

MOHAWK COUNCIL OF AKWESASNE

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



OFFICE OF THE GRAND CHIEF

Onerahtokha/April 9, 2018

Watkwanonhwera:ton/Greetings,

Yet another month has passed us by, I hope the month of March was great for you and that you were able to spend time with family over the March break. As we now roll into the month of April, I hope that we can expect to see some warmer weather. It sure has been a roll coaster of a weather ride.

Earlier this month, the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne received notification that a government support grant has been approved to potentially extend the option to utilize natural gas on Kawehno:ke. It's important to know that at this point, the project is only at the consultation stage. The grant has made it possible to be able to offer natural gas as an option. Now it is up to the community to consider this option and we are under no obligation to proceed. Over the next several months, the Mohawk Council will discuss this option with community members and business owners alike. At the same time, our environment program will be working to complete an environmental assessment on the proposed project. The option of utilizing natural gas as a potential heat source and more could have a great impact on existing high electricity costs and result in an overall savings. Please know that applying jointly for this grant is just one of the ways that Council has been working hard to meet the needs of the community, specifically in response to the community petition received in 2015, which called on Council to find a way to reduce electricity costs on Kawehno:ke.

As we continue to make progress on our community priorities, we are also awaiting a potential grant for the expansion of fibre optics into the jurisdiction of the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne. If approved, we will begin the design of a network to potentially provide every home with fibre high speed internet. This again will help open new doors for business expansion in our community, in addition to having internet video streaming services that don't freeze up anymore.

I am providing you with the link from the latest General Meeting held on March 29, 2018: <https://youtu.be/us4bSNYDU-o> . My monthly report, which was distributed at the General Meeting, is attached for your information. As always, should you have questions on my report, or any of the files that our Council or I am working on, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or any of the District Chiefs. We always welcome your insight, feedback and input into all the files we are working on, or recommendations for files we should be working on. Our Council is working hard for you and we need your input and feedback.

Have a wonderful month ahead!

Sken:nen/Peace

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Abram Benedict".

Abram Benedict
Grand Chief



Grand Chief Monthly Activity Report Enniska/February 2018

FEBRUARY 1, 2018 BANK OF MONTREAL

On the afternoon of February 1, 2018 the Executive Director for the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne (MCA) and I met with the Commercial Account Manager of the Bank of Montreal (BMO). Mrs. Besner of the Bank of Montreal provided us with an update on recent changes coming at the bank and explained that Cornwall will be merging its two branches into one. The changes are not expected to impact the Peace Tree branch. We explained to Mrs. Besner that Akwesasne community members expect to see more Akwesasronon employed at the BMO Peace Tree branch and that since our meeting with the Aboriginal Director in December 2017 very little improvements have occurred at the bank. Mrs. Besner agreed to follow up with senior representatives within the Bank of Montreal.

FEBRUARY 5, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING

- The Acting Manager of the Aboriginal Rights and Research Office (ARRO) provided Council with a progress update on the Seaway and Dundee claim settlements.
- A briefing was provided to Council on a concern with respect to the name of Lame Squaw Island. Further research will be done for the owner to consider renaming.
- Council discussed the Possession and Acquisition License (PAL) requirements and will further research the implications.
- A briefing was provided on a recent meeting with Indigenous Services on the development of a 10-year grant proposal.

- Council discussed a recent request from the Chiefs of Ontario for Elders representation. Council agreed to research the development of an Elders Council.
- A concern with MCA programs fundraising was discussed and will be considered for policy development.
- MCRs passed: Approval of funding agreement with Health and Long Term Care for 17/18 fiscal year; Approval of mortgage guarantee with the Bank of Montreal for community member; Approval of funding submission to Indigenous Services for replacement of underground fuel storage tank at Kana:takon School; Approval of contract with EVB Engineering for Engineering Services on Snye subdivision sewage plant reconstruction; Approval of amendments to funding agreement with Health Canada.

