

AGNUTMAQAN

Welcome to your fourth edition of *Agnutmaqan*

This edition is a summary of proceedings and matters discussed during the regular Band Council meeting held in January 2014. Previous editions included comprehensive overviews of the strategic plan and program plans for the year, and can be referenced again as background to this report.

Agnutmaqan will help keep you as Band Members informed and will enable you to engage in the ongoing discussions of your Band Council.

Pronunciation: *a-gê-nu-dê-ma-hgan*

Meanings: story; news; report; message; discussion

STAYING THE COURSE

The fourth quarterly Council meeting of the QMFNB was held in Corner Brook on January 18th, 2014. It was a regular meeting, with an opportunity for Council members to raise any concerns and ask questions of Portfolio Holders and the CEO. In addition to regular business matters, there were some further discussions on establishing processes for doing business with Qalipu Development Corporation and other subsidiaries of the Band. Council had the opportunity to review recommendations for realigning departments and establishing a more streamlined Service Qalipu.

A CLOSER LOOK AT FINANCES

This edition of *Agnutmaqan* takes a closer look at the work of the Finance Committee and the inner workings of the Qalipu operation. At each Band Council meeting, the Finance Committee reports on the financial management of program and project areas delivered and managed by staff under the direction and support of Council. As with all Committees, a Council member leads as the Portfolio Holder and Chairs the Committee. The Finance Committee is chaired by Councilor Litty MacDonald, and includes Councilor and Central Vice Chief Randy Drover, Neil Lucas who is a member-at-large, and Lynn Kendall, the new Director of Finance and Administration.

This Committee has a critical role for the Qalipu Band. Committee Councilors work closely with staff to ensure financial management remains efficient, accountable and transparent, and that funds are managed to provide maximum opportunities for members and growth of the Band. Funding for all Qalipu operations and programs for members depends on developing proposals to many government departments and partners in business and nongovernment organizations. Council and management work hard to make the most of all funding and want to be accountable and collaborative with partners and funders.

The Finance Committee is becoming more established in its processes. It has frequent and detailed meetings and is fine tuning the way Council is informed. Council is provided with a report in advance, and a summary is discussed at the Council meeting to address any areas of concern or interest.

In preparing its review and the January report to Council, the Finance Committee reviewed all financial statements for projects funded from government and partner agreements. There are 35 income statements for QMFNB and nine (9) under MAMKA. These include several projects under the Community Economic Development Program (CEDP) and some under the Community Economic Opportunities Program (CEOP). The high volume of unique financial statements reflects the level of attention and detail that drives how projects are managed, scrutinized and monitored. It also eases direct reporting back to funding agencies and partners.

The Finance Committee reported how it has been analyzing each project, and working closely with the new Director of Finance and Administration. The Committee reported that there were only a few minor issues. With Council's approval the Committee recommended making some programs more efficient by providing more information on select matters, realigning extra funding to address shortages, and realigning and reorganizing some programs. The Committee will monitor the use of consultants throughout the year and report to Council regularly, taking care to balance hiring employees and contracting consultants in a manner that gathers the best experience and insight to build internal learning and capacity.

There are many projects under the Community Economic Development Program (CEDP). Most are for the Qalipu Development Corporation, which next year will be independent of the Band when the corporation completes setting up its operation, policies and plans. There is a QDC communications program. The QDC Affordable Housing Business Plan project funded a firm to prepare a feasibility study regarding the housing market in Central Newfoundland. The Personnel Agency Business Plan is another QDC project focused on assessing the feasibility and business case of establishing a personnel agency. That report is being reviewed.

Another Community Economic Opportunities Program (CEOP) project is preparing for employment and business opportunities associated with the Muskrat Falls transmission line construction to come through Western Newfoundland, funded by an Emera contribution. This could include contractors employing qualified Qalipu members wherever possible, possible procurement opportunities for the Band, Band member companies or QDC.

Another CEDP program is designed to receive funding for Cultural Resource Personnel which will likely be consolidated with the Cultural Foundation budget when it is finalized. The Business Wings project aims to develop the capacity and leadership of business owners/entrepreneurs within the Qalipu community.

The Electronic Records Management System project will lead to digitizing all administration records, making for a more effective and efficient filing system at Qalipu offices. The system recommended by a professional firm is being reviewed by the management team and will be implemented in April.

A small fund was set aside to help educate Councilors, employees and the general membership about the differences between Community Economic Development projects and the Qalipu Development Corporation. CEDP projects will be managed by the Band, and are intended to help members and the Band create economic development in Qalipu communities. The QDC will be an independent body, a separate profit-making enterprise focused on businesses and partnerships that generate revenue that can be invested later in growth of Qalipu and its programs. It is important to distinguish the two, especially in terms of investment, and to understand where Council has authority and influence.

