



Office of the Grand Chief

Ennisko:wa/March 1, 2023

Wa'tkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

I hope this letter finds you doing well and keeping healthy.

We are now turning to March 2023; undoubtedly it's hard to believe we are already three months into 2023. In a couple of weeks, our children in the northern portion of the community will be off school for March Break. Many will head to Mississauga, Ontario, for the Little Native Hockey League (LNHL). After three years of cancellation, the community of Nipissing First Nation is keen to welcome the many families and players to their territory for the Little NHL. On behalf of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, I wish all our Akwesasne players, families, and supporters the best for the upcoming Little NHL. Good luck and have fun!

As always, I am sharing my monthly report with you. This report covers the month of January 2023 and was shared at last week's General Meeting in Kana:takon which was the first meeting of 2023. Unfortunately, due to inclement weather, the January General Meeting was cancelled. The agenda included a presentation on Kawehno:ke Block 1 Lands and a presentation on Emergency Preparedness. First, an overview was provided on the return of the Block 1 Lands. Next, information was shared on how these lands will be allocated to the owners. These lands were expropriated in the 1950s as part of the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the hydro dam, and the international crossing. Finally, after 60 years, those affected lands have Certificates of Possession and are being allocated to the owners. The last presentation was on Emergency Preparedness. Chief Cindy Francis-Mitchell and Chief Sarah Lee Diabo walked through several ways to prepare for emergencies, especially power outages. Following this presentation, we had a lengthy discussion with the community members present at the meeting about what the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne is doing to help stabilize the electrical power in the Quebec portion of the community. The recording for the General Meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DAt71YKxYc>. Please listen to the recording to learn more about the two subjects covered. Our next General Meeting is scheduled for March 30, 2023, at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Center.

In closing, I hope that all of you have a great month ahead. Should you travel to the Little NHL in Mississauga or any other place for March Break, I hope you have a great time. I look forward to all the social media posts about your adventures and, hopefully, some big wins for our little hockey players.

Sken:nen/Peace,

Abram Benedict
Grand Chief



GRAND CHIEF MONTHLY REPORT TSIOTHOHRKO:WA / JANUARY 2023

JANUARY 3, 2023, BORDERS PARTNERS CALL

Every month MCA's Public Safety Portfolio Chiefs, representatives from the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and I participate in monthly calls with the Port Directors for the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) and the United States Customs and Border Protection (USCBP). The calls now occur on the first Tuesday of the month on the Zoom platform. These calls are designed for Akwesasne to receive regular updates from the Port Directors on current traffic volumes, any issues with local travelers, and reports of COVID outbreaks at the port if any. These meetings also allow our local governments to provide relevant updates to the CBSA and USCBP representatives.

JANUARY 9, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Council discussed the recent power outage under Hydro-Quebec and outlined several of follow-ups with various organizations and Governments. Council passed a motion for administration to examine a possible subsidy to the community to support food replenishment during the power outage.

- A briefing was provided on the Department of Health's intention to support and work with a community organization affected by the recovered graves and residential school survivors.
- Council reviewed the MCA 2022-2026 Strategic Plan in preparation for a two-day strategic planning session with Council and administration.
- A request from the Social Development Council for an Akwesasne representative to sit on the board was discussed. Council agree to Chief Vanessa Adams being the representative.
- Council reviewed a funding request from a community language group and referred the request to the Youth, Elders, Culture and Language committee.
- A request for access to trust money for interest-free loads was discussed. Council determined that the Akwesasne Community Settlement Trust is responsible for funds and will refer the request to the trustees.
- Council discussed a response from the SIBC (Seaway International Bridge Corporation) Board of Directors on an offer to meet. Council identified Chief Thompson and King to accompany Grand Chief in attending the meeting.
- Council discussed and agreed to identify a male elder to represent Akwesasne for Chiefs of Ontario.
- MCRs passed: Approval to proceed and award the contract for the replacement of HVAC unit at Iohahiio; Approval of funding agreement for work on Areas of Concern; Approval of allotment of land to community member; Declaration of National Ribbon Skirt and Ribbon Shirt Day; Approval of new organization chart for Executive Services; Approval for Executive Director to sign grant agreement for AMBE; Approval of amendment to Akwesasne Canada funding agreement; Approval of tuition agreement between AMBE and Akwesasne Freedom School; Approval of Indigenous Language grant for AMBE; Approval of Quebec grant for languages for AMBE; Approval of Ministry of Community Social annual reconciliation report.

