

# MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

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



Onerahtokha/April 3, 2019

Watkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

Happy month of April! I'm happy that after our long wait, it finally feels like Spring for the first time today. I hope you get the chance to go outside and enjoy the weather with your family.

This past Thursday, Council hosted our monthly General Meeting at Iohahi:io in the Tsi Snaihne District. The meeting was initially set to take place on Kawehno:ke, but due to the unfortunate passing of a district resident, the General Meeting was relocated to Tsi Snaihne. The agenda included a follow-up presentation on Canada's Bill S-3, an act to amend the Indian Act as it relates to Indian registration. You may recall that we had already presented on this item and held several focus meetings. At the General Meeting, the final report findings were provided to the community. In addition, the Manager of the Entewatatha:wi program provided an update on upcoming outreach to the community. Also, an update on the potential for natural gas expansion onto Kawehno:ke was provided and an overview on a future trash challenge was given to the community.

The last item was the upcoming information session on the Government of Canada's new initiative to make the new Secure Status Cards machine readable. Machine-readable means that when this card is used at the border crossings, the border officer can swipe the card instead of having to input all your information manually. This initiative was introduced as a way to help speed up the process when crossing the border. An information session will be held at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Centre on Tuesday, April 16 at 11:30 am to explain how the card will work and what the process is to get one. Later that day, at 5:00 pm at the same location, an intake session will be held for interested community members to apply for the new machine readable card. A second intake session will occur on Wednesday, April 17 from 10:30 am to 7:30 pm, also at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Center. The intake sessions are open to any registered Indian. A fact sheet on the card can be found at [http://bit.ly/SCIS-MRZ\\_FactSheet](http://bit.ly/SCIS-MRZ_FactSheet) .

My monthly report is attached to this letter for your information and the recording of last week's General Meeting can be found at <https://youtu.be/gW3mgiyngW0> . Should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out.

Enjoy the wonderful month ahead!

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 Enniska/February 2019**

### **FEBRUARY 1, 2019 CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETY (CAS) OF STORMONT, DUNDAS & GLENGARRY (SD&G)**



In response to an invite, I attended the staff development day of the Children's Aid Society (CAS) of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry (SD&G) on February 1, 2019 at the Ramada Inn. Chief Joe Lazore accompanied me and provided a traditional opening in Kanienkeha. The Executive Director for the CAS invited me to speak to her staff about Akwesasne and my role as the Grand Chief. It was a pleasure for us to provide the opening, give welcoming remarks to their staff, and speak about our community and the uniqueness of service delivery in Akwesasne.

### **FEBRUARY 1, 2019 GUY LAUZON FEDERAL BUDGET MEETING**

Following the opening and welcoming of the CAS staff, I joined a small group of community leaders and business people at a federal budget consultation forum with Guy Lauzon, Member of Parliament for Cornwall and area. Guy Lauzon had hosted a number of engagement sessions in the riding, with the intent to develop and finalize a submission that would include the priorities of this region, for budget consideration. I explained to Guy Lauzon that in Akwesasne, we continue to face infrastructure shortfalls, which has resulted in aging

infrastructure, and the need to reconstruct community roads is a priority for Akwesasne.

### **FEBRUARY 4, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING**

- The MCA Acting Comptroller and Assistant Comptroller provided Council with an overview and the proposed 2019/2020 OLG budget allocation.
- Council discussed a request from Bell Canada to bring services to the Peace Tree Trade Centre; further follow up will be done.
- MCRs passed: Approval of contract award for retrofit of DCSS Outreach Program in Tsi Snaihne; Approval of amendment to Akwesasne/Canada fiscal agreement; Approval to transfer funds from Caisse Populaire Quebec to Caisse Populaire Cornwall; Approval of changes to BMO account signing authorities; Approval of BMO Harris account signing authorities; Approval of changes to BMO residents trust account signing authorities; Approval of agreement with Justice Quebec for support of Gladue reports; Approval of upgrade loan to community member; Approval of (3) sets of Council Meeting minutes.

