



Office of the Grand Chief

Onerahtohko:wa / May 4, 2022

Wa'tkwanonhwera:ton / Greetings,

It's with great pleasure that I share my monthly activity report. Last Thursday, we hosted our monthly General Meeting at the Kana:takon Recreation Center and on the Zoom platform. Before the meeting began, the community witnessed the swearing-in of four new Ratiianrenhserakwenienhstha (Justices) for the Akwesasne Mohawk Court. In the Fall of 2021, these four Justices attended an intense 10-week training program leading up to their swearing-in last week. It was a great pleasure for our Council and community to witness the swearing-in. Congratulations to Alexandra David, Mellani Martin, Rhonda Garrow and Theresa Thompson.

Following the swearing-in, we went into our General Meeting business. The agenda for the meeting was dedicated to presenting the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne 2022-2023 Annual Operating Budget. Executive Director Ann Seymour provided welcoming remarks, gave an overview of priorities, and turned the presentation over to each department director, who then gave an overview of their upcoming priorities and the department's budget. Following the formal presentation, the community was able to ask budget related questions. The material from the presentation can be found at: <http://www.akwesasne.ca/mca-april-2022-general-meeting-agenda-2022-2023-operating-budget/> as well the whole recording of the General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/Mfa2PPyvR8o>. Our next General Meeting will be held at the Tsi Snaihne Recreation Center and on the Zoom platform on May 26th. We encourage you to email your questions ahead of time to ensure it gets answered at the General meeting.

Finally, as we now cruise into May, we see the weather continues to change, and it's getting warmer. This upcoming weekend is Mother's day, a particular time when we pay extra attention to our Ista's, our Tota's and all the moms out there. Wish you a very Happy Mother's Day.

Sken:nen / In Peace

Abram Benedict
Grand Chief



Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report

Ennisko:wa / March

2022

MARCH 1, 2022, BORDER PARTNERS

Every month MCA's Public Safety Portfolio Chiefs, representatives from the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and I participated in the monthly call 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 travellers, 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.

MARCH 1, 2022, FIRST NATION MARKET HOUSING FUND

On March 1, 2022, I hosted a call with the Executive Director (ED) of the First Nations Market Housing Fund (FNMHF) to discuss possible lease opportunities in Akwesasne. The ED explained to me that her board of directors had authorized her to explore the establishment of an office located on a First Nation territory. On the call on March 1st, I explained to the ED that the MCA didn't have any available office space, but I offered her a few local options for her consideration. I

followed up with the contact information for some local entrepreneurs who currently may have office space for lease.

MARCH 1, 2022, ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE ACADEMIC COMMITTEE

On the morning of March 1, 2022, I participated in the St. Lawrence College Academic Committee. The committee reviewed and accepted the agenda and minutes from the last meeting on December 14, 2021. The committee received and approved two new programs for the board to consider for implementation. The committee discussed possible new programing and received an update on the annual program review for the 2022-2023 year, as well the committee received reports from the program advisory committee and reviewed the mid-year check-in on tasks assigned to the committee.

MARCH 1, 2022, ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNERS

On the afternoon of March 1, 2022, I participated in the monthly St. Lawrence College board of governors meeting. The President and CEO provided the board with an overview of his monthly report and answered questions concerning his report. The committee chairs provided verbal reports and requested approval of various action items from the committee. The President and CEO gave recognition to board members who recently completed training through the College Center of Board Excellence. Following this public board meeting, the board went into an in-camera session to receive and discuss operational issues.

MARCH 2, 2022, BI-WEEKLY COVID CALL

On a bi-weekly basis throughout March Council met with MCA's Administration to specifically discuss and receive updates on our response to COVID-19. These meetings provide an opportunity for Council to thoroughly discuss our current precautions and travel restrictions. While discussions may occur at length during these bi-

weekly Wednesday meetings, decision-making is reserved for the regular Council Meetings.

MARCH 4, 2022, BI-WEEKLY MEETING WITH SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE

Our Council has been meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (SRMT) on a bi-weekly basis as part of our ongoing commitment to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of these meetings is to provide an opportunity for Council and our Emergency Operations Center to share information on our pandemic response with our counterparts from the SRMT. Topics for these weekly discussions include updates on current positive cases of COVID-19, upcoming state, provincial, and federal directives, updates from the monthly border calls, and other COVID-19-related discussions.