FEBRUARY 6, 2018 ST. LAWRENCE COLLEGE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

On the morning of February 6, 2018 I participated on a conference call with the Advancement and Business Engagement Committee for the St. Lawrence College Board of Governors. As members of the Advancement and Business Engagement Committee we are responsible for the recommendation of recipients of honorary diplomas. On the conference call of February 6, we reviewed all the nominations and agreed that each committee member would review the nominations individually and complete a survey on each nomination in an effort to rate each candidate. Once the recommendations are compiled, the committee will meet again to finalize a recommendation to the Board of Governors.

FEBRUARY 6, 2018 INTERVIEW WITH AKWESASNE TV

On the morning of February 6, 2018 I was interviewed by Akwesasne TV (ATV) on the recent settlement offer received from Canada to settle the Seaway Claim. I explained to ATV the history of the claim and the progress of the litigation since it was filed in the Federal Courts in 1976. I also explained what the offer from Canada,

to settle the claim for \$45 million, means for Akwesasne and outlined the ratification process. It was explained to Akwesasne TV that the MCA will host a referendum on the offer before the MCA moves to accept the offer from Canada.

FEBRUARY 7, 2018 VIBRANT COMMUNITY ROUNDTABLE

Earlier in January I was invited by the Social Development Council of Cornwall and area to participate in a roundtable discussion on social systemic challenges being faced by the region and poverty reduction. Regional community partners from Cornwall and area, from business and the non-profit sector, as well as local government representatives from the City, Akwesasne, and the counties were invited to attend. The meeting was facilitated by a representative from the Tamarack Institute, who provided the participants with an overview of the City of Hamilton and a framework they developed to make Hamilton a vibrant community. The representative explained that vibrant communities are communities that embrace poverty reduction strategies in an effort to help the community grow and the families of the communities thrive. The participants broke into groups to discuss local factors that affect community poverty and discussed solutions and initiatives the community could consider. The overwhelming indicator from the group exercise was access to good quality jobs and jobs that pay more than minimum wage. Following the breakout session Dr. Paul Roumeliotis, the Medical Officer of Health gave a presentation on the demographics of the Cornwall and area. The presentation by Dr. Paul highlighted the growing number of Elders in the area and spoke about the significant cost this has on the health care system. The Social Development Council of Cornwall and area will provide a preliminary report at a future meeting of the community representatives.

FEBRUARY 7, 2018 ONTARIO POWER GENERATION PRESIDENT

On February 7, 2018 I met with Mike Martelli, the Ontario Power Generation (OPG) President of Renewable Energy and Power Marketing, to discuss a recent letter I sent expressing our interest in

working with OPG on potential investment opportunities. Mike explained the opportunities that OPG may have available for Akwesasne's consideration but also explained the regulatory challenges OPG has in place with regard to partnering with investors. Mike and I will meet again in the future to further discuss investment opportunities.

FEBRUARY 7, 2018 CANADA'S CHIEF FEDERAL NEGOTIATOR

On February 7, 2018 I had a telephone conversation with Fred Caron, Canada's Chief Federal Negotiator, regarding the ratification timelines for the Dundee/Tsikaristisere land claim. Fred explained to me that the longer Akwesasne pushed back the ratification date, the longer it would take for Canada to make the settlement payment. It will take the Federal Government 6 to 8 months before they will make the \$239 million payment after Akwesasne ratifies the agreement. That amount of money will require cabinet approval. The Government of Canada will hold its next general election on or before October 21, 2019 which means cabinet approvals will be delayed during the election time surrounding October 21, 2019. Fred explained that if Akwesasne holds its ratification vote in November 2018 the payment to Akwesasne will likely not be made until late 2019 or even 2020. This information was shared with Council for strategic planning purposes.

