

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

Sustaining our inherent rights, facing challenges together, and building a strong and healthy future.
Office of the Grand Chief



Onerahtokha/May 9, 2023

Happy May to all of you!

It's so nice to finally have some sunshine and nice weather come our way. April was much more of an up and down month and it seemed like the nice weather would never come.

Now that it is May, we not only celebrate our moms and say Happy Mother's Day, we are also on the final home stretch for the school year with many of the colleges and universities already wrapped up for the summer. As spring unfolds here in Akwesasne, many students will begin their search for summer employment. Over the past several years, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne has been partnering with the Akwesasne Career & Employment Support Services (ACCESS) to employ summer students at the MCA. I encourage our students to learn about the summer employment opportunities available through ACCESS and to keep an eye out for applications and important deadlines.

This week is National Nursing Week. I want to take a moment to acknowledge all our community nurses within Akwesasne, whether it be here at the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne, the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, or at one of our many community partners, our hats off to all nurses. Niawen:kowa for all you do!

On April 27, 2023, our Council hosted the monthly General Meeting at the Ahkwesahsne Mohawk School (AMS). The agenda included an overview of the Jay Treaty Border Alliance and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) Jay Treaty engagement sessions that were recently completed by the MCA. A working task group gave an update and overview of the amendment process underway to amend the Akwesasne Election Law. Council updated the community on a recent meeting with Hydro Quebec, the downgrading of the MCA pandemic status, the Fiber to the Home project, and a brief update was provided on the status of construction of a Rogers tower in Tsi Snaihne. All the material, including monthly reports can be found at: www.akwesasne.ca/mca-general-meeting-april-2023/ and the recoding of the meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/3c4KW1FgoH4>. Our next General Meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2023 at the Kana:takon Recreation Center.

In closing, I am pleased to share my monthly report with you. As always, should you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me or any one of the members of Council. I look forward to sharing my next report on May 25 and with you online shortly thereafter. Have a wonderful month ahead, and to all our Istas out there: Happy Mother's Day!

Sken:nen/Peace,

Abram Benedict
Grand Chief

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GRAND CHIEF MONTHLY REPORT MARCH / ENNISKO:WA 2023

MARCH 1, 2023, HEALTH CANADA

On March 1, 2023, I hosted a call with the Manager for Indigenous Affairs in the Controlled Substance and Cannabis Branch at Health Canada. The manager had reached out to me to discuss the current engagement happening with the cannabis expert panel and the need for First Nations to participate in the engagement. On the call on March 1, 2023, I informed the manager that Akwesasne's position on cannabis has already been submitted in writing, but I offered to facilitate a presentation to the Chiefs of Ontario Leadership Council and the expected panel.

MARCH 1, 2023, NEW YORK STATE CLAIM

On the afternoon of March 1, 2023, our MCA New York Land Claim team met with our legal counsel to receive an update from our lawyer on the status of the negotiations. Over the last year, we have been working with the Mohawk plaintiffs to negotiate a settlement with the state and counties. Our legal counsel has been participating in conference calls with the other lawyers and provided us with an update.

MARCH 2, 2023, SEAWAY CLAIM INTERNAL

On March 2, 2023, I hosted a call with our Manager for the Aboriginal Rights and Research Office and our legal counsel to discuss the draft settlement agreement of the settlement of the Seaway claim. On the call of March 2, 2023, we discussed some potential dates for the

referendum on the settlement offer and agreed that we would move forward with a presentation of the claim to Council and then put forward a resolution to Council to call for a referendum.

MARCH 2, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On March 2, 2023, members of our MCA Executive Committee met with our consultant from Orbis Risk Consulting to receive an update on the recruitment processes for the MCA's Executive Director. On the call of March 2, the committee received an overview of the proposed interview process and how the questions would relate to the job assessment that each candidate had to complete. The committee agreed to the process for the

MARCH 2, 2023, UNDRIP JAY TREATY ENGAGEMENT

On March 2, 2023, I hosted a call with our consultants from All Professional Consulting Services regarding our Jay Treaty engagement. I received an update on the key points heard from previous engagement sessions with other First Nations from the consultations. We agreed that because we received an extension on our reporting deadline, we would host another session at the upcoming Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Special Chiefs Assembly. At the upcoming AFN meeting, we will present the preliminary findings to the participants. A presentation at the April 2023 MCA General Meeting is also scheduled.