MARCH 7-18, 2022, OUT OF THE OFFICE

During the week of March 7 to March 18, 2022, I was away from the office to spend some time with my family.

MARCH 14, 2022, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- A representative from the Eastern Ontario Health Unit provided Council with an overview and update on the 2021 living wage for the region. Council acknowledged the 2021 living wage for publication.
- The Director of Economic Development provided Council with an update on the financial resourcing efforts to build a skate park at the A'nowara'ko:wa Arena and outlined the next steps for the procurement of a contractor.
- Council set the agenda for the upcoming General Meeting on March 24, 2022.
- An overview was provided on a recent discussion of Council regarding the need to have two draft laws reviewed by legal counsel

to satisfy the law enactment process. Council confirmed the need to have the legal review completed.

- The Government Support Manager provided Council with an overview of a new process for the set dates for check signing at Mohawk Government.
- MCRs passed: Approval of contribution agreement with Quebec for Fibre to the Home project; Approval of appointment of a community member to the Oversight Committee on Legislative Development; Acceptance of resignation of Akwesasne Community Settlement Trust Overseer; Approval of contribution agreement with ACCESS for welding course; Approval of an extension to Akwesasne Ontario Long Term Care agreement; Approval of a contract with Dr. Sailor; Approval of a contract with Dr. Levac; Approval of a contract with Chiropodist; Approval of (3) contract with traditional medicine healer; Approval of (3) amendments to Akwesasne – Canada contribution agreement.

MARCH 21, 2022, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Representatives from the Independent First Nations (IFN) education sector provided Council with an overview of a recent pilot project titled “Akwesasne Career Planning Project” and outlined the next steps for other communities’ participation.
- Council discussed a concern with MCA pensions being taxed when community members try withdrawing portions of their pensions. Follow-up and research will be done on this matter.
- MCRs passed: Approval of (3) allotment of land to a community member (loan paid off); Approval (3) amendments to 2022 leases; Approval of assignment of a lease on Colquhoun Island; Approval of assignment of a lease on Pilon Island; Approval of legal service agreement for law review; Approval MCA to host Independent First Nations (IFN) funding agreement; Approval of annual reconciliation

report for Tsiionkwanonhso:te; Approval to proceed with a contract award for construction of Akwesasne Skate Park; Approval of MCA 2022-2023 Operating Budget;

MARCH 22, 2022, CHIEFS OF ONTARIO LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

On March 22, 2022, I participated in the monthly Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council meeting. Ontario Regional Chief welcomed the participants and turned the meeting over to the Chief of Ontario who provided an administrative update on the many files they were working on. The presentations included an update on the fuel surcharge, AIP on child welfare, Education and AFN, and the Chiefs Committee on Economic Development Term of Reference. The final presentation was on a review being conducted by the coroner's office on pediatric deaths. Following the administrative updates, the Chiefs discussed the relationship with AFN and the National Chief. Deputy Minister Batise provided an update on the province's response to COVID-19.

MARCH 22, 2022, TRANSPORT CANADA

On the afternoon of March 22, 2022, I met with representatives of Transport Canada to update them on a recent meeting I had with the Minister of Transport Omar Alghabra. I discussed with the minister the impacts the Seaway International Bridge Corporation (SIBC) has on our community and asked for governance reform for the SIBC to be more inclusive of community priorities. I also provided the Transport Canada representatives with an update on our timelines to run a referendum for the settlement of the Seaway Claim. I committed to keeping the Transport Canada representatives updated on our progress to ratify the Seaway Claim.

MARCH 22, 2022, CBC'S STANDING STILL

On March 22, 2022, I hosted a call with a representative from CBC who are interested in featuring Akwesasne on one of CBC's series

called Standing Still. On the call on March 22, the CBC representative explained to me what the Standing Still series is all about and how they thought Akwesasne would make a good episode for the series. I explained to the representative Akwesasne's unique geographical location and that the international border was a very important element of the community and CBC viewers need to see that to completely understand Akwesasne. After a series of questions, I let the representative know that I would like to schedule a presentation to Council so that they can consider if this is something Akwesasne would like to be featured in. Following this call, I agreed to have the show representatives present to Council.

MARCH 23, 2022, JAY TREATY BORDER ALLIANCE

As part of the planning for a lobby week in Ottawa with the Jay Treaty Border Alliance (JTBA), on March 23, 2022, I hosted a call with representatives of the JTBA in preparation for the upcoming week of meetings with Members of Parliament (MP). On the call on March 23, 2022, we reviewed the lobbying document that was going to be shared with the MPs and reviewed the final logistics for the upcoming meetings.

