



Office of the Grand Chief

Onerahtókha/April 12, 2023

It's with great pleasure that I provide you with my monthly report. This report was distributed at last month's General Meeting at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Center. At the General Meeting, we presented the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne 2023/2024 Operating Budget. The annual presentation we provide to the community outlines the annual operating budget and includes a brief overview of the department priorities as they relate to the operating costs. The entire recording of the General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/BsXtyvUS3xg>. I encourage you to take a moment to review the presentation to learn more about the operating plan and budgets for the MCA.

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, through the Department of Community and Social Services, recently announced the Family Sustainability initiative. The eligibility for this program was based on the Head of Household list from the most recent Akwesasne Heating Assistance Program. The initiative was created to support Akwesasne families by reducing the overall financial constraints being felt within each household. We recognize that the cost of living and purchasing everyday essentials has increased exponentially and we wanted to help our community members out with that. I would like to add that this initiative is supported by prevention and community well-being dollars received as part of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal First Nations Child Welfare Reform currently taking place throughout Canada. Niawen:kowa to the Department of Community and Social Services employees who did everything they could to get payments to our heads of households in a smooth and timely manner. For more information on the Family Sustainability initiative contact Courtney Skidders at 613-575-2341 ext. 3165.

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne continues to examine the reliability and sustainability of electrical power for the community. We recently met with Hydro Quebec to receive an update from them on their efforts to improve the reliability of the electrical power being provided to Akwesasne residents. The current issue is mostly due to the interference caused by overgrown vegetation on the line all the way to Huntingdon, Quebec. We are working with Hydro Quebec to make a presentation to the community; in the meantime, we continue to examine options, including short and long-term solutions.

In closing, I hope that April finally brings warm weather as we head into spring. Enjoy the month ahead. Be safe and take care.

Sken:nen/Peace,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Abram Benedict', is written over a light blue circular watermark.

Abram Benedict
Grand Chief



GRAND CHIEF MONTHLY REPORT ENNISKA / FEBRUARY 2023

FEBRUARY 1, 2023, JAY TREATY BORDER ALLIANCE (JTBA)



On February 1, 2023, I participated in Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA) summit in Ferndale Washington at the Lummi Nation Silver Reef Casino and Resort. The participants received a briefing on the lobby efforts happening in Washington D.C. at Capitol Hill and at Parliament Hill in Ottawa. These lobby efforts are to eradicate the 51% blood quantum requirement from United States law, and for Canada to pass legislation to allow American-born indigenous people the right to enter Canada. Representatives from the Department of

Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection presented to the summit on current initiatives happening in their respective agencies. Following their presentations, they accepted and answered questions from the Tribal leaders. An overview was provided of the proposed governance structure for the JTBA.

FEBRUARY 3, 2022, ALL NATION CANNABIS



In July 2022, while in Vancouver I had met with representatives from All Nation Cannabis. On February 3, 2022, we travelled to Shxwa:y Village just outside of Chilliwack British Columbia to tour the All Nations Cannabis growing facility. The community of Shxwa:y Village are majority owner of All Nation Cannabis. On February 3 we toured the facility and learned more about their challenges and future expansion plans. Part of their expansion plans includes the recently opened retail store.

FEBRUARY 2, 2023, AKWESASNE CANADA SELF-GOVERNMENT

On the morning of February 2, 2023, I participated in the Akwesasne Canada self-government negotiations. The call was hosted on the zoom platform which gave me the ability to participate and welcome the participants. This was the first meeting with Canada since 2022, as well this was the first meeting with Canada since we hosted an in person meeting to outline process expectations to advise the negotiations. I welcomed Canada's representatives and provided an outline of the Akwesasne's position on process and thank Canada for committing to make process changes to better support one another. Akwesasne had asked Canada to streamline the negotiations process and redefine the preparation meetings that Akwesasne and Canada take part in ahead of negotiation sessions. Unfortunately, due to being in British Columbia I was unable to attend the entire day of negotiations.

