



RAINY RIVER FIRST NATIONS Chief & Council Member Meeting
Wednesday September 2, 2020
RRFNS Pow Wow Grounds
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Chief Robin McGinnis
Councillor Karen Oster-Bombay
Councillor Leona McGinnis

Councillor Will McGinnis
Councillor Gary Medicine

REGRETS:

Councillor Jason Wilson

OTHER:

Lauren Hyatt- EA/Acting MOA
Ruthann McGinnis
Wayne Strachan
Marcel Horton
Kim Bombay Detweiler
Al Wilson
Brian Cochrane Snr.
Ruthann McGinnis
Art Hunter
Hannah Myers

Casey Oster
Danica Medicine
Sancia Medicine
Debbie Leonard
Verna De Bungie
Bev Wilson
Pam Major
Brittany Hunter
Brittany Myers

Meeting Opened 5:35p.m. By Art Hunter, Brittany Hunter and Casey Oster-Bombay with prayer and song.

Meeting Protocol Reminder (Chief McGinnis)

Everyone attending the meeting will have 10 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 attached.

Chief's Update: Chief R. McGinnis

Chief R. McGinnis updated the Membership on the following:

1) Covid:

- To date RRFNs have received \$462,901.96 in COVID funding from various funding sources.
- Staff in all departments are continuing to apply as applications become available.
- Members were reminded that the funding applications have very specific criteria so RRFNs departments are not always eligible.
 - Although the screening gate had been shut down, any members travelling out of the district were encouraged to be in contact with J. Hunter-Connon to ask questions and be monitored.

- The Isolation trailers are in the process of being furnished and will be ready should an outbreak occur.
- Updates on statistics in the district will be distributed in the newsletter every 2 weeks.
- Although the Band Office is now open, Members were reminded that if a worker to be visited, to call the office and make an appointment.
- Masks are mandatory in all Band Office Buildings.

2) Education:

- A meeting for parents who have decided to keep their children home from school to discuss services available and supports that RRFNS can help with will be held. These plans will be individualized based on the needs of each child and/or household.
- Many departments are working together to pool funding to support RRFNs children and families in as many ways possible. Chief and Council are also looking into the RRFNs investment portfolio to help package assistance for these students.

3) New Band Office:

- The New Band Office Construction is in its finishing stages. A project manager is diligently working to ensure all work is completed correctly. The end date is expected to be late October early November 2020.
- Contracts that have been required by the main construction company have been open and awarded to local or band member contractors where possible. Where this has not been possible, band members have been hired by the secondary contractors.

4) Housing Department:

- Two people have been hired to people in the Housing Department: Housing Manager- Wayne Strachan and Housing Coordinator Kyle Kellar. They are working diligently to ensure all outstanding housing issues are caught upon. Members were asked to contact them with any housing concerns.
- This department is also looking at getting new garbage bins installed where they are needed.
- Focus will be on digitizing housing files, reviewing rental agreements, rental arrear plans, renovations and putting together a housing committee.
- Housing is hoping to complete assessments of all properties on reserve and investigate the feasibility of property off Community for building homes.

5) Staffing:

- RRFNS now have one dedicated OW worker- J. Rodegard.
- S. Hawk is the new Membership Registrar.
- L. Hyatt is currently the acting MOA. C&C are the final stages of interviewing and negotiation for an MOA and CFO. The original position of MOA has been split into 2.
- There will be postings going out this Friday for a Recreation Coordinator and Full Time Janitor.

6) Financial Audit:

- The audit is in the process of being completed. It is taking longer than usual this year as it had to be completed remotely due to the Covid Pandemic. Once this has been approved, it will be posted and made publicly available to all Membership.
- 7) Land Code:
- The Land Code Vote was pushed back due to COVID. The information packages have been mailed out. The new date for the in-person vote is October 29th. Voting opens for all eligible voting members on One Feather on September 29th. Members were encouraged to vote online.
- 8) New Gold:
- Chief McGinnis and other Chiefs in our area have been working on a Racism policy at New Gold.
 - New Cultural awareness training for employees of the mine is being negotiated.
- 9) At the Chief's table:
- The most pertinent issue at the area Chief's table is the Metis Encroachment on Treaty 3 Territory.
- 10) Mounds:
- A comprehensive financial review of the Mounds is being completed. The results will be shared with Membership.
- 11) Water Treatment Plant:
- Funding for the design of the New Water Treatment Plant. Leadership are in contact with Government agencies to push this file through as quickly as possible.
- 12) Economic Development:
- The Economic Development Corporation's working name is "Ziibi Anishinaabe Investments Inc."
 - The corporation is scheduled to Launch on September 22, 2021, in Winnipeg.
 - The corporation is focusing on three main projects:
 - Fuel
 - Sawmill
 - International Asset Purchase
 - Significant progress in asserting management control at the sawmill.
 - Negotiations on taking on full ownership are being had with a focus is ensuring a smooth transition.
 - The corporation is also looking at additional future projects:
 - Fish Hatchery
 - Options to upgrade the fish hatchery are being investigated.
 - Planning for the upgrade is complete.

