



RAINY RIVER FIRST NATIONS Chief & Council Member  
Meeting Wednesday July 14th , 2021  
RRFNS Pow Wow Grounds  
5:30 p.m.

**PRESENT:**

Chief Robin McGinnis  
Councillor Gary Medicine  
Councillor Leona McGinnis  
Councillor Will McGinnis

**REGRETS:**

Councillor Jason Wilson  
Councillor Karen-Oster Bombay

**OTHER:**

Lauren Hyatt- EA to C&C	Sonny McGinnis- MOA
Casey Oster	Debbie Leonard
Kim Bombay Detweiler	Verna De Bungie
Beverly Wilson	Brittany Myers
Hannah Myers	BJ Cochrane
Jamie Leonard	Geraldine Hoard
Robert Bombay	Agnes Grover
Carolyn McGinnis	Annie McGinnis
Sancia Medicine	Dolores Nanie-Bradick
Gloria Short	Stephanie Markewich
Dorothy Huttika	Laverne Caul
Doug Horton	Shane Kehl

*Meeting Opened 5:35p.m. By Art Hunter with prayer and song.*

**Meeting Protocol Reminder (Chief McGinnis)**

Everyone attending the meeting will have 5 minutes allotted to them to express any concerns or comments. These meetings will be for Band members only and meetings concerning the Community will be separately scheduled. Members on and off reserve who are unable to attend these meetings are encouraged to submit their questions and concerns directly to the departments they concern and leadership. Please remember that ALL are to adhere to the Client and Community Code of Conduct. No video recordings of this meeting are permitted.

**Chief's Update: Chief R. McGinnis**

Chief R. McGinnis updated the Membership on the following:

**1) Solar Payments:**

- These payments were administered. For those that were not picked up, the payments would be arriving in the mail soon if they had not already. Since the distribution date, Chief and Council made the decision to give Solar Payments to ALL members, regardless of Arrears. On behalf of Chief and Council, Chief McGinnis

apologized for any distressed caused by the short notice given that people with arrears would not be receiving payments.

**2) Oscar Bay Property:**

- The beach property will be closed for the next week while a usage plan and guidelines are being created for implementation. Membership will be made aware of its reopening.

**3) Covid:**

- On behalf of C&C, Chief McGinnis thanked all the staff who kept programming moving despite the ever-changing covid restrictions that were experienced. They were hugely creative and inclusive in this programming and kept our members as engaged as possible.
- The majority of RRFNS has been vaccinated. C&C thanked Juanita- Hunter-Connon for ensuring that all vaccinations went smoothly and for always making herself available to monitor, field questions or even just quell fears of the virus that many had.
- During covid we instituted 2 main polices: the US Travel policy and the Social Gathering Policy to ensure the safety of our members.
- Chief and Council made 2 submissions to the Trust to allow members to access dollars for hardship brought on by Covid 19. I would like to thank the Trust for working diligently with us as Chief and Council to ensure that we could offer our members relief during these trying times.

**4) Education:**

- Hopefully schools will be returning to in person lessons in September. If not, there will be a plan in place for distance learning support.

**5) New Band Office:**

- The New Band Office is now complete and open.

**6) Public Works Department:**

- Rapid Housing initiative is in progress sites are being inspected and prepped.
- There is still an ongoing water shortage. Members were encouraged to report leaks or continually running toilets.
- Members are welcome to bring housing Trust proposals to the Public Works Manager and Coordinator for assistance.

**7) Staffing:**

- Sonny McGinnis is the new Manager of Administration. He was hired in December by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party panel and a Council Member that was not in conflict on this decision.
- Tom Waters was hired as the new CFO.
- Maria Vandenbrand was hired as the new Executive assistant for Administration.
- Dianne Morrison is the new Acting CCP Director.
- Haley Broadbent is the new recreation worker. —
- Samir Kumar is the new HR Manager.
- Job postings are listed in the Band Office Job board, on the website and sent out via One Feather.

- long term capital financing at competitive rates through the FNFA, and to participate in the ISC's 10-year grant program.
- Once achieved, access to these two sources will provide Rainy River First Nations with increased flexibility & control over our finances, enabling better long-term planning, infrastructure management and growth for the community.

#### **15) Mental Health Services**

- Our Mental Health has suffered enormously during this COVID19 Pandemic. Not being able to cope with day-to-day life, feeling overwhelmed, depressed, or anxious and having a general feeling of needing help- of someone to talk to- is an ongoing struggle that people face daily regardless of the Pandemic declaration. Thus, Chief and Council are offering a Virtual Counselling Service to all on reserve members as a first step in combatting the mental health challenges that we face.

#### **16) Community Drug Strategy**

- Chief and Council has deemed creating a revitalized Community Drug Strategy a priority. A working group of all relevant program staff has been created and is meeting on a regular basis to discuss treatment, post-treatment, detox , and support/prevention programming ideas and actions. There be Community Consultation on this strategy when COVID 19 restrictions allow.
- We are currently looking into a pre and post treatment facility on Community.