JANUARY 10, 2023, EMERGENCY COUNCIL MEETING

- MCRs passed: Approval to process with the distribution of emergency subsidy to support Tsi Snaihne and Kana:takon residents affected by prolonged Hydro- Quebec outage. *More details to follow*

JANUARY 9, 2023, ORBIS RISK CONSULTING

On January 9, 2023, I hosted a call with John Lees from Orbis Risk Consulting to finalize the posting for the Executive Director Position. Over the last two months, MCA Executive Committee members have been finalizing the job description for the position. Orbis Risk Consulting supported the Executive Committee throughout the hiring process. On the call of January 9, we reviewed the timelines for the posting and discussed how the position will be advertised. The position is posted on the MCA website, and can be found at: <http://www.akwesasne.ca/employment/> with the final day to submit on February 28, 2023.

JANUARY 9, 2023, REGIS MOHAWK TRIBAL POLICE

On the afternoon of January 9, 2023, I attended the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Police Department station with Chiefs Adams, Adams-Phillips, and Phillips-Jacobs to view a cultural awareness video developed in partnership with the SRMTPD and the U.S. Customs. Chief Rourke and Massena Port Director welcomed us and gave us a viewing of the 20-minute video that captured some of the history of Akwesasne and current governance in the community. This jointly developed video is shown to new U.S Customs officers joining the Massena workforce to give them background on the community.

JANUARY 10, 2023, STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PRIORITY SETTING DAY ONE

On the morning of January 10, 2023, members of our Council met at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Center to discuss the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne's strategic plan. All Professional Consulting, a company from Six Nations of the Grand River, helped facilitate the session. This session was designed to be an opportunity for Council to review the strategic plan and identify political priority areas within the plan. The MCA strategic plan outlines a few goals the MCA administration will be working towards over the next 5 years. With the consultant's help, council divided into smaller working groups and worked on identifying top priority areas. A presentation was also made on what nation building looks like and how it ties into strategic planning as a community government. During the afternoon of February 10, 2023, the similar session was hosted with the MCA directors to conduct the same exercise from the administrative perspective.

JANUARY 10, 2023, CHILDREN'S TREATMENT CENTER

On the afternoon of January 10, 2023, I was invited to attend the office of the Children's Treatment Center in the City of Cornwall. I had been invited to assist Hugo Rodrigues, Managing Editor of the Standard-Freeholder, Rev. Lois Gaudet and Mary Lalonde in the drawing of three grand prize winners for NHL hockey tickets. Among the three winners drawn, Bill Roundpoint from Akwesasne was one of the lucky winners. Congratulations to all those who won and thank you to all the supporters of the Children's Treatment Center.

JANUARY 11, 2023, STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PRIORITY SETTING DAY TWO

On January 11, 2023, members of our Council and senior executive leadership within the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne met following

the previous days' priority setting session. The second day, the facilitator broke the larger group into small working groups to begin the implementation plan development. Each group discussed which roles the administration and political played in the implementation. During this session, the presentation on nation building was used as a guide of how all developing plans center around improving the community as building the nation.

JANUARY 12, 2023, NEW YORK STATE CLAIM

As part of our ongoing court appointed mediation for the settlement of the New York State land claim, we hosted an internal call with our lawyer on January 12, 2023. Over the last several months our lawyer has been working with the mediator and the other parties' lawyers to finalize the draft settlement agreement for the claim. On the call of January 12, 2023, our legal counsel provided us with an update on the mediation. As we work toward a draft settlement agreement, previous settlement provisions are used as the current draft's guide.

JANUARY 13, 2023, WILLIAM BILL MONTOUR

On January 13, 2023, I attended the funeral service for former Chief of Six Nations of the Grand River, William Bill Montour. Bill Montour was the elected Chief of Six Nations from 1986 to 1991 and then again from 2007 to 2013.

JANUARY 16, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- A representative from Procurement Assistance Canada presented to Council on the mandate of the government program and described how they can assist Akwesasne businesses submit bids on Government of Canada procurement.
- Council set the agenda for the upcoming General Meeting set for January 26 at the Kawehno:ke Recreation.

- A concern regarding an incident that occurred regarding illegal aliens was discussed. Council will follow up with a meeting with the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Commission.
- Council discussed the current recommendation on moving forward with a trust development for the use of Dundee settlement proceeds. Formal recommendation via MCR forthcoming.
- An overview was provided for an upcoming communications and portfolio session and Council was asked to consider portfolio selections.
- MCRs passed: Approval to allocate additional resources to Elders Emergency Fund; Approval of funding agreement with Indigenous Services for mental health programming; Approval of funding agreement with Indigenous Services for Jordan's Principal Emergency Funding; Approval of allocation of surplus to support arena ground improvements and ACFS program.