MARCH 2, 2023, BGIS NATIONAL DIRECTOR, INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

On the afternoon of March 2, 2023, I met with Wade Griffin and Vanessa Dreckmann from BGIS. BGIS is a property management company that provides a wide range of services for building management and maintenance. At the meeting on March 2, Wade described to me that BGIS would like to procure more services, goods from First Nations and would like to collaborate more with First Nations on major projects. Wade explained that given the variety of services BGIS provides to its clients, there are various possibilities where First Nations can become vendors or employees of BGIS. We

agreed that we would arrange for BGIS to collaborate with the MCA to present to the community opportunities with BGIS.

MARCH 3, 2023, HEALTH RECRUITMENT STRATEGIC PLANNING



On the morning of March 3, 2023, I attended a Health Recruitment Strategic Planning session at the Townhall for South Stormont in Long Sault. The session was hosted by the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry and the Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area. I provided the 40-50 participants with

welcoming remarks and commended them for their work in the healthcare sector. Over the course of the day, the participants developed a draft plan to recruit more health professionals to the region. Unfortunately, I was unable to stay for the session due to having other commitments but other District Chiefs were able to attend long with MCA health personnel.

MARCH 3, 2023, CANADA BORDER SERVICE AGENCY



On March 3, 2023, following my welcoming remarks at the health strategic planning, I attended the Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) Cornwall Port of Entry to meet Kelly Acton, Vice-President for Strategic Policy. Kelly was recently appointed the Indigenous Champion at CBSA, which means she will

lead the Indigenous Affairs unit and the work Akwesasne is doing. I spent the morning touring Kelly around Akwesasne explaining to her

the complexity the border creates on the community, our service delivery, and the MCA. I also expressed to Kelly the continued need for the Cornwall Port of Entry to bring more staff to the port to mitigate the wait times.

MARCH 6, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- The Oversight Committee on Legislative Development presented to Council the recommended changes to the draft Akwesasne Election Law and will recommend the law for acceptance in principal for community consultation.
- A representative from Clarkson University presented a proposed wind turbine project and outlined the partnership opportunities for Akwesasne. A further presentation was provided on possible business and trade opportunities with various minority groups within Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic. Further follow-up will be done and reported back.
- A concern with MCA phone extension and back of proper voicemail was raised with administration for follow up considerations.
- MCRs passed: Approval of grant application for design expansion to A'nowara'ko:wa Arena, Approval for Akwesasne Justice Department to proceed with the request for legal services for council's consideration; Approval of waste coordinator service agreement with Indigenous Services Canada; Approval of International Joint Commission fish consumption framework advisory agreement; Approval of allocation of Least Disruptive Measures surplus; Approval of allocation of funds of Least Disruptive Measures surplus.

MARCH 6, 2023, ONTARIO HEALTH

On the afternoon of March 6, 2023, I stopped into the Kana:takon Recreation to provide some welcoming remarks to many representatives from Ontario Health. Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, the Medical Officer of Health accompanies several individuals from the Ontario Ministry of Health to tour Akwesasne and to share information about their inclusion and addictions programs. The Director of Health and several other Mohawk Council of Akwesasne staff personnel participated in the information-sharing session. I

expressed to the guest my appreciation to them for touring Akwesasne and learning more about the services the MCA provides and experiencing the border and the challenges faced by the international and provincial borders. Due to other commitments, I was unable to stay the entire afternoon, but portfolio chiefs attended the remainder of the session.

MARCH 6, 2023, CORNWALL ART HIVE



On the afternoon of March 6, 2023, I met Yafa Goawily of Cornwall Art Hive at the Native North American Travelling College (NNATC). I met Yafa a few months back and she expressed to me her desire to host an art hive in Akwesasne. On March 6, 2023, I welcomed Yafa to the NNATC where we together received a tour of the facility. Following the tour of the museum, Yafa discussed with the NNATC staff the possibility of hosting an art hive at their museum. An art hive was scheduled for April 8, 2023. Additional and future art hives can be found on the Cornwall Art Hive Facebook page.