### **FEBRUARY 5, 2019 SEAWAY INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

In response to an invite, I attended the Board of Directors meeting for the Seaway International Bridge Corporation (SIBC) on February 5, 2019, at the offices of the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation (SLSDC) in Massena. The SLSDC and the Federal Bridge Corporation Limited (FBCL) are joint owners of the Three Nations Bridge Crossing at Akwesasne. Since becoming Grand Chief in 2015, I have met with the SIBC board annually to discuss current community files, issues, and ongoing challenges. I briefed the board on the Dundee claim and explained that there are five appeals currently being adjudicated by the Akwesasne Mohawk Court. I further explained that we would likely take the Seaway settlement claim to the community in a referendum vote in the fall of 2019. While with the board, I also raised the continued impacts of the toll on our

community. Following the update and dialogue with the board, I joined the board members for lunch.

### **FEBRUARY 6, 2019 BILL S-3 FOCUS MEETING**

On February 6, 2019, as part of our ongoing community engagement on Bill S-3, members of our Council attended a community focus meeting at the Kana:takon Recreation. The purpose of the focus meeting was for the consultant and the committee to explain to the community what the amendments of Bill S-3 were about and to discuss the potential impacts to Akwesasne. This focus meeting was held during the day and approximately 15 community members attended to receive the information and provide input. A final report on the input received throughout all of the community sessions will be reported to the community on March 28, 2019 at the monthly General Meeting.

### **FEBRUARY 7, 2019 INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**

As part of Akwesasne's ongoing efforts to become a recipient of a 10-year grant from Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), I hosted a call with ISC Chief Financial Officer Paul Thoppil. I provided Paul with an update on our current efforts to enact the Akwesasne Financial Administration Law (FAL). Paul provided me with an update on the timelines and requirements for Akwesasne to have our FAL in place. Paul also provided me with an update on ISC efforts to ensure that they receive the proper approval and authority for Akwesasne to use our law enactment process on our FAL. ISC is working to ensure the approvals occur before March 31, 2019.

### **FEBRUARY 7, 2019 MEETING WITH CANADA'S SELF GOVERNMENT CHIEF FEDERAL NEGOTIATOR**

On the afternoon of February 7, 2019 I met with Fred Caron in Ottawa to provide him with an update on the Dundee appeals and to discuss the Akwesasne/Canada self-government negotiations. Fred is the chief federal negotiator for Canada and wanted to discuss timelines for the negotiations with me. Fred also updated me on the potential

impacts the official call for an election by the Canadian government, and the eventual setting of the election date, may have on the Akwesasne/Canada negotiations. We agreed to continue to keep in constant contact as the federal election in Canada approaches.

### **FEBRUARY 11, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING**

- Representatives from Statistics Canada provided Council with an overview of the 2016 Akwesasne census results and explained that the results are incomplete due to surveyors being unable to achieve enough samples.
- Outreach workers from Service Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) provided Council with an overview of programs and services available from both agencies and explained how their outreach programs work.
- Council agreed that no Council Meeting will be held on February 18 due to the Family Day holiday, and that the next General Meeting will occur on March 7, 2019.
- MCRs passed: Approval of housing update loan to community member; Appointment of Chiefs committee to the Property Acquisition Team (PAT); Approval of amendment to Akwesasne/Canada funding agreement; Approval to grant authority to Iethinisten:ha Program Manager for issuance of Occupancy Licenses; Approval to grant authority to Ionkwanonhsassetsi Program Manager for issuance of Occupancy Licenses; Approval of 2019 legislative project; Approval of revision to the job description for the Executive Director position; Approval of contract for Mohawk language digitalization project.

### **FEBRUARY 12, 2019 CALL WITH ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE PRESIDENT AND CEO**

In response to an invite, I participated in a conference call with St. Lawrence College (SLC) President and CEO Glenn Vollbregt to review some draft language for the SLC strategic plan. The Board of the St. Lawrence College hosted a retreat in November to begin developing the strategic plan, and as part of the ongoing development, Glen

agreed to review the proposed language about the Indigenous work SLC is doing, with me. During the review, I provided Glenn with suggestions for improvements that could be made to the language. The SLC will continue to work towards finalizing their 5-year strategic plan.