FEBRUARY 6, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Representatives from the MCA Jordan's Principal (JP) presented to Council on the JP program and explained processes for applications and eligible expenses.
- The MCA Executive Director explained an exercise for Council to map out Council & Administration responsibilities and priorities.
- Council discussed follow-up on the Greener Homes presentation and will continue to explore a potential presentation to the community.
- Chief Diabo agreed to chair next week's meeting in the absence of the Grand Chief.

- Council discussed the rescheduling of a regular meeting date with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe. Council agreed to have the meetings monthly.
- A briefing was provided on the history of the 1796 Treaty Claim (New York Claim).
- Council discussed an upcoming meeting with the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Commission and set the agenda for the upcoming meeting.
- A briefing was provided on a recent meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe on the renewal of a lease agreement.
- MCRs passed: Approval of ACFS non-union Management Salary admin policy; Approval of (2) amendment to Akwesasne-Canada funding agreement; Approval of allocation of surplus funds for new AMPS Dispatch Console; Approval of funding agreement for First Nation Police Modernization Initiative; Approval of Jordan's Principal funding agreement; Approval of additional food subsidy allocation for missed applicants; Approval of 2022 Ontario Ministry of Transport subsidy; Approval of lease amendment for Pilon Island; Approval of lease amendment for Tupper Island; Approval of lease amendment for Pilon Island; Approval to rescind MCR related to lease assignment.

FEBRUARY 6, 2023, MINISTER OF INDIGENOUS CROWN RELATIONS



On the evening of February 6, 2023, I travelled to Ottawa with the Nation Building portfolio to meet with Minister Marc Miller. We have previously met with Minister Miller regarding our self-government negotiations and the matters that we consider outstanding. At the meeting of February 6, we reiterated to the Minister the importance of resolving the outstanding matters. The Minister explained to us that his officials have been working to find a solution and he requested more time to be able to work through the issues. We agreed to reconnect with the Minister in April to receive an update.

FEBRUARY 7, 2023, CBC RADIO CANADA

On the afternoon of February 7, 2023, I provided an interview with Camille Kasisi-Monet from CBC Radio Canada on human trafficking in Canada. Camille had already been in contact with a victim of human trafficking from Akwesasne, and one of the Akwesasne Family Wellness staff members, these two individuals had already been interviewed. In the interview, I explained the complexity of community policing in Akwesasne because of our geographical location and the challenges it creates on our police force. I explained that the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service works closely with other

enforcement and intelligence agencies to tackle human trafficking. I also explained the programming we have at Mohawk Council of Akwesasne to promote awareness and support victims and families of trafficking. The article can be found at: <https://rb.gy/lqf84d>

FEBRUARY 7, 2023, MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE FINANCE COMMITTEE

On the morning of February 7, 2023, I participated in the monthly Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Finance Committee meeting. The Director of Finance and Administration presented a draft 2023/2024 MCA organizational budget. The director reviewed each department's proposed budget and explained several concerns. The areas of concern described as purchases or expansions that should be considered on a one-by-one basis by council rather than all lumped into the annual budget. After all the department and program budgets were presented to the committee the committee recommended to the director that she go back and work with the department to reduce the deficit to less than five million. The committee agreed to meet again prior to the final budget being presented to Council.

FEBRUARY 7, 2023, CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR ABORIGINAL BUSINESS

On the evening of February 7, 2023, I was invited by Enbridge Gas to attend the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) Awards Dinner in Toronto. The CCAB acknowledged the 2023 Business Lifetime Achievement award recipient, Dawn Madahbee Leach, and Young Entrepreneur award recipient, Lesley Hampton.

FEBRUARY 8, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On the afternoon of February 8, 2023, I met with the members of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Executive Committee to discuss the

status of the recruitment process for the position of Executive Director. At the meeting on February 8, the committee agreed that I would ask Associate Executive Director to act as the Executive Director when the current ED contract expires on March 14, 2023, and will remain until the position is filled.