JANUARY 16, 2023, CHIEFS OF ONTARIO

On the evening of January 16, 2023, Chief Roundpoint and I travelled to Toronto to participate in the Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council meeting. Most recently the Ontario Regional Chief (ORC) had requested a follow up meeting with Premier Doug Ford following a failed reception at the November Chiefs assembly. In November 2022 at the last Chief assembly, the Ontario Premier offered an evening reception with the Chiefs. A few Chiefs convinced the rest of the Chiefs in assembly to not participate in the reception. The Ontario Regional Chief had set up a meeting with the Premier on January 17, 2023 in Toronto. On the evening of January 16, the leadership council met to strategize for the upcoming premiers meeting. At the meeting, the leadership council heard from a lobbyist from Cumberland Strategies who walked through what to expect at the upcoming meeting. The lobbyist explained that the leadership council needs to focus on the positive and move past the reception. The Chiefs did not attend the

reception because of Ontario's posturing on the green belt and the ring of fire, but the lobbyist explained that the leadership needs to focus on the benefits and collaboration rather than confrontation. Initially the premiers meeting was scheduled for the morning of January 17, 2023, but due to communication errors, the premier was only available in the afternoon. Unfortunately, Chief Roundpoint and I were unable to attend the meeting with the premier due to travel restrictions.

JANUARY 18, 2023, JAY TREATY BORDER ALLIANCE (JTBA)



On January 18, 2023, I attended a Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA) meeting hosted by the Forest County Potawatomi in Milwaukee Wisconsin. As the Canadian Co-Chair for the JTBA, I was asked to provide some welcoming remarks to the participants. Representatives from JTBA working on the Tribal Border Crossing Parity Act provide an update on the efforts underway in the US to remove the 50% blood quantum requirement for entry into the United States. The U.S. Customs and Border Protection Agency presented on current initiatives underway with Tribal communities. I participated in a panel discussion on the current Canadian lobby strategy happening in Canada to amend legislation to allow for American born Indians to cross into Canada as a right rather than

privilege. The participants provided input into both the Canadian and US lobby strategy and reaffirmed the need to cross the border without hindrance as described in the Jay Treaty.

JANUARY 19, 2023, UNITED NATIONS DECLARATION ON THE RIGHTS OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES (UNDRIP) ENGAGEMENT

The Mohawk Council of Akwesasne was a recipient of funding under Canada implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples focusing on the Jay Treaty. Our proposal was to examine the Jay Treaty and host engagement sessions with other First Nations effected by the international border and the impacts of Canada not recognizing the Jay Treaty. On January 19, 2023, we hosted an engagement session at the Potawatomi Hotel & Casino in Milwaukee Wisconsin. The Forest County Potawatomi and other Potawatomi of the Three Fires Confederacy participated in the engagement session. I provided welcoming remarks and some background on Akwesasne and the impacts the international border has on Akwesasne. Following my remarks, our consultants from All Professional provided a presentation to the participants on the background of the Jay Treaty, the legal status of the treaty and the current discrepancies between Canada and the United States. The consultants presented a series of questions designed to stimulate discussion on the varying options, possibilities, and remedies under the Jay Treaty. Our engagement session yielded several perspectives from trade, citizenship, possibilities for modernization, and status quo ideas.

JANUARY 23, 2023, CANOBI AGTECH

On the morning of January 23, 2023, I participated in a call with representatives from Canobi AgTech. The purpose of the call was for the representative from Canobi to introduce themselves to me, and to describe their product. The representatives explained that Canobi is

an agricultural resource planning platform for indoor farmers. The platform integrates monitoring, alerting, and data to optimize growth. They explained that this system can support all side of indoor growth operations. The representatives extended an invitation to me to tour a farm outside of Cornwall that uses this technology to grow their agriculture. A tour will be set-up later in the spring to see the technology.

JANUARY 23, 2023, JAY TREATY BORDER ALLIANCE

On the afternoon of January 23, 2023, I hosted a call with the Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA) leadership members to identify representatives to participate in the governance table. As part of the working tables under the Jay Treaty Border Initiative, the First Nation leadership needed to identify representatives to participate in each of them. On the call of January 23, 2023, the representatives were identified for the Jay Treaty Border Alliance Governance table.

