

A regular meeting of the Qalipu Chief and Council took place on November 18, 2017 at the Community Room in Corner Brook.

The minutes of the June 20 special meeting (to discuss Aboriginal Sports Circle, funding for youth attending NAID Games, INAC funding for Flat Bay), the August 26 regular meeting and the September 29 special meeting (to review and approve proposed changes to Education Policy) meetings of Council were reviewed and accepted.

### **Elder Advisory Council**

Other Nations, including Miawpukek First Nation, has an Elder Advisory Council. Qalipu recognizes the value of having such an established group.

A draft Terms of Reference was written and shared with Council prior to the meeting

More than 40 names were submitted when Council put out a call for recommendations. Ward Councilors submitted names that they had received, and members of the Executive (Chief and Vice Chiefs) submitted names as well.

The Terms of Reference outlines the purpose, mission, values and ways of working for this soon to be established Council. Membership on the Elder Council will be based on inclusion of “anyone who is sought after and recognized for their wisdom, knowledge, and caring for humanity within their communities.”

Some of the roles of the Elder Council will be to give direction, request full disclosure about matters and issues in order to give informed direction/advice, sit on committees as requested, assist Chief and Council with making important decisions that impact our Mi'kmaq communities and build relationships and exchange knowledge with Elders from other areas.

Chief expressed the desire to make a shortened list of Elders who can make up this Council, and asked Council how they thought this should be structured.

He asked, “How big do you think this group should be, for function?”

One Councilor suggested that we have so much difficulty moving forward with the nine people we have at the table, that establishing this Council may further delay our ability to move forward.

Several Councilors suggested that if we are looking at putting an Elder Council together, we should stick to a guideline of not anymore than five or six people. This can't be done with 40 + people.

Another Councilor spoke to the fact that there are nine Wards, and all Wards should be represented. It would make the group larger than ideal, but all areas would be represented. The Councilor also suggested that the community should determine the person, not Council.

A Councilor responded that this list of names *was* submitted by the people in our communities. What the Council is attempting to do is shorten the list.

Another member of Council suggested that we keep the group small, maybe have regional representation.

Most Councilors agreed that keeping the group size small would be best.

Another issue was that for Wards representing several distinct and separate communities, maybe its time to engage an individual from a community that is not typically recognized.

One Councilor said that “in the Newfoundland context, our culture was so underground. If we look to Nova Scotia and other provinces whose culture has not been underground, their Terms of Reference on Elders would include a lifetime of their culture not being underground. The kind of Elder you meet in Nova Scotia, we don’t have many people like that here. Some of the people submitted on this list, are they really Elders?”

A discussion on what defines an Elder in this process followed:

- Knowledge keeper
- Acknowledged, and accepted in the community as having wisdom, life experience and understanding of our culture and teachings.
- Someone that carries the traditional knowledge that has been involved in the Mi’kmaq way of life for many years.
- Someone who can conduct ceremonies
- A life-long learning knowledge.
- A community leader
- Someone who is giving of their time and gifts

An idea that came forward was how to include the entire group of people whose names were put forward. Maybe a retreat, and other ways to get together as teaching and learning opportunities.

A member of Council spoke to the seriousness of being an Elder. It is an important role that comes with self-sacrifice.

### **Consultants**

There has only been one consultant in the past year, Gerry Kerr, the Consultant on establishing the Qalipu Business Park.

### **Highlights of the Finance Standing Committee Report**

Chairperson Gerard Alexander presented the Committee Report.

Mortgages on our properties at 1 and 3 church street have been renegotiated, with a new provider, at a reduced interest rate from 4.45% to 3.6%. This will lead to cost savings of about \$10,000 a year.

Further efficiencies will continue to be sought to create savings for the Band.

Council recently hosted a presentation from the First Nation Financial Management Board. Council had requested more information. A representative of the Board will attend the January 20, 2018 meeting of Council to present more information, and answer the questions of Council.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) process was reviewed and a draft RFP process document was prepared by the Comptroller and a member of the Finance Committee. This has been presented to Council.

## **Good News**

Chief updated Council on a recent visit from an INAC representative re: General Assessment. Last year, our score was 2.02 – the best score of First Nations in Canada.