- Implementation of the plan will hopefully begin over the next year.
- Logistics Company
 - EPL is a short-notice logistics company looking to partner with RRFNs for their northern Ontario operations.
 - A strong business plan has been put in place.
 - The next step is to investigate the best way to maximize this opportunity.
- Casino
 - The corporation are currently reviewing the business case, and options for locating a casino within the district.

Membership Questions and Concerns:

a) Chief & Council

Members raised the following concerns about Chief and Council:

- They requested an update on the Over 80 charge that Chief R. McGinnis had received. Chief R. McGinnis responded that an official statement was released by Council, that the legal processes were being followed and that there is no new information to share regarding this concern.
- A concern about a Councillors alleged suspension was raised. Chief McGinnis responded that any issues concerning Council Members are dealt with by Chief and Council using the Governance Manual and they are kept confidential.
- Concerns were raised regarding Chief and Councils personal use of Social Media Platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Tik-Tok and what example this use is setting for all RRFNs Members.
- A younger member of the Community implored all Leadership and Adults and Elders in the Community to set a higher standard of example for the youth to follow. Chief McGinnis stated that 3 of the 6 Chief and Council members have worked in the education system and that Youth have always been a focus of Chief and Council.
- Members accused Chief and Council of not being transparent or held accountable for their actions. Chief McGinnis explained that statements and updates continue to be given by Chief and Council and that a conflict of interest legal opinion is being sought due to the make up of the current Chief and Council.
- Members were concerned that leadership were standing in for the absence of Management. Chief McGinnis explained that although there have been staffing challenges, that they are being addressed as swiftly as possible within all the restrictions that Covid imposes.

b) K. Oster-Bombay Address

Councillor K. Oster Bombay address the Membership as follows:

“ Between February 21-24, 2020- four written complaints came to Chief and Council from employees concerning a member of Council. A BCR was issued and Gary Medicine and I was mandated to review the complaints, as we were the only Council members who were not in Conflict of Interest. Falconer Law Firm was hired to assist us, to have proper legal direction.

On August 6, 2020 our investigations were complete. Without going into further details, the final report was being read to all of Council before it was given to the Council member that was being investigated. Before the report was finished being read aloud, the remaining Council didn't like what they were hearing, so they made a motion to dissolve our Panel and refused to accept the final report.

For myself, I said I would try to be as accountable and transparent as I could be to our Band Members, but I believe that this falls into Conflict of Interest. And neglecting legal mandates through this issued BCR, and the Chief and Council Governance Manual.

Early in the term, Chief and Council submitted to undergo a Drug Urine Test. Not all Council members complied. Section 3.9b(iii) Refusal to Test: A Council Member who refuses to submit a drug test upon being ordered to do so by a quorum of Council will be suspended from his or her position until he or she undergoes testing"

K. Oster-Bombay explained that she didn't agree with this conduct, however she was only one vote and believes that Band Members and being transparent should always be Chief and Council's first priority.

c) Riversedge Partnership Concern:

A Band Member had a concern regarding the partnership RRFNs has with Riversedge: particularly with their previous business ventures and requests that were brought from them to the past Chief and Council.

d) CCP

A member requested to know whether exit interviews were being conducted for those leaving the RRFNs CCP Team. Another member brought up concerns with the Acting Director of the CCP team and requested that they be addressed immediately.

e) Member Communication

Members stressed that they would like to have a Members Only page on which they can receive news of RRFNs before the public do. It was expressed that although updates at these meetings are appreciated, that members would like to see more regular updates and newsletters distributed to on and off reserve Band Members,

f) Mounds Property Concern

A Member brought up concerns regarding land adjacent to the Mounds and how it is being taken over without it having been archeologically investigated or assessed for any artifacts on this historical territory. Chief McGinnis ensured all that this was being investigated along with the Townships of Chapple and Morely who are tasked with maintaining and managing this area. He further explained that these Townships have policies regarding archaeological assessments

that will be followed, and that he as Chief would be follow up with Ministers too, to ensure that this issue is addressed.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting will take place on October 7th, 2020: this date and venue will dependant on the weather and Covid restrictions.

7:37PM – Meeting Adjourned.

The minutes dated Wednesday September 2nd, 2021, have been reviewed and approved at a duly convened meeting dated: Oct 6, 2021

Date signed: Oct 14, 2021

Quorum: 3



Robin McGinnis, Chief




Willie James McGinnis, Councillor



Gary Medicine, Councillor



Leona McGinnis, Councillor



Karen Oster-Bombay, Councillor

Jason Wilson, Councillor