FEBRUARY 9, 2023, INDIGENOUS PRIMARY HEALTH CARE COUNCIL

On the afternoon of February 9, 2023, members of the MCA health portfolio and I met with Caroline Listone-Jones and Patrick Madahbee from the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council. This was an introductory meeting between the organization and the MCA, I had previously met with Patrick and Caroline in Toronto at the Chiefs of Ontario assembly and had invited them to Akwesasne. At the meeting on February 9, the CEO Caroline described the services provided by her organization and the advocacy she does on behalf of her members. The portfolio chiefs committed to following up with MCA health administration to see if there was any interest in learning and or partnering with the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council.

FEBRUARY 9, 2023, NEW YORK STATE CLAIM

In the afternoon of February 9, 2023, the MCA New York land claim negotiating team with our legal counsel to receive an update from them on the status of the negotiations. Our legal counsel has been going back and forth with the State of New York on language for the draft final settlement agreement.

FEBRUARY 10, 2023, INTERVIEW WITH WWNY CHANNEL 7 NEWS



On the morning of February 10, 2023, I met with Sean Brynda from WWNY Channel 7 News. Sean had reached out wanting to learn more about the recent children welfare settlement between Canada and First Nations. I shared insight into the settlement and what it means for Akwesasne. The interview can be found at: <https://www.wwnytv.com/2023/02/10/akwesasne-mohawks-react-canadian-settlement-money/>

FEBRUARY 21, 2023, CUSTOMS IMMIGRATION UNION (CIU)

On the evening of February 21, 2023, I met with representatives from the Customs Immigration Union (CIU) and about ten of its members. Back in December 2022 I had met with representatives of the CIU executive to discuss the working relationship at the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) Cornwall Port of Entry. At the December meeting, I offered to meet directly with Border Service Officers (BSO) representing the Cornwall Port of Entry to begin a dialogue. At the meeting of February 21, I shared my vision for collaboration between CBSA as an agency, and my desire to have awareness training conducted in Akwesasne versus in Cornwall. The BSOs expressed a

desire to work with me and Akwesasne and they shared ideas for working closer with the community. The BSOs also shared some of their challenges around disrespectful transistors, and the concerns they have when proper identification is not presented for minor children. I thanked the BSOs for sharing insight and committed to following up with the CIU.

FEBRUARY 22, 2023, OFFICE OF VITAL STATISTICS (OVS) CHIEF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

On the afternoon of February 22, 2022, I met with the Office of Vital Statistics (OVS) chief committee members to discuss a membership issue. At the meeting, the Manager of the Office of Vital Statistics and the Membership Clerk provided us with an overview of the Indian Registry system and how it impacts the Akwesasne Membership.

FEBRUARY 22, 2023, ONTARIO SPECIAL INVESTIGATION UNIT

On the morning of February 22, 2023, I met with representatives from the Ontario Special Investigations Unit (SIU). The SIU is an independent investigation unit under the Ontario Police Service Act who is responsible to investigate actions of police officers in Ontario. The representatives on the call explained to me their function in relation to police services and when they would investigate officer conduct and what could happen. This call was an introduction and information sharing call.

FEBRUARY 23, 2023, GENERAL MEETING

On the evening of February 23, 2023, our Council hosted our monthly General Meeting at the Kanatakon Recreation Center. The agenda included a presentation on the allocation of Block 1 lands on Kawehno:ke, followed by a presentation from Chief's Francis-Mitchell and Diabo on emergency preparedness. Following the presentation, our council took business from the floor. A request from the community came forward for Council to establish a working group to

deal with the frequent power outages with Hydro Quebec. The entire recording of the General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/4DAt71YKxYc>. The next general meeting will take place on March 30, 2023, in Tsi Snaihne.

FEBRUARY 24, 2023, TRANSPORT CANADA

On the morning of February 24, 2023, I hosted a call with representatives from Transport Canada. Over the last few years, I had been working closely with Marc-Olivier Ranger on our seaway case and our relationship with Federal Bridge Corporation Ltd. On the call of February 24, Marc introduced me to his replacement Heather Carriere, who will be assuming the responsibilities of Crown Corporations and Governance for Marc while he is on assignment for the next year. I welcomed Heather to the position and extended an invitation for her to tour Akwesasne to learn more about the community and our challenges. I also provided the representatives with an update on our plans to call for a referendum in July for the seaway settlement.

