible, calling on them to work with Akwesasne to ensure we are not impacted by Bill C-21.

### **NOVEMBER 28, 2018 CBSA DESIGN LAB EXERCISE**

As part of the design lab exercise with the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) I participated in an interview with CT Labs, the hired consultant, on November 28, 2018. Over the course of an hour I explained to the consultants the challenges our community faces with CBSA and the Canada/USA border, from profiling, to wait times, to the economic impacts. The consultants asked various questions regarding my explanation of the experiences. Over the next two to three months the consultants will meet with various groups from within the community to discuss their experience with CBSA. After those interviews are completed, the consultants will begin to draft a report to present to Akwesasne and CBSA leadership on possible changes to alleviate the challenges faced by Akwesasne.

### **NOVEMBER 28, 2018 FIRST NATIONS LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT SURVEY PROJECT**

On November 28, 2018 members of our Council met with representatives of Innovation 7, who were contracted by the First Nations Information Governance Centre to conduct a survey on First Nations Labour and Employment in 37 communities in Ontario. At the November 28 meeting, representatives from Innovation 7 explained the survey and the questions and explained that they would like to hire community members to conduct the survey. The Akwesasne Area Management Board Manager also attended the meeting, to receive the information. Following the meeting of November 28, our Council will consider whether or not to participate in the survey.

## **NOVEMBER 29, 2018 CELEBRATION OF LIFE CONFERENCE**



On the morning of November 29, 2018 I was able to attend a portion of the Celebration of Life, a conference hosted every year by our Department of Community and Social Services. The theme this year was, “Laughter is Good Medicine”. Alayna Eagle Shield and Tonia Jo Hall, two Lakota women,

spoke about self-care and self-healing while using humor. They were both very vibrant women and it was a real pleasure to have welcomed them to our territory and share a few laughs.

## **NOVEMBER 29, 2018 VIBRANT COMMUNITIES ROUNDTABLE**

On November 29, 2018 I was invited by the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area to a second Vibrant Communities Roundtable. The Vibrant Communities Roundtable is a project that brings together various community leaders, including civic representatives, and individuals from the business, non-profit, and interfaith sectors in Akwesasne, Cornwall, and the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas, and Glengarry. The roundtable’s purpose is to engage in discussion about how to address complex societal issues like poverty and community livability. The roundtable’s ultimate goal is to form a group that will work together to build a healthier and more vibrant community for all. At the meeting of November 29 the participants broke into groups to discuss various challenges the region faces in employment and looks for ways to address the social and economic gaps of the region. Following the breakout sessions, the groups reported their discussions back to entire group. These working sessions will continue to occur every 2-3 months.

### **NOVEMBER 27-29, 2018 MCA OPEN HOUSES**

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) hosted our annual Open Houses on November 27, 28 & 29, 2018 at the Kana:takon School, the Ahkwesasne Mohawk School, and the Tsi Snaihne School. The purpose of the open houses is for MCA programs to showcase the services they provide to the community. Community members were invited to come to the open houses to ask questions and receive information about MCA programs. The three events were well attended and we thank all those who came out.

### **NOVEMBER 30, 2018 TOUR WITH TUNGASUVVINGAT INUIT**

On November 30, 2018 we hosted representatives from Tungasuvvingat Inuit, which is an organization that provides health and social services to Inuit in Ontario. The representatives visited Akwesasne to learn more about our designation process as a Children's Aid Society in Ontario. We welcomed the representatives and provided them with a tour of our community followed by a discussion of Akwesasne Child and Family Services.