### **FEBRUARY 12, 2019 DUNDEE TSIKARISTISERE UPDATE**

On the morning of February 12, 2019 the Government Secretariat portfolio, representatives of the Aboriginal Right and Research Office (ARRO), and I met with MCA legal counsel to receive an update on the ongoing appeals of the Dundee Tsikaristisere Settlement referendum results. The legal counsel provided us with an overview of the current appeal proceedings and outlined the next steps to adjudicate the appeals.

### **FEBRUARY 15, 2019 DAVID BIRNBAUM TOUR**

On February 15, 2019, we welcomed David Birnbaum, member of the Quebec National Assembly to Akwesasne. David is the official opposition critic for the Minister of Indigenous Affairs. I provided David with a tour of Akwesasne so that he could learn more directly about how he can help us in his official role as critic. Following the tour, David met with our Council to further discuss our challenges and opportunities. David committed to returning to Akwesasne and learning more about the challenges we face, being in two provinces.



## **FEBRUARY 19, 2019 ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

On February 19, 2019, I attended the St. Lawrence College Board of Governors regular monthly board meeting at the Brockville campus. The agenda for the board meeting included an update and report from the President & CEO, as well as from the executive team for the college. Each respective board committee provided updates to the full board; the committees included the Governance Committee, Academic Committee, Finance, Student & Operations Committee, and the Strategy, Communications & Advancement Committee, as well as the Nomination Committee. Following the committee updates, the President provided the board with an update on the draft Strategic Plan. Three board members were recognized for their completion of the Good Governance Certification through the College Centre of Board Excellence. Following the public session, the board members went into an in-camera session to discuss other board business. The next board meeting is scheduled for April 30, 2019.

## **FEBRUARY 21, 2019 ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES**

I attended the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) on February 21, 2019. This board meeting was the first board meeting for the newly hired CEO for the OACAS. The CEO provided an overview of her monthly report and spoke about how her integration into the OACAS was going. Following the CEO report, the committees provided updates. The board discussed the Ontario Government's response to inquiries about the future of the child welfare sector in Ontario. No direct indications from the province were received that concerned the board and the entire sector. The CEO outlined the agenda for the upcoming Governors Forum scheduled for March 3 & 4, 2019. Other board business and updates provided included: Intra-Zone Updates; Strategic Planning; and Governors Council Executive. The next board meeting is set to occur on March 21, 2019.

## **FEBRUARY 22, 2019 CANADA/AKWESASNE SELF GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS**

On the morning of February 22, 2019, I attended the second day of the Canada/Akwesasne self-government negotiations. Canada presented to Akwesasne on follow up items from the previous negotiations and Akwesasne also responded to undertakings from the previous meeting. Canada reported that the minister would not be able to meet with Akwesasne on certain requested clauses in the draft agreement and Akwesasne expressed our serious disappointment with the minister's decision. We informed Canada that we would be following up with a letter to the minister.

## **FEBRUARY 25, 2019 COUNCIL MEETING**

- Council was briefed on the Akwesasne Community Settlement Trust Overseers composition and processes. Further research will be done on the supporting documentation for the overseers.
- A concern was raised and discussed on the safety of the community and access to homes on un-serviced roads during inclement weather; further research on options will be done.
- Council discussed a request to use community land for farming and other agriculture activities; further research will be conducted on options.
- Council discussed the events of Friday evening and deliberated on a communication strategy for upcoming meetings with the community.
- MCRs passed: Approval of MCA financial sponsor 2019 Summer Employment Experience Development Program; Approval of Summer Students hourly rate of pay; Approval of Child and Family Services Prevention & Operations funding 2018-2019; Approval of housing upgrade loan to community loan; Approval of lease renewals for 2019; Approval of lease addendums for 2019; Approval of Share your Stories Project with Wabano Centre; Approval of agreement with MCSS for NILO program.



## **FEBRUARY 28, 2019 INTERVIEW WITH K103.7 & AKWESASNE TV**

In the morning of February 28, 2019, I provided an interview to Paul Graif of K103.7 radio from Kahnawake. I provided K103.7 with an update on Akwesasne's cannabis regulatory framework development. Paul asked questions about recent community events and I reassured him that Akwesasne was continuing to work with the community on the framework development. On the afternoon of February 28, I attended the Akwesasne TV studio to provide a very similar interview to Akwesasne TV. I again spoke about the recent events in our community and explained that the Mohawk Council has been working to address concerns with the community.