MARCH 7, 2023, ONTARIO HYDRO

Earlier in February I received notification from Hydro One regarding some upcoming work being done on the large transmission lines over the St. Lawrence River to the United States. On March 7, 2023, I hosted a call with representatives from Hydro One who described the project to me. The representatives explained that a lightning shield on top of the actual transmission lines was going to be replaced. It was explained that this was a rather simple project where a new shield would be dragged from the substation on Power Dam Drive Cornwall to the US side of the lines. I had requested additional information on the project to assess if Akwesasne could benefit from the project, unfortunately, it's a very specialized project.

MARCH 7, 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-related issues at the port if any. These meetings also allow our local governments to provide relevant updates to the CBSA and USCBP representatives.

MARCH 9, 2023, DATA CHAMPION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

On March 9, 2023, I participated in a Chiefs of Ontario Data Champion Advisory Committee meeting in Niagara Falls. The committee received an update from the Director of Research and Data Management on the funding that had been received from the First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC). The committee discussed the current action plan being provided by the FNIGC and how the advisory committee and Ontario will fit into the National Plan. The committee discussed the ongoing efforts to hire a project lead. The committee received an update from a recently hired consultant who has been engaged to move along with the action plan implementation in Ontario. The committee agreed that the director would provide an update at the upcoming Chiefs of Ontario Chiefs Assembly in June 2023.

MARCH 13, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Representatives from Infrastructure Ontario (IO) Indigenous Relations introduced themselves to Council and explained their role at Infrastructure Ontario.
- MCA Legal Counsel and a representative from Aboriginal Rights and Research presented an overview of the draft plain language settlement agreement being prepared for community-wide

distribution leading up to a community referendum in the summer of 2023.

- An overview was provided on the process that ethical conduct complaints go through and what role council has in the process.
- The agenda for an upcoming meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe was discussed and set.
- Council agreed that the upcoming General Meeting will have one agenda item, the MCA 2023/24 operational budget.
- A request for the use of MCA-owned land was discussed and will be replied to by the Grand Chief.
- A briefing was provided on the history and background of the Akwesasne International Powwow and the resources and planning needed to ensure its operation and success.
- Council discussed a request from the Iroquois Caucus on the recruitment of a new coordinator and agreed to proceed with interviews.
- MCRs passed: Acceptance in principle of draft Akwesasne Election Law for next phase community consultation; Approval of Indigenous Court worker contribution agreement; Approval of allocation to Akwesasne Boys and Girls for new club construction; Approval of allocation and acceptance of scope of work for Redmane Technologies; Approval of (2) amendment to Akwesasne Canada contribution agreement; Approval of appointment of Acting Executive Director; Approval of amendment to MCA Executive Committee Terms of Reference.

MARCH 14, 2023, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

On the afternoon of March 14, 2023, our Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) Executive Committee met with our consultant from Orbis Risk Consulting to review and prepare for the upcoming scheduled interviews for the position of Executive Director for the MCA. The Executive Committee previously agreed that five applicants would be extended the opportunity to interview. The interviews are scheduled for March 21, 2023.

MARCH 14, 2023, ACC FUTURES

On March 14, 2023, I met with the Executive Director for ACC Futures and the Mayor of the City of Cornwall. The Executive Director provided the Mayor and I with an update on the finance framework being developed for the Cornwall Harbor, as well as an update on a proposed conceptual use presentation for the committee's consideration. An update was also provided on the current efforts to acquire additional land from Transport Canada to complement the existing lands.

MARCH 14, 2023, INTERNAL RIGHT OF ENTRY TECHNICAL TABLE

On the afternoon of March 14, 2023, I participated in an internal Jay Treaty Border Alliance Right of Entry technical table update call. The participants discussed the current status of the technical table and the recent documents received from Canada. The committee discussed strategies for the upcoming meeting with Canada.