This year, our score is 1.51, what we believe is the lowest score ever recorded of any First Nation in Canada.

Council applauded the success.

This score is reflective of accountability, transparency, as well as effective policies and procedures.

Chief also shared that we are about to receive the official certification of ISO 9001. We will be the first Band in Canada to receive this certification on *all aspects* of our operation, as opposed to just particular departments.

The Band Manager talked about a more detailed audit that also resulted in good news. The auditor reviewed our operations, to see what we need to do to successfully pass a more rigorous level of assessment, known as a level C. Reaching a level C allows for block funding, a multi-year funding arrangement that allows for greater flexibility, responsiveness to our communities, and the ability to carry money from year to year rather than having to spend it by year end or send it back. The Band Manager reported that as a result of that assessment, the auditor has determined that we may be eligible for a passing grade on the level C assessment, as it stands, making us eligible to apply for block funding much earlier than anticipated.

## **Annual Operating Plans-Highlights**

### Education and Training Department

Based on current information and projections, 100% of eligible clients will be funded through the Post Secondary Student Support Program in 2017-18.

There are currently 735 active students being funded under PSE, and 58 active clients under the ASETS.

To date, one short term program, and ten skills parachute programs were approved.

Eight members under the RCMP/Qalipu Summer Student Program completed their work placements at various detachments.

There were 30 youth who received employment through the Youth Summer Employment Program this year.

Five new Self-Employment Program applications were approved this year.

Three youth completed the Qalipu-led Linkages Program.

2,717 new client profile updates have been completed in ginu, the Qalipu membership database.

Policy has been changed to allow mandatory/compulsory fees to be covered for funded clients.

## Department of Community Development

The Fall session of the Outdoor Education Program had 15 schools with 215 students, 17 teachers and 48 chaperones. A meeting was held with Parks Canada to discuss running a similar pilot program in the Tera Nova National Park.

Revenue generated at Qalipu Cultural Foundation Annual Gala was \$14,000.

Development of a community space at 90 Main St. Stephenville is being explored.

The next Traditional Use Study has begun, with a focus on Benoit's Cove and Corner Brook Wards.

K-12 school visits have taken place at several schools.

80 Tourism assets have been added to a database for the Experience Qalipu website which is set to launch in January 2018.

Funding has been secured for a Traditional Healers project in collaboration with Conne River.

\$23,000 was secured for the New Horizons for seniors funding, Elder FACE project.

\$28,000 was secured for the Ktaqmkuk Place names language project through Heritage Canada.

\$12,300 was secured for stage two of the Waltes project

\$25,000 for Dancers of the New Dawn Project.

## Operations Department

An item on the Operations AOP is to "Assess the need amongst membership for a Mental Health and Traditional Healing Centre."

Some Councilors brought up the importance of this piece of work, and expressed a desire to see more happening with this as an initiative.

The Band Manager confirmed that this is a priority area that will receive enhanced attention from the Operations Department.

Item will be changed to reflect that assessment of need has been established, the priority area needs to be *establishment* of a Mental Health and Traditional Healing Centre.

A Councilor spoke to the fact that there are people in our communities who can deliver cultural health services toward integrated healing. This is a service available to First Nations in Canada, why not here? Typically, an individual can call a Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) rep. and ask for a traditional healing. The Councilor encouraged the Chief to find out what we need to have happen here to make this available to our people in Newfoundland.

An Election Committee has been established to review the Custom Election Rules. The recommendation of this committee will determine the type of voting tool to present to membership at the 2018 Qalipu Election to ratify for use in the Qalipu Election in 2021.

ISO 9001 Certification is a globally recognized quality assurance management system, which in turns supports the standardized mapping of internal processes and creating an internal auditing program to ensure that Qalipu is maintaining and delivering consistent programing services to its members. An

external audit took place on October 25 and 26. The auditor has advised that Qalipu will be recommended for ISO Certification. Formal certification is expected in December.

### **Question and Answer Period**

Q. I Note you are going off to have a meeting among yourselves about QDC, and I notice you met yesterday and there have been some minutes from special meetings. How do you determine what is an in-camera meeting, and do the bylaws reflect when an in-camera meeting is required?