FEBRUARY 8, 2018 MCA FINANCE COMMITTEE

On February 8, 2018 I attended the monthly MCA finance committee meeting. The comptroller provided the committee with an update on the year end projections and budgeting process. The comptroller explained that the MCA needed to cut an additional \$500,000 from the proposed 2018/2019 fiscal budget in order to meet the direction of Council and reduce the reliance on the Ontario Lottery Gaming funding. The committee was briefed on ongoing deficit of the Akwesasne non-insured health benefits program but it was also explained that Health Canada recently approved a financial increase to offset the MCA deficit in the non-insured program. An Assistant Comptroller explained to the committee that a review is underway

at the Akwesasne Mohawk Board of Education (AMBE) to examine the financial supports needed to operate AMBE as an independent school board. Once this review is complete, AMBE will then work with the MCA and portfolio to determine options and next steps. The finance committee reviewed a recent call for presentations for investment services and agreed that a recommendation will be made to Council to engage Caisse Populaire Desjardins. Updates were provided on the MCA's recent efforts to secure a 10 year grant from Indigenous Services.

FEBRUARY 8, 2018 AKWESASNE WINTER CARNIVAL OPENING CEREMONY AT IAKHIHSOHTHA

On the afternoon of February 8, 2018 I was able to visit with the Totas at the Iakhihsohta Snowflake Gathering as part of the 27th Annual Akwesasne Winter Carnival. The event was filled with great music and wonderful company!



FEBRUARY 10, 2018 WINTER CARNIVAL ELDERS DINNER

On the evening of February 10, 2018 the Mohawk Council of Akwesasne in collaboration with the Hogansburg Akwesasne Volunteer Fire Department (HAVFD) and the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Services (AMPS) hosted an Elders dinner as part of the 2018 Akwesasne Winter Carnival at the Kawehno:ke Recreation Centre. The evening began at 5pm, with members of our Council, HAVFD, and AMPS serving a roast beef dinner to all Elders who attended.

The event was very well attended. Thank you to members of Council, HAVFD, and AMPS for making the evening a great success.

FEBRUARY 12, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING

- The Acting Manager of the Aboriginal Rights and Research Office (ARRO) provided Council with a progress update on the Seaway and Dundee claim settlements and an update from a recent community meeting on the Dundee claim.
- Council was briefed on a recent meeting with the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA).
- The MCA pension advisor briefed Council on proposed changes to the MCA pension fund to provide an additional option for retirees to consider accessing.
- Council was updated on the Additions to Reserves (ATR) process for the return of the 4 islands as part of the Ontario Power Generation (OPG) settlement.
- The owner/operator of Caveman Strong provided Council with an overview of the services provided by the facility and explained potential partnership options for consideration; portfolio will follow up.
- MCRs passed: Approval of funding agreement with Ontario to support Strategy Project to end Human Trafficking; Approval of amendments to MCA pension policy to include Retiree Division.
- Note: There will be no Council meeting during the week of February 19, 2018.

FEBRUARY 12, 2018 US EMBASSY ON HUMAN TRAFFICKING

On the evening of February 12, 2018 I traveled to Ottawa to attend a presentation on human trafficking at the US Embassy. The US Assistant District Attorney Betsy Horsman presented on the challenges around cross border human trafficking. Betsy also spoke about the important relationship that she and the District Attorney's office has with the St. Regis Mohawk Tribal Police and the Akwesasne Mohawk Police Service. Betsy reiterated the importance of relationship building, with an emphasis placed on relationships

with Tribal nations. After the presentation, I spoke with representatives from the US Embassy and extended an invitation to embassy staff to visit and tour Akwesasne.

FEBRUARY 14, 2018 MINISTER ZIMMER MEETING WITH AKWESASNE COMMUNITY GROUPS

The Ontario Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation (MIRR) David Zimmer was invited by the Akwesasne Residential School Survivors group to meet with them here in Akwesasne. On February 14, 2018 Minister Zimmer travelled to Akwesasne to meet with the group. I was asked to welcome the Minister to the community and provide welcoming words to him. Following my welcome, I left the meeting so that the representatives could meet with Minister Zimmer.