MARCH 15, 2023, INDEPENDENT FIRST NATION

On the afternoon of March 15, 2023, I participated in a call with the Independent First Nation (IFN) Intergovernmental Liaison regarding the status of funding available to the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. We also discussed the current outstanding reports due to the IFN. The IFN receives money from various government departments and transfers the monies to the 12 communities they represent including Akwesasne. We also discussed new initiatives being considered by the IFN.

MARCH 15, 2023, HEALTH CANADA

On the morning of March 15, 2023, I hosted a follow-up call with a representative from the Health Canada Cannabis division regarding a presentation to the Chief of Ontario Leadership Council. Earlier in the month I had offered to facilitate a presentation to the leadership council, but due to a scheduling conflict, I asked Chief Roundpoint to

attend the upcoming leadership meeting on my behalf. On the call on March 15, I introduced Chief Roundpoint to the Health Canada representative who would be presenting the Chief of Ontario Leadership Council the following week.

MARCH 16, 2023, JAY TREATY PRESENTATION

On the morning of March 16, 2023, I participated in a Haudenosaunee Boarder Crossing Rights presentation at Cornell University. As part of the ongoing engagement work, we have been doing on the United Nations Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Jay treaty we presented our engagement to the participants of the session. I also shared insight into the realities in Akwesasne and the implications of the international border on our community. I also described to the participants the current work that the Jay Treaty Border Alliance is doing to lobby Canada to change Canadian law to recognize American-born Indians have the right of entry into Canada.

MARCH 30, 2023, SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBE

On the afternoon of March 20, 2023, members of our Council met with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Council as part of our reestablished regular meetings with the tribe. The agenda for the joint council meeting included a discussion on homelessness in Akwesasne, human trafficking, joint training, green cards, NYS hunting and fishing permits, and MCA parking lot lease. Following the official meeting, our New York land claim Chiefs discussed with Tribal Council the status of the New York claim settlement discussions.

MARCH 20, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- Council discussed a received proposed resolution regarding Quebec electrical reliability.
- A concern regarding the Akwesasne Fibre to the Home project was discussed.

- Council discussed the current space requirements of Mohawk Government and agreed to examine the reallocation of office space to accommodate government.
- An overview was provided on the MCA emergency declaration, administration was tasked to garner feedback from EOC and Health on downgrading the emergency declaration.
- Council agreed that Mohawk Government staff attending Council Meetings is no longer needed.
- MCRs passed: Approval of (3) amendments to Akwesasne Canada funding agreement; Approval of funding agreement for Sturgeon Study; Approval of creation of power outage committee.

MARCH 21, 2023, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR INTERVIEW

On March 21, 2023, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Executive Committee hosted a full day of interviews for the position of Executive Director for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne.

MARCH 22, 23, & 24, 2023, FIRST NATIONS AND MUNICIPALITIES SUMMIT ON RECONCILIATION



On March 22, 23, and 24, 2023 I attended the 3rd Summit of First Nations and Municipalities on Reconciliation in Gatineau Quebec. This summit is designed to bring First Nations together with Quebec Municipalities to discuss areas of commonality and opportunity. The summit was hosted jointly by the community of Kitigan Zibi and the City of Gatineau. Over the

course of two and a half days, a series of panels took place between First Nations and city or township representatives to discuss their

existing partnership, initiatives and ongoing relationship with each other. The participants were able to ask questions and learn best practices for their consideration. The Minister of Indigenous Crown Relations and the Minister of Quebec Indigenous Affairs attended for a few hours on the first day of the summit.

MARCH 23, 2023, INDIGENOUS SERVICE CANADA

On the afternoon of March 23, 2023, I hosted a call with Sunil Bajaj, Development Officer at Indigenous Service Canada regarding business loans. I discussed what programs are available from Indigenous Service to community businesses. Sunil explained to me that Aboriginal Impact Capital provided funding opportunities to community business, and they also administer some grant programs for businesses.