A. These kinds of meetings are to discuss items that are in the preliminary stages, to have a discussion before we present to membership. It could also be a HR issue, privacy and confidentiality issue.

Q. In terms of the QDC meeting taking place privately during the lunch break, why is this closed?

A. We are looking at a list of candidates who may be hired by the Band for the QDC Manager position.

Q. Are you planning to attend the AFN meeting in Quebec in December?

A. Had a discussion with Chief Joe, if I get the green light to go on behalf of Qalipu, I certainly will go. I'm trying my best to build a relationship with this group. I do think this is the right place for Qalipu and I will continue to work toward becoming a member of this group. We need the support and acceptance of the Atlantic Canada group of Mi'kmaq.

Q. Can I get a list of consultants please?

A. This was provided, there has been one consultant.

Q. At the AGA, you talked about the many consultants who were used before...

A. Yes, the reporting at the AGA was to do with the last fiscal year.

Q. I had some concern about the consultants you are using.

A. We have had a lot of conversations about being sure to be inclusive of aboriginal business.

Q. Are there any craft fairs for native crafts?

A. Mala, the Wonderful Fine Market, the local Craft Fair. You will find aboriginal crafts sold there. We would like to host a craft event of our own. Maybe we can ask our crafters where they are selling their items, we could list it on our website.

Council agreed that a list will be established.

Q. Is there anything to update on the Arctic Surf Clam proposal that we are bidding on with Miawpukek and the Innu Nation.

A. It's very positive, what we are doing together. It's the first time that all First Nations in NL have pulled together on a joint venture. We are interested in bringing unity to the First Nations of Newfoundland.

There are other indigenous groups who have partnered with industry in the same bid for this opportunity. The application is in. We just have to wait and see where this goes.

Q. Are you lobbying the politicians about this?

A. Yes.

### **Breakfast Program Donations**

Councilors made donations to school programs in their areas in previous years.

A discussion took place as to whether this would be planned for this year.

It was noted that the monies were available through surplus in previous years, that it had not been a budgetary item.

Council would like to discuss making this a regular item that is budgeted for from year to year.

### **Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Circle**

The Band had the Aboriginal Sport and Recreation Circle in to talk about who the Sports Circle is, and how Qalipu can plan, and budget, to support our youth involvement in the North American Indigenous Games 2020

Regional Coordinator Mike Alexander presented.

Bert Alexander, a member of the Board of Directors for the Circle, gave a history on his involvement with the group. He said that the Inuit, the Innu, the Metis and the Mi'kmaq all met at this founding meeting, and forged out the first agreement of these groups. These four provincial aboriginal groups are represented by the Sports Circle.

Mr. Alexander spoke to the importance of supporting and working with our youth and thanked the Qalipu Council for their engagement.

The first-time youth were sent to the National games, they scraped and saved. It was difficult to come up with the money to get those aboriginal youth to the games. He said that the \$15,000 contribution that Qalipu made last year was so significant, and so helpful in getting youth to the North American Indigenous Games.

North American Indigenous Game (NAIG)-multi-sport, multi-disciplinary even that happens every three years. The next games will take place in 2020. Mike said that he is a coach, and he attends the games with the youth and says this is an amazing event.

Some of the sports that are featured at NAIG that our NL Sports Circle are focusing on for our youth are: Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Swimming, Volleyball, and Wrestling.

Sports Circle NL has been to three NAIG's. Mike shared the results from the 2017 event where 45 of our Mi'kmaq youth athletes that attended. In 2017, 89 athletes from provincial aboriginal groups participated, and our province finished 8<sup>th</sup> out of 22 teams.

Key partners of the Sports Circle NL are the Provincial Government, the Nunatsiavut Government (Inuit), the Innu Nation (Innu), Nunatukavut (Metis), Miawpukek (Mi'kmaq) and now, Qalipu (Mi'kmaq).

The impact of participating in competitive sports for our young athletes is great. Sport is a tool for building and connecting people. It can bring out the best in people, instill community and cultural pride. This is the primary focus of the Sports Circle.

The Aboriginal Sports Circle NL is involved in other sporting events as well. For instance, this past summer was the first time an aboriginal team was permitted to be entered into the Provincial Games. We had a Team Mi'kmaq in the Summer Games, and Qalipu provided the uniforms. These Games take place every two years (Summer/Winter).