Following the Ministers meeting with the Akwesasne Residential School Survivors, Chief Louise Thompson and I accompanied Minister Zimmer to the White Pine Healing Lodge. Last summer, the Minister met with representatives from the lodge, but we felt it would be important for the Minister to receive an update on the progress the lodge has made since the last visit.

FEBRUARY 15, 2018 ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S AID SOCIETIES

The board for the Ontario Association of Children's Aid Societies (OACAS) met on February 15, 2018 to conduct its regular monthly business. Due to my upcoming travel, I participated in the meeting by teleconference for half of the meeting. The Director for Shared Services provided the board with an update on the shared services program and the implementation plan. The OACAS Chief Executive Officer (CEO) provided the board with an update from a recent meeting on child welfare reform, which was held in Ottawa between Indigenous Services and First Nations leadership. The CEO explained that the meeting included main plenary discussions and breakout sessions on child welfare reform followed by a roundtable of First Nation leadership and provincial representatives. Following the update from the CEO, staff for the OACAS provided the board with an update on labour relations and union negotiations updates. The next meeting for the OACAS is set to occur on March 15, 2018.

FEBRUARY 16 – 23, 2018 VACATION

From February 16 to February 23, 2018 I was away from the community on vacation and spent time with my family.

FEBRUARY 26, 2018 COUNCIL MEETING

- Legal Counsel for the MCA provided an overview and background of the Additions to Reserve (ATR) process for Akwesasne islands being returned to reserve and explained future land allotment considerations.
- A concern with respect to certain disability clients not receiving the Green Food Bag was discussed and will be further researched by portfolio.
- Council discussed procedures for any Community State of Emergency and requested that the Executive Director follow up with the responsible programs on process and communications protocol.

- The General Meeting agenda for March 1, 2018 was set and Council agreed to the next General Meeting will occur on March 29, 2018.
- Council agreed that the voting for acceptance of amendments to the Akwesasne Election Law will occur by secret ballot at a Special General Meeting set for March 24, 2018.
- MCRs passed: Appointment of Elders to Council of Elders and alternatives; Approval of allotment of land to community member (loan paid off); Acceptance of financial terms of deal with Quebec for road maintenance; Acceptance of Ontario road subsidy report; Approval of design contract for renovation for DCSS facility; Approval of funding submission to Indigenous Services for retrofit to HAVFD Station 3; Approval of funding submission to Indigenous Services for reimbursement of HAVFD Station 2 truck purchase shortfalls; Acceptance of four sets of Council Meeting Minutes.

FEBRUARY 27, 2018 MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

On February 27, 2018 I met with members of the Akwesasne Membership review committee. As previously reported, our department in collaboration with Entewatatha:wi contracted consultant Dr. Rose Alma McDonald to conduct a review of the policies, process, regulations, and charter of the Akwesasne Membership Board, the Akwesasne Membership Code, the Akwesasne Residency Law, and the Council of Elders. Council felt it was important to conduct a review to ensure all policies and process of control and support under Akwesasne were supporting one another and the community. At the February 27 meeting, Dr. McDonald provided the committee with a draft survey that will be launched online for community input and feedback and also provided the committee with an overview of the recent interviews that took place with staff who work with the Akwesasne Membership Board. The committee reviewed the draft survey and provided direction into what groups should be interviewed as part of the review. The report and recommendations is expected to be completed in the coming months.

FEBRUARY 27, 2018 AKWESASNE COMMUNITY SETTLEMENT TRUST OVERSEERS

On the evening of February 27, 2018 I met the overseers for the Akwesasne Community Settlement Trust to receive information from them with respect to operational challenges they have been experiencing as overseers. The Overseers explained their administrative needs to fulfill their duties as overseers. In response, I informed the overseers that the MCA would examine ways to better support them and that we would schedule a meeting with Mohawk Government support staff and themselves to mitigate administrative concerns.