MARCH 23, 2022, BANK OF MONTREAL PENSION

On March 23, 2022, I hosted a call with the Bank of Montreal Peace Tree Branch Manager to discuss the taxation of pension withdrawals from BMO pension funds. The Branch Manager explained to me that they had been directed to withhold income tax for registered pension withdrawals regardless if the pension income was earned on reserve. She explained that individuals could claim the tax amount back on their annual tax filings. I explained to the manager that this was not an acceptable practice of the bank, and I requested the exact Canada Revenue Tax bulletin or a thorough explanation from the bank as to why this was happening since previously it was not. The Manager

committed to getting back to me with an answer from senior people in the bank and getting back to me.

MARCH 24, 2022, HARBOUR CO-OWNERS MEETING

On the morning of March 24, 2022, I participated in Cornwall Harbor co-owners meeting. A representative of Transport Canada presented to the Co-owners some possible options for surplus property adjacent to the harbour. The CAO for the City of Cornwall provided an update on HST filings. The project managers provided an update on the tender process for environmental consultant services. The Co-owners also received an update on the efforts of a sub-committee to design and erect a sign on the property.

MARCH 24, 2022, GENERAL MEETING

On the evening of March 24, 2022, our Council hosted our monthly General Meeting in person at the Kawehno:ke Recreation and by Zoom. The agenda for the March General Meeting included a presentation and update from the Department of Health Portfolio Chiefs on COVID-19, a presentation from a representative of our Aboriginal Rights and Research Office on the Dundee proceeds and the New York Land Claim. The entire recording of the April General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/DPNow9AkW4>. The next General Meeting will occur on April 28, 2022, at the Kana:takon Recreation and the Zoom platform. Questions in advance can be emailed to meetings@akwesasne.ca to ensure they are answered at the next meeting. You can also request the General Meeting link by emailing the same email address.

MARCH 25, 2022, STRATEGIC PLANNING STEERING COMMITTEE

On the morning of March 25, 2022, I chair the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Strategic Planning Steering Committee which took place at the Best Western Cornwall. Our consultant from a2z explained that all of the input had been compiled into draft goals and that the

steering committee was going to break into working groups to review the data and validate it or add to it. Over the course of three hours, the committee review every strategic goal and added to it. The final draft will now be presented to Council for final validation before this is finalized.

MARCH 25, 2022, INDIGENOUS SERVICES CANADA

On the afternoon of March 25, 2022, members of our finance committee, our Executive Director and our Director of Finance and Administration and I met with representatives of Indigenous Service Canada to discuss our 10-year grant. Since we became a recipient of the 10-year grant, Indigenous Services Canada regularly meets with recipients to receive feedback on how the grant is working for the community. On the call on March 25, 2022, we explained that the flexibility and sustainability of the grant allowed the Mohawk Council to plan longer than previously because our funding levels are set for the next 10-years. We also explained that due to the pandemic the MCA has been delayed in achieving the full implementation of the Akwesasne Financial Administration Law. We discussed possible support from Indigenous Services Canada for capacity development in the finance program of the MCA. The Indigenous Services Canada representatives committed to examining possible supports for the MCA.

MARCH 28, 2022, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Representatives from CBC Standing Still Frantic Films provided Council with an overview of the possibility of making an episode in Akwesasne. Additional follow-up will be done on logistics and reported back to Council.
- A briefing was provided by MCA legal Counsel and the Entewatatha:wi Manager on the provisions in the draft Akwesasne-Canada Self-Government Agreement titled “Survey of Akwesasne

Lands” and it was agreed this section would be removed from the draft. This provision will be re-examined if necessary after ratification.

- Council discussed agenda items for an upcoming leadership meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and Mohawk Nation.
- Chief Dwayne Thomas was identified as next week’s chair in the Grand Chiefs’ absents.
- MCR’s passed: Approval of amendment to Akwesasne Canada financial agreement; Approval of funding from Ministry of Children and Community; Approval of funding from CHMC for community housing; Approval of legal services agreement for law review; Approval (2) of application to Akwesasne Community Settlement Trust for community projects; Approval to rescind previous MCR on COVID restrictions; Approval of (3) Council Meeting Minutes; Approval of agreement with Ministry of Health for youth mental health; Approval of agreement with Dr. Wysote for services; Approval of agreement for physiotherapist services; Approval of agreement for COVID-19 assessment testing; Approval of agreement for mental health counsellor services; Approval of physiotherapist services; Approval of changes to Department of Public Safety organization chart; Approval of allocation for Indigenous Services Canada surplus remoteness fund; Approval for Executive Director to sign all MCA contracts, legal and banking documents; Approval of (2) agreements with Ontario for Akwesasne Community Justice Program; Approval of agreement with Ontario for Victim Service Program.