Other CEDP programs include an update to the 2011 Strategic Plan, a program nearing completion was for a consultant contracted under Government Relations to help QMFNB navigate federal institutions in order to advance the goals and objectives of the Band. Other programs of CEDP are Investment Strategy project which will see the creation of investment parameters, especially for QDC, and that work is ongoing. The CEDP funded Finance Development budget will assist senior management travel to Ottawa for meetings to advance the Band's economic agenda.

A CEDP program is set up for Heritage Tourism. There is one for a Cultural Foundation, with a budget to provide capacity to the Foundation in its initial years. The Aboriginal Women's Program funding was provided by the Provincial Government for organizing two women retreats, to hire a person to assist the Cultural Foundation get started, and a consultant.

There are CEDP funds for a Communication Strategy, and Energy Industry Negotiations, such as meeting with Nalcor. A Business Forum was scheduled for March in Central Newfoundland, similar to the event organized on the west coast last year for Qalipu members and interested people. The Business Development Centre/Service Qalipu budget will be used to fund the Director of Service Qalipu, an Economic Development Officer in Central Newfoundland and part of administrative staff's salary. There is a Field School budget which needs to be increased. The program will train members on how to research and document Mi'kmaq history, culture and traditions. The Hiring Strategy and QDC Human Resources Capacity project provides a budget for the QDC Manager and Administrative Assistant, which will also need to be increased.

The DFO-Aboriginal Fisheries (AFS) project provides salary for a coordinator and guardians. Funds from the Provincial Government program Advanced Education and Skills NL, along with some funds carried forward from CEOP, were used to hire individuals to populate and update the Ginu database with member information on labour and employment. The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples recently provided funding for a project funded through employment insurance programs to sponsor eighteen members to get short-term training in certifications necessary to enhance their opportunity for employment with major resource projects such as the Maritime Link.

The Aboriginal Skills Employment and Training (ASETS) program has two components which is Employment Insurance and consolidated revenue funding (EI/CRF) both programs provide direct post-secondary education benefits to members. Non-insured health benefits (NIHB) funding helps members get medical services when they don't have their own health insurance, and that budget remains in high demand.

The Post-Secondary Education (PSE) remains in high demand. Savings from unspent travel funds and other areas not fully utilized will be transferred to other areas such as student programs. A consultant contract was expanded from its initial scope of work to review the student tuition tax issue to also review HST rebates, Enrolment Committee payroll deductions, and Council remuneration tax issues.

Band Support is scrutinized as well, including per-diems, as savings may be realized depending on the number of Committee meetings in the coming months. Most of the budgeted legal fees will be used this year. Management will engage its legal counsel to review contracts in the context of privacy legislation.

Council was informed that the Director of Finance and Administration provided the Committee with an overview of the budget preparation process that will commence in the new fiscal year. The process is

comprehensive and provides a robust framework around budgeting. The Committee was pleased with the process. Qalipu program managers will be given a template budget along with the previous year's budget to use as a baseline. Managers will need to justify variances where there is a 10% increase. If new jobs or positions are being created, the manager must submit a justification and new programs and initiatives must also be justified. Once all the documents are received, prepared and reviewed by the Director of Finance and Administration and the CEO, the budget will be submitted to the Finance Standing Committee for consideration. Once endorsed at that stage, it will go before Council.

CLARITY OVER CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Following up on a detailed discussion about conflict of interest for Qalipu Councilors, employees and contractors, Chief Sheppard advised Council that after discussions with the Band's Legal Counsel, it was made clear that a proposal of any sort between Councilors of the Band and subsidiaries of the Band does not constitute a conflict of interest. Councilors were advised that in the future should they wish to do business with QDC that they should meet with QDC who will make a decision with regard to business opportunities.

A NEW QALIPU SERVICE MODEL

Council was given an overview of a conceptual framework to set up Service Qalipu and a Strategic Partnership Office. The CEO suggested that the current Manager of Community Economic Development be moved into the position of Director for Service Qalipu. Several departments would be consolidated under Service Qalipu: MAMKA, Health, CEDP, Culture and Heritage. 'Service' was chosen as part of the name for this new department in keeping with the name used by other government agencies under the provincial and federal departments with similar services. A Community Economic Development Officer will be hired for the Central Newfoundland region and it is anticipated that a Community Economic Development Officer for Western Newfoundland will be hired in September 2014. An Administrative Assistant will be hired to work with both Service Qalipu Director and the NIHB Navigator. The assistant will help with taking calls from members, allowing the NIHB Navigator more time to work with the Director on creating new initiatives in Health Care for the Band.

A Strategic Partnership Office will be set up as a two-year pilot project and be led by the Director of Workforce Qalipu to investigate partnership opportunities. Those opportunities with potential for profit will be presented to QDC to carry on to business investment and development. Opportunities inclined to create community economic development will be brought to Service Qalipu. Another employee will be hired to assist the Director of Workforce Qalipu with the reporting requirements for Work Force Qalipu. Council approved the new approach.