#### **17) Sawmill:**

-Two Band Members were hired to be Manager Trainees at Manitou Forest Products

#### **18) Strategic Planning Session:**

- Chief and Council will be having a Strategic Planning Session at the Mounds from August 12-15, 2021

#### **19) Economic Development:**

- Ziibi Investments is Manitou's economic development corporation.
- It started operations last September.
- It went through a bit of a transition in the New Year after the previous CEO left to take on the MOA role.
- Ziibi's mandate is to develop business opportunities that will build capacity and generate long-term, ongoing financial benefits for the Nation.
- In terms of governance, Ziibi Investments is set up as a trust.
- The trust structure allows the trusts to operate independently from Chief and Council and also separates RRFN's liability from these business ventures.
- There are nine trustees on three trustee boards ensuring Ziibi is operating in RRFN's best interests.
- Ziibi is currently focused on three main projects.
- Providing fuel for the New Gold mine. Financially, this project is very successful.
- Taking over 100% ownership of the sawmill.

- And exploring opportunities for a new retail fuel / convenience store / restaurant on the Nation.
- Profits currently being generated are targeted to be used to purchase the remaining interest in the sawmill, making it a 100% owned RRFN business.
- Ziibi currently has two positions to fill.
- Full-time CEO. We currently have an interim CEO who has been filling in since the previous CEO moved to the MOA role.
- And an operations analyst training position.
- We are planning to post for both of these positions shortly, once final input has been received from the management trustees.

**20) CCP:**

- There will be a full ministerial program review of our CCP Program.
- RRFNs has submitted a proposal to become the sovereign child welfare authority for our Nation under Bill C92.
- A new service agreement between RRFNs and Weechi was presented to the board president of Weechi.

**21) Solar Retrofit**

- A solar retrofit opportunity for the Community is being explored.

**Membership Questions and Concerns:**

**a) Pop up Market**

A member requested that an On- Reserve pop-up farmers market be set up on reserve.

**b) Rain Barrels & Hanging Flower Baskets for Community**

A member requested that rain barrels be supplied to gather water for gardens. Hanging flower baskets for around the Community was also suggested.

**c) Door Knobs**

It was requested that the door- knobs on the laundry facility at the East End Hall be replaced.

**d) East End Storage Unit:**

A storage unit at the East End Apartments for use by the seniors was requested.

**e) Elders AC**

It was requested that Elders all be given AC. Chief McGinnis stated that this is a request that we have filled in the past and can definitely be for filled again.

**f) Fire alarm training**

It was requested that Elders receive fire alarm and extinguisher tutorials and training. Chief McGinnis state that a plan of this kind will be established.

**g) Seniors Activities**

It was suggested that programming for seniors be held at the East End Hall. Chief McGinnis stated that this was the original intent of this building and that a Usage Policy for this purpose will be created.

**h) Membership**

Concerns were raised that Membership Applications are not being addressed. Chief McGinnis assured Members that now that in person meetings can be held and that we have a new person handling Membership Applications, that all applications will be reviewed shortly and the time that they were submitted will be taken into consideration.

**i) Member Communication**

A Member requested that Bi weekly Newsletters be reinstated and distributed via One Feather.

**j) Drug Strategy**

Concern over the drug and alcohol epidemic on the Community and in surrounding communities was raised. Chief McGinnis assured Membership that all have suffered from the effects of this disease and that aggressive plans are being made to combat it.

**k) BCR'd Members**

A Member questioned why another member was being denied services for a Banishment BCR that was issued in 2014. Chief McGinnis stated that there were conditions attached to this BCR and that if the individual wishes to appeal it, they can apply to do so through C&C

**l) Senior Staff Complaint**

Concerns about 2 senior staff members was brought to C&C's attention and the Member wanted to know who they could report these unanswered complaints to. Chief McGinnis stated that all complaints against staff under the MOA are to be reported to the MOA or HR and any complaints against either the MOA or CFO are to be submitted in writing to C&C.

**m) Chief's Absence**

A member expressed concern that the Chief was not on the Community during the stay at home order. Chief McGinnis stated that due to the stay at home order, all of his meetings were on Zoom and taken from home.

**n) Picnic Table Donation**

Kim Bombay-Detweiler informed all that her family will be donating an accessible picnic table in memory of their Mother Jean Bombay.

**o) Mounds Updates:**

It was requested that updates on the Mounds and its programs be made available to the Membership.

**p) Grave Site Clean Ups**

A concern was raised about the state of grave sites. Chief McGinnis stated that sometimes families like to do the clean up themselves, but that maintenance options will be explored.

**q) Policies**

A member suggested that lawyers shouldn't be involved in decisions when policies can address them.

**r) Youth Programming**

It was requested that more programming be scheduled for youth and that all activities be published to Members on one Calendar. There was concern over the state of some Band facilities and Chief McGinnis ensured all that this would be corrected.

**s) Fire Team**

There was a lengthy discussion on the Fire Team and remobilizing it. Chief McGinnis stated that a call for volunteers will be sent out to Membership.

**Next Meeting:**

The next meeting will take place on August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021: this date will be dependant on Covid restrictions, and it will likely be held in the Band Office Drum Room.

7:37PM – Meeting Adjourned.

The minutes dated Wednesday July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2021, have been reviewed and approved at a duly convened meeting dated: \_\_\_\_\_

Date signed: \_\_\_\_\_

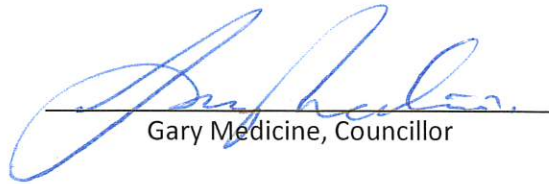
Quorum: 3



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Robin McGinnis, Chief



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Willie James McGinnis, Councillor



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Gary Medicine, Councillor

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Leona McGinnis, Councillor

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Karen Oster-Bombay, Councillor

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