MARCH 27, 2023, COUNCIL MEETING UPDATE

- The Cannabis Law working task group presented the draft Cannabis Law and reviewed the recent changes. Council agreed to move the law forward to acceptance in principal and set a date for community acceptance.
- Council received additional information on the status of the Akwesasne International Powwow.
- A briefing was provided on the status of the New York State land claim.
- Council debriefed from a recent meeting with the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe and agreed to follow up on action items from the meeting.
- An overview was provided on the recent accomplishment of the Cornwall Girls U13 Hockey Team. The Ionkwakwé:nion committee will begin the planning for the recognition of the team and the Akwesasne players on the team.
- Council agreed that a call out will be conducted for interested youth to sit on the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Youth Council.
- MCRs passed: Approval of transfer payment agreement for Literacy Basic Skills Program; Approval of training agreement with ACCESS;

Approval of Indigenous Institute Virtual Learning Grant; Approval of amendment to Indigenous Institute Mental Health Grant agreement; Approval of amendment to Akwesasne Canada Quad-Partite funding agreement; Approval of amendment to funding agreement for Organized Crime Initiative; Approval of agreement with Coast Guard to support liaison position; Approval of grant application to Indigenous Initiative Fund to support Akwesasne business; Approval of amendments to Akwesasne Legislative Enactment Procedural Regulations; Approval of template for development of a law; Approval of contract for solid waste curbside pick-up services; Approval of Executive Committee recommendation to offer position of Executive Director to successful candidate.

MARCH 29, 2023, EMERGENCY COUNCIL MEETING

- MCRs passed: Approval of funding agreement with Public Safety Canada for Equipment, Supplies, and Materials; Approval of agreement with Public Safety Quebec for training.

MARCH 27, 2023, MCA FINANCE COMMITTEE

On the afternoon of March 27, 2023, I participated in an MCA finance committee meeting. Over the last couple of weeks, the committee met to finalize the MCA 2023/2023 operating budget. At the meeting of March 27, 2023, the committee received a presentation from the Director of Finance and Administration on the budget presentation that is going to be provided at the upcoming General Meeting the following Thursday. Following the budget presentation, the committee received another presentation from the Director of Finance and Administration on a recent analysis of a resolution passed by the Council without following the proper due diligence and financial reviews. The committee agreed that they would recommend to the Council the resolution be rescinded and reconsidered after the proper process had been followed.

MARCH 30, 2023, NATION BUILDING PORTFOLIO

On the morning of March 30, 2023, I met with the Nation Building portfolio chiefs to discuss the upcoming Canada Akwesasne self-government negotiations. Over the last several months our portfolio and I have been working on two outstanding issues in the self-government file. At the meeting on March 30, we discussed strategy and messaging for the upcoming session.

MARCH 30, 2023, AKWESASNE CANADA SELF GOVERNMENT

On the morning of March 30, 2023, I participated in the Canada Akwesasne self-government negotiations. I welcomed the participants from Canada and commended our team and portfolio for continuing to move forward with the negotiations. I also updated the teams on the recent meeting with Minister Marc Miller regarding our self-government file. Following my welcoming remarks, the teams reviewed the undertaken from the previous meeting and reviewed the current outstanding proposals from Akwesasne to Canada on draft language in the agreement. We discussed in detail several draft provisions in the draft agreement. Due to time, I was only able to participate in the negotiations for the morning.

MARCH 30, 2023, GENERAL MEETING

On the evening of March 30, 2023, our council hosted our monthly General Meeting at the Tsi Sniahne Recreation Center. The entire meeting agenda was a presentation of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne 2023/2024 operating budget. Over the course of the evening, each department director presented their priority areas for the upcoming year and presented their department's budget. Following the presentation, the community was able to ask questions about the presentation. Once the budget presentation was complete, we took the business from the floor, where the community was able to ask various things of council and present suggestions, comments, and ideas to council. The entire recording of the General Meeting can be found at: <https://youtu.be/BsXtyvUS3xg>

MARCH 31, 2023, HYDRO-QUEBEC

On the morning of March 31, 2023, members of our council hosted representatives from Hydro-Quebec. Over a month ago the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne wrote to the CEO of Hydro-Quebec regarding our continued electrical reliability issues in Akwesasne. At the meeting on March 31, 2023, the representatives provided a PowerPoint presentation on current status of vegetation mitigation, line preparation, and alternate line configuration including the exploration of power from National Grid. We pressed upon the representative the urgency to find an immediate solution to the long-term outages. The representatives agree to make a presentation to the community and to answer questions.