The question was asked, 'at NAIG, how strong is the cultural element?'

Mike said that there is a cultural village at the centre point of every NAIG. Within there, youth have exposure to many diverse cultures, including their own. All the Nations share.

Going forward, for NAIG 2020, we are looking at a contingent of around 120 people (includes athletes, coaches, managers).

Mike outlined what the Sports Circle would like from Qalipu First Nation.

1. That QFN endorse the NAIG and become a partner with the Sports Circle at \$1000.00 per athlete.
2. That QFN endorse the aboriginal team entry into the Provincial Games and become a partner with the Sports Circle at \$120-160 per athlete (to cover cost of uniforms)
3. That QFN consider providing funding for Mi'kmaq youth attending National Aboriginal sporting events.
4. That QFN budget \$56,000 over the next three years to meet projected costs of items 1-3.

A Councilor questioned whether the Sports Circle was "status-blind".

The individual can compete on the team with a declaration of ancestry form however, money provided by the government of a Nation is only meant to fund its members.

### **Qalipu Cultural Foundation – Application Guidelines—highlights**

Mitch Blanchard, Resource Coordinator and staff liaison with the Qalipu Cultural Foundation was on hand to present to Council about how groups can apply for funding through the Qalipu Cultural Foundation's Cultural Support Program. Individuals can apply for the fund however, groups applying for funding, benefiting a broader community, are preferred. During the first two years, the Foundation had \$10,000 to give out in support grants. This year, \$20,000 was committed and demand has been high.

- For one-day events, a group can apply for \$1000 funding. For multi-day events, groups are eligible for \$2500.
- Being eligible for funding has no requirement for status. This Support Program is set up for indigenous groups of all kinds.
- When considering applications, partnering is preferred.
- Letters of support from a Council member is also an asset.
- QCF helps to funnel applicants to other sources of money, letters of support are provided from the QCF to help those groups secure additional funding from other sources.
- Resource Coordinator will provide assistance on applying for the Cultural Support Grant in order to ensure that all items are covered that would make the group eligible for funding.
- To request an application for the Cultural Support Grant please contact Mitch Blanchard at [mblanchard@qalipu.ca](mailto:mblanchard@qalipu.ca) or call 634-8046

## **Enrolment Update**

In October, some letters went out dealing with Appeals. 362 appeals were done at that time, and around 935 replies to the Administrative Reviews were also sent out.

The Appeals are being handled by the Appeal Masters under Chief Appeal Master Geoffrey Brown. All together about 13,000 appeals were made and at the end of October only 362 were done. We can expect that at the end of November and December there will be much larger numbers of Appeals letters being sent out.

Of the 362 that were processed, the majority were based on Group Acceptance (points). Not many people were successful out of that 362.

When more letters begin arriving in the mail, we can expect that there will be a lot of people talking about this subject. We will soon have a far greater understanding of how this appeals process ended up.

Chief shared that as a member of the Implementation Committee, a number of practical, reasonable solutions have been brought to the Federal Government to bring better results to our membership. In particular, those 10,000+ people who may have their status cards revoked.

For instance, those with 9+ points (meaning the individual was a member of the former Federation of Newfoundland Indians) should have gained membership because this agreement was intended for recognition of the members of the Federation of Newfoundland Indians.

## **Indigenous Representative Organization (IRO)**

A conversation with INAC recently about opening up dialogue, improving communication lines and improving the lives of Mi'kmaq in Newfoundland. This type of organization brings together First Nations to work together on negotiating, and accomplishing shared goals together. The purpose/mandate is to support co-operative relationships with Aboriginal peoples by providing basic organizational capacity to organizations mandated by Aboriginal peoples to represent them.

There is core funding available to sustain an office such as this.

A motion was made at the Council table to work with Miawpukek toward exploring and establishing an IRO.

## **Next Regular Meeting of Council**

The next regular meeting of Council will take place January 20, 2018 in Stephenville. To register, please contact Mabel MacDonald at [mmacdonald@qalipu.ca](mailto:mmacdonald@qalipu.ca)