MARCH 29, 2022, SENECA COLLEGE INTERVIEW

On the morning of March 29, 2022, I participated in an interview with four Seneca College students. The students are part of the Human Resource program at the college and they were conducting research into First Nation employment challenges. On the call on March 29,

2022, the students took turns asking me a series of questions about our hiring practices at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, the challenges we face with recruitment, and any advice I could offer to employers looking to embrace reconciliation through hiring indigenous people into their organizations.

MARCH 29, 2022, DEVCORE GROUP

On the evening of March 29, 2022, I was invited by Nav Centre General Manager to dinner to meet the new owners of the facility. Most recently Nav Canada announced that they were selling the Cornwall Nav Centre to Devcore Group a private corporation based in Gatineau, Quebec. The Chief Executive Officer of Devcore, Jean Pierre Poulin, explained to me that Devcore was set to take ownership of the Nav Center on June 30, 2022, and the immediate was to continue to operate the facility as normal. Jean Pierre expressed to me an interest in collaborating with Akwesasne as he and his group begin the planning for the expansion of the Nav Centre and its amenities. I welcomed the opportunity to work with Devcore as they explore and plan an expansion of the Nav Centre.

MARCH 30, 2022, AKWESASNE CANADA SELF-GOVERNMENT NEGOTIATIONS

On the morning of March 30, 2021, I participated in the Akwesasne – Canada Self-Government negotiations. I welcomed the Akwesasne and Canada teams to the negotiations and expressed my appreciation for the work both teams have been doing on moving the negotiations forward. We reviewed the record of the decision from the February 1, 2022, meeting. We also discussed with Canada the provisions in the agreement around common assault. Following a lengthy debate and conversation with Canada on common assault, the Akwesasne team held a private session to discuss Canada's new position on common assault. Following a morning of updates and negotiations, I departed the meeting for another commitment at noon.

MARCH 31, 2022, ONTARIO PREMIER AND GOVERNOR-GENERAL

On the afternoon of March 31, 2022, I was invited by the Premier of Ontario to attend a meeting with Canada's Governor General Mary Simons and the Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council at Queens Park. On March 31, 2022, Premier Doug Ford welcomed the Governor-General to Toronto on her first official visit to the province. The Premier welcomed the leadership Council to Queens Park, followed by welcoming remarks by Ontario Regional Chief Glenn Hare. Following the welcoming remarks by the Premier and the Regional Chief, the Governor-General provided the leadership with an overview of her background and her responsibilities as Governor-General. The leadership representatives were provided with an opportunity to individually offer their welcome remarks to the Governor-General and provide a quick overview of their organization or community. I expressed to the Governor-General and the Premier my appreciation to participate in the welcoming and expressed Akwesasnes desire to continue to work with Ontario and Canada on recovery from the global pandemic. Following the sit-down meeting with the Premier and Governor-General, I attended a welcome reception at the Royal Ontario Museum hosted by Ontario Deputy Premier Christine Elliot.

MARCH 31, 2022, SPECIAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL MEETING



On March 31, 2022, in between the meeting with the Governor-General, the Premier and the welcome reception the Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council met to review a draft First Nation Provincial Priorities 2022 document in preparation for the upcoming Ontario election in June 2022. The leadership reviewed the draft document that outlined five priority areas for the upcoming election. The areas included: A Renewed Relationship, Sustainable Community Development; Health and Emergency Preparedness; Community Wellbeing and Indian Residential School Investigation. The leadership reviewed each of the five areas including additional priorities within those headings. Following the review, the leadership council accepted the draft with a few amendments. After the Leadership Council reviewed the election priority document, they received an overview of the proposed funding models for the Agreement in Principle on Child and Family Services with Canada. Legal counsel explained that there were two funding models begin presented to the leadership for consideration. An indebt explanation was given on the two differences between the models. After much dialogue and debate, the Leadership Council determined more time would be needed before deciding on the funding model.