JANUARY 23, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- A representative from Greener Homes Initiative presented to Council the process of applying for and obtaining a home energy assessment to apply for a program rebate.
- Council identified Chief Sarah Diabo as next week's council meeting chair in the absents of the Grand Chief.
- An overview was provided on a resolution received from the district meeting. A response will be drafted for review, and an information presentation will be created to update the community on the current work underway to stabilize Hydro-Quebec electricity.
- Council discussed a request for an update and advancement to replace the Tsi Snaihne HAVFD Fire Hall. A report and presentation will be given to Council by administration on the project's status.

- The Executive Director provided an overview of an upcoming Council exercise to map political and administrative responsibilities.
- A briefing was provided on a forthcoming request for support for an Iroquois hunting legal file.
- The Council discussed and debriefed from the recent subsidy distribution and instructed the government manager to present a recommendation for mitigation on those who were missed.
- MCR's passed: Approval of allotment of land Cornwall Island (mortgage paid) to community member; Approval of (3) allotment of land Chenail Range (mortgage paid) to community member; Approval of appendix to 2023 leases; Approval of assignment of lease Pilon Island; Approval of amendments to leases for 2023; Approval of amendments to leases Appendix A.

JANUARY 23, 2023, DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL SERVICES, PORTFOLIO MEETING

On the afternoon of January 23, 2023, I attended the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, Department of Community and Social Services (DCSS), monthly portfolio meeting. The portfolio and director discussed the current surplus under the Child Welfare Prevention dollars and discussed the need to develop a process to identify priority areas. The director provided the portfolio with an overview of recently allocated resources and explained upcoming MCRs being sent to Council to allocate additional resources to various areas. An overview of a proposal to support new transitional housing was reviewed and discussed.

JANUARY 25, 2023, ABORIGINAL PEOPLE TELEVISION NETWORK (APTN) INTERVIEW

Recently, our community has experienced an increase of prolonged power outages in Quebec. Aboriginal People Television Network (APTN) came to Akwesasne to learn more about the ongoing outages being experienced with Quebec Hydro. On February 23, 2023, I provided an interview to APTN regarding the ongoing challenge. The entire interview can be viewed at: https://youtu.be/KrjUVP2_OI4

JANUARY 25, 2023, SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE

On the afternoon of January 25, 2023, I attended a meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal (SRMT) Chiefs to discuss a current leased land we have with the SRMT. Most recently, I requested the SRMT to renew the lease and lease some additional land to accommodate access expansion to the lot. At the meeting of January 25, 2023 we discussed the current terms, and I explained the purpose of the expansion. Following this meeting we will follow up with the SRMT on next steps to solidify a new lease arrangement.

JANUARY 26, 2023, MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE FINANCE COMMITTEE

On the morning of January 26, 2023, I participated in a Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Finance committee meeting. The Director of Finance and Administration presented the draft 2023-2024 MCA organization budget. The committee received a department by department overview of the budgetary needs. Following the presentation, the committee directed the director to go back and bring the proposed deficit to be under five million. The January 26 proposed budget projected a deficit of eleven million, which the finance committee determined to be unmanageable even with the

current level of financial reserves available. The committee will receive a revised budget in two weeks for reconsideration.

JANUARY 31, 2023, JAY TREATY BORDER ALLIANCE SUMMIT VANCOUVER, BC

I attended a Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA) Summit hosted by the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh Nations in Vancouver, BC. As the Canadian Co-Chair for the JTBA, I was asked to provide some welcoming remarks to the participants. Representatives from JTBA working on the Tribal Border Crossing Parity Act provide an update on the efforts underway in the US to remove the 50% blood quantum requirement for entry into the United States. The Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) presented on current initiatives underway with Indigenous communities. I participated in a panel discussion on the current Canadian lobby strategy happening in Canada to amend legislation to allow for American born Indians to cross into Canada as a right rather than privilege. The participants provided input into both the Canadian and US lobby strategy and reaffirmed the need to cross the border without hindrance as described in the Jay Treaty. Following the many sessions, our consultants from All Professional provided a presentation to the participants on the background of the Jay Treaty, the legal status of the treaty and the current discrepancies between Canada and the United States. The consultants presented a series of questions designed to stimulate discussion on the varying options, possibilities, and remedies under the Jay Treaty. Our engagement session yielded several perspectives from trade, citizenship, possibilities for modernization, and status quo ideas.