

Meeting Notes
Off Reserve Meeting
April 16, 2026

Purpose

Rainy River First Nation meeting to discuss off-reserve member support, community programming, communication updates, and Powwow planning activities.

Takeaways

1. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) is being implemented for Canadian members.
 2. A U.S. mailing solution through International Falls, Minnesota is being finalized to improve delivery times.
 3. Friendship Centres continue to offer supports for off-reserve members, including food security, mental health, housing, and education assistance.
 4. Membership backlog processing has been completed, with letters sent to applicants regarding their status.
 5. Powwow planning is underway with expanded programming, youth activities, and cultural events.
 6. Funding applications and sponsorship efforts are ongoing to support Powwow operations and community initiatives.
 7. Requests were made for future Powwow Committee meetings to include virtual participation options for off-reserve members.
 8. Save on Energy programs for Northwestern Ontario residents were shared with attendees.
 9. The next Off Reserve Meeting is scheduled for May 20, 2026, at 6:00 PM.
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Meeting Logistics

1. Technical issues and audio echo concerns were addressed at the beginning of the meeting.

2. Members were reminded to mute microphones unless speaking.
 3. Camera and Status Card verification procedures were reviewed for attendee confirmation purposes.
 4. Meeting agenda and summary notes from the previous meeting were reviewed.
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Financial Distribution Updates

1. Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) will be available for Canadian members.
 2. A mailbox in International Falls, Minnesota is being finalized to improve mailing times for U.S. members.
 3. Communication regarding payments and distributions will continue through community platforms.
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Friendship Centre Supports

1. Friendship Centres may provide:
 - Food security supports
 - Emergency rent assistance
 - Mental health and trauma supports
 - Employment and education assistance
 - Family and cultural programming
 2. Federal funding of \$168 million over five years was announced for Friendship Centres across Canada.
 3. Members were encouraged to contact Friendship Centres within their local area to explore available supports.
 4. Intake forms are generally required, but Status Cards may not always be necessary for access to services.
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Membership, Housing, and Estates

1. Membership backlog processing has been completed.

2. Applicants have been mailed letters regarding approvals or requests for additional information.
 3. Members who have not received correspondence were encouraged to contact the Membership Registrar.
 4. Housing discussions remain ongoing.
 5. Wills and Estates planning initiatives continue to be developed.
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Powwow Committee Update

Powwow Planning

1. Powwow planning activities are ongoing for the upcoming event season.
2. The Powwow budget is approximately \$208,000.
3. Volunteer support continues to be essential to Powwow operations.

Activities and Programming

1. Planned events include:
 - Youth Showcase
 - Dance competitions
 - Jigging contest
 - Potato dance
 - Bells-only dance
 - Fish fry
 - Giveaway events
 - Royalty Pageant
2. Youth dance competitions will continue using randomized prize envelopes to encourage fairness and participation.
3. Ojibwe language teachings and cultural teachings will continue to be incorporated throughout the Powwow.

Powwow Grounds Improvements

1. Discussion took place regarding the development of enclosed bunkies at the Powwow grounds.
2. Proposed bunkies would include:
 - Doors and windows
 - Loft sleeping areas
 - Basic sleeping accommodations
3. The goal is to improve accommodations for attendees and create additional community recreation opportunities.

Virtual Participation

1. A request was made for future Powwow Committee meetings to include Zoom access for off-reserve members.
 2. Efforts are underway to coordinate virtual participation options.
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Communication Improvements

1. Members raised concerns regarding meeting links not being distributed through all communication channels.
 2. Additional efforts will be made to improve notice distribution through:
 - Community app
 - Newsletter
 - OneFeather communications
 3. Members were encouraged to continue sharing information and community resources.
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Save on Energy Program

1. Information was shared regarding Ontario's Save on Energy initiative available in Northwestern Ontario communities.
2. Programs may assist residents with:
 - Energy efficiency upgrades

- Reducing energy costs
 - Home improvement supports
3. Program information was shared through the meeting chat.
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Action Items

1. Finalize Electronic Funds Transfer implementation for Canadian members.
Finance Department
2. Finalize International Falls mailing solution for U.S. members.
Administration / Finance Department
3. Continue sharing Friendship Centre support information with off-reserve members.
Community Support Staff
4. Coordinate virtual access options for future Powwow Committee meetings.
Powwow Committee
5. Continue planning and preparation for Powwow programming and grounds improvements.
Powwow Committee
6. Improve communication and meeting notice distribution across all platforms.
Administration