FEBRUARY 24, 2023, CANADA REVENUE AGENCY

On the afternoon of February 24, 2023, I hosted a call with representatives from Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to learn about the process for applying for a tobacco manufacturing license. On the call of February 24, the representatives explained the application process and the requirements for an application. This was an information gathering call to understand the process to apply for a license.

FEBRUARY 26, 2023, CORNWALL ASYLUM SEEKERS

On the morning of February 26, 2023, I attended the OPG visiting center at the invite of the City of Cornwall to receive an update from Immigration and Citizenship Canada on the current asylum seekers situation in the City of Cornwall. The representative from Canada

explained that there is about 800 people being housed at the DEV Hotel in Cornwall who are being process as asylum seekers in Canada. Many community health and social organizations in the City of Cornwall expressed concern with the lack of capacity and ability to serve the asylum seekers and pressed upon the Government of Canada Representatives to find a solution to support the city and the many organizations within the city. The immigration representatives could not commit to additional resources but said they were working with the City to find solutions to the shortfalls and the financial impacts of having so many people coming to the city in a short period.

FEBRUARY 27, 2023, FINANCE COMMITTEE

Following the finance committee meeting earlier in the month, the committee met on February 27, 2023, to receive an updated presentation from the Director of Finance and administration on the proposed 2022/2023 MCA organizational budget. At the last meeting, the committee recommended to the Director of Finance and Administration to reduce the projected deficit. At the February 27 meeting the committee was satisfied with the budget presented and agreed to recommend the budget to Council in the coming week.

FEBRUARY 27, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- A representative from the MCA Environment and the River Institute presented to Council the highlights of a draft report on delisting criteria on beach closures. Council agreed to support the report and will provide a letter of support.
- The MCA Director of Finance and Administration presented the draft 2023/2024 MCA operational budget to Council and provided highlights for each MCA department.
- A briefing was provided on the current recruitment process underway to recruit an Executive Director for the MCA.
- Council reviewed a request for support for local studio production company to film a documentary in the community. Council agreed to

support the request and identified Chief Diabo as a liaison on behalf of Council.

- A briefing was provided on a request for assistance on Akwesasne Iron Workers pension and taxation. Further research will be done and reported back.
- Council was reminded of upcoming training available on Active Ready Response training.
- A request for a Council member to participate on the Iroquois Caucus hiring committee. Chief Sarah agreed to participate.
- Council was briefed on the upcoming Iroquois Caucus general meeting and asked to put forward agenda items ahead of the meeting.
- A briefing was provided on a request for support on exemption for participants of the North American Indigenous Games who are unvaccinated. Additional information will be provided
- MCRs passed: Approval to revision of 2021/24 Council portfolio; Approval of contribution agreement with Environment Canada for Forest Landscape project; Approval of partnership agreement with Raising River Conservation; Approval of contribution agreement with Parks Canada; Approval of application to Impact Assessment Agency Canada; Approval to proceed with the creation of a trust for the Dundee settlement funds; Approval to proceed with Additional to Reserve (ATR) application; Approval of Carin Island Environmental Site Assessment report; Approval of assignment of lease Pilon Island; Approval of Assignment of lease Renshaw Island; Approval of (2) assignment of lease Hamilton Island; Approval of new lease Stanley Island; Approval of BMO main account signing authority; Approval of Budget Adjustment to Akwesasne Canada funding agreement; Approval of (4) amendment to Akwesasne Canada funding agreement; Approval of MCA 2023/2023 operating budget.

FEBRUARY 28, 2023, ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE BOARD

On the morning of February 28, 2023, I participated in the St. Lawrence College Student, Strategy, Communications & Advancement committee. The committee received an update on the 2023

convocation planning and discussed other business in-camera. I also participated in the audit committee where we received and update and presentation from the auditors on the plan for the audit and the proposed timelines. The committee also reviewed the annual risk assessment for the college. Following the Committee meetings, I chaired the full public session of the board where we received updates from the college CEO and from the various committees. The committees presented several motions for the board's consideration. Following the public session, I chaired a closed session of the board where we